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Rocky Mountain Poll

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ARIZONA: POLARIZATION DEEPENS AS DEMOCRATS ESCHEW BUSH & REPUBLICANS CIRCLE THE WAGONS

Phoenix, Arizona, January 23, 2004. President George W. Bush, once the toast of the town in Arizona and enjoying immense bi-partisan support across the state, is rapidly losing support among Democrats and Independents. Simultaneously, and perhaps sensing that they might face a serious challenge to maintain their control of the White House, Arizona Republicans are circling the wagons around the President. Belief that President Bush is doing a good job in the White House rose to 80 percent among Republicans, up from 72 percent in October. Not even ten percent of rank and file Republicans are openly critical of his performance, and eighty-five percent plan to vote for his reelection. Overall, the President's favorable job ratings are at 50 percent, the lowest level since July of 2001.

On the other hand, the proportion of Arizona Democrats who praise his job performance shrank from 54 percent last summer to 31 in October and now rests at only 23 percent. Negative assessments among Democrats now approach 60 percent. Among registered Independents, a similar although less dramatic slide in popularity is occurring: favorable job ratings fell to 41 percent in January compared to 52 percent in October and 65 percent last summer. Only 16 percent of Democrats plan to vote for the reelection of Bush and among Independents, the figure is only 37 percent.

Some of the shifts in praise for Mr. Bush might be expected in a presidential election year as the rhetoric cranks up to megaphone-in-a-closet level and partisan juices begin to flow. But the declining job ratings are not just the result of partisan loyalties rising to the surface. They as well trace to softer assessments among voters on both sides of the isle on the President's domestic policies, and particularly health care. More specifically:

Two-thirds or more of Republican voters applaud President Bush on his Iraq policies, his efforts to fight terrorism, his tax-cut policies and on efforts to revitalize the economy. Republicans are more divided, however, on his environmental policies and regarding the impact of his policies on world opinion of the U.S.. The least praise for President Bush from among Republicans is in the area of his efforts to reduce health care costs for Americans: only four in ten Republicans give favorable appraisals, a fact that may explain his promises in the recent state of the nation message to do more in health care.

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Independents, who comprise about a fifth of voters in Arizona, are far more critical. In only one category do even 40 percent rate his performance as good: making the US safe from terrorism. In all other categories, the favorable ratings fall to 30 percent or less, and in three categories, to under 20 percent: environmental policies, health care costs and improving world opinion of the U.S.

Democrats are, as would be expected, the least favorable toward Mr. Bush. Only in one category do more than a third approve of his performance and in six of the seven issue areas tested, favorable ratings fall to 20 percent or less.

The study also finds that unfavorable regard for the President is correlated to family income. More specifically, favorable opinion on his performance in reducing one's taxes, improving the economy and reducing health care costs falls off noticeably in middle and lower income families.

In reviewing these findings, it should be kept in mind that the study was taken in the midst of the Democratic primaries around the country and before the President unleashes his own campaign, which may see more than a quarter billion dollars being spent to get him re-elected and which will doubtless include saturation media messages to remind people of his accomplishments and promises for the future. Even so, it is clear that in a generally pro-Republican state such as Arizona, voters are currently responding to his presidency with decreased enthusiasm.

The findings outlined in this report are based on a survey of 704 adults across Arizona conducted between January 6th and January 12th, 2004, by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona as part of the Center's independent and non-partisan Rocky Mountain Poll series. The public is welcome to visit www.brcpolls.com to read this and other recent polls.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll Arizona (2004-I-04) is based on 704 telephone interviews with adults, conducted from January 6th through January 12th, 2004 throughout Arizona. In the overall sample, one may say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 3.7 percent of what they would have been had the entire adult population been surveyed. The Democrat, Republican subsamples have estimated margins of error of plus or minus 5.7 and 6.5 percent, respectively. The Rocky Mountain Poll is conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program.

This statement conforms to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

ENCLOSED: Statistical data for reference.

STATISTICAL DATA

Behavior Research Center
Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona
RMP 2004-I-04

For this and other polls, see www.brcpolls.com/results.

"Next, I'd like to read you the names of some public officials. As I read each one, please just tell me if you think the job they are doing in office is excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor." (READ EACH; ROTATE LIST)

		EXCELLENT/ GOOD	FAIR	POOR/VERY POOR	(NET POS TO NEG)
President George W. Bush					
January	2004	50%	16%	29%	(+ 21)
October	2003	51	19	27	(+ 24)
July	2003	56	20	21	(+ 35)
April	2003	69	13	14	(+ 55)
January	2003	57	21	18	(+ 39)
October	2002	58	19	20	(+ 38)
July	2002	63	21	15	(+ 48)
April	2002	73	15	10	(+ 63)
January	2002	77	15	7	(+ 70)
October	2001	79	14	5	(+ 74)
July	2001	44	27	21	(+ 23)
April	2001	49	24	19	(+ 30)

DETAIL

January 2004: President Bush

	Excellent/ Good	Fair	Poor/Very Poor	(NET POSITIVE TO NEGATIVE)	
				Jan. 04	Oct. 03
<u>POLITICAL AFFILIATION</u>					
Republican	80%	10%	8%	(+72)	(+60)
Democrat	23	21	55	(- 32)	(- 14)
Independent	41	17	37	(+ 4)	(+18)
Likely voters	51	12	35	(+16)	(+19)
<u>ETHNICITY</u>					
White	54	15	28	(+26)	(+28)
Hispanic	39	22	29	(+10)	(+22)
Other	26	28	41	(- 15)	(- 12)
<u>GENDER</u>					
Men	52	16	29	(+23)	(+26)
Women	48	17	29	(+19)	(+22)
<u>AGE</u>					
Under 35	49	23	22	(+27)	(+31)
35 to 54	51	17	29	(+22)	(+33)
55 +	49	13	34	(+15)	(+ 8)
Retired	41	17	36	(+ 5)	(+ 7)

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"EXCELLENT/GOOD" JOB RATINGS
IN EACH CATEGORY BY PARTY

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>
Making the U.S. safe from terrorism	78%	36%	41%
Managing the situation in Iraq	77	20	30
Reducing your taxes	68	18	27
Improving the nation's economy	66	11	28
Protecting the environment	53	14	18
Improving world opinion of the U.S.	56	12	18
Reducing health care costs of Americans	41	7	16

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% "EXCELLENT/GOOD" JOB RATINGS  
BY FAMILY INCOME

| <u>Family Income</u> | <u>Reducing Your Taxes</u> | <u>Improving Economy</u> | <u>Reducing Health Care Costs</u> |
|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Under \$25,000       | 29%                        | 29%                      | 20%                               |
| \$25,000 to \$44,999 | 33                         | 34                       | 17                                |
| \$45,000 to \$64,999 | 36                         | 32                       | 25                                |
| \$65,000 +           | 54                         | 48                       | 32                                |

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