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WISCONSIN VIEWS OF GEORGE BUSH IN JUNE OF 2002
by G. Donald Ferree, Jr.

President George W. Bush enjoys wide backing in the Badger state, His job rating is high, he is viewed favorably by the population overall, and -- whatever doubts there may have been about the 2000 election originally -- he would do quite well now if there were some way of "redoing" that election. These are among the findings of the most recent Badger Poll™, which interviewed 524 randomly chosen state residents by telephone between June 8 and 17, inclusive. The poll was conducted by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center and was underwritten financial by private funds made available by the UW-Madison Chancellor's Office and University Communications, with the media sponsorship of the Capital Times.

The Wisconsin public gives President George W. Bush strong marks on his job performance. Two thirds rate him either excellent (25%) or good (44%) while three in ten choose one of the two lower marks, either fair (22%) or poor (8%). Comparing the views of selected groups, as may be seen in the detailed tables following this summary, men are slightly more positive than women, with more rating him excellent and correspondingly fewer choosing good. Partisanship shows a clear relationship. Just over four in ten among Democrats rate Bush as good or better, which proportion rises to seven in ten among Independents and reaches nineteen out of twenty among Republicans. Higher ratings are more prevalent among older age groups.

In addition to the ratings in an absolute sense, they may also be understood in comparative context. When respondents were asked to rate Bush's predecessor on the same scale, just under half give HIM grades of excellent (9%) or good (38%), while just over that proportion pick fair (30%) or poor (22%).

Demographic patterns tend to be the opposite of those for Bush, with women thinking more highly of Clinton than men, Democrats more than Republicans, and younger respondents especially pro-Clinton. At the same time, except for self-described Democrats, among every group examined here, Bush is rated at least as highly as Clinton. And Bush does much better among the "opposite party" (i.e., Republican President among Democratic respondents) than did Clinton (i.e., Democratic President among Republicans).

At the individual level, just about half of all respondents rate Bush higher than Clinton (e.g., rating Clinton fair, and Bush good or excellent). The remainder of the respondents split roughly evenly between those who rated them

at the same point in the scale, and those who placed Clinton at a higher level. Across the groups, except for Democrats, among whom half place Bush lower, and those under thirty, who split roughly evenly, the largest proportion, ranging from a plurality to a strong majority, give Bush better grades than Clinton.

These two questions were also included in the inaugural Badger Poll™ in March. Bush's ratings were very similar, with a few percentage points lower on excellent and correspondingly more on good, but this difference is small enough so one can have only very limited faith that it reflects any real shift as opposite to "the luck of the draw" in who was selected. Clinton's retrospective ratings are equally stable, or even more so. The individual level comparison is also very similar.

Cross-Time Comparisons (March and June 2002)

	JUNE	MARCH
Rating of GW Bush		
EXCELLENT	25%	28%
GOOD	44	40
FAIR	22	22
POOR	8	7
TOO SOON (vol.)	*	*
Rating of Clinton		
EXCELLENT	9%	8%
GOOD	38	39
FAIR	30	30
POOR	22	22
Comparison of Bush/Clinton (Combining two previous items)		
BUSH HIGHER	47%	50%
BUSH SAME	27	23
BUSH LOWER	23	24
DID NOT RATE BOTH	2	3

Responses such as Don't Know or Refused are omitted

Bush was also included, along with other prominent politicians in a series of questions asking respondents whether they had a favorable or unfavorable impression of each. Bush led the pack in terms of both familiarity (the proportion willing to come down on one side or the other) at 91%, and ratio of favorable to unfavorable mentions (74%-17%). This held across a variety of demographic and political groups defined by age, gender, and partisanship, but only among self-described Democrats among whom Bush has a 50%-37% favorability score, did he fail to find onesidedly positive views.

