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Washington, D.C.- The Battleground 2004 poll shows that while a majority of voters continue to approve of the job George W. Bush is doing as President (54% approve) and a majority of voters continue to approve of President Bush personally (67% approve), there has been a consistent drop in the President's job approval ratings over the past few months. The President's job approval ratings have virtually come back down to a pre-Iraqi War level. However, they are still historically positive for a President coming upon a re-election year.

With that said, it should be noted that our data show only 39 percent of voters say they will definitely vote to reelect the President, and Bush only leads the generic Democratic nominee by 4-points, an indication that this is shaping up to be a very close race.

On looking at the economy, a majority of voters disapprove of the handling of the economy by President Bush (46% approve/51% disapprove), while a plurality of voters also disapprove of the job the Democrats in Congress are doing on handling the economy (41% approve/46% disapprove). This shows voters clearly have some economic concerns and will hold both the President and the Members of Congress feet to fire.

The views of voters about the economy are equally mixed. Forty-two percent (42%) of voters rate the economy as just fair, 34% rate the economy as poor, and 24% rate it as excellent or good. In addition, in an open-ended format a majority of voters say the best indicator of an improving economy would be a lower unemployment rate or more people working (61%). This is quite a strong response and shows the importance of the issue.

Regarding the 2004 Presidential election, Republican pollster Ed Goeas says, "Our latest Battleground Poll not only shows George W. Bush is in a stronger position than his father at a comparable time in his 1992 re-election campaign, but he is also running even or ahead of Bill Clinton's re-elect measurements at a comparable time in his 1996 re-election campaign!"

Democratic pollster Celinda Lake looks at the partisan divide in the electorate and the declining voter confidence in some of President Bush's efforts and states: "this is setting up to be another close election. The electorate is already highly polarized along partisan lines, with very few people in the middle. However, Bush is not doing well with Independents—only 44 percent approve of the job he is doing"

This data and much more will be presented by pollsters Ed Goeas and Celinda Lake on Thursday, September 25, 2003 at 9:30am at the National Press Club in the Holeman Lounge. This bipartisan Battleground 2004 poll surveyed one thousand registered likely voters nationwide and yields a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1%. The poll covers views of the current state of America, public opinion on the state of the economy, job approval ratings for the President and the Democrats in Congress and views on who voters trust more on issues of highest concern to them.

Celinda Lake and Ed Goeas are both available for comment. For Celinda Lake, please contact David Cantor at Lake Snell Perry and Associates at 202-776-9066; and for Ed Goeas, please contact Tammi Smith at 703-684-6688. The data is also available via the Internet at www.tarrance.com.