

THE GRANITE STATE POLL

BUSH APPROVAL DROPS, TEPID SUPPORT FOR IRAQ INVASION

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DURHAM, NH -- President George W. Bush's approval ratings in New Hampshire have dropped as residents have become increasingly unhappy with the administrations handling of the economy and foreign affairs. Granite Staters are also hesitant about committing U.S. ground troops to Iraq.

These findings are based on the latest **Granite State Poll**, conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. The Granite State Poll is sponsored by the University of New Hampshire. Six-hundred fifty-two (652) adults were interviewed between February 6 and February 12, 2003. The margin of sampling error for the survey is +/-3.8 percent. (For more detailed results, visit the Survey Center web site at www.unh.edu/survey-center and click on Press Releases.)

What a Difference a Year Makes

One year ago, President George W. Bush enjoyed incredibly high approval ratings in as a result of his response to September 11 and because of the successful war in Afghanistan. But one year later, the sluggish economy and growing concern over a possible war in Iraq have led to a decline in Bush's approval ratings among New Hampshire residents. In the most recent Granite State Poll, 65 percent of New Hampshire adults say they approve of the job Bush is doing as president, only 30 percent disapprove, and 4 percent are neutral. Bush's approval ratings have dropped significantly over the past year. In the February 2002 Granite State Poll, 87 percent of New Hampshire adults approved of his performance as president, 9 percent disapproved, and 4 percent were neutral. "People in New Hampshire are nervous about the economy as well as Iraq," said Andrew Smith, Director of the UNH Survey Center. "Until we see improvements in both of these areas, Bush is likely to see further erosion in support despite New Hampshire being a solid Republican state. But it is no surprise that Bush's approval ratings have declined over the past months. The record high ratings in the wake of September 11 were going to come back down eventually."

Another indicator that support for Bush in New Hampshire is waning can be seen in his personal favorability ratings, which have also declined over the past year. Currently, 64 percent of New Hampshire adults say they have a favorable opinion of Bush, 29 percent have an unfavorable opinion of him, and 7 percent are neutral. One year ago, 84 percent of New Hampshire adults said they had a favorable opinion of Bush, 11 percent had an unfavorable opinion, and 5 percent were neutral. Bush's net favorability rating, the percentage having a favorable opinion minus the percentage having an unfavorable opinion, is +35, down from +73 in February 2002.

Foreign Affairs

Bush's previous high levels of personal popularity and job approval were largely due to of his response to the September 11 attacks. But as this event, and the war in Afghanistan fade from the headlines, support for Bush's handling of foreign affairs has declined. When asked about the job Bush is doing handling foreign affairs, 60 percent of New Hampshire residents say they approve, 36 percent disapprove, and 4 percent are neutral. This represents a significant drop from a year ago when 86 percent approved of his handling of foreign affairs, only 10 percent disapproved, and 4 percent were neutral.

Economic Approval Rating

A standard rule in politics is that Presidents get blamed for bad economies and Bush is getting blamed for the prolonged sluggishness in New Hampshire's economy. In the most recent Granite State Poll, 51 percent of New Hampshire residents say they approve of the job President Bush is doing handling the economy, 43 percent disapprove, and 6 percent are neutral. In February 2002, 69 percent approved of Bush's handling of the economy, 25 percent disapproved, and 6 percent were neutral. Support for Bush's handling of the economy has been low since at least June 2002 when 50 percent of New Hampshire residents said they approved.

Iraq

The Bush administration's handling of the situation in Iraq has been increasing unpopular in the United States and it has been unpopular for some time overseas. In the most recent Granite State Poll, 56 percent of New Hampshire adults say they approve of Bush's handling of the situation in Iraq, 37 percent disapprove, and 7 percent are neutral. These figures compare closely with national approval figures of Bush's handling of the situation in Iraq.

But New Hampshire residents do not strongly support sending U.S. ground troops to Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Currently, 55 percent of New Hampshire adults favor sending U.S. ground troops to Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein, 38 percent oppose, and 7 percent are neutral. On this indicator, New Hampshire is less supportive of military action than the U.S. as a whole. In a recent Gallup poll (February 7-9, 2003) 63 percent of Americans favored sending U.S. ground troops to Iraq, 34 percent opposed and 3 percent were neutral.

SUB-GROUP ANALYSIS

Bush has high overall, economic, and foreign affairs approval ratings from Republicans and conservatives. Democrats and liberals are most likely to disapprove of Bush's job performance in all three categories.

