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BUSH AND THE SECOND TERM  
by G. Donald Ferree, Jr.

As he begins his second term, the Wisconsin public has mixed views of George W. Bush. Specifically, those asked on our most recent survey split roughly evenly between those who rated his job performance as either excellent (16%) or good (33%) on the one hand as those who chose one of the two lower "grades" of fair (26%) or poor (25%). There was a strong partisan cast to these assessments, with only about one in eight Democrats according Bush one of the two higher scores, and one in seven Republicans putting him at one of the two lower scores. By comparison, the Governor of Wisconsin was given ratings on the same survey which averaged out similarly, but -- as may be seen in the tables

Previous Ratings of Bush's Performance

Polls from March 2002 to September 2004

	<-----2004----->					<-----2003----->							<---2002--->			
	SPT	JUN	APR	MAR	JAN	DEC	OCT	AUG	MAY	APR	MAR	FEB	JAN	SPT	JUN	MAR
Overall																
Exc	18%	14%	15%	16%	11%	17%	15%	14%	27%	31%	18%	19%	16%	19%	25%	28%
Good	32	33	35	30	37	35	35	38	35	38	35	39	38	45	44	40
Fair	22	27	25	24	28	26	27	28	24	21	30	25	29	23	22	22
Poor	26	25	23	30	22	19	21	19	13	10	16	16	14	12	8	7

following this summary -- were much less organized in partisan terms.

A substantial majority of residents claim either to have cast a ballot at the polls (83%) or to have voted absentee (8%). No partisan or age group was markedly differently likely to say they voted, although the proportion indicating they had cast a absentee ballot was a bit lower among those under thirty. Because voting is "the right thing to do", especially in a state like Wisconsin with its strong heritage that voting should be easy and near universal, these reports probably somewhat overstate the actual prevalence of voting.

When respondents were asked how they voted, Bush "wins" over Kerry by 46%-37% and Feingold bests Michels by 44%-25%. Both reflect somewhat greater tendency to vote for the incumbent (and ultimate winner) than the actual results. This, also is not at all uncommon. Indeed, decades of public opinion research have tended to show a retrospective overvote for the person known to have won, unless he or she subsequently becomes quite unpopular.

Another indication that the public is far from unanimous about the election comes from the responses when residents were asked how they felt about Bush's victory and requested to place themselves on a scale of very pleased, somewhat pleased, somewhat disappointed, or very disappointed. Overall, those reacting positively (37% very pleased, 17% somewhat so) outnumbered those reacting negatively (19% somewhat disappointed, 25% very disappointed).

It is noteworthy, however that for both positive and negative responses, residents were more apt to describe their reactions as strong ("very") than weaker ("somewhat"). This tendency was a bit more clear for those on the pleased side, but overall more than six in ten place themselves at the far ends of the scale. Republicans tended almost unanimously to be pleased, Democrats a bit less strongly to be disappointed. Independents tended to be split, but not as polarized as adherents of either party.

At least by self report, the election was not a shocker here in the Badger State. "Thinking back to when you learned Bush had won", six in ten declared themselves either "not at all surprised" (37%) or "a little surprised" (24%). One in three claimed the results were more unexpected, with 28% saying they were somewhat surprised, 7% very surprised, and 3% extremely surprised. Democrats were about twice as likely as Republicans to voice at least being "somewhat surprised", but the typical resident if not exactly expecting a Bush win nationally, seems not to report being all that surprised.

The election seems to have been an occasion of a lot of talk before November 2. Just about half (49%) say they spoke "a lot" about it with members of your family (the precise definition of which was left to respondents themselves). Adding in those who spoke "some" accounts for more than eight residents in ten. There was little difference across partisan groups in this report.

While unanimity surely did not apply within families, there was apparently limited dissensus as well. More specifically, just over six in ten (62%) said "your family pretty much agreed with you about who should win". At the same time, more than one third thought "pretty evenly split" (29%) or "pretty much disagreed with you" (6%) applied more accurately as a description of their family. Consistent with the fact that partisanship tends both to run in families and to be associated with voting choice, self-described Independents were a bit less likely to report agreement within families than were Democrats or Republicans.

Using the same scale, residents were a bit less likely to talk with their friends and neighbors about the election than with family members. Just under one in three (31%) said they had spoken "a lot" with this group, and adding in the similarly sized group which had discussed the election "some" (34%) accounts for roughly two residents in three. Partisan differences here are trivial.

