

Friends,

It is time to take a fresh look at recent political polls and what they mean or don't mean for the 2006 mid-term elections.

To begin with, the President's numbers are abysmal. His approval rating is at 48% and has not been above 50% in any public poll since March. Bush's approval ratings on the economy and Iraq are 40% and 41% respectively (nearly 6 in every ten Americans disapproving of his performance). Bush's favorability is at 48%, which is below Hillary (51%) and McCain (57%) in a recent poll. Two thirds of the country believes that things are off on the wrong track and oppose the President's social security plan. Plain and simple, the President has failed to move beyond his winning coalition (and in some cases lost ground) to capture more voters for his governing agenda.

With numbers like these you would expect there to be a substantial advantage for Democrats on the "generic ballot" for 2006 and a potential hemorrhaging of the "soft" GOP vote.

Not so fast. We do not believe that this necessarily translates into an electoral disaster for Republicans in 2006. Our own LCG poll of 877 registered voters in May shows only a 5 point edge for Democrats on the generic congressional ballot. This is comparable to the advantage Democrats had in June of 2001 (4 point edge) and July of 1997 (5 point edge). In both years there were only slight changes in the net composition of Congress with Democrats gaining 5 seats in the House in 1998 and Republicans gaining 2 seats in the Senate (no change in the House) in 2002. The Democrat "generic" advantage was virtually meaningless.

One area for concern for the GOP is that in our poll Democrats had a 14 point generic congressional ballot advantage among women. Clearly if there are defections from the Bush coalition it is happening with women – especially elderly women.

Additionally, when you look at Presidential approval ratings running up to and at the time of the mid-term elections there is little correlation with how much the respective party gains or loses...and the approval rating of the President. In the past, the party of the sitting President lost seats in Congress regardless of his approval rating. Nixon lost 10 seats in 1970 despite a 58% approval rating and Reagan lost 13 seats in 1986 despite a 63% approval rating. Beginning in 1998 and continuing in 2002 there was little change in the composition (both slight gains) despite Presidents with very high approval ratings (66% for Clinton and 67% for Bush).

Yes, Bush's approval rating is low and yes, he is in no position at present to bolster the candidacy of GOP candidates in 2006 but that doesn't necessarily translate into huge losses. Why? Because people are not feeling that much better about Democrats. Public polls show low approval ratings for both Congressional Democrat leadership and Republican leadership. As for the President's policies, the Democrats have yet to take

advantage of low approval ratings on Iraq, the economy and social security by offering credible alternatives. The public is unable to identify a single alternative position to any of the nation's problems offered by Democrats.

The attached opinion monitor also includes polling data on social security, the war in Iraq and the public trust of the news media. We have also included snapshots of the Rhode Island and Pennsylvania Senate race and the Gubernatorial races in New York, Georgia, Florida, Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Finally, we have added an ongoing "Hillary Snapshot" -- polling data on her electability -- including a Gallup/USA Today poll that asked voters how likely they are to vote for Hillary Clinton. Interestingly while it was split almost 50/50 likely/unlikely, the "very likely" segment (core Hillary) was only 28% while the "very unlikely" segment (core Anti) was 40%. This 12 point gap is a significant hurdle. To win, any candidate needs at least a one to one ratio of core supporters and core "antis". We will keep watching.

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A Compilation of Publicly-Available Survey Data

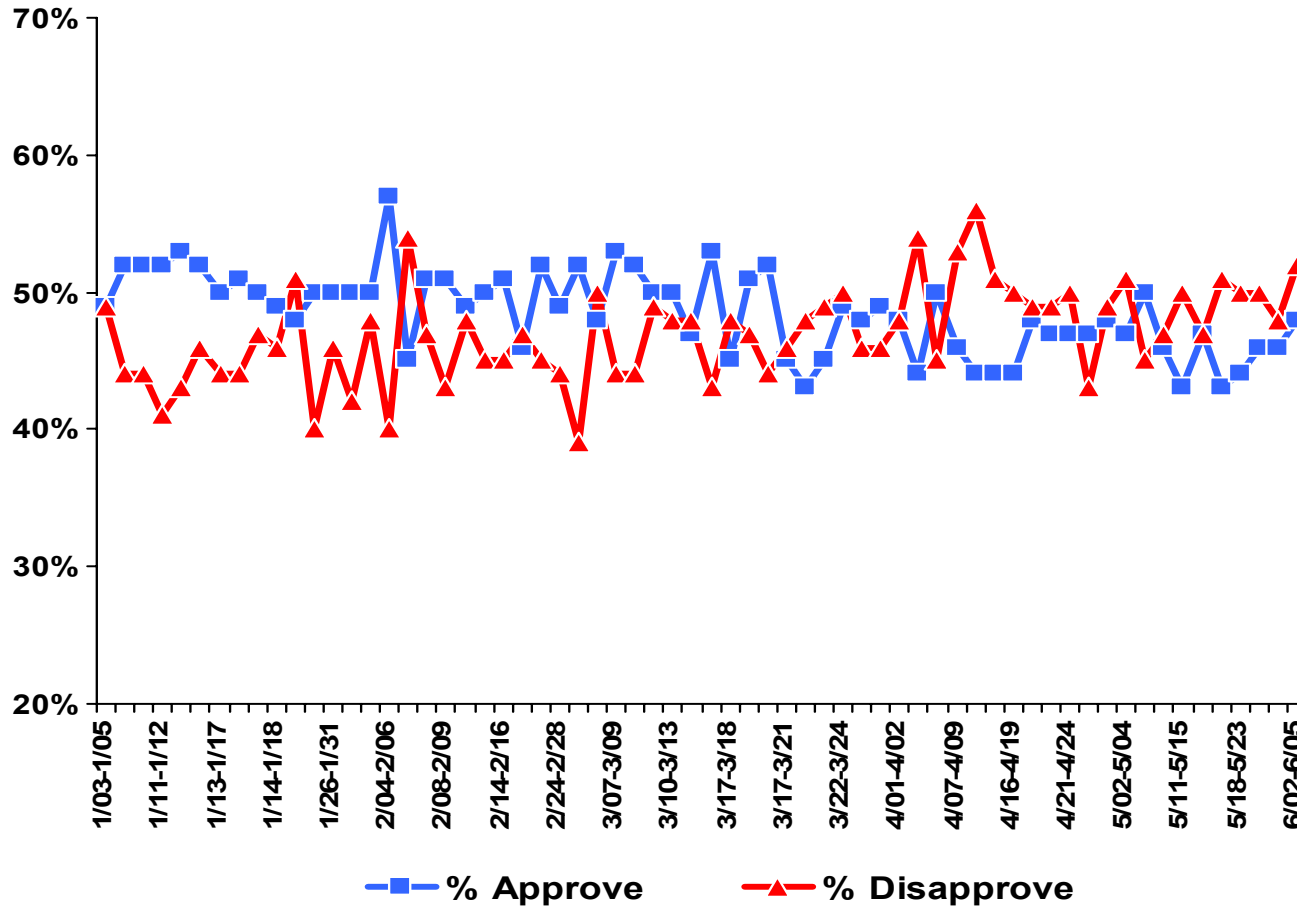
January 1st, 2005 - Present

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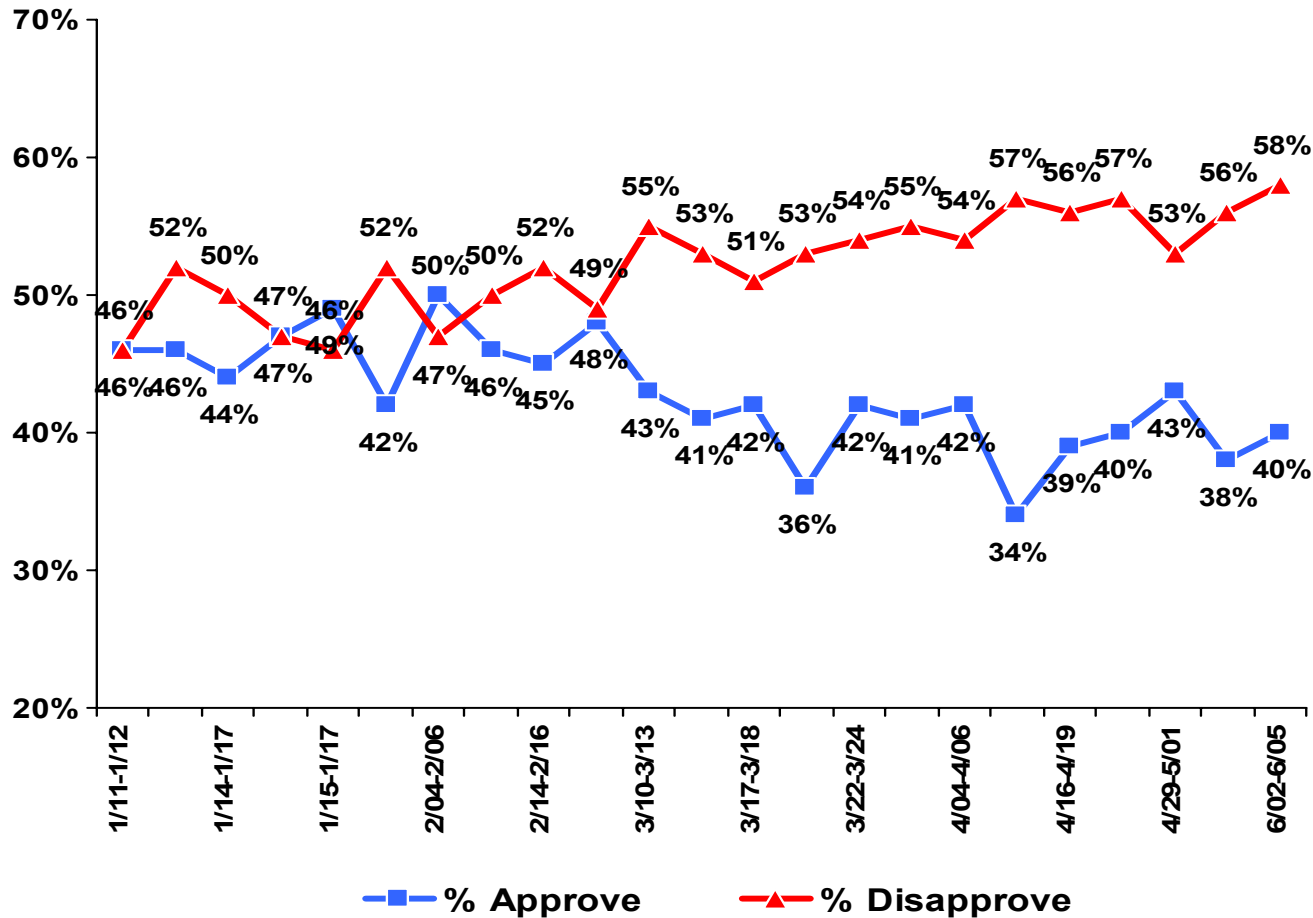
Executive Summary

- **Approval under 50.** President Bush's overall approval rating is at 48% this month, and has not been above 50% since March. The President's approval ratings on the economy and Iraq are at 40% and 41%, respectively. President Bush currently has a favorability rating of 48%, below that of Hillary Clinton (51%) John McCain (57%) and the Republican Party in general (49%).
- **Situation in Iraq.** Public opinion on the Iraq war has taken a turn away from President Bush of late, as nearly six in ten (58%) Americans believe that the war was not worth fighting, and a majority (52%) believe the Iraq war has not contributed to the long-term security of the U.S.
- **Congressional Ballot.** An exclusive LCG survey conducted in April and May shows that if the midterm elections for Congress were held at this early date, Democratic candidates would have a slight edge over Republican candidates (38% to 34%) with 28% still undecided.
- **Social Security Statistics.** The current public opinion environment being what it is—it will be very difficult for President Bush to push through his desired changes to Social Security. With six in ten Americans (62%) disapproving with his job on Social Security and over 71% saying they have heard “a lot” or “some” about the President's current plan—opinion will need to shift significantly if the President wants to amend the system.
- **Government & The Media.** In the wake of last month's controversial spat over Newsweek's report on abuse of the Koran at Guantanamo Bay—the public still puts more trust in the news media than it does the government. 46% say that they would tend to believe the media if it's reports were in contrast with the government, while 26% would take the government's side.