Overall job ratings tell only part of the story, since respondents may relate to leaders both in terms of their personal characteristics and the policies they espouse. Respondents were asked specifically how they felt about Bush on both dimensions at once, that is. in which of the combinations of like/dislike and support/oppose they fell. By far the greatest proportion, some two thirds or 64%, both like the person and support his policies. Only about one in eight took the doubly negative position of disliking Bush as a person AND opposing his policies. Just under one in ten took either of the "mixed" positions (e.g. like personally but oppose policies or dislike personally but support them. In every

group looked at, the most common view is the double positive, indeed except for Democrats, this group constituted at last an absolute majority.

One can also combine categories, examining for instance, how many said they liked Bush, regardless of where they stood on his policies (e.g. either liked him and supported the policies, liked him and opposed the policies, or volunteered that they liked him, but stated no impression on his policies. (This is not the same number as one might have obtained if one simply asked "do you like or dislike Bush as a person", since the views of his policies, not asked for, might likely tinge the other dimension and vice versa.

Overall, three in four liked Bush personally. Only partisanship showed clear group differences, with the proportion liking Bush rising from just over half among Democrats, to three in four among Independents, to almost unanimity among GOP backers. A generally similar pattern obtained if one looked just at how respondents fell on the policy dimension. The upshot is that Bush enjoys substantial reservoirs of goodwill on both dimensions among very different groups.

Dimensions of View of President Bush

	JUNE	MARCH
Attitude to Bush		
LIKE PERSON/SUPPORT	64%	59%
LIKE PERSON/OPPOSE	9	13
DISLIKE PERSON/SUPPORT	7	8
DISLIKE PERSON/OPPOSE	12	11
SUPPORT POLICIES ONLY	2	2
OPPOSE POLICIES ONLY	1	1
LIKE PERSON ONLY	2	1
DISLIKE PERSON ONLY	*	*
View of Bush as person		
LIKE BUSH	75%	73%
DISLIKE BUSH	19	19
View of Bush policies		
SUPPORT POLICIES	73%	69%
OPPOSE POLICIES	21	25

Responses such as Don't Know or Refused are omitted

Compared to March, the proportion both liking Bush personally and supporting his policies remains the most common and has, if anything, slightly increased. He also holds his own on both dimensions looked at separately.

Overall, just over half (54%) say they believe the Bush Administration's policies are helping the country, dwarfing the roughly one in ten (11%) who feel they are hurting it. Three in ten (30%) felt they were not making much difference one way or the other. Groups differ among one another in terms of the balance of views.

Thus, men and women are broadly similar, although men are slightly less likely to believe Bush's policies are neutral, and correspondingly more likely to believe they hurt. Republicans overwhelmingly feel Bush's policies are

helping, Democrats on balance are split, Independents fall in between the two partisan groups. (Among the former, the most common single opinion is that Bush's policies are neutral, in all other groups, the sense that they are helping is clearly most common). Age shows no striking pattern.

If one looks at the impact of Bush's policies on the individual level (helping or hurting "people like you"), the situation is more complicated. Overall, six in ten (58%) do not feel there is much personal impact one way or the other. Among those who DO see an impact, those who think people like them are helped outnumber those who feel themselves hurt by a five to two (26%-15%) margin. Men and women are quite similar as groups. The balance swings from weakly negative among Democrats to balance among Independents to strong positive among Republicans. Among the latter group, those believing they are personally helped are of the same size as those believing the impact is neutral, among all other groups, the sense that the policies are personally neutral is the dominant one. The middle age groups are most positive, those at the top and bottom are similar to one another.

When respondents were asked how they had voted in the 2000 election, Bush "wins" with just under half (45%) claiming to have backed him. Gore garners three in ten (29%), while he actually won the state. It should be mentioned that it is a long noted phenomenon for survey respondents to "overremember" voting for the winner, especially when sentiment toward him or her is positive, so this question can sometimes be used as an indication to present assessment as well as literally recalling past behavior.