Respondents were also asked about the degree of agreement from friends and neighbors with their own views. A slightly different scale was used, but there is an indication that the network of friends and neighbors provides more muted (or at least less monochromatic) support for respondents' views. Thus, under four in ten profess to find most friends and neighbors in agreement (8% say

almost all agree with them, 30% say most do). Outright opposition is lower (or perceived to be lower) with 6% saying most disagree and 1% saying almost all do. But the common view (held by about half of all residents (48%) is that this group is "pretty evenly split".

There are only small partisan differences, although while between four and five in ten of both Democrats and Republicans say their friends and neighbors mostly or almost all agree, this proportion drops among self-described Independents to just above one in four. But it is noteworthy that, counting in both "pretty evenly split" and the two "disagreed" answers, members of all three partisan groups are less likely to find essential agreement than dissensus within their social circles.

Besides the presidential election, of course, all House seats and one third of Senate seats were up for election as well. Reminded that "in November's elections, the Republicans won more seats in both the US House of Representatives and the US Senate" and asked about their reaction, just over half said they were pleased (29% very and 24% somewhat), while just over four in ten were disappointed (24% somewhat, 18% very). The balance is similar to what we found concerning Bush's re-election, although there was a less tendency to be EITHER very pleased or very disappointed when it came to Congress. Partisanship was strong-- as would be expected -- on this front as well, although again taking into account the DEGREE of pleasure or disappointment views were not quite so polarized. In any event, both sides of the federal equation leave Wisconsin divided with people who are quite pleased over against a number almost as large who are quite DISpleased by what happened.

A series of questions asked respondents specifically about the second Bush term, which officially gets underway on January 20. Globally, Wisconsinites do not expect a clear ideological shift (with precise definitions left to individual respondents). When asked whether President Bush's "policies at home will be more liberal than they were, more conservative or will they stay about the same", two thirds (66%) think they will be similar. Among the three in ten who DO expect a change, those who think he will move to the right (23%) outnumber those who think his policies will be more liberal (6%). Democrats and Independents are somewhat more likely to expect a shift than Republicans, and the former are more onesided in thinking it will be to the right.

Overall, there is muted optimism about the degree of partisanship to be expected in the second Bush term. When respondents were explicitly asked to compare how the President and Congress will work together, the largest group (52%) say they expect things to be about as they were. The substantial group (just under half) which thinks there will be change find slightly more (25%) thinking Bush and the Democrats will work together well than thinking they will get together "worse than they did" (20%). While the largest single proportion among all three self-described partisan groups thinks things will be as they were, Democrats on balance are pessimistic (that is, expect worse collaboration), Republicans most optimistic (that is expect them to work together better), and Independents fall relatively in the middle.

One feature of a new Bush term may well be (one must be careful of predictions) one or more Supreme Court appointments. Respondents were asked to consider this and say whether they thought any Bush appointments would make the Court more liberal than it is, more conservative than it is, or leave it about the same. Overall, just under half (47%) felt Bush appointments would make the Court more conservative. The next most common answer was that it would be about the same, while only a relative handful (6%) felt it would be more liberal. All three partisan groups agree that Bush appointee(s) are most likely to lead the

Court in a rightward direction, but differ in the onesidedness with which this view is held.

This expectation is somewhat at variance with what Wisconsin residents would like. Here, we get an essentially even split, with a slight support for the status quo. Thus, just under four in ten (37%) would leave the Court as it is, making this the single most common position for Independents and the sample overall. Moreover, the six in ten (a high figure) who WOULD move the Court ideologically if they could, split essentially evenly between those wishing a leftward shift and those wanting a rightward one.

Independents tend to want to leave things where they are, with the largest single group taking this position and those wanting the Court to be more liberal about in balance with those who would see it more conservative. This is clearly, however, an area of sharp partisan divide. Half (50% and 51%, respectively) of both Democrats and Republicans would shift the Court in one direction, but they differ in which. Perhaps needless to say, Republicans would like to see the Court more conservative (whatever that means) and Democrats would like to see it more liberal. Still, each partisan group has a non-trivial group which would just as soon see the Court move in the "opposite" direction.

Lastly, we asked a question directly about how people wanted to see the court move (if at all) when it came to abortion.

There is a large constituency overall (some 42%) which would like to see abortions left "about the way things are now". This left, however, just over half of all resident who WOULD shift things. Across the population, four times as many (44% compared to 11%) would like to see abortions "harder to get" rather than "easier to get than they are now". Of course, a question of this type cannot capture all the nuances of the issue, but it does suggest that almost any pattern of appointments is likely to leave a substantial group unhappy. Democrats and Independents are similar in that the most commonly held single opinion is that things should be about as they are. They differ, however, in that while self-described Democrats split on which direction any change should be (modestly favoring making abortions harder than easier), Independents more clearly come down in this direction. By contrast, two thirds of Republicans want abortions harder to get.