Republicans and conservatives give Bush high approval ratings for his handling of the situation with Iraq and are also most likely to favor sending U.S. ground troops to Iraq to oust Saddam Hussein. Democrats, liberals, and people with post-graduate educations are most likely to oppose the use of U.S. ground troops in Iraq

Presidential Approval

	Oct. 2001	Feb. 2002	Apr. 2002	June 2002	Feb. 2003
Approve	92%	87%	81%	75%	65%
Neutral	2	4	6	5	4
Disapprove	6	9	13	21	30
(N)	(687)	(724)	(685)	(658)	(646)

Presidential Approval - Economy

	Oct. 2001	Feb. 2002	Apr. 2002	June 2002	Feb. 2003
Approve	75%	69%	70%	62%	51%
Neutral	8	6	7	6	6
Disapprove	18	25	23	32	43
(N)	(684)	(725)	(688)	(644)	(644)

Presidential Approval - Foreign Affairs

	Oct. 2001	Feb. 2002	Apr. 2002	June 2002	Feb. 2003
Approve	88%	86%	76%	69%	60%
Neutral	4	4	5	5	4
Disapprove	7	10	19	26	36
(N)	(685)	(722)	(690)	(644)	(646)

Favorability Rating - President George W. Bush

	Oct. 2001	Feb. 2002	Apr. 2002	June 2002	Feb. 2003
Favorable	88%	84%	78%	69%	64%
Neutral	4	5	6	8	7
Unfavorable	8	11	16	23	29
(N)	(678)	(726)	(693)	(641)	(651)

Presidential Approval - Handling of Situation in Iraq

	Feb. 2003
Approve	56%
Neutral	7
Disapprove	37
(N)	(646)

Favor or Oppose Sending US Ground Troops to Iraq

	Feb. 2003
Favor	55%
Neutral	7
Oppose	38
(N)	(645)

Granite State Poll Methodology

These findings are based on the most recent Granite State Poll conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center from February 6 to February 12, 2003. A random sample of 652 New Hampshire adults was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to plus or minus 3.8 percent. Results reported for other subgroups have potential for somewhat larger variation than those for the entire population.

The data have been weighted to adjust for numbers of adults and telephone lines within households, respondent sex, and region of the state. In addition to potential sampling error, all surveys have other potential sources of non-sampling error including question order effects, question wording effects, and non-response.

Respondents to the Granite State Poll were asked:

- “GENERALLY SPEAKING, do you approve or disapprove of the way President Bush is handling his job as president?” (IF APPROVE): “Would you say that you STRONGLY approve of the way he is handling his job as president, or that you approve only SOMEWHAT?” (IF DISAPPROVE): “Would you say that you STRONGLY disapprove of the way he is handling his job as president, or that you disapprove only SOMEWHAT?” (IF NEITHER, NOT SURE, DK): “Would you say that you lean a little more toward APPROVING or DISAPPROVING of the way he is handling his job as president?”
- "GENERALLY SPEAKING, do you approve or disapprove of the way President Bush is handling FOREIGN AFFAIRS?" (IF APPROVE): "Would you say you STRONGLY approve of the way he is handling foreign affairs, or that you approve only SOMEWHAT?" (IF DISAPPROVE): "Would you say you STRONGLY disapprove of the way he is handling foreign affairs, or that you disapprove only SOMEWHAT?" (IF NEITHER, NOT SURE, DK): "Would you say you lean a little more toward APPROVING or DISAPPROVING of the way he is handling foreign affairs?"
- "GENERALLY SPEAKING, do you approve or disapprove of the way President Bush is handling THE ECONOMY?" (IF APPROVE): "Would you say you STRONGLY approve of the way he is handling the economy, or that you approve only SOMEWHAT?" (IF DISAPPROVE): "Would you say you STRONGLY disapprove of the way he is handling the economy, or that you disapprove only SOMEWHAT?" (IF NEITHER, NOT SURE, DK): "Would you say you lean a little more toward APPROVING or DISAPPROVING of the way he is handling the economy?"
- "Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the situation with Iraq?" (IF APPROVE) "Would you say that you STRONGLY approve of the way he is handling the situation with Iraq, or that you approve only SOMEWHAT?" (IF DISAPPROVE) "Would you say that you STRONGLY disapprove of the way he is handling the situation with Iraq, or that you disapprove only SOMEWHAT?" (IF NEITHER/NOT SURE/DK) "Would you say that you lean a little more toward APPROVING or DISAPPROVING of the way he is handling the situation with Iraq?"
- "Would you favor or oppose invading Iraq with U.S. ground troops in an attempt to remove Saddam Hussein from power?" (IF FAVOR) "Do you strongly favor this or just somewhat?" (IF OPPOSE) "Do you strongly oppose this or just somewhat?" (IF DK/NOT SURE) "Do you lean more toward favoring or opposing?"
- "Next, I'd like to get your overall opinion of some people in the news. As I read each name, please say if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of this person - or if you have never heard of him or her. President George W. Bush."