In any event, when respondents were asked explicitly how they would cast their ballots "if you had it to do all over again", Bush "wins" even more handily, by a margin of some 55%-27% over Gore. To be sure, he garners the support of relatively few Democrats (18% compared to Gore's 65%), but outdistances the former Vice-President by more than two to one among Independents (55%-20%) and holds almost all (96%) of Republicans. Bush does well among all age groups, but the biggest difference is between the youngest respondents, among whom the Bush/Gore ratio is three to two and those just above them (thirty to forty-four), where it is nearly three to one. Bush's support then trails off slowly as one continues up the age ladder. Among all except Democrats, however he is the choice of at least a strong plurality and often a clear majority.

Compared to March, Bush does a bit better in the recalled vote (45%-29% compared to 41%-30%). The hypothetical "new" vote is quite similar, with both Bush and Gore picking up a couple of points.

The general sense that emerges from these numbers is that President Bush continues to enjoy widespread backing in Wisconsin. If the events of the past months since March have raised questions about the performance of the intelligence community and have seen a gradual return to "politics as usual", contrasted with the unusual bi-partisanship of the past several months, none of this seems to have cut into views of the President himself.

Impact of Policies and "Voting" for President

	JUNE	MARCH
Bush policies impact on USA		
HELP	54%	52%
HURT	11	16
NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE	30	27
Impact on "people like you"		
HELP	26%	28%
HURT	15	16
NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE	58	53
Recalled 2000 vote		
BUSH	45%	41%
GORE	29	30
NADER	3	3
BUCHANAN	1	*
SOMEONE ELSE	1	2
DIDN'T HAPPEN TO VOTE	17	18
INELIGIBLE (VOL.)	1	1
If had to do over		
BUSH	55%	53%
GORE	27	25
NADER	5	4
BUCHANAN	*	*
SOMEONE ELSE	2	5
WOULD NOT VOTE	5	6
INELIGIBLE (VOL.)	*	1

Responses such as Don't Know or Refused are omitted

Statewide Marginals and Percentages for Key Groups

What follows is the exact question wording for each of the items referred to in the release. The first column is the percentage of the entire sample giving each response. The second and third reports the percentages for men and women separately. The fourth, fifth, and sixth columns show self-described Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. Columns seven through ten group respondents by their age group (calculated from year of birth: 18-29; 30-44; 45-59; sixty and older.)

Q01: INTERVIEWER: (DO NOT ASK) Enter respondent's gender

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
MALE	49%	100%	--%	40%	60%	54%	45%	55%	43%	52%
FEMALE	51	--	100	60	40	46	55	45	57	48

Q02: How would you rate the job George W. Bush is doing as President?
Excellent, good, fair or poor?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
EXCELLENT	25%	30%	20%	6%	19%	51%	13%	21%	24%	35%
GOOD	44	40	48	37	52	44	46	52	44	35
FAIR	22	21	22	40	19	4	35	18	21	20
POOR	8	8	8	16	9	--	4	6	11	8
TOO SOON (vol.)	*	1	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	1
DON'T KNOW	1	1	2	1	--	1	2	3	--	*
REFUSED	*	1	*	1	--	--	--	--	*	1

Q03: And, looking back, how would you rate the job Bill Clinton did as President? (Excellent, good, fair, or poor)

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
EXCELLENT	9%	11%	8%	19%	9%	2%	16%	9%	7%	11%
GOOD	38	33	44	54	41	18	45	47	33	34
FAIR	30	32	29	25	30	36	30	27	33	28
POOR	22	25	19	2	20	44	7	17	28	27
DON'T KNOW	1	--	1	--	1	--	1	--	1	*
REFUSED	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Q03X: (CONSTRUCTED ITEM from Q02, Q03) Comparison of Bush/Clinton rating

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
BUSH HIGHER	47%	51%	44%	15%	47%	85%	28%	45%	52%	53%
BUSH SAME	27	26	29	31	29	14	35	31	24	23
BUSH LOWER	23	22	25	52	22	--	35	21	23	21
DID NOT RATE BOTH	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	3	1	3

BUSH01: Which of the following comes closest to how you feel about George W. Bush?