#### 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 NOTE, BUT DO NOT ASK) Gender of Respondent	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
Male	49%	100%	--%	44%	64%	43%	64%	46%	50%	44%
Female	51	--	100	56	36	57	36	54	50	56

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	16%	16%	16%	1%	6%	35%	5%	20%	15%	15%
GOOD	33	31	34	12	33	50	36	36	29	33
FAIR	26	27	24	31	32	14	46	26	25	20
POOR	25	25	25	54	29	*	12	16	29	32
TOO SOON TO TELL (vol.)	*	--	*	*	--	--	--	--	*	--
DON'T KNOW	1	1	1	1	--	*	1	1	1	--
REFUSED	*	--	1	1	--	--	--	1	1	--

REELEC01. The next question asks about last November's election. Before you answer, try to remember how you got to the polls if you did vote, or some detail that would help you remember for sure if you actually voted. Which of the following best describes you?

- \*I did not vote in last November's election
- \*I thought about voting, but did not
- \*I usually vote in presidential elections but did not vote
- \*I cast an absentee ballot
- \*I am sure I voted at the polls in November 2004

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
DID NOT VOTE	4%	2%	6%	2%	3%	5%	8%	2%	4%	6%
THOUGHT ABOUT/DID NOT	2	1	3	*	5	2	3	2	2	3
USUALLY VOTE/DID NOT	2	1	2	1	2	1	--	4	1	*
VOTED ABSENTEE	8	10	6	8	8	8	1	6	10	8
SURE I VOTED AT POLLS	83	84	83	86	83	85	82	85	82	83
INELIGIBLE (VOL.)	1	2	--	2	--	--	6	--	1	--
DON'T KNOW	*	--	*	*	--	--	--	--	*	--
REFUSED	*	*	*	*	--	--	--	--	--	1

REELEC02. (IF VOTED) For whom did you vote for President? (PROMPT IF NECESSARY)

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
NOT ASKED	9%	6%	11%	6%	9%	8%	17%	8%	7%	9%
BUSH	46	50	43	7	38	88	41	53	43	46
KERRY	37	38	37	81	42	2	37	32	43	37
NADER	*	1	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	1
SOMEONE ELSE	1	1	*	--	2	--	--	1	1	--
DID NOT VOTE FOR PRES.	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
DON'T KNOW	*	--	1	--	--	1	--	--	1	*
REFUSED	6	4	8	5	7	2	5	5	5	6



REELEC07. Would you say that your family pretty much agreed with you about who should win, pretty much disagreed with you or were they pretty evenly split?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
PRETTY MUCH AGREED	62%	59%	64%	65%	50%	71%	53%	62%	69%	55%
PRETTY MUCH DISAGREED	6	5	8	8	9	4	12	7	5	7
PRETTY EVENLY SPLIT	29	34	25	27	40	24	33	28	25	34
DON'T KNOW	2	2	3	1	1	1	2	3	1	5
REFUSED	*	--	*	--	--	--	--	--	1	--

REELEC08. And how much did you talk with your friends and neighbors about the presidential election? A lot, some, only a little, or not at all?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
A LOT	31%	37%	25%	33%	30%	30%	29%	34%	29%	31%
SOME	34	30	38	38	33	36	39	35	40	25
ONLY A LITTLE	23	22	25	21	24	25	25	20	21	28
NOT AT ALL	12	11	12	9	13	9	6	12	9	16
DON'T KNOW	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
REFUSED	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

REELEC09. Would you say that almost all your friends and neighbors agreed with you about who should win, most agreed with you, most disagreed with you, almost all disagreed with you, or were they pretty evenly split?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
ALMOST ALL AGREED	8%	8%	8%	12%	3%	9%	11%	6%	8%	10%
MOST AGREED	30	25	34	35	24	31	20	31	36	25
MOST DISAGREED	6	6	6	6	4	6	7	10	4	4
ALMOST ALL DISAGREED	1	1	*	*	1	1	3	1	*	*
PRETTY EVENLY SPLIT	48	53	44	42	60	46	57	43	47	52
DON'T KNOW	6	5	7	3	6	6	2	8	4	8
REFUSED	1	1	1	2	--	--	--	1	1	1