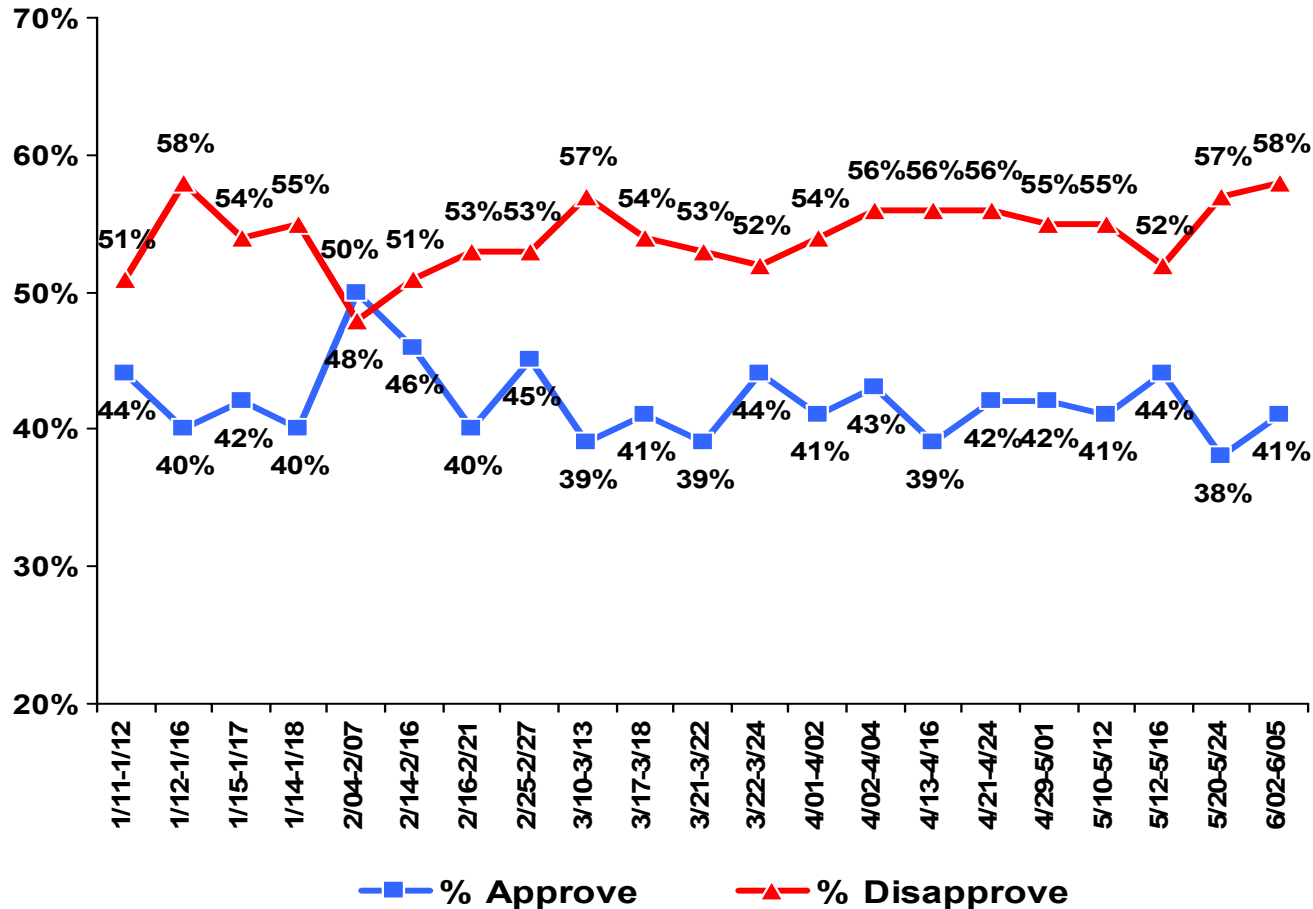
George W. Bush Job Approval Rating



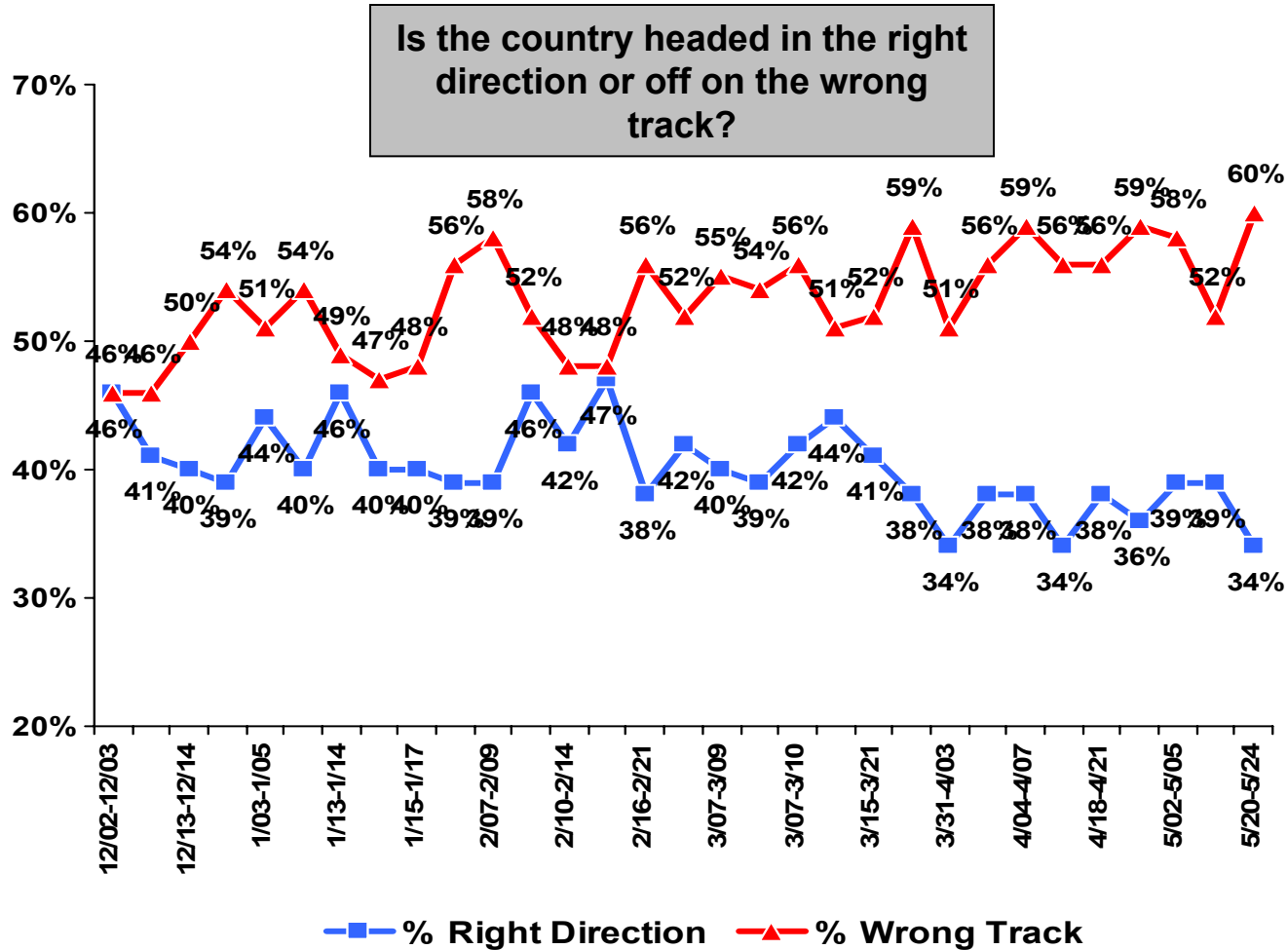
The Economy: George W. Bush Job Approval Rating