- * I like him as a person AND I also support most of his policies
- * I like him as a person BUT I oppose most of his policies
- * I don't like him as a person BUT I support most of his policies
- * I don't like him as a person AND I oppose most of his policies

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
LIKE PERSON/SUPPORT	64%	69%	60%	33%	67%	95%	55%	69%	65%	63%
LIKE PERSON/OPOSE	9	8	10	18	9	--	11	10	10	6
DISLIKE PERSON/SUPPORT	7	7	8	15	7	1	12	8	5	8
DISLIKE PERSON/OPOSE	12	12	11	23	11	--	12	8	13	14
SUPPORT POLICIES ONLY	2	1	2	1	2	2	5	2	1	*
OPOSE POLICIES ONLY	1	1	1	1	2	--	1	1	1	1
LIKE PERSON ONLY	2	--	3	2	1	2	--	--	3	3
DISLIKE PERSON ONLY	*	*	--	*	--	--	--	--	--	1
DON'T KNOW	3	2	5	6	1	--	3	3	2	5
REFUSED	1	1	1	1	1	*	1	--	1	*

BUSH01X: (CONSTRUCTED ITEM from BUSH01) Attitude to person, ignoring policies

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
LIKE BUSH	75%	77%	73%	53%	77%	97%	66%	79%	78%	72%
DISLIKE BUSH	19	19	19	38	18	1	24	16	17	22
DK/REF LIKE	6	4	8	8	5	2	10	6	5	7

BUSH01Y: (CONSTRUCTED ITEM from BUSH01) Attitude to policies, ignoring person

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
SUPPORT POLICIES	73%	77%	70%	50%	76%	98%	72%	79%	71%	71%
OPOSE POLICIES	21	21	22	41	22	--	25	19	24	20
DK/REF POLICIES	6	2	9	9	3	2	4	3	6	10

BUSH02: Overall, do you think the Bush Administration's policies are helping the country, hurting it, or not making much difference?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HELP	54%	54%	53%	27%	59%	84%	48%	51%	59%	52%
HURT	11	14	9	22	13	--	11	9	12	12
NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE	30	28	32	46	24	13	39	33	26	29
DON'T KNOW	5	4	6	5	4	2	2	7	2	8
REFUSED	*	*	1	1	--	--	--	--	1	--

BUSH03: And how about people like you? Are the Bush Administration's policies helping people like you, hurting them, or not making much difference?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
HELP	26%	27%	25%	13%	17%	49%	16%	31%	29%	23%
HURT	15	14	15	29	15	1	17	12	15	17
NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE	58	58	58	57	67	49	65	55	56	59
DON'T KNOW	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
REFUSED	*	1	--	--	1	*	1	--	1	--

BUSH04: In the 2000 presidential election, did you vote for Bush, Gore, Nader, Buchanan, someone else, or didn't you happen to vote in that election?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
BUSH	45%	48%	41%	8%	44%	86%	24%	46%	48%	51%
GORE	29	24	34	70	18	1	30	26	29	32
NADER	3	4	2	3	7	--	2	*	5	3
BUCHANAN	1	1	--	1	--	--	--	1	--	1
SOMEONE ELSE	1	1	2	*	3	1	--	2	2	1
DIDN'T HAPPEN TO VOTE	17	18	15	13	22	9	41	20	9	9
INELIGIBLE (VOL.)	1	1	*	--	--	--	4	--	--	--
DON'T KNOW	2	2	1	1	2	1	--	2	2	1
REFUSED	4	3	5	4	5	2	--	4	6	3