REELEC10. In November's elections, the Republicans won more seats in both the US House of Representatives and the US Senate. How do you feel about the Republicans' gains in the Congress? Are you very pleased, somewhat pleased, somewhat disappointed, or very disappointed?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
VERY PLEASED	29%	29%	29%	--%	10%	70%	14%	37%	26%	31%
SOMEWHAT PLEASED	24	25	23	12	31	26	30	22	24	23
SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTED	24	27	22	44	34	3	35	22	25	22
VERY DISAPPOINTED	18	16	20	42	20	--	14	11	22	21
DON'T KNOW	4	3	4	1	5	1	6	7	2	3
REFUSED	1	*	1	--	--	*	--	--	1	*

REELEC11. I'd like you to think about how President Bush's second term is likely to compare with his first term. First, do you think his policies at home will be more liberal than they were, more conservative, or will they stay about the same?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
MORE LIBERAL	6%	9%	4%	4%	11%	5%	11%	3%	6%	8%
MORE CONSERVATIVE	23	25	21	31	23	19	16	24	23	22
ABOUT THE SAME	66	62	69	62	63	72	70	68	67	62
MIXED (VOL.)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
DON'T KNOW	4	3	5	4	3	3	2	4	3	7
REFUSED	1	1	1	--	--	1	--	--	1	1

REELEC12. And do you think the President and the Democrats in Congress will work together better than they did, worse than they did, or about as well?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
WORK TOGETHER BETTER	25%	26%	24%	11%	28%	36%	30%	22%	23%	30%
WORK TOGETHER WORSE	20	25	15	30	22	11	18	19	25	16
WORK TOGETHER AS WELL	52	47	58	56	48	51	50	57	50	51
DON'T KNOW	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
REFUSED	*	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

REELEC13. Bush will probably make one or more appointments to the Supreme Court. Do you think his appointments will make the Court more liberal than it has been, more conservative, or leave it about the same?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
MORE LIBERAL	6%	6%	6%	9%	2%	5%	12%	6%	3%	10%
MORE CONSERVATIVE	47	50	44	55	51	47	30	46	56	43
ABOUT THE SAME	42	41	43	33	44	43	57	44	37	39
MIXED (VOL.)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
DON'T KNOW	5	4	5	3	3	4	2	3	4	8
REFUSED	1	--	1	--	--	1	--	1	--	1

REELEC14. And would you PERSONALLY like to see the Supreme Court more liberal than it has been, more conservative, or leave it about the same?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
MORE LIBERAL	27%	23%	32%	50%	26%	12%	31%	30%	30%	22%
MORE CONSERVATIVE	30	31	28	16	22	51	28	26	28	35
ABOUT THE SAME	37	41	34	31	44	34	38	41	36	36
MIXED (VOL.)	1	1	*	1	*	1	--	--	1	*
DON'T KNOW	4	3	5	2	6	2	3	2	5	5
REFUSED	1	*	1	--	1	1	--	1	1	1



REELEC15. Thinking about one issue which often comes before the courts, would you like to see abortions in this country made easier to get than they now are, harder to get, or left about the way things are now?

	TOT	GENDER		PARTISANSHIP			AGE IN YEARS			
		M	F	DEM	IND	REP	<30	<45	<60	60+
EASIER TO GET	11%	11%	11%	16%	13%	6%	15%	14%	14%	4%
HARDER TO GET	44	42	46	23	42	66	38	37	39	57
ABOUT THE SAME	42	45	38	54	45	27	45	47	43	34
DON'T KNOW	2	2	2	4	*	1	2	*	1	3
REFUSED	2	1	3	4	--	--	--	2	3	1

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%	26%	33%	100%	--%	--%	30%	28%	31%	32%
REPUBLICAN	37	33	40	--	--	100	28	43	34	36
INDEPENDENT	23	30	16	--	100	--	32	12	24	27
OTHER	7	8	7	--	--	--	2	14	9	3
NONE	1	1	1	--	--	--	--	2	2	1
DON'T KNOW	1	1	*	--	--	--	2	1	1	--
REFUSED	2	1	3	--	--	--	6	1	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	10%	13%	7%	10%	14%	7%	100%	--%	--%	--%
30-44	24	23	26	23	13	29	--	100	--	--
45-59	37	38	35	38	39	34	--	--	100	--
60 and over	27	25	30	29	32	27	--	--	--	100
DK/REFUSED	2	2	2	--	2	3	--	--	--	--

\* 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 503 randomly chosen state residents were interviewed for this survey by telephone between January 4 and 12, 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".