

**FOR RELEASE**

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**FRANKLIN PIERCE COLLEGE POLL SHOWS KERRY LEADING BUSH AMONG NEW HAMPSHIRE VOTERS; GOVERNOR'S RACE TIED; UNDECIDEDS TILTING NOTICEABLY TOWARDS BUSH; REPUBLICANS SAFELY AHEAD IN CONGRESSIONAL RACES; REPUBLICAN DEFECTION, DOMESTIC ISSUES, GENDER GAP, INDEPENDENTS HEPLING KERRY AND LYNCH; FOREIGN POLICY, PARENTS, YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ANCHORING BUSH AND BENSON; NEITHER RED NOR BLUE: PURPLE HAZE OVER NEW HAMPSHIRE.**

A Franklin Pierce College (FPC) poll of 453 likely New Hampshire voters (+/-4.6% margin of error) shows Sen. John Kerry leading President George W. Bush in the presidential race, 50.1 to 41.3%, with Ralph Nader polling 1.3%. 45% approve and 52% disapprove of the President's job performance. Gov. Craig Benson (R) and challenger, John Lynch (D) are tied, 45 to 45%. Interestingly, among New Hampshire Republicans, the President's approval rating is 76%; he is polling 74%; Benson is polling 68%.

Frank Cohen, FPC's Polling Director, says, "One would expect Republicans, based on nationwide numbers and historical statewide trends, to poll much higher for President Bush and Governor Benson. The President's and Governor's problems in New Hampshire may stem from the unique rate of defection of New Hampshire Republicans from their camps."

Benson's support clearly comes from the First Congressional District (Benson 49 to Lynch 42%), whereas Lynch's comes from the Second (Lynch 47 to Benson 41%). The congressional incumbents, all Republicans, have safe leads: Sen. Judd Gregg over "Granny D" Haddock (D), 60 to 27%, in the U.S. Senate race; Rep. Jeb Bradley over Justin Nadeau (D), 52 to 23%, in the U.S. House race, 1<sup>st</sup> District; Rep. Charlie Bass over Paul Hodes (D), 50 to 36%, in the U.S. House race, 2<sup>nd</sup> District.

Of the sample, registered Republicans make up 38.4%, Democrats 25.8%, independents 35.8%. Official, statewide registration figures show Republicans at 33.1% of the electorate, Democrats at 28.2%, and independents at 38%. Republicans are overrepresented in the sample, which highlights Kerry's lead. 80% of Democrats support Kerry; 70% support Lynch; but Democrats strongly favor the all-Republican congressional incumbents. Independents support Kerry at 62.3%, Lynch at 69.2%, and strongly favor the all-Republican congressional incumbents.

### *PURPLE NEW HAMPSHIRE*

Cohen says, "Nearly universal ticket splitting; the reverse gubernatorial numbers for the two congressional districts; and the relatively balanced partisan mix of Dems, Republicans and independents

show New Hampshire to be neither red nor blue, but, instead, thoroughly purple. To me, being deep purple makes New Hampshire a bellwether for the country, but the straying of New Hampshire Republicans from the norm may mean that New Hampshire is unique.”

*DOMESTIC ISSUES, KERRY'S SUPPORT BASE; FOREIGN POLICY IN TERMS OF SECURITY, BUSH'S SUPPORT BASE*

Here is how New Hampshire voters rate Kerry and Bush on the issues, when asked, “Who do you think would be . . .”:

**(Domestic issues)**

“better for the economy,” Kerry over Bush, 51 to 41%

“better for the health care system,” Kerry over Bush, 56 to 33%

“better for Social Security,” Kerry over Bush, 53 to 36%

**(Foreign policy issues)**

“better for national security,” Bush over Kerry, 49.7 to 46.6%

“better deal with terrorism,” Bush over Kerry, 50.3 to 44.4%

Only 13.7% of voters think we should immediately “withdraw from Iraq,” with only 21% of Democrats saying we should. This underpins Kerry’s commitment to stay in Iraq for at least the next four years, for which he’s been criticized by the left of his party. It is very clear that foreign policy is the engine of the Bush campaign and domestic policy is for the Kerry campaign. The uniform support in New Hampshire for staying in Iraq beyond the short-term provides some insight into why both candidates are competing over the claim to be better executors of the war there.

