

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
Monday, June 18, 2001**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:  
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**Congressional Democrats' Agenda Favored  
BUSH'S EUROPE TRIP YIELDS NO PUBLIC DIVIDEND**

As President Bush returns from his first overseas trip, his approval ratings are inching downward and an increasing number of Americans now say they disapprove of the job performance of GOP leaders on Capitol Hill. By contrast, the newly-installed Democratic leaders in the Senate are winning initially positive approval marks (50% vs. 28% disapprove), while the Democrats' agenda of tougher regulations on health maintenance organizations (HMOs), a raise in the minimum wage and providing prescription drugs through Medicare continues to draw support from a solid majority of Americans.

The latest Pew Research Center survey of 1,200 Americans, conducted June 13-17, shows that in spite of extensive media coverage of the president's trip, relatively few Americans closely tracked Bush's talks with European and Russian leaders. Just one-in-ten said they followed the trip very closely, with another 25% following it fairly closely. The public was significantly more interested in foreign trips by other recent presidents. This month, more than twice as many followed Sen. James Jeffords' departure from the GOP very closely (21%) than paid close attention to Bush's trip.

<b>Democrats Out-Polling Republicans</b>				
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>
<i>Bush job</i>	%	%	%	%
Approve	50	86	26	50
Disapprove	33	6	57	31
Don't know	<u>17</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>19</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>GOP leaders</i>				
Approve	<b>40</b>	75	20	37
Disapprove	<b>40</b>	13	60	40
Don't know	<u>20</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>23</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Dem leaders</i>				
Approve	<b>50</b>	35	71	42
Disapprove	<b>28</b>	51	11	30
Don't know	<u>22</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>28</u>
	100	100	100	100

<b>Recent Presidential Trips Abroad</b>	
	<u>% Following Closely</u>
Bush in Europe (6/01)	35
Clinton in China (8/98)	42
Clinton in Africa (3/98)	43
Bush & Gorbachev in Helsinki (9/90)	57
Bush in Colombia for drug summit (3/90)	62
Bush & Gorbachev in Malta (12/89)	55

Just half of Americans now say they approve of the job the president is doing, while 33% disapprove. While that is not markedly different from his 53% rating in May, it represents a steady erosion from his high in the Pew survey of 56% recorded in April. Once again, the public is divided along partisan lines over Bush's performance, as more than eight-in-ten Republicans (86%) say they approve of the job the president is doing, compared to only about a quarter (26%) of Democrats.

Until Jeffords' decision to bolt the Republican Party, which tipped control of the Senate to the Democrats, GOP congressional leaders had been enjoying their first sustained period of general approval since 1998. In May, a 45% plurality gave them favorable marks. Now, the public is evenly divided, with 40% approving of their job performance and the same number disapproving. Somewhat surprisingly, more than a third of Republicans (35%) endorse the job Democratic leaders are doing, compared to 20% of Democrats who say the same about GOP leaders.

The Democrats' agenda wins broad public backing and even large numbers of Republicans express support for Democratic proposals to provide prescription drug coverage through Medicare, boost the minimum wage and allow patients to sue their HMOs. Bush's plan to permit faith-based organizations to apply for government funding to provide social services also continues to draw bipartisan support. Proposals to eliminate the unlimited contributions to political parties known as soft money are favored by a slim majority (54%).

	---- % Favor ----			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>
Prescription drug benefit under Medicare	89	89	90	89
Minimum wage increase	87	74	93	90
Patients' right to sue	77	70	82	79
Funding for faith-based organizations	72	74	72	71
Ban on soft money	54	58	52	52

As the Senate begins debate on HMO reform legislation, 58% of the public supports government-imposed national standards for health care plans, while 30% say this would get the government too involved in health care. Among Republicans, just 44% support national standards, compared to 42% who say this would mean too much of a government role.

## **ABOUT THIS SURVEY**

Results for the survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 1,200 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period June 13-17, 2001. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. For results based on either Form 1 (N=600) or Form 2 (N=600), the sampling error is plus or minus 4.5 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PRESS**  
**JUNE 2001 NEWS INTEREST INDEX**  
**— FINAL TOPLINE —**  
**JUNE 13-17, 2001**  
**N=1,200**

Q.1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? **[IF "DON'T KNOW", ENTER AS CODE 9. IF "DEPENDS," PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president? IF STILL "DEPENDS," ENTER AS CODE 9.]**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
June, 2001	50	33	17=100
May, 2001	53	32	15=100
April, 2001	56	27	17=100
February, 2001	53	21	26=100

**ROTATE Q.2 AND Q.3**

Q.2 Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Democratic leaders in Congress are doing? **[IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the job the Democratic leaders in Congress are doing? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