War in Iraq: George W. Bush Job Approval Rating

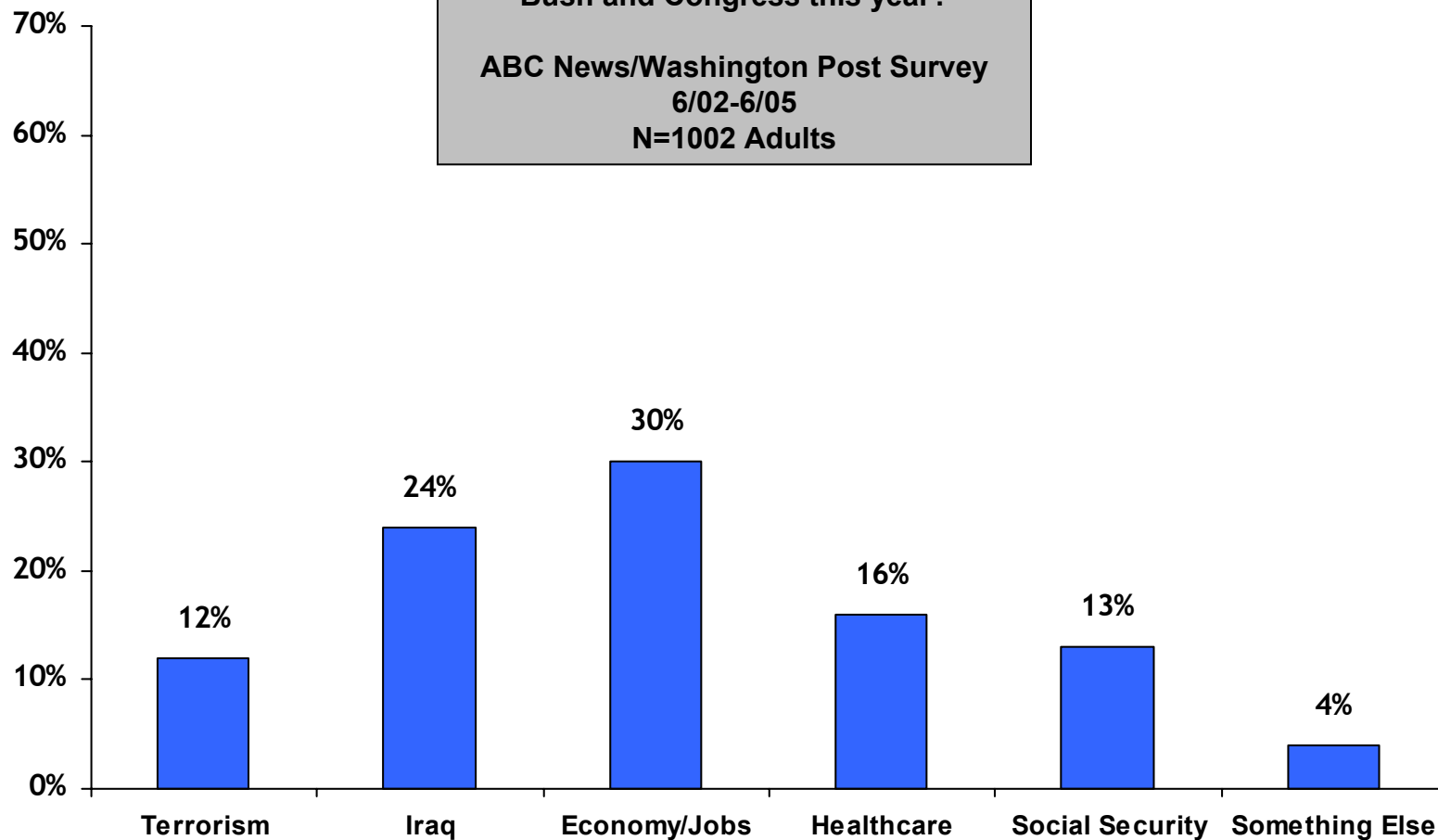


Direction of the Country

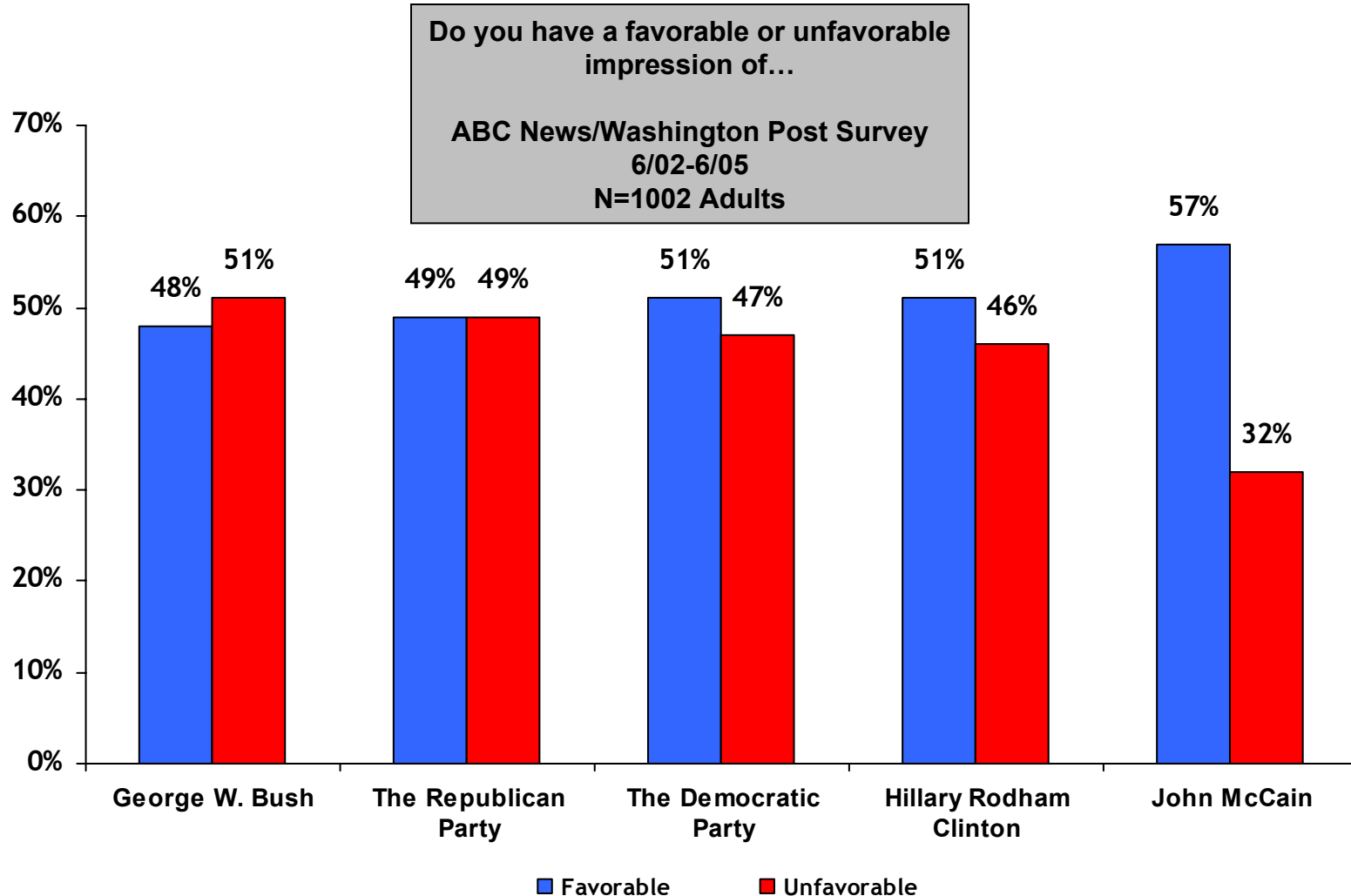


Opinion Monitor Perspective: National Priorities

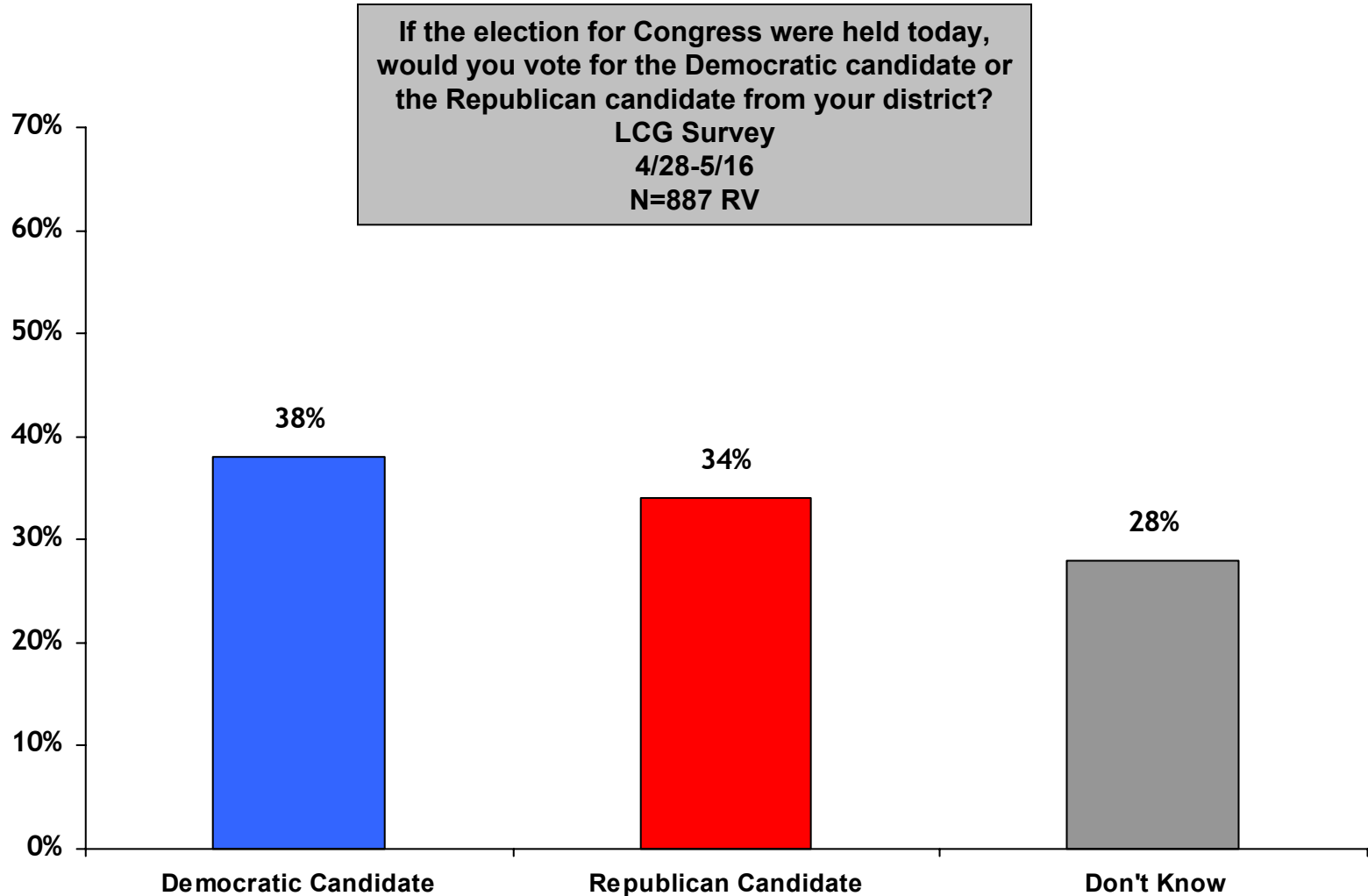
What should be the highest priority for Bush and Congress this year?
 ABC News/Washington Post Survey
 6/02-6/05
 N=1002 Adults