BUSH05: If you had it to do all over again, would you vote for Bush, Gore, Nader, Buchanan, someone else, or wouldn't you vote?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
BUSH	55%	59%	51%	18%	55%	96%	46%	62%	56%	52%
GORE	27	26	28	65	20	1	32	23	23	34
NADER	5	6	4	5	9	--	7	2	7	3
BUCHANAN	*	*	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	1
SOMEONE ELSE	2	2	2	2	7	*	4	3	2	1
WOULD NOT VOTE	5	4	6	4	3	1	10	6	3	5
INELIGIBLE (VOL.)	*	1	--	1	--	--	2	--	--	--
DON'T KNOW	3	1	4	3	2	1	--	3	4	2
REFUSED	3	2	4	2	5	2	--	2	5	3

BUSH05X: (CONSTRUCTED ITEM, from BUSH04, BUSH05) Comparison of reported vote, preference if had to do over again ("For" means for Bush, "against" means prefer other candidate, "other" means no vote, ineligible, DK, etc.)

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
BOTH FOR BUSH	43%	46%	40%	7%	39%	86%	19%	45%	47%	48%
WAS AGAINST/NOW FOR	4	4	4	7	4	2	5	4	5	2
WAS OTHER/NOW FOR	8	9	7	4	13	8	22	12	4	2
WAS FOR/NOW AGAINST	1	1	2	*	5	--	3	1	1	1
BOTH AGAINST	26	25	28	63	22	*	25	21	27	32
WAS OTHER/NOW AGAINST	6	8	5	9	10	1	14	6	4	6
WAS FOR/NOW OTHER	1	1	*	1	1	--	2	--	--	1
WAS AGAINST/NOW OTHER	3	1	5	4	2	*	1	4	3	3
BOTH OTHER	8	5	10	6	7	3	9	7	8	5

QD05: Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or something else?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
DEMOCRAT	31%	26%	37%	100%	--%	--%	39%	29%	30%	32%
REPUBLICAN	31	34	28	--	--	100	22	36	29	35
INDEPENDENT	20	24	15	--	100	--	16	16	24	20
OTHER	10	8	11	--	--	--	12	13	9	5
NONE	6	5	6	--	--	--	10	4	5	6
DON'T KNOW	1	1	2	--	--	--	1	2	1	1
REFUSED	2	2	2	--	--	--	--	*	3	2

QD11: In what year were you born? (ENTER FOUR-DIGIT YEAR)

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
18-29	14%	13%	15%	18%	12%	10%	100%	--%	--%	--%
30-44	26	29	22	24	21	30	--	100	--	--
45-59	35	31	39	33	43	32	--	--	100	--
60 and over	24	26	23	24	24	27	--	--	--	100
DK/REFUSED	1	1	1	1	--	1	--	--	--	--

* denotes less than .5%
 -- denotes 0%

HOW THE POLL WAS DONE

This BADGER POLL™ was conducted by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center as part of its ongoing program of research designed to benefit the research community and the people of Wisconsin, under the direction of G. Donald Ferree, Jr., Associate Director for Public Opinion Research of the Center. This Badger Poll™ was funded with private funds made available through the UW-Madison Chancellor's Office and University Communications. The media sponsor of the survey was the Capital Times newspaper of Madison. The BADGER POLL™ is intended to be a "poll of record" for the state, investigating matters of concern to Wisconsinites including politics, culture, and their daily lives, adhering to the highest standards of polling methodology and rigorous independence.

A total of 524 randomly selected adult residents of Wisconsin were interviewed over the telephone from June 8-17, inclusive. Telephone numbers were generated by computer in proportion to the number of adults living in each area of the state. Theoretically, results from this survey have a "margin of error" of a little over +/- 4%. This means that, had we asked every eligible adult in Wisconsin, exactly these questions at the time the survey was conducted, there is only a one in twenty chance that the answers would differ by more than that in either direction from what we report here. There could be differences because of changes in question wording, events occurring in the meantime, or any of the practical difficulties involved in taking a scientific survey. Results based on subgroups are subject to a larger "margin of error".