50 Approve  
28 Disapprove  
22 Don't know/Refused (VOL)  
100

Q.3 Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Republican leaders in Congress are doing? **[IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the job the Republican leaders in Congress are doing? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
June, 2001	40	40	20=100
May, 2001	45	36	19=100
April, 2001	45	30	25=100
January, 2001	43	36	21=100
July, 2000	36	46	18=100
May, 2000	40	42	18=100

<b>Q. 3 CONTINUED...</b>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
March, 2000	38	43	19=100
February, 2000	40	43	17=100
January, 2000	39	41	20=100
December, 1999	38	42	20=100
October, 1999	34	50	16=100
Late September, 1999	34	46	20=100
September, 1999	35	48	17=100
August, 1999	40	44	16=100
July, 1999	36	45	19=100
June, 1999	37	46	17=100
May, 1999	38	44	18=100
March, 1999	38	47	15=100
February, 1999	37	51	12=100
Mid-January, 1999	36	51	13=100
January, 1999	38	50	12=100
Late December, 1998	39	56	5=100
Early December, 1998	38	49	13=100
November, 1998	41	48	11=100
September 21-22, 1998	44	44	12=100
September 19-20, 1998	46	41	13=100
Early September, 1998	44	37	19=100
Late August, 1998	48	36	16=100
Early August, 1998	43	37	20=100
June, 1998	42	38	20=100
May, 1998	40	41	19=100
April, 1998	41	40	19=100
March, 1998	43	39	18=100
January, 1998	43	41	16=100
November, 1997	41	43	16=100
August, 1997	42	44	14=100
June, 1997	33	50	17=100
May, 1997	40	44	16=100
April, 1997	40	44	16=100
February, 1997	44	42	14=100
January, 1997	38	47	15=100
November, 1996	40	43	17=100
July, 1996	38	48	14=100
June, 1996	36	50	14=100
April, 1996	39	46	15=100
March, 1996	35	51	14=100
February, 1996	33	53	14=100
January, 1996	36	54	10=100
October, 1995	36	51	13=100
September, 1995	36	50	14=100
August, 1995	38	45	17=100
June, 1995	41	45	14=100
April, 1995	44	43	13=100
March, 1995	43	39	18=100
December, 1994	52	28	20=100

**ASK ALL:**

Q.11 Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely? **[INSERT ITEM; ROTATE]**

		Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not too Closely	Not at all Closely	DK/Ref
a.	The decision by Vermont Senator Jim Jeffords to leave the Republican Party	21	27	18	34	*=100
b.	George W. Bush's trip to Europe	10	25	27	37	1=100
d.	President Bush's daughter using a fake ID to buy alcohol	17	29	27	26	1=100

**ASK ALL:**

On another subject...

Q.37 I'd like your opinion of some programs and proposals being discussed in this country today. Please tell me if you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose each one. The first one is... **(READ AND ROTATE ITEMS a THROUGH d, WITH e ALWAYS LAST)**

		Strongly Favor	Favor	Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref
a.	Making prescription drug benefits part of the Medicare system	50	39	5	3	3=100
	September, 2000 (RVs)	57	34	5	2	2=100
b.	An increase in the minimum wage, from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.45 an hour	49	38	8	4	1=100
	October, 1999	48	34	12	4	2=100
	February, 1998 <sup>1</sup>	48	32	14	5	1=100
c.	Allowing patients to sue insurance companies which deny or delay medical treatments	40	37	12	5	6=100
	October, 1999	47	35	11	4	3=100
d.	Allowing churches and other houses of worship to apply, along with other organizations, for government funding to provide social services such as job training or drug treatment counseling to people who need them?	30	42	15	10	3=100
	March, 2001	30	45	13	8	4=100
	February, 2001	28	36	19	11	6=100
	September, 2000 <sup>2</sup>	32	35	17	12	4=100

<sup>1</sup> In February 1998, the question was worded: "An increase in the minimum wage, from \$5.15 an hour to \$6.15 an hour."

<sup>2</sup> Based on registered voters. Item was worded "Allowing religious organizations to apply, along with other organizations, for government funding to provide social services such as job training or drug treatment counseling to people who need them."

**Q.37 CONTINUED...**

		Strongly		Strongly		
		<u>Favor</u>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK/Ref</u>
e.	Banning the unlimited campaign contributions that corporations and unions can now make to political parties	29	25	24	12	10=100
	October, 1999	29	27	24	15	5=100

Q.38 In your view, how important is it that campaign finance reform is signed into law this year? Do you think this should be a top priority, some priority, or little or no priority?

25	Top priority
42	Some priority
25	Little or no priority
<u>8</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.39 In your opinion, should the federal government create national standards to protect the rights of patients in HMOs and managed health care plans, OR would this get the government too involved in health care?

		(RVs)		Early	Early
		Sept	Oct	Sept	Aug
		<u>2000</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1998</u>
58	Government should create national standards	58	64	48	53
30	Too much government involvement	36	30	44	35
<u>12</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>
100		100	100	100	100