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FEDERAL OFFICEHOLDERS  
by G. Donald Ferree, Jr.

Of the four persons or institutions at the Federal level, the President stands highest in the esteem of Wisconsin residents. Overall, just over six in ten rate his handling of his job as either excellent (27%) or good (35%), contrasted with the nearly four in ten who think that either fair (24%) or poor (13%) is apt. In "absolute" terms, these are strong ratings for the President.

To be sure, there are some group differences. Thus men are more positive (by a modest amount) than women. The proportion among self-described Democrats who rate Bush as good or above falls just below four in ten. The corresponding proportion among Republicans is above nine in ten, with Independents in the middle. With the caveat that age-related differences are quite small, Bush does a bit better with those in the "middle" of the age distribution, with support somewhat weaker at either the young or old end of the range.

Congress as an institution does far less well. Overall, only a bit above one in three rates the Congress as either excellent (1%) or good (35%). Six in ten choose a lower rating of either fair (46%) or poor (14%). The clustering in the middle, and the almost complete lack of "excellent" ratings fills out the picture.

Men are a bit more critical than women (with almost the entire difference coming in their being ten points more likely to label Congress "poor" than are women, with the latter group being ten points more likely than the former to choose "fair". Republicans like Congress as a whole more than do Independents and Democrats, but the size of the difference is less than it was for President. Backing of Congress (as a whole) starts out relatively high among the younger age groups, and then drops off as one moves up the ladder to those forty-five to fifty-nine or sixty and older.

Oftentimes individual officeholders, particularly legislators, stand out positively compared to their institutions. Both of Wisconsin's Senators seem to follow that pattern. Senior Senator Herb Kohl has a plurality rating him good or better (6% excellent, 39% good, compared to 31% fair and 9% poor) overall.

There are weak gender, partisan and age patterns, with each small enough that there is only limited confidence they reflect real differences in the population as opposed to the luck of the draw which determined which particular residents we polled. Still, women seem to be a bit more pro-Kohl, and Democrats are more positive than Republicans. Sentiment becomes very slightly warmer as one moves up the age ladder.

The Junior Senator is up for reelection next year, so his job ratings are of special interest as the election campaign draws closer.

Overall, he does not differ much from his colleague in terms of public perceptions, with a (very) small plurality opting for either excellent (7%) or good (38%) as opposed to fair (29%) or poor (11%), though he, like Kohl, is noticeably weaker than the President.

Women are slightly more favorable to Feingold than are men. The proportion giving him good or better ratings is twice as high among Democrats as it is among Republicans. Both of these patterns is somewhat clearer than the corresponding one for Kohl. When it comes to age, the pattern for the two men is quite similar.

This survey saw the asking of a question not previously put for Feingold. Respondents were asked "as of now, do you think you would you like to see Senator Feingold reelected in 2004, or would you rather see someone else in the Senate instead?". Overall four in ten would like to see him returned (41%), another third (34%) would rather see "someone else", but one in for fail to express an opinion.

There is little gender or age pattern. For all groups, those who say they would like to see Feingold re-elected slightly outnumber those who would give a chance to some other person. The pattern is clear only for self-described party, where Democrats (by five to two) endorse his re-election and Republicans, by a slightly weaker two to one, would look elsewhere.

It should be noted that this is most definitely NOT a prediction of an election outcome. A campaign would give a challenger a chance to make the case against re-election while the incumbent was doing the opposite. And the transition from being willing to look at "someone else" to seriously considering a particular individual is by no means an easy one. Still, at this state -- a year and a half away -- the balance favors Feingold, while many residents are clearly up in the air.

A parallel question was asked about Bush on this same survey. Overall, the margin is similar to what we found for Feingold, with just over half (53%) saying they want to see Bush returned, and four in ten (42%) willing to see "someone else" in the White House.

There are contrasts with attitudes to Feingold. To begin with, far fewer are sitting on the fence, at least as regards this basic predisposition. Secondly, there are much stronger group patterns for the President. Women split evenly, while by almost two to one, men would like to see Bush returned. The President is weakest among those forty-five to fifty nine (who split evenly), and does relatively best among the oldest. But partisanship is clearly most important. Eight in ten Democrats would like to substitute "someone" for George W. Bush, while only one in six would retain him. Among Republicans, on the other hand, over nine in ten want to see Bush in the White House for another term, and a handful (fewer than five percent) would make room for someone else. Naturally the same caveats which were voiced about Feingold's performance on this question hold as well for Mr. Bush.

With the exception of the "re-election" questions, which are new to this survey, the basic job ratings also were included in our February survey, and results are summarized below in a special table.