Cohen says, “Before 9/11, voters in New Hampshire and elsewhere didn’t care about foreign policy or the world beyond American borders, now they do and that clearly helps the President and hurts Kerry. The post-9/11 political environment accentuates the President’s strengths and diminishes the weight of Kerry’s.”

*UNDECIDED VOTERS (7.3 PERCENT), BREAK STRONGLY FOR BUSH IN TERMS OF ISSUES AND APPROVAL RATING.*

Among undecided New Hampshire voters, Bush has relatively high approval numbers and drastically lower disapproval numbers. On foreign policy concerns such as national security and the war on terrorism, the President is preferred to the Massachusetts senator almost 5 to 1! Interesting, while half of New Hampshire has given considerable thought to the Supreme Court during the election, only a quarter of undecided voters have. Undecideds seem to be weighing their overwhelming national security concerns and equally overwhelming preference for Bush in those areas against the totality of their domestic concerns. Cohen says, “Bottom line, the undecided make the New Hampshire race much closer than the decided make it appear. The Bush campaign should find solace in the preferences of the undecided voters and should continue to emphasize national security.”

*NEW HAMPSHIRE GENDER GAP: LARGE ON PRESIDENTIAL/GUBERNATORIAL RACES; NARROWS DRAMATICALLY OR ON SECURITY ISSUES AND PARENT-AGE DEMOGRAPHIC; DISAPPEARS FOR CONGRESSIOAL RACES. SECURITY/SOCCER MOM PHENOMENA VERIFIED*

Both Bush and Benson poll far better among men than women. Kerry and Lynch’s major support base in New Hampshire is clearly women, particularly those that fall outside the mom-age, young-professional demographic category of 30-49 years. Among those women, Bush polls his only leads over Kerry on our issue questions and those issue questions pertain to “national security,” “terrorism,” and the “economy,” thus verifying the “security mom” and “soccer mom” phenomena. Bush addresses their security and

material concerns far better than he does among women younger and older than this bracket. The gender gap virtually disappears in New Hampshire's congressional races.

*SUPPORT BY AGE AND EDUCATION FOR CANDIDATES: YOUNG, HIGHLY EDUCATED HEAVILY FAVOR KERRY AND LYNCH. PARENT-AGE, YOUNG-PROFESSIONAL-AGE MOST CONSERVATIVE; "GRANNY D" NO BOOST FROM ELDERLY*

The only age category that truly sticks out is the young voter bracket of 18-29 years, which heavily favors Kerry and Lynch, however, this is by far the smallest age group of likely voters. Middle age and elderly voters disproportionately, but slightly, help Kerry and Lynch. The parent-age, young-professional-age category of 30-49 voters is the most conservative in the state in terms of likely votes for Republican candidates for the whole ticket. Interestingly, nonagenarian "Granny D" Haddock gets no noticeable boost from elderly voters in her race as challenger for the U.S. Senate. Only voters with advanced degrees (22.7% of likely voters) stick out in terms of their overwhelming support for Kerry and Lynch. However, they still favor congressional Republican candidates but to a far lesser degree than those that fall in the lower education categories. Advanced-degree voters is the only demographic category that gives overwhelming support to Kerry over Bush on foreign policy issues related to "national security" and "terrorism."

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The Center for Applied Public Opinion Research (CAPOR) at Franklin Pierce College's Marlin Fitzwater Center for Communication conducted this poll of 453 likely voters from Oct 18-21. The respondents were randomly selected from the population of New Hampshire voters that participated in the 2000 presidential or 2002 congressional elections. All interviews consisted of 15 questions and were conducted by telephone. Margin of error is +/-4.6%. FPC's next poll will be conducted from Oct 25-28.

### **About Franklin Pierce College & The Marlin Fitzwater Center for Communication**

Franklin Pierce is a fully accredited four-year liberal arts college in Rindge, N.H. The college has six Graduate and Professional Studies campuses in six other New Hampshire communities: Concord, Keene, Lebanon, Nashua, Portsmouth, and Manchester.

The Marlin Fitzwater Center for Communication is a 12,000 square foot state-of-the-art communications facility on the campus of Franklin Pierce College. The Fitzwater Center studies the relationship between the presidency and the press and is committed to educating leaders of conscience in public communication. Franklin Pierce's Center for Applied Public Opinion Research (CAPOR), conducting survey and public opinion research since 1999, is housed in the Marlin Fitzwater Center for Communication.