Presidential Approval Rating - Overall

STATEWIDE (Feb. 2003)	<u>Approve</u> 65%	<u>Neutral</u> 4%	<u>Disapprove</u> 30%	<u>(N=)</u> 646
Registered Democrat	38	5	56	137
Undeclared	56	4	39	201
Registered Republican	91	4	6	159
Not registered	75	5	20	144
Democrat	38	5	57	241
Independent	59	10	31	118
Republican	92	2	6	264
Liberal	42	4	54	128
Moderate	62	5	33	281
Conservative	84	3	13	194
2 Years or less in NH	70	5	25	38
3 to 5 years	69	4	28	52
6 to 10 years	70	5	25	67
11 to 20 years	69	4	27	123
More than 20 years	62	5	34	360
18 to 29	66	2	32	79
30 to 39	70	3	28	131
40 to 49	72	3	25	149
50 to 59	58	4	38	139
60 to 69	58	9	33	69
70 and over	61	10	30	63
Male	67	4	29	309
Female	63	5	32	337
High school or less	68	8	24	170
Some college	70	3	27	177
College graduate	64	5	31	194
Post-graduate	53	1	46	99
Less than \$30K	62	9	29	97
\$30K to \$60K	68	3	29	146
\$60K to \$75K	73	2	25	75
\$75K to \$100K	67	0	33	73
More than \$100K	59	4	37	87
Protestant	65	6	29	216
Catholic	69	4	27	223
Other	55	1	44	110
Northern NH	59	4	37	87
Western NH	64	4	32	59
Central/Lakes	63	4	33	101
Hillsborough County	68	3	30	196
Seacoast	66	7	27	204

Presidential Approval Rating - Economy

STATEWIDE	<u>Approve</u> 51%	<u>Neutral</u> 6%	<u>Disapprove</u> 43%	<u>(N=)</u> 644
Registered Democrat	25	6	69	137
Undeclared	40	4	56	200
Registered Republican	76	5	19	158
Not registered	62	9	29	143
Democrat	26	4	70	241
Independent	47	8	45	119
Republican	76	6	18	262
Liberal	34	3	63	128
Moderate	46	6	47	281
Conservative	67	5	28	194
2 Years or less in NH	46	5	49	37
3 to 5 years	56	3	41	52
6 to 10 years	50	11	39	67
11 to 20 years	56	6	39	123
More than 20 years	49	5	45	358
18 to 29	57	4	40	80
30 to 39	56	7	37	130
40 to 49	60	4	36	149
50 to 59	38	8	53	138
60 to 69	39	5	56	69
70 and over	50	6	45	62
Male	50	6	43	308
Female	51	6	43	336
High school or less	54	7	39	170
Some college	56	6	38	175
College graduate	49	6	45	194
Post-graduate	42	3	56	99
Less than \$30K	50	8	42	97
\$30K to \$60K	54	3	43	146
\$60K to \$75K	52	2	46	75
\$75K to \$100K	52	5	43	73
More than \$100K	48	5	47	87
Protestant	55	6	39	216
Catholic	52	5	42	223
Other	32	4	64	109
Northern NH	50	5	45	86
Western NH	50	6	44	60
Central/Lakes	56	3	41	101
Hillsborough County	49	6	45	195
Seacoast	50	8	42	203