## Federal Officeholders at Two Points in Time

	May	February Rating of George W.
Bush		
EXCELLENT	27%	19%
GOOD	35	39
FAIR	24	25
POOR	13	16
TOO SOON TO TELL (vol)	*	--
DON'T KNOW	1	1
REFUSED	1	1
Rating of US Congress		
EXCELLENT	1%	1%
GOOD	35	37
FAIR	46	45
POOR	14	12
DON'T KNOW	4	5
REFUSED	1	*
Rating of Herb Kohl		
EXCELLENT	6%	6%
GOOD	39	40
FAIR	31	30
POOR	9	7
DON'T KNOW	14	16
REFUSED	1	1
Rating of Russ Feingold		
EXCELLENT	7%	8%
GOOD	38	40
FAIR	29	27
POOR	11	10
DON'T KNOW	16	15
REFUSED	*	1
Like to See Feingold re-elected		
LIKE TO SEE FEINGOLD	41%	
LIKE SOMEONE ELSE	34	
DON'T KNOW	24	
REFUSED	1	
Like to see Bush re-elected		
LIKE TO SEE BUSH	53%	
LIKE SOMEONE ELSE	43	
DON'T KNOW	4	
REFUSED	1	

Results on all four questions show a good deal of stability, typically differing on a category by category basis by only a percentage point or two. The "largest" difference evident is that while the balance between the two most positive ratings and the two more negative ones is similar for Bush on both surveys, excellent ratings are somewhat more common in May than they were in February (still leading up to the war). But the key finding here is the basic stability that seems to be evident.

## Statewide Marginals and Percentages for Key Groups

What follows is the exact question wording for each of the items referred to in the release. All results shown are for the basic sample of state residents. 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 age.

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%	--%	34%	55%	60%	53%	53%	38%	56%
FEMALE	51	--	100	66	45	40	48	47	62	44

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	27%	31%	22%	6%	19%	56%	26%	26%	26%	30%
GOOD	35	34	35	32	33	37	30	37	37	32
FAIR	24	21	27	36	32	5	34	25	20	19
POOR	13	12	13	25	14	1	8	10	16	18
TOO SOON TO TELL (vol)	*	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
DON'T KNOW	1	1	1	--	2	1	1	1	1	1
REFUSED	1	*	1	1	1	--	1	--	1	1

RATE03. How would you rate the job the US Congress is doing? Excellent, good, fair, or poor?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
EXCELLENT	1%	1%	*%	*%	1%	1%	1%	1%	*%	1%
GOOD	35	35	35	26	27	48	46	43	32	21
FAIR	46	41	51	57	50	37	38	41	51	55
POOR	14	19	9	15	19	8	10	10	15	22
DON'T KNOW	4	4	4	2	2	7	5	5	2	1
REFUSED	1	1	*	--	1	1	1	--	--	1

RATE04. How would you rate the job Herb Kohl is doing as Senator from Wisconsin? (PROMPT FOR CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY)

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
EXCELLENT	6%	5%	7%	8%	7%	2%	6%	2%	8%	8%
GOOD	39	37	42	46	41	32	34	40	42	41
FAIR	31	32	30	27	32	37	29	32	35	29
POOR	9	12	6	4	8	15	8	6	7	14
DON'T KNOW	14	14	15	16	11	14	23	20	6	8
REFUSED	1	1	*	--	1	--	--	1	1	--

RATE05. How about the job Russ Feingold is doing as US Senator from Wisconsin?  
(PROMPT FOR CATEGORIES AS NECESSARY).

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
EXCELLENT	7%	6%	8%	12%	8%	1%	2%	6%	10%	9%
GOOD	38	36	40	45	37	28	39	37	40	40
FAIR	29	31	27	25	33	31	27	29	32	30
POOR	11	14	7	3	9	22	9	9	10	15
DON'T KNOW	16	13	19	15	13	18	24	20	7	7
REFUSED	*	*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

FEING01. As of now, do you think you would you like to see Senator Feingold re-elected in 2004, or would you rather see someone else in the Senate instead?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
LIKE TO SEE FEINGOLD	41%	43%	40%	58%	40%	25%	36%	40%	45%	46%
LIKE SOMEONE ELSE	34	33	34	22	35	48	28	30	36	41
DON'T KNOW	24	24	24	20	23	25	33	30	19	12
REFUSED	1	1	2	1	2	1	3	1	1	2

BUSH06. As of now, do you think you would you like to see President Bush re-elected in 2004, or would you rather see someone else in the White House?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
LIKE TO SEE BUSH	53%	61%	46%	16%	50%	93%	55%	54%	47%	58%
LIKE SOMEONE ELSE	42	35	49	79	45	4	43	41	47	40
DON'T KNOW	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	5	5	1
REFUSED	1	1	1	1	2	--	--	1	1	2

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	30%	20%	38%	100%	--%	--%	25%	34%	32%	28%
REPUBLICAN	30	37	24	--	--	100	35	31	23	30
INDEPENDENT	25	28	22	--	100	--	26	19	31	29
OTHER	9	10	9	--	--	--	11	12	11	4
NONE	5	4	6	--	--	--	5	4	3	7
DON'T KNOW	*	*	--	--	--	--	--	*	--	--
REFUSED	1	1	2	--	--	--	--	1	--	2

QD11. In what year were you born? (ENTER FOUR-DIGIT YEAR) (Calculated and grouped as below)

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
18-29	18%	20%	17%	15%	19%	21%	100%	--%	--%	--%
30-44	30	32	28	34	23	31	--	100	--	--
45-59	28	21	33	30	34	21	--	--	100	--
60 and over	21	25	18	20	25	21	--	--	--	100
DK/REFUSED	3	2	4	1	--	5	--	--	--	--

\* 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. The media sponsors of the survey are the (Madison) Capital Times, and the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. 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 505 randomly chosen state residents were interviewed for this survey by telephone between May 13 and 21, 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 resident 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".