Opinion Monitor Perspective: National Favorability

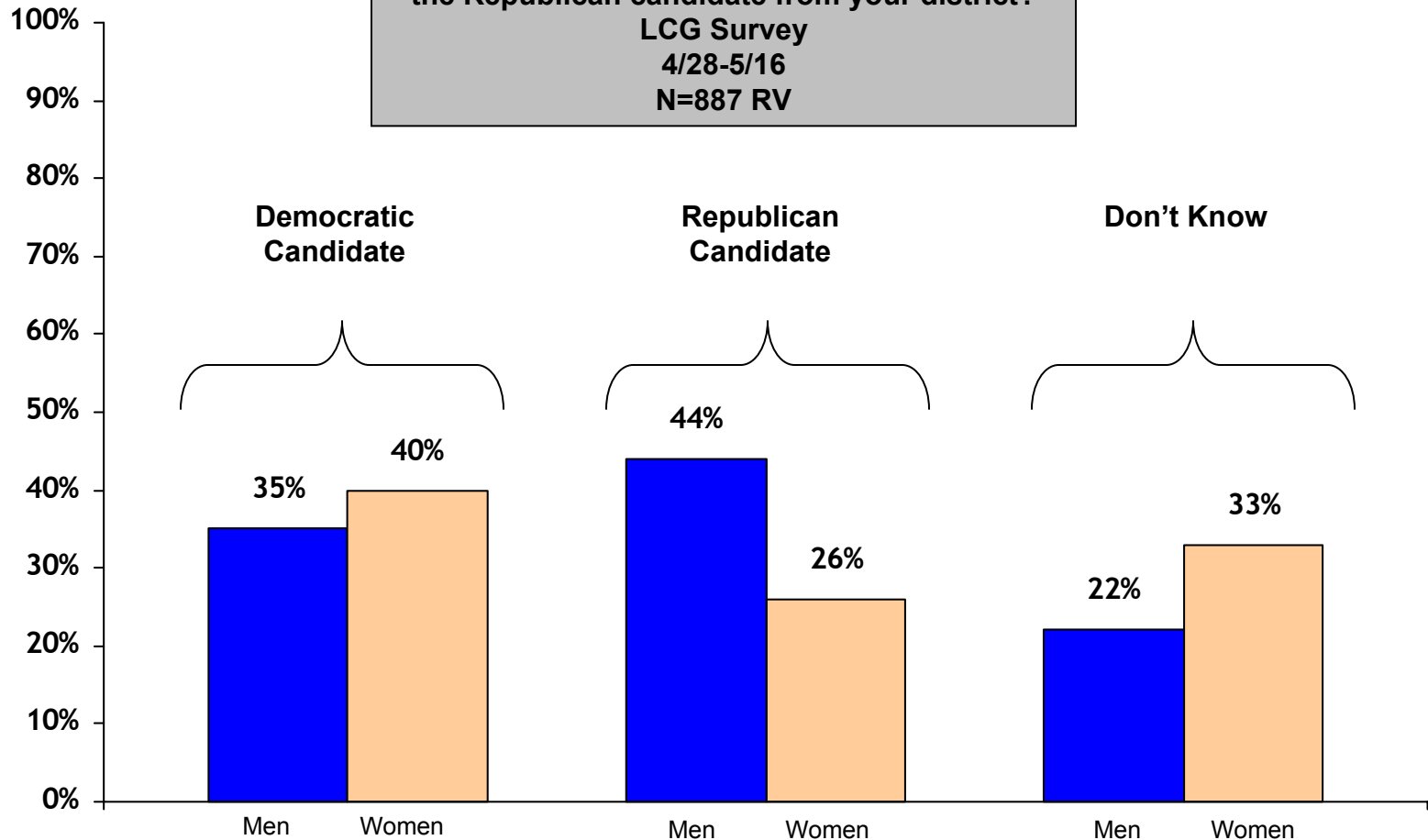


Opinion Monitor Perspective: Generic Congressional Ballot



Opinion Monitor Perspective: Generic Congressional Ballot

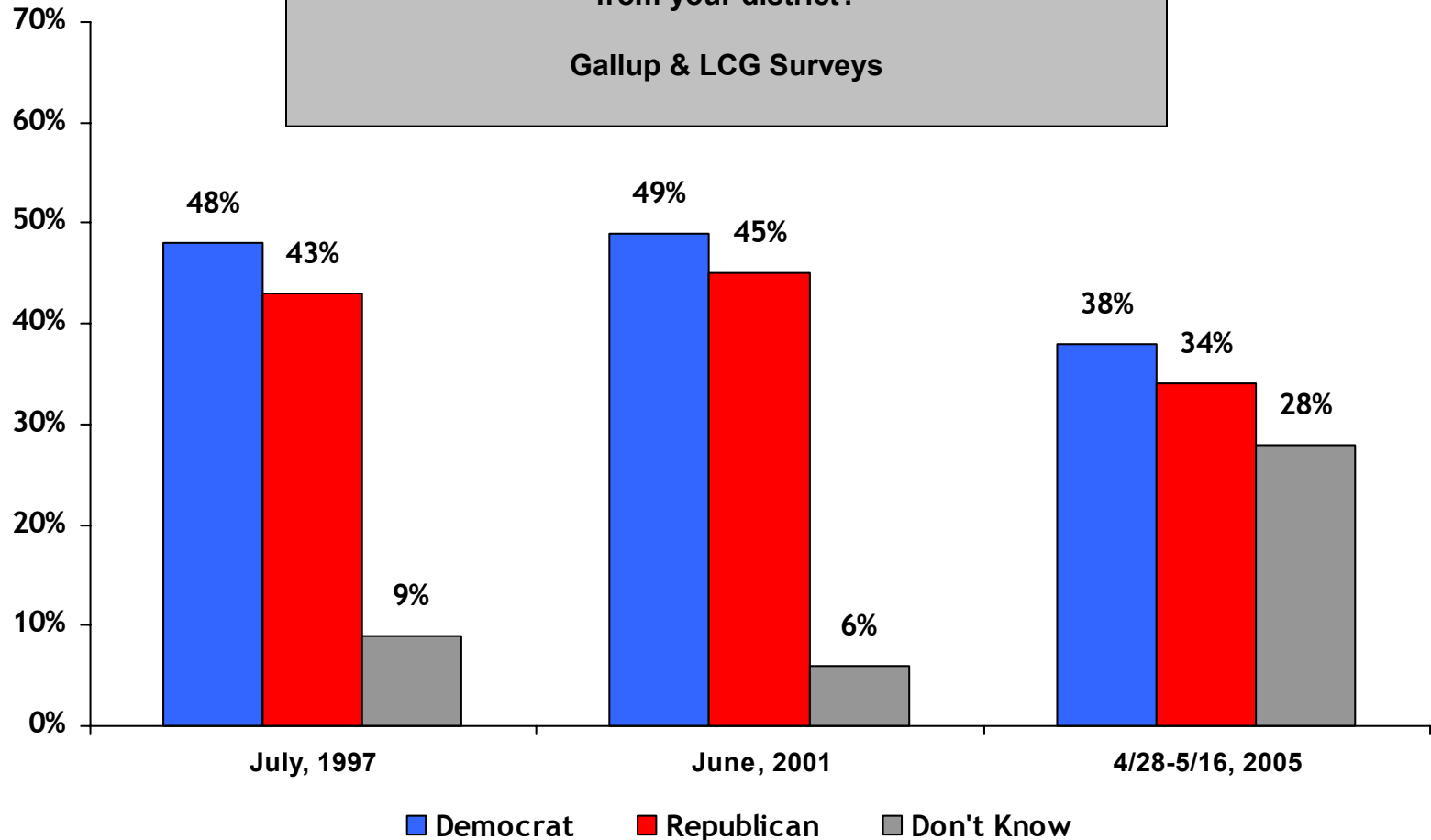
If the election for Congress were held today, would you vote for the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate from your district?
 LCG Survey
 4/28-5/16
 N=887 RV



Opinion Monitor Perspective: Generic Congressional Ballot

If the election for Congress were held today, would you vote for the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate from your district?

Gallup & LCG Surveys

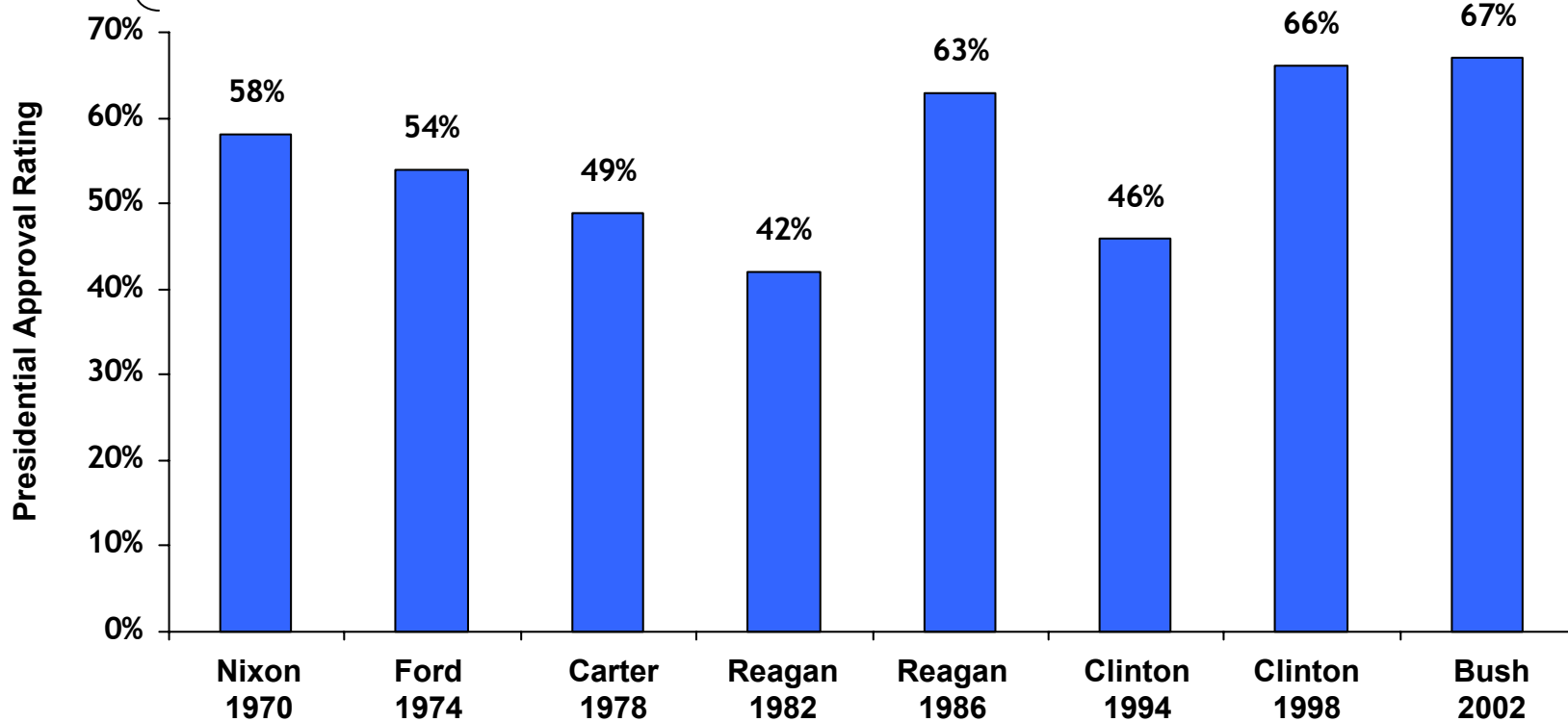


Opinion Monitor Perspective: Approval Ratings and Midterm Elections

Net: **-10** **-53** **-18** **-25** **-13** **-60** **+5** **+2**

Congressional seats gained/lost by president's party

Senate: +2	Senate: -5	Senate: -3	Senate: +1	Senate: -8	Senate: -8	Senate: 0	Senate: +2
House: -12	House: -48	House: -15	House: -26	House: -5	House: -52	House: +5	House: 0

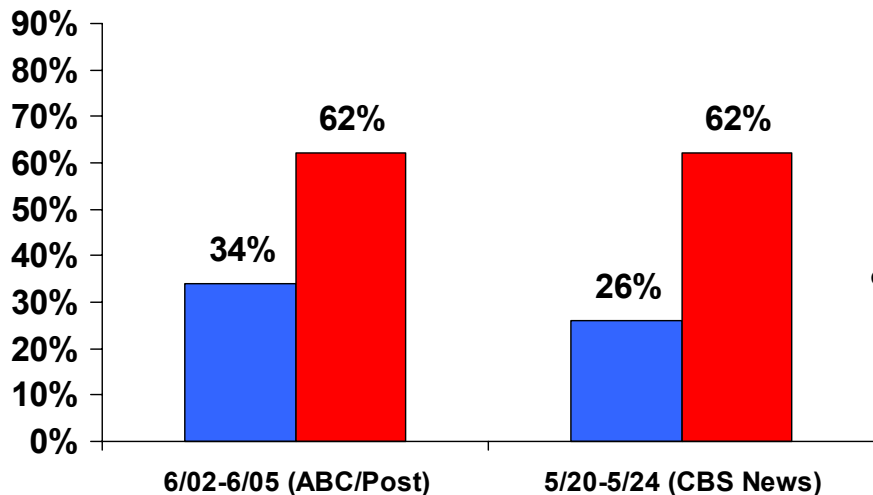


Opinion Monitor Perspective: Social Security

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling Social Security?

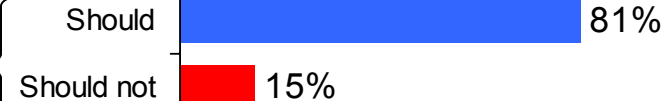
ABC/Post & CBS News Surveys

■ Approve ■ Disapprove



CBS News Survey
5/20-5/24
N=1150 Adults

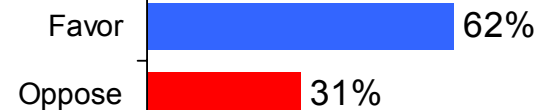
Do you think it should be the government's responsibility to provide a decent standard of living for the elderly?



Will SS have the money available to provide benefits for your retirement?



Currently, people pay SS taxes only on the first \$90K of their income. Would you favor or oppose raising the amount of income subject to SS taxes?



Would you favor or oppose limiting the rate of growth of benefits for people with incomes >\$100K?



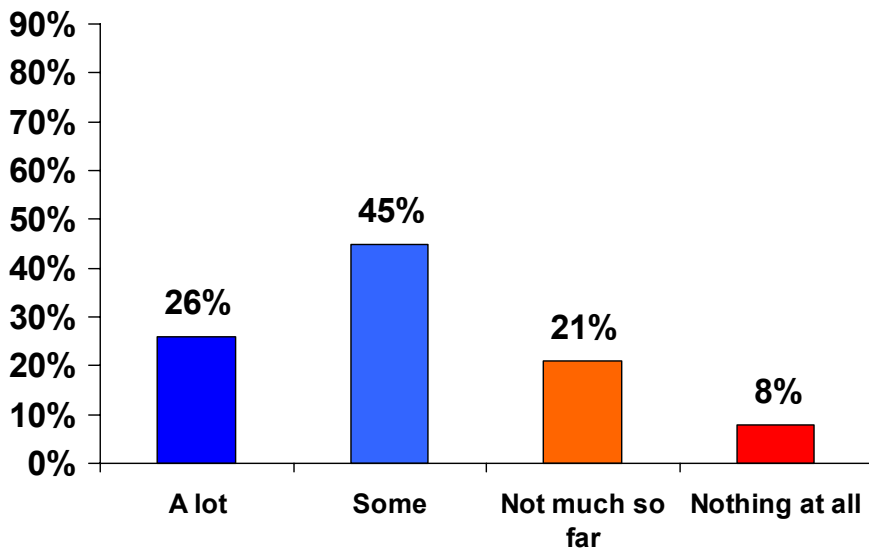
...limiting rate of benefit growth for people with incomes \$50K-\$100K?