Presidential Approval Rating - Foreign Affairs

STATEWIDE	<u>Approve</u> 60%	<u>Neutral</u> 4%	<u>Disapprove</u> 36%	<u>(N=)</u> 646
Registered Democrat	35	5	61	137
Undeclared	52	3	44	202
Registered Republican	83	5	11	159
Not registered	69	4	27	143
Democrat	34	4	63	242
Independent	58	6	36	116
Republican	84	4	12	264
Liberal	37	2	61	127
Moderate	57	5	38	281
Conservative	79	3	17	194
2 Years or less in NH	58	2	40	38
3 to 5 years	64	4	32	52
6 to 10 years	73	4	23	67
11 to 20 years	58	3	40	123
More than 20 years	58	5	37	360
18 to 29	61	1	38	78
30 to 39	61	3	36	132
40 to 49	68	2	29	149
50 to 59	53	6	41	139
60 to 69	59	2	38	69
70 and over	52	15	34	63
Male	62	4	34	309
Female	58	4	38	337
High school or less	62	7	31	169
Some college	63	2	35	179
College graduate	61	5	33	194
Post-graduate	47	2	51	99
Less than \$30K	59	7	34	98
\$30K to \$60K	63	3	34	146
\$60K to \$75K	64	3	33	75
\$75K to \$100K	61	1	38	73
More than \$100K	57	4	39	87
Protestant	59	7	34	216
Catholic	64	3	33	223
Other	51	1	48	110
Northern NH	55	5	39	87
Western NH	52	3	45	59
Central/Lakes	63	2	36	101
Hillsborough County	60	3	37	196
Seacoast	63	6	32	204

Presidential Approval Rating - Handling of Iraq

STATEWIDE	<u>Approve</u> 56%	<u>Neutral</u> 7%	<u>Disapprove</u> 37%	<u>(N=)</u> 646
Registered Democrat	28	6	66	137
Undeclared	50	3	47	202
Registered Republican	81	6	13	158
Not registered	64	13	23	143
Democrat	30	7	63	242
Independent	52	7	41	117
Republican	82	5	13	263
Liberal	36	4	60	128
Moderate	50	7	43	280
Conservative	78	6	16	193
2 Years or less in NH	56	12	32	37
3 to 5 years	60	8	33	52
6 to 10 years	69	5	25	67
11 to 20 years	58	6	36	123
More than 20 years	53	6	41	359
18 to 29	60	7	33	79
30 to 39	59	5	36	132
40 to 49	66	6	28	149
50 to 59	47	7	47	140
60 to 69	54	8	38	68
70 and over	49	9	42	63
Male	60	6	34	309
Female	53	7	40	337
High school or less	61	11	28	170
Some college	58	6	36	178
College graduate	57	5	38	192
Post-graduate	46	2	52	99
Less than \$30K	53	7	40	98
\$30K to \$60K	61	6	34	145
\$60K to \$75K	63	6	31	75
\$75K to \$100K	58	2	40	73
More than \$100K	53	6	41	87
Protestant	59	7	34	215
Catholic	58	4	38	223
Other	49	3	48	110
Northern NH	55	6	39	86
Western NH	49	11	41	59
Central/Lakes	61	3	36	101
Hillsborough County	56	8	36	196
Seacoast	56	6	38	203

Favor Sending U.S. Ground Troops to Iraq

STATEWIDE	<u>Favor</u> 55%	<u>Neutral</u> 7%	<u>Oppose</u> 38%	<u>(N=)</u> 645
Registered Democrat	35	3	61	137
Undeclared	48	6	46	200
Registered Republican	71	9	20	158
Not registered	65	11	24	144
Democrat	34	5	60	241
Independent	58	8	34	117
Republican	72	7	20	263
Liberal	40	2	58	128
Moderate	49	9	42	279
Conservative	72	8	20	193
2 Years or less in NH	55	6	39	37
3 to 5 years	53	10	37	52
6 to 10 years	78	3	20	67
11 to 20 years	53	9	38	123
More than 20 years	51	7	42	359
18 to 29	58	7	35	79
30 to 39	60	3	36	132
40 to 49	58	8	34	148
50 to 59	51	9	41	138
60 to 69	54	7	38	69
70 and over	46	8	46	62
Male	63	6	32	308
Female	47	9	44	337
High school or less	65	11	25	170
Some college	57	7	36	176
College graduate	52	8	40	193
Post-graduate	38	2	61	98
Less than \$30K	57	10	33	98
\$30K to \$60K	59	6	35	146
\$60K to \$75K	60	3	37	75
\$75K to \$100K	58	7	36	73
More than \$100K	55	3	43	86
Protestant	52	10	38	214
Catholic	57	6	37	223
Other	48	4	48	109
Northern NH	52	12	36	84
Western NH	57	8	35	60
Central/Lakes	54	5	41	101
Hillsborough County	55	5	40	196
Seacoast	54	9	37	203