

FOR RELEASE
On October 29, 2004

CONTACT: Frank Cohen, Associate Professor of Political Science
Polling Director
CAPOR, Marlin Fitzwater Center
Franklin Pierce College
Rindge, NH
603-899-1174 (office)
603-313-0459 (cell)
cohenf@fpc.edu

Rindge, NH - LATEST FRANKLIN PIERCE COLLEGE POLL SHOWS KERRY STILL LEADS BUSH IN NEW HAMPSHIRE BY SAME MARGIN. PRESIDENTIAL NUMBERS UNCHANGED DURING WHOLE MONTH. GOVERNOR'S RACE STILL TIED: ONLY RACE WITH CHANGING NUMBERS THROUGH THREE OCTOBER POLLS IN FOUR WEEKS. SOCIAL SECURITY ISSUE, REVERSE COATTAILS HURTING PRESIDENT IN NH. UNDECIDED SPLITTING ON PRESIDENCY BUT LEANING BENSON.

The most recent Franklin Pierce College (FPC) poll of 621 likely New Hampshire voters (+/-4 margin of error) shows Sen. John Kerry leading President George W. Bush in the presidential race, 50.1 to 42.5%, with Ralph Nader polling 1%. Kerry's lead is unchanged since FPC's Oct 3-4 poll. The three October polls reveal no statistically significant dent in (or opening of) the gap separating the two presidential candidates. The same applies to the three congressional races. The president's approval rating in New Hampshire is 44.1%, exactly what it was at the beginning of the month.

Only the gubernatorial race has changed, and barely so, with Gov. Craig Benson (R) and John Lynch (D) statistically tied 45 to 46%. That race is the only one with a statistically significant change through October. In the last week of October, over the last two polls, not one race changed. The congressional incumbents, all Republicans, have secure leads: Sen. Judd Gregg leads "Granny D" Haddock (D) 64 to 24% for the U.S. Senate Race; Rep. Jeb Bradley leads Justin Nadeau (D), 57.4 to 26.4%, in the 1st District, House race; Rep. Charlie Bass leads Paul Hodes (D), 55.4 to 32.3%, in the 2nd District, House race.

GOVERNOR TUGGING, NOT RIDING ON COATTAILS OF PRESIDENT

Party breakdown of the sample is 29% Democrat, 34% Republican, 37% Independent. Voter registration records show the state to be 28% Democrat, 34% Republican and 39% Independent. Republicans break in the high 80s for the congressional delegation but the president and governor poll in the 70s, with Benson at 70% and Bush at 77%. The governor is, perhaps, too embattled,

particularly in his intraparty relations, to provide spark to the president's New Hampshire campaign. With more popularity among Republicans, Benson may have provided a boon to the President's prospects in this state. Democrats break at 82% for Kerry, 74% for Lynch, 43% for Haddock, 52% for Nadeau, 63% for Hodes. Independents break 54-35 for Kerry.

SOCIAL SECURITY: STILL THIRD RAIL IN NEW HAMPSHIRE?

On our five issue questions, two on foreign policy and three on domestic issues, Bush and Kerry maintain mostly the same leads they've had all month. Bush leads Kerry by four and six points, respectively, in providing "national security" and confronting "terrorism." Kerry leads by twelve, seventeen, and nineteen points in dealing with the "economy," "Social Security," and "health care." Bush has recently whittled Kerry's lead from 24 to 17 points on the issue of Social Security.

However, Social Security seems to be the issue hurting Bush in New Hampshire. This could be seen in New Hampshire's two congressional districts, the First being more conservative than the Second on all election races and issues, with the exception of Social Security. A brief comparison makes the point:

First District

Race for governor:	Benson over Lynch, 52 to 41%
Who will "better deal with terrorism":	Bush over Kerry, 54 to 39%
Who will be "better for Social Security":	Kerry over Bush, 51 to 37%

Second District

Race for governor:	Lynch over Benson, 51 to 39%
Who will "better deal with terrorism":	Kerry over Bush, 47 to 46%
Who will be "better for Social Security":	Kerry over Bush, 54 to 34%

On no other issue or race do the First and Second Districts so closely resemble one another. The President's proposals to change Social Security and his opponent's charges that such proposals will drain the trust fund for future retirees may be playing into the fear of New Hampshire's aging boomer babies. Kerry is strongest in the 50-64 age bracket where he leads Bush, 54 to 38. This is an enormous lead in one of the largest groupings of likely voters.

UNDECIDED APPEAR SPLIT ON PRESIDENCY BUT APPEAR TO LEAN TOWARDS BENSON

6.5% of presidential voters are undecided and appear to be split on the presidency based on a mix of measures. 23.7% are Democrats, 23.7% are Republicans, and 53% are independents, which break more for Kerry. They are distributed equally in their support for Benson, Lynch, and "undecided" for governor. 23.7% approve of the president, while 42.1 disapprove, and 34.2% are indifferent. Two-thirds of them are in the 1st District, which is more conservative. They favor Bush on foreign policy issues and Kerry on domestic issues, which is balanced by frequent

indifference in stating a preference. 8.7% of gubernatorial voters are undecided and have a more conservative bent based on the same measures. On the surface, they seem like they could go 60-40 to Benson.

The Center for Applied Public Opinion Research (CAPOR) at Franklin Pierce College's Marlin Fitzwater Center for Communication conducted this poll of 617 likely voters from **Oct 25-27**. 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.

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.