Opinion Monitor Perspective: Social Security (Cont'd)

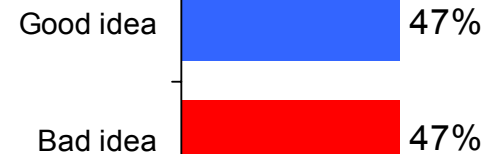
How much have you heard about the President's proposal to allow people to invest a portion of their Social Security taxes on their own in and receive reduced Social Security benefits from the government when they retire?

CBS News Survey
5/20-5/24
N=1150 Adults

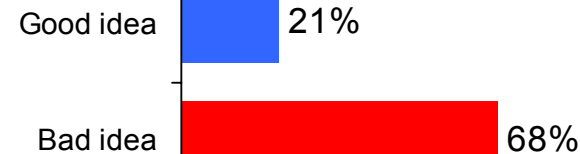


CBS News Survey
5/20-5/24
N=1150 Adults

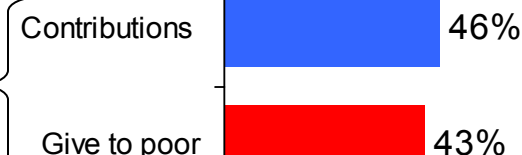
Do you think that allowing individuals to invest a portion of their Social Security taxes on their own is a good idea or a bad idea?



What if establishing personal accounts meant that the guaranteed benefit paid to retirees by the government would be reduced by as much as a third or more—do you think it's a good idea or bad idea?



Should Social Security pay out to retired people based only on how much they contributed, or should it take some of the contributions of better-off people and give them to poorer people?

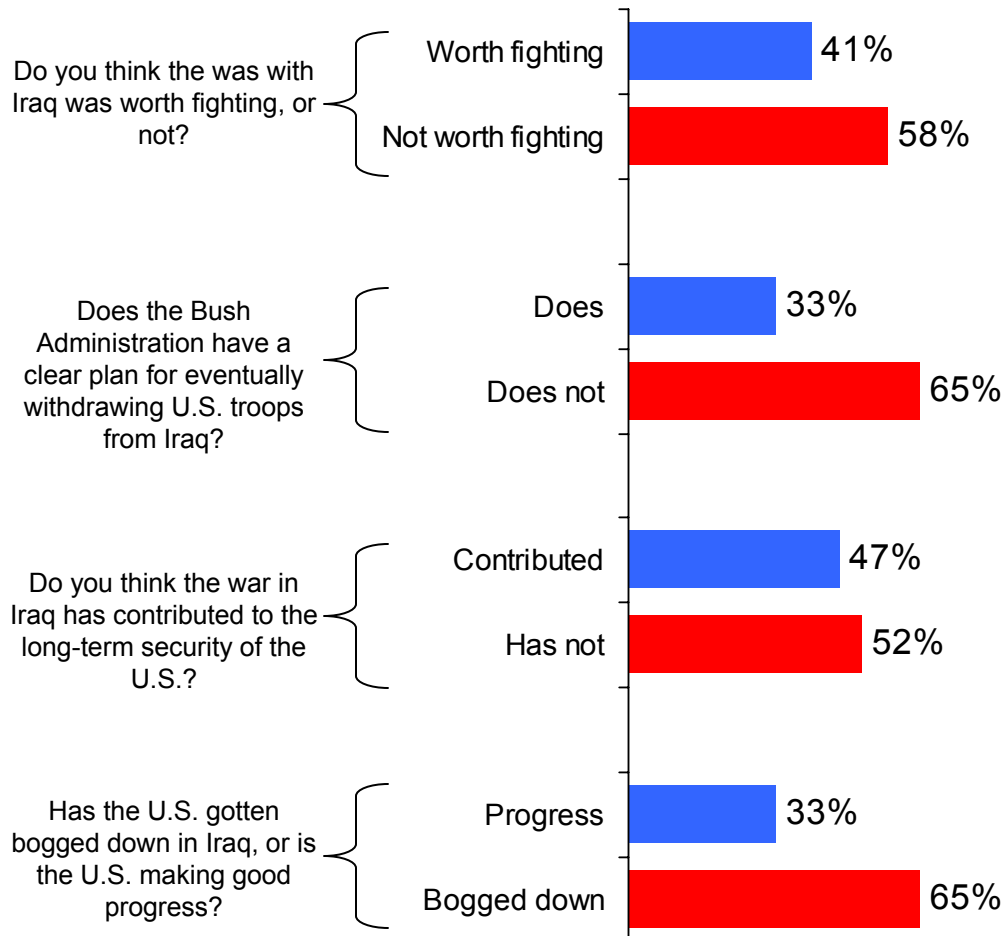
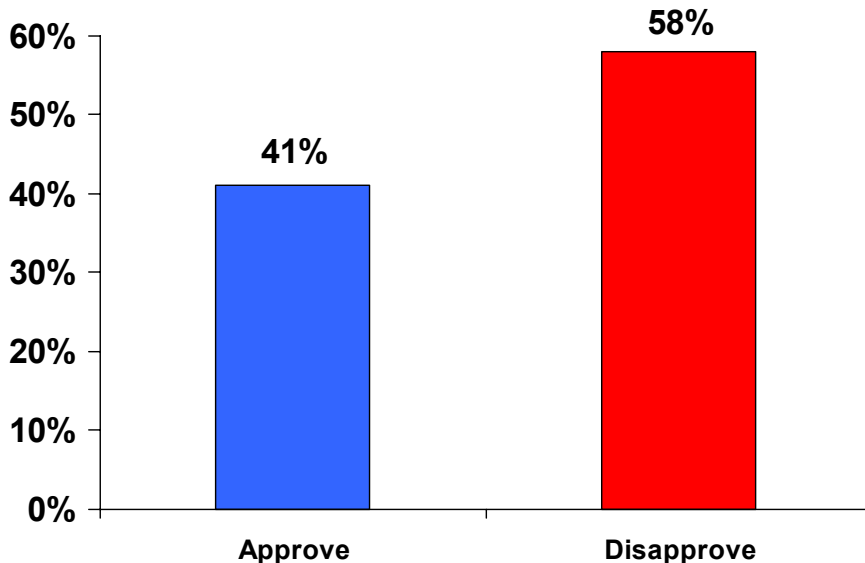


Opinion Monitor Perspective: The War in Iraq

Do you approve or disapprove of the job that President Bush is doing with the war in Iraq?

ABC News/Washington Post Survey
6/02-6/05
N=1002 Adults

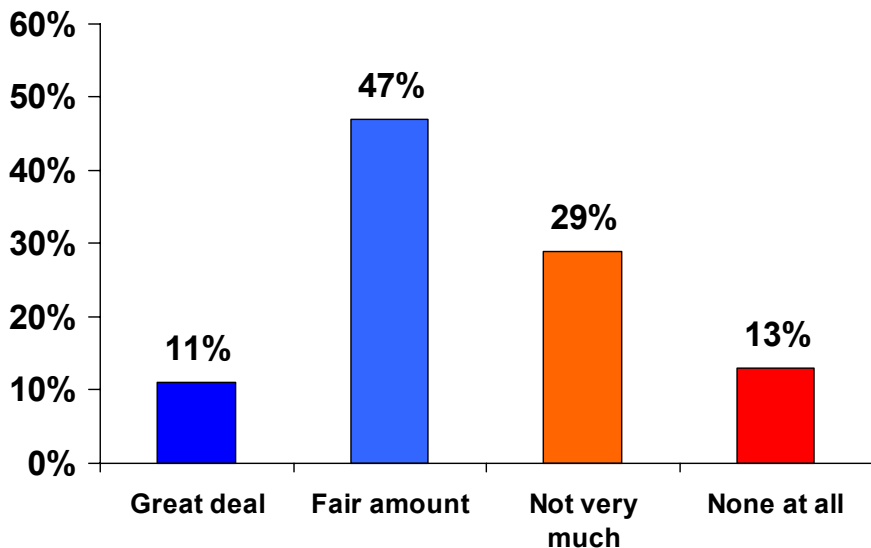
ABC/Post Survey
6/02-6/05
N=1002 Adults



Opinion Monitor Perspective: Public Trust & The News Media

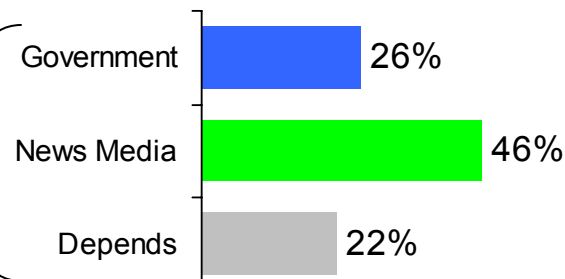
In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the news media -- such as newspapers, newsmagazines, TV and radio news -- when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately, and fairly?

ABC News/Post Survey
5/18-5/22
N=1003 Adults



ABC News/Post
5/18-5/22
N=1003 Adults

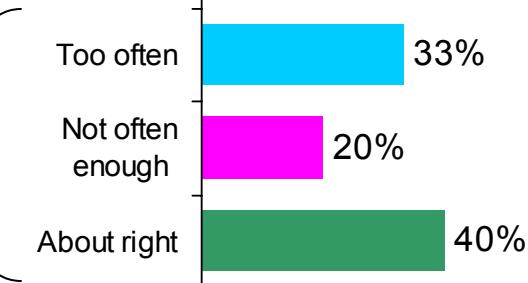
From time to time, high government officials deny reports in the national news media and say the reports are not accurate. In such cases, who do you tend to believe?



As you may know, journalists sometimes get information by agreeing not to identify their source by name in the story. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the use of anonymous sources in news stories?

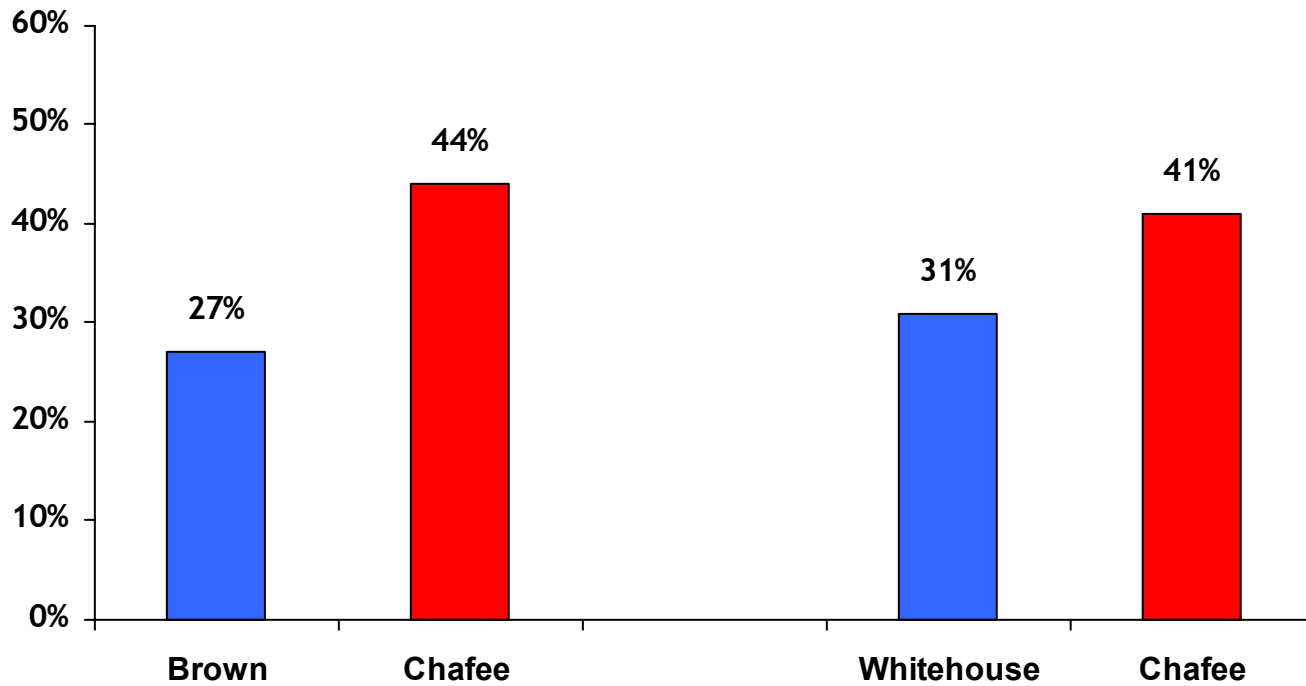


Overall, do you think news reporters use anonymous sources too often, not often enough, or about the right amount?



