



## **POLL OF ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDERS ON THE 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

Conducted by Bendixen & Associates and The Tarrance Group  
For New California Media (NCM)

### ***Executive Summary***

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## **Methodology**

The results and findings in this report are based on a poll of 1,004 Asian and Pacific Islander (APIA) registered voters likely to participate in the November 2<sup>nd</sup> presidential election. The sample was designed to be representative of the approximately 2.9 million APIA “likely voters” in the United States. Bilingual operators conducted the interviews in nine languages – Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, Japanese, Hindi, Hmong and English. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents chose to be interviewed in a language other than English. All of the interviews were conducted between August 19<sup>th</sup> and August 29<sup>th</sup> of 2004. The margin of error for the full sample of 1,004 interviews is three percentage points. The polling project was organized and coordinated by Bendixen & Associates of Coral Gables, Florida and The Tarrance Group of Alexandria, Virginia.

## **Major Findings**

- 1. Senator John Kerry and President George W. Bush are in a close race among APIA voters with two months to go before Election Day. The Democratic nominee leads by 43 percent to 36 percent over the Republican nominee with a substantial 20 percent still undecided. The President seems to have cut in half the lead that Democrats enjoyed among these voters in the 2000 presidential election when Vice President Al Gore defeated George W. Bush by 55 percent to 41 percent (the remaining 4 percent were split between Ralph Nader and Pat Buchanan).**

\*\* Kerry has a strong lead among Chinese, Asian Indian and Hmong voters.

\*\* Bush has a strong lead among Vietnamese and Filipino voters.

\*\* Japanese, Korean and Pacific Islander voters split their votes equally between Kerry and Bush.

\*\* Kerry does best among younger APIA voters (18-39) and those that have a college degree while Bush does best among older APIA voters (60+) and those with a high school degree. First-time APIA voters (31% of the APIA electorate) support Kerry over Bush by 16 percentage points.

\*\* Kerry’s lead over Bush among APIA voters in the 18 “battleground states” is the same as his lead among all APIA voters – 7 percentage points. The “battleground states” with the greatest number of APIA “likely voters” are Washington, Florida, Michigan, Oregon and Pennsylvania.

- \*\* President Bush's approval rating – 49 percent – seems to be contributing to his strong showing among voters that clearly favored the Democratic nominee in the 2000 election. Many political analysts believe that the approval rating of an incumbent president is a strong “predictor” of his reelection vote.
  - \*\* President Bush and Senator Kerry have similar personal image numbers among APIA voters. Fifty percent have a positive image of the Republican nominee while 40 percent have a negative opinion of him. The Democratic nominee has a positive to negative ratio of 53 percent to 26 percent.
  - \*\* A large majority of APIA voters (62%) think that the 2004 presidential election may very well be the most important election of their lifetime.
- 2. The APIA electorate point-of-view on the major issues of the day is made clear by the study. A small majority of APIA “likely voters” thinks that it was “wrong” to go to war with Iraq. Chinese, Asian Indian and Korean voters are the strongest opponents of military action in the Middle East while a majority of Vietnamese and Filipino voters think that it was “right” to go to war with Iraq.**
- \*\* “Jobs and the economy” was chosen by 47 percent of APIA voters as the most important issue for the next President to deal with while 22 percent told our interviewers that the Iraq war or terrorism was the number one issue. The importance of the jobs issue is underlined by the finding that only 27 percent of the APIA electorate rates the economic condition of the United States as “excellent” or “good.”
  - \*\* Vietnamese, Korean and Filipino voters believe that the “outsourcing” of jobs to foreign nations should be penalized through tax policy while Asian Indians and Japanese voters feel that the “outsourcing” of jobs overseas will help the U. S. economy by creating stronger markets for U. S. goods. Chinese voters are equally divided on this issue, one of the most controversial of the 2004 presidential campaign.
  - \*\* Same-sex or gay marriage is supported by a small percentage (21%) of the APIA electorate but there is an important “generational gap” on this issue – older APIA voters (60+) oppose gay marriage by the overwhelming margin of 83 percent to 9 percent. Younger APIA voters (18-39) also oppose it but by a much smaller margin (12%).
  - \*\* APIA voters support legalizing undocumented immigrants who live, work and pay taxes in the United States but by a much smaller percentage than their Hispanic counterparts. Only 51 percent of APIA voters support

legalizing the undocumented while a January 2004 New California Media poll indicated that 85 percent of Hispanic voters favor the policy.

- \*\* APIA voters may be more “assimilated” than other voting groups dominated by immigrants. Only 23 percent of APIA voters report having experienced discrimination because of their racial or ethnic background and a majority oppose giving non-citizen immigrants living in the United States the right to vote in important local elections.
  
- 3. The APIA electorate may be developing into a key “swing” constituency in American politics. Forty-four percent of these voters were not able to pick between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party when asked which party regards the opinions of their national or ethnic group in a more important way. The Democrats had a small advantage over the Republicans – 34 percent to 22 percent – among those APIA voters willing to choose between the two major political parties.**
  
- \*\* The numbers are similar when APIA voters are asked which party they feel closer to - only 29 percent see themselves as Democrats while 25 percent say they are closer to the Republican Party.
  
- \*\* The percentage of APIA voters that remain undecided is a substantial 20 points. Most national polls show the undecided to be in the low single digits. The APIA electorate may have one of the highest concentration of undecided voters in the nation.
  
- \*\* The Democratic Party may have greater growth potential among APIA voters. Sixty-three percent of these voters have a positive opinion of the Democratic Party while only 48 percent have a positive opinion of the Republican Party.
  
- 4. There is an important difference of opinion among APIA voters about the importance of voting ballots being printed in languages other than English. Among those interviewed in English, only 27 percent said it was “very important” to have “foreign-language” ballots while among those interviewed in another language, 52 percent said “very important.”**

**About New California Media**

New California Media is a nationwide association of over 700 print, broadcast, and online ethnic media organizations founded in 1996 by the non-profit Pacific News Service. NCM's goal is to build a more inclusive public forum by raising the visibility of ethnic media and their audiences. NCM polling is supported by grants from the Ford Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, the Overbrook Foundation, and the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Foundation, among others. Multilingual polling partners include the USC Annenberg's Institute for Justice and Journalism and the Chinese American Voter Education Committee. For more information, visit [www.ncmonline.com](http://www.ncmonline.com).