

DEMOCRACY CORPS
CARVILLE ♦ GREENBERG

Date: July 16, 2007
To: Friends of Democracy Corps
From: Karl Agne

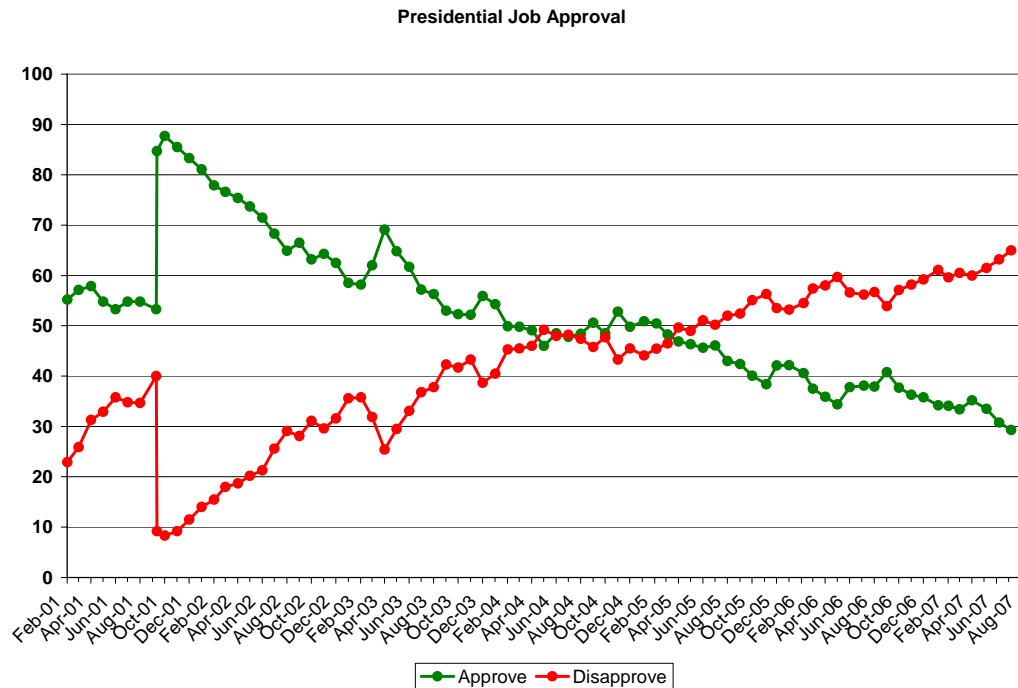
Broad Political Trends Unchanged
Bush, Congress Both Near Record Low Approval

As summer heats up across the country, public polls released over the last few weeks still reveal a political environment that is stubbornly resistant to major changes. Certainly, there have been some notable shifts in the last month and a half. President Bush's job approval marks have once again reached a new low. Similarly, views of the country's direction have also reached their most pessimistic point in nearly 15 years. And the number of Americans who believe the war in Iraq was a mistake as climbed over 60 percent for the first time in the latest Gallup poll. Of course, these shifts really reflect slow but inexorable trends that have been at work consistently for a year or more. The big picture remains essentially unchanged – a tremendously unpopular president and administration, broad pessimism about the direction of the country and our government, an unmistakable Democratic electoral advantage, and a growing desire to bring our troops home.

Eight separate surveys conducted through June and early July show the number of Americans who believe the country is headed in the right direction dropping to just 24 percent, with 70 percent now convinced that the country is off on the wrong track. The latest CBS News poll shows a majority of Republicans (52 percent) now joining 86 percent of Democrats and 80 percent of Independents in rejecting the country's current direction. Consumer confidence, influenced strongly by gas prices, has been much more volatile than other measures of the political environment this year, but the ABC News/*Washington Post* Consumer Comfort Index stands at -9 this week – down 2 points this week, 3 points below its average for the year, and even with its average over 21 years of weekly polling. Looking at the economy as a whole, only 23 percent in a mid-June Gallup poll said the economy was getting better while 70 percent felt it was getting worse.