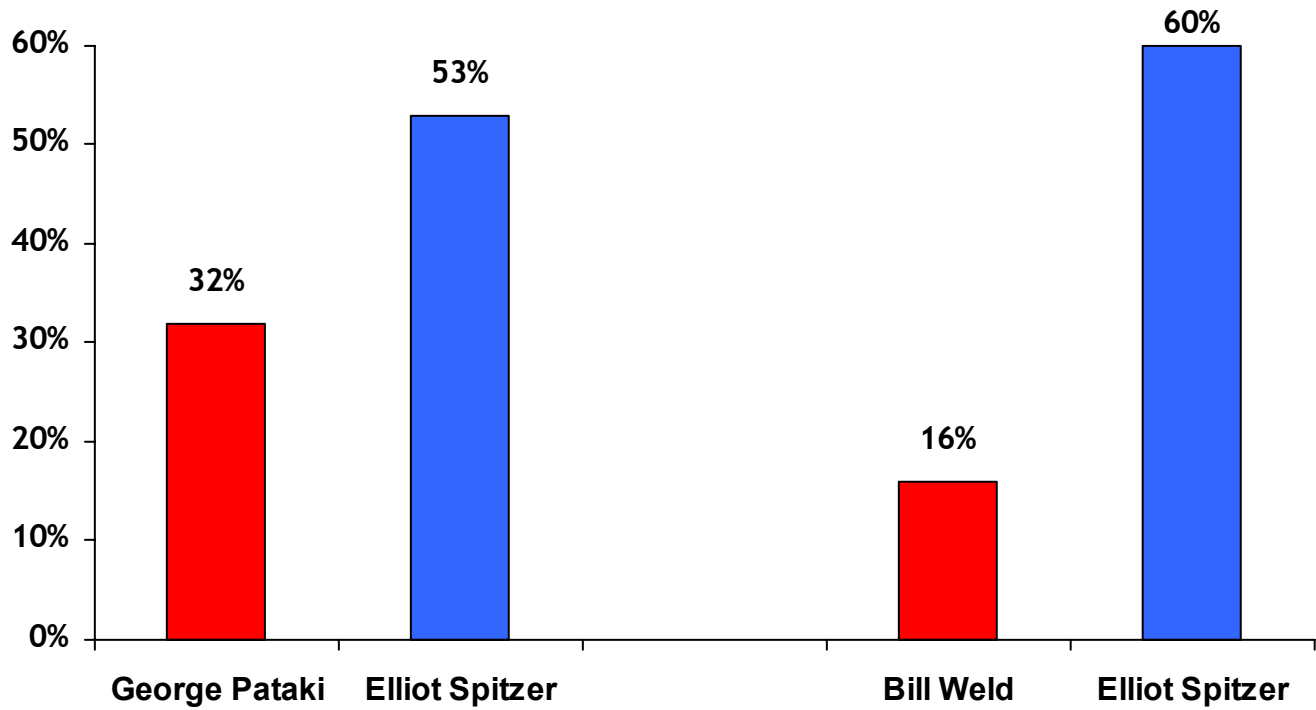
Opinion Monitor Outlook: Rhode Island Senate Race

Channel 12 Survey
4/25-4/28
N=402 LV



Opinion Monitor Outlook: New York Governor's Race

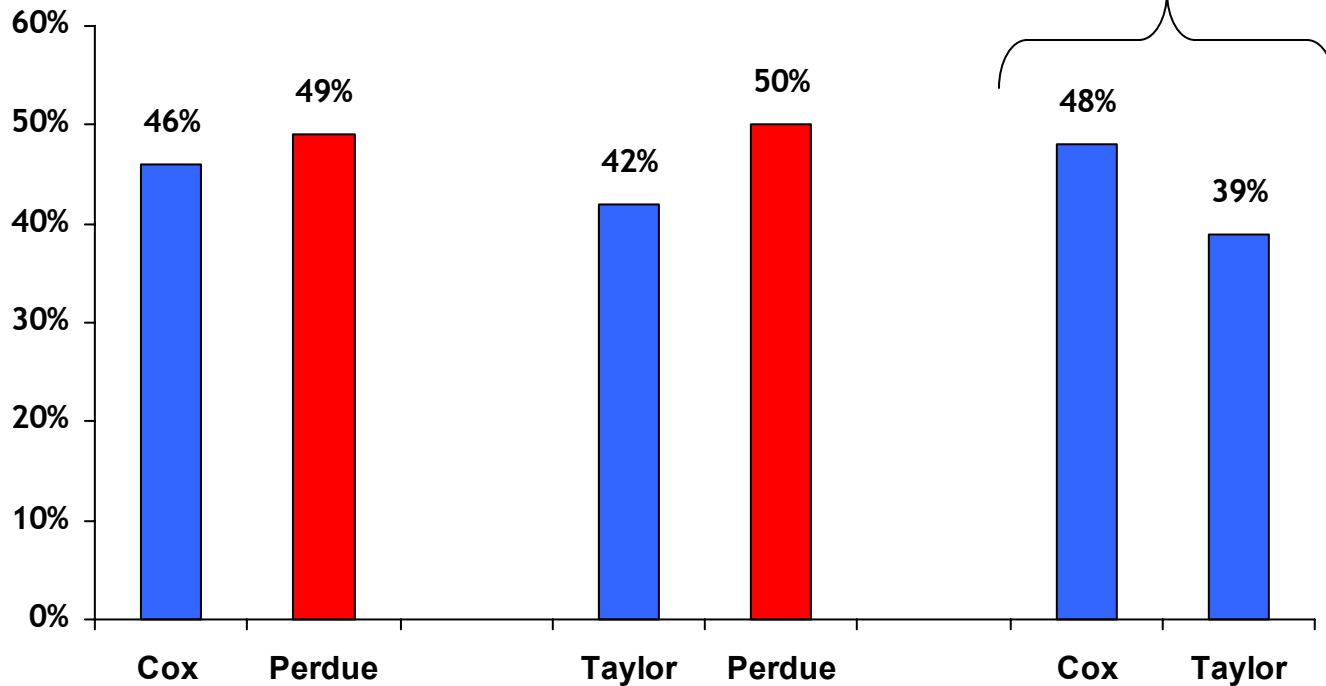
Quinnipiac Survey
4/28-5/02
N=1191 RV



Opinion Monitor Outlook: Georgia Governor's Race

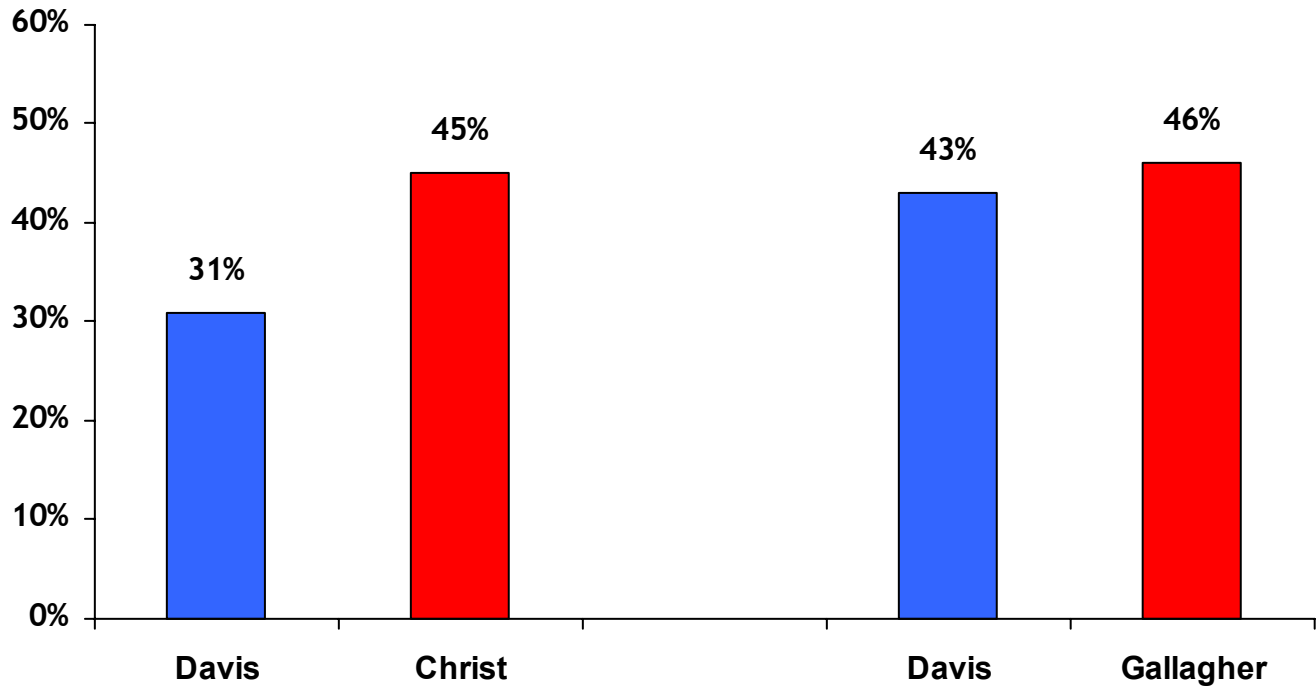
Strategic Vision (R) Survey
5/16-5/15
N=801 RV

Dem
Primary



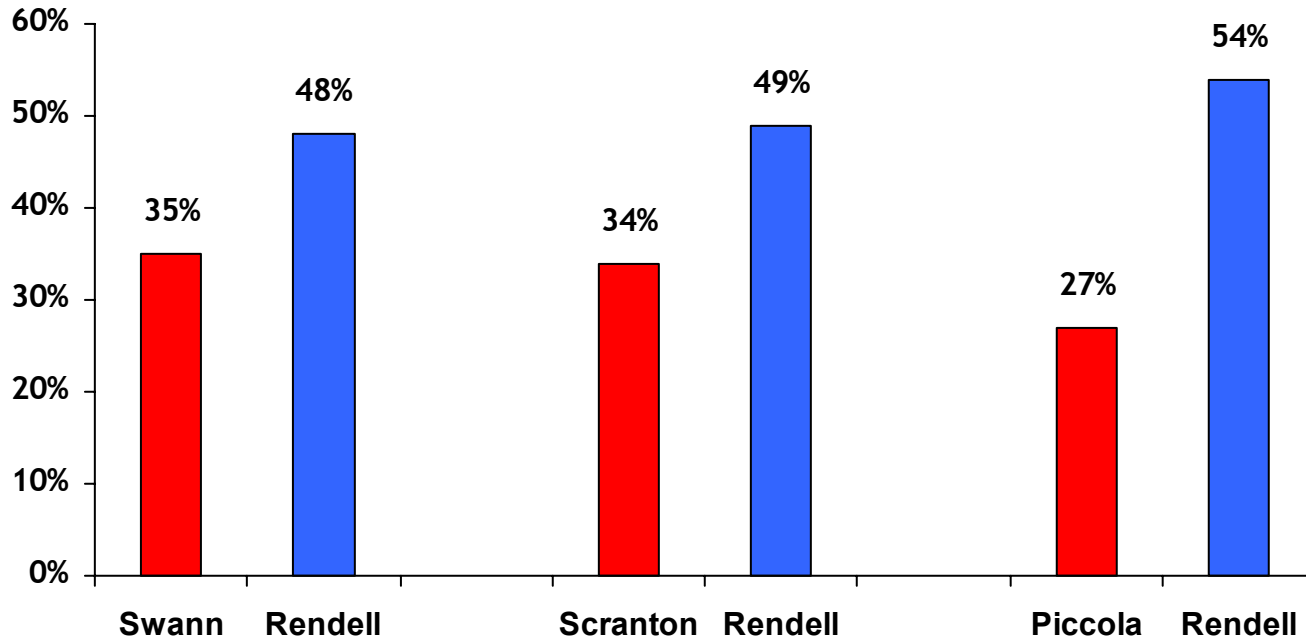
Opinion Monitor Outlook: Florida Governor's Race

Strategic Vision (R) Survey
4/20-4/24
N=1200 RV



Opinion Monitor Outlook: Pennsylvania Governor's Race

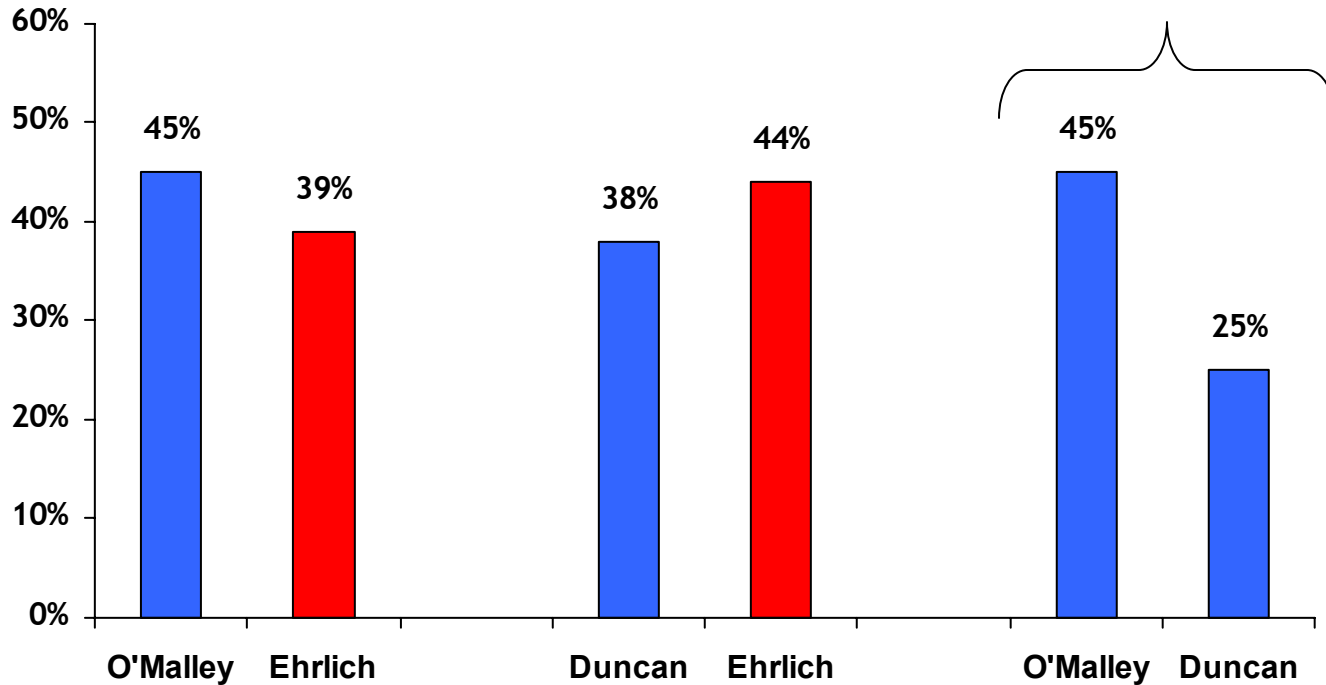
Quinnipiac Survey
4/13-4/18
N=1395 RV



Opinion Monitor Outlook: Maryland Governor's Race

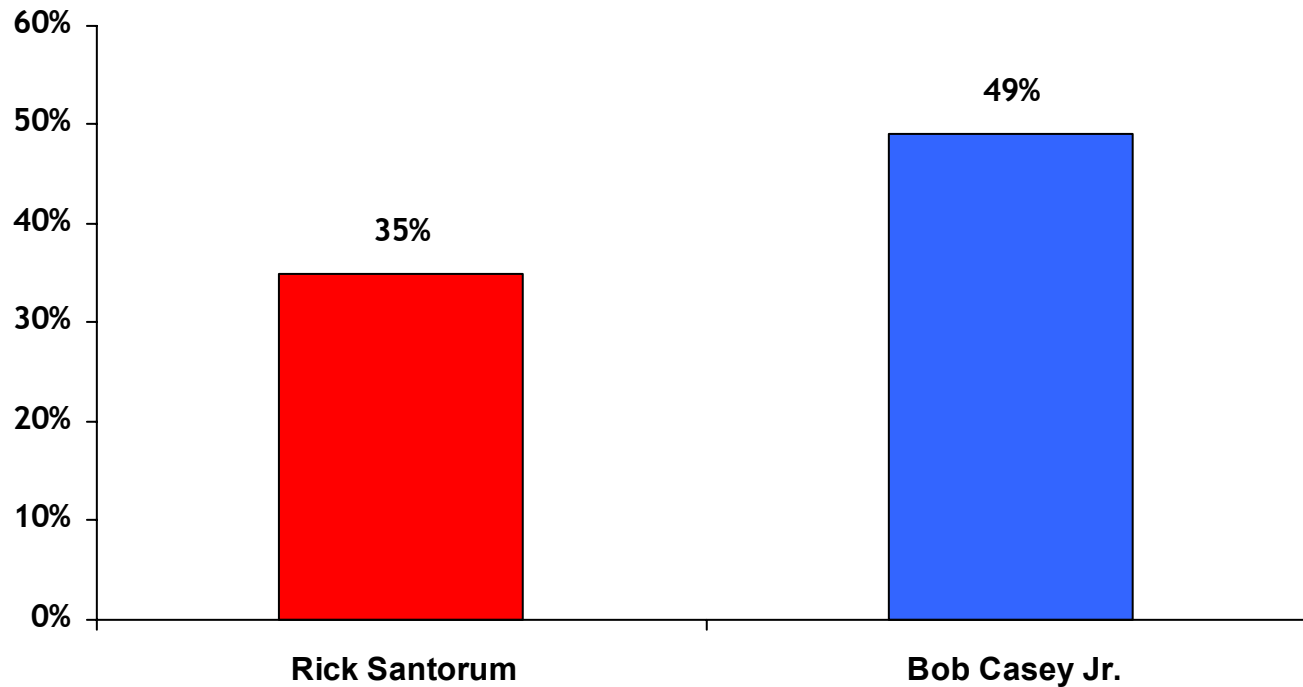
Baltimore Sun
4/11-4/13
N=1000 LV

Dem
Primary



Opinion Monitor Outlook: Pennsylvania Senate Race

Quinnipiac Survey
4/13-4/18
N=1395 RV

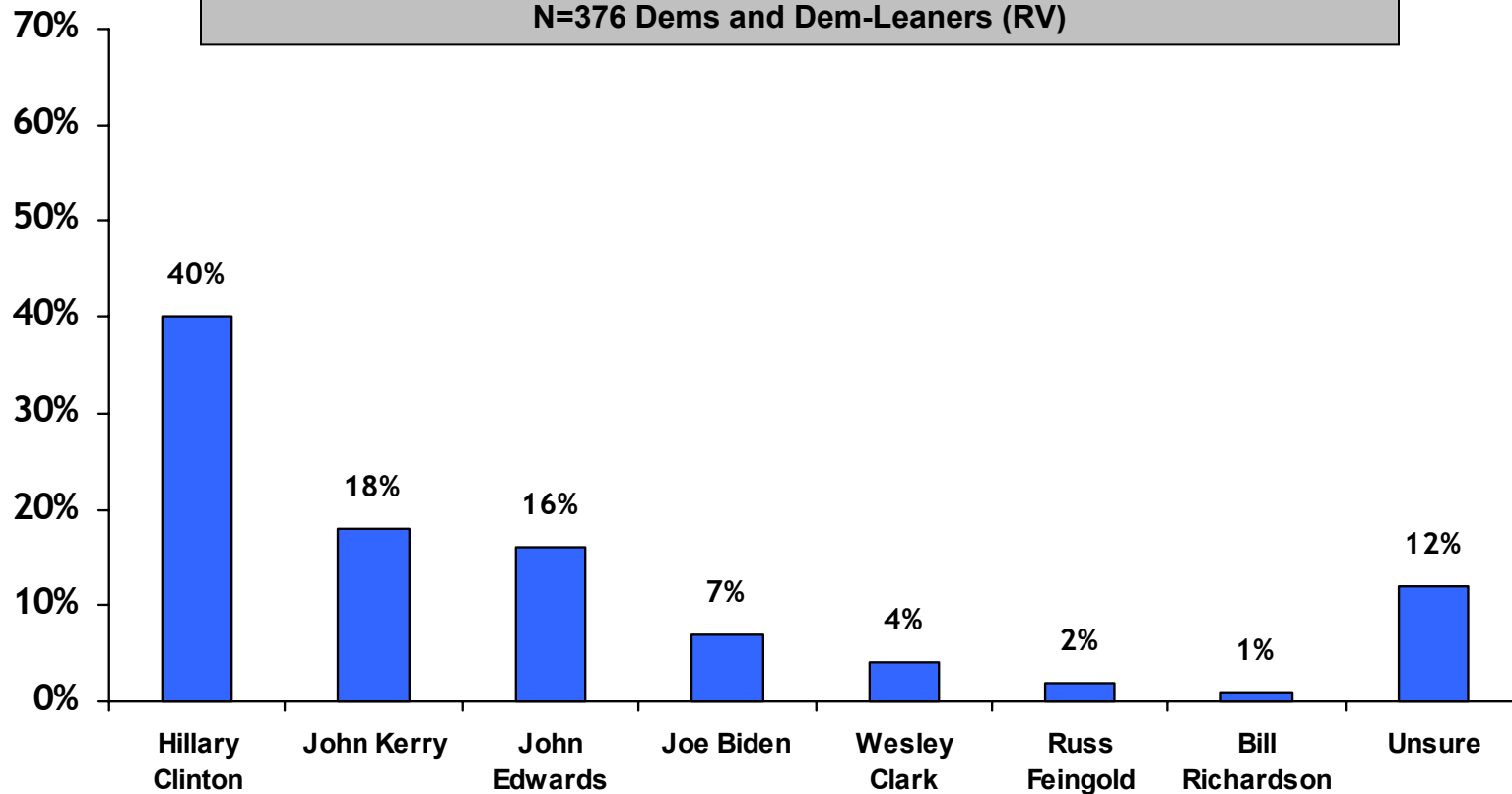


Opinion Monitor Outlook: Election 2008

If the 2008 Democratic presidential primary were held today, whom would you support?

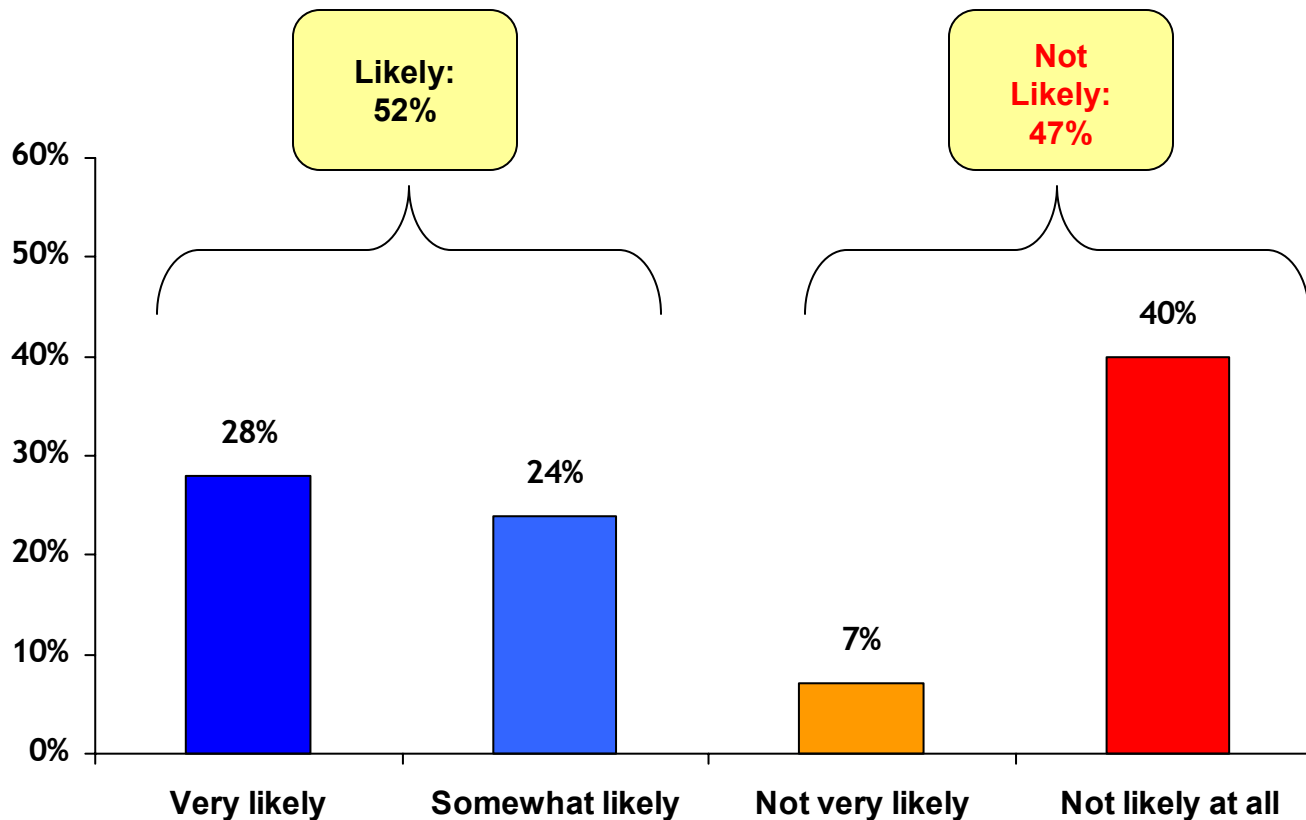
Marist College Survey
4/18-4/21

N=376 Dems and Dem-Leaners (RV)



Opinion Monitor Outlook: Election 2008

If Hillary Rodham Clinton were to run for president in 2008, how likely would you be to vote for her?
 Gallup Survey
 5/20-5/22
 N=453 RV

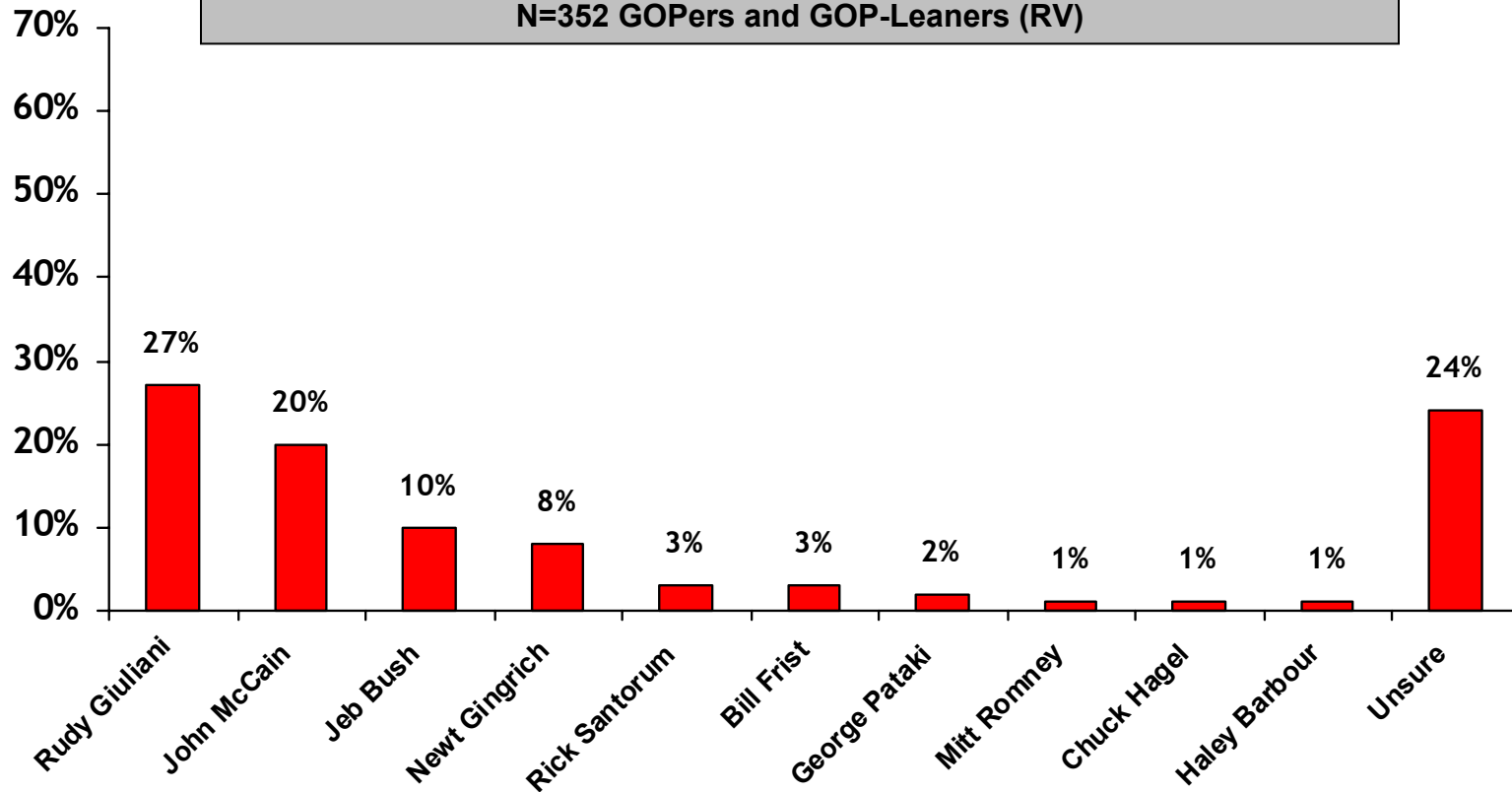


Opinion Monitor Outlook: Election 2008

If the 2008 Republican presidential primary were held today, whom would you support?

Marist College Survey
4/18-4/21

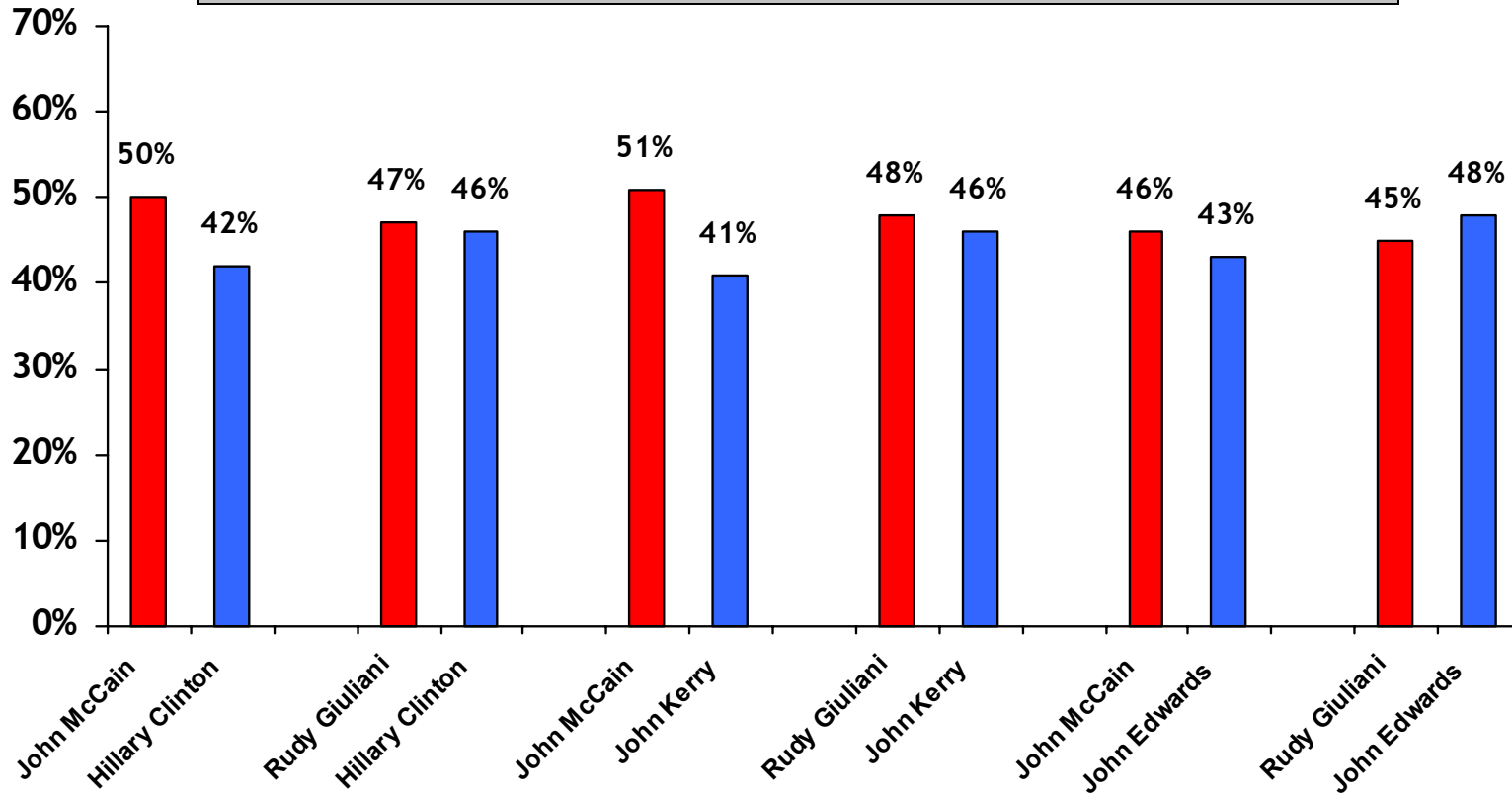
N=352 GOPers and GOP-Leaners (RV)



Opinion Monitor Outlook: Election 208

If the 2008 presidential election were held today, whom would you support?

Marist College Survey
4/18-4/21
N=838 RV



Lombardo Consulting Group

The LCG Opinion Monitor is a compilation and analysis of various publicly-available surveys pertaining to selected political and policy-related issues including but not limited to:

- ABC News/Washington Post
- American Research Group
- Associated Press/Ipsos
- CBS News
- CNN
- Fox News/Opinion Dynamics
- Gallup
- Annenberg Election Survey
- Newsweek
- The Pew Research Center
- Time
- USA Today

Data updated daily