President Bush's ratings reflect the deep pessimism felt by such a large majority of Americans. After remaining in a narrow range between 33 and 35 percent each of the first five months of the year, Bush's overall job approval dropped to 31 percent in June, with disapproval also reaching a new high of 63 percent. This month, that trend continues – through four polls conducted in July, Bush's approval stands at just 29 percent, with disapproval up to 65 percent. As usual, the FOX poll has the best net job approval numbers for Bush (31 percent approve, 60

percent disapprove), but even this survey puts Bush's approval at just 21 percent among Independents.



Historically, only Truman (22 percent) and Nixon (23 percent) have ever recorded lower approval marks than Bush. With 18 long months left in his term and no sign of political recovery in sight, it is increasingly likely that Bush could soon break their ignominious records.

Measures of Bush's performance on a variety of issues once thought to be political strengths reveal the extent of his current political weakness. On Iraq, barely 1-in-4 (27 percent) now approve of the job Bush is doing while 68 percent disapprove. His marks in the campaign against terrorism are only slightly better (39 percent approve, 53 percent disapprove). And a strongly negative rating among Republicans gives Bush his lowest approval mark on immigration (20 percent approve, 65 percent disapprove). Approval for Bush's handling of the economy (36 percent approve, 60 percent disapprove) has barely moved in two years and, while still dismally low, now actually ranks higher than his overall approval.

Clearly, Bush's recent actions on a number of fronts have added to his woes. Less than 1-in-5 Americans agreed with his decision to commute Scooter Libby's sentence (13 percent) or say he should have given Libby a full pardon (6 percent), while 2-in-3 say Bush was wrong to get involved in the sentencing at all (66 percent). Of course, Bush's decision to commute Libby's sentence was made in reaction to an outcry among certain segments of the Republican base. However, only 9 percent of self-identified Republicans and Republican leaning Independents in the Gallup survey say his handling of the affair caused them to gain confidence in him; 16 percent lost confidence in Bush as a result of this situation, and 71 percent say it didn't impact their opinion of Bush. By comparison, Bush's handling of the immigration issue has left 10 percent of these partisans more confident but 39 percent less confident, with 50 percent saying it has had no impact on their opinion of him.

The only good news for Bush is that the Congress, now under Democratic control, is not faring much better in terms of overall job approval in these recent surveys. After a short post-election honeymoon, congressional approval marks have once again fallen near their pre-election levels. The AP/Ipsos poll puts approval of Congress even lower than President Bush – 24 percent approve, 70 percent disapprove. However, voters are still drawing clear distinctions between the two parties in Congress, with Democrats earning significantly higher marks. The FOX survey finds a difference of 13 points in net approval for the two parties in Congress, while the CNN poll finds majorities of Americans still offering positive opinions of the Democratic Party (51 percent favorable, 38 percent unfavorable) and negative views of the Republican Party (36 percent favorable, 53 percent unfavorable).

Democrats are certainly not free of blame for the current ratings of Congress, and the public is growing increasingly frustrated with what they view as a failure by Democrats to deliver the change which fueled their victory in November. For the first time, the CNN poll finds negative marks for the work of the Democratic leaders in the House and Senate (42 percent approve, 49 percent disapprove), down markedly from their marks in early May (49 percent approve, 44 percent disapprove). And by a margin of almost 4-to-1, the CBS poll shows Americans believe this Congress has accomplished less than usual in its first six months (16 percent more, 59 percent less); even a majority of Democrats agree with this assessment.

Despite these concerns, the CNN poll finds that Americans still say it is good for the country that Democrats are in control of Congress – 57 percent good for the country, 31 percent bad for the country. After some slippage on this measure in the spring, it is now essentially back to where it stood at the beginning of the year. And the same poll shows Democrats maintaining both majority support and a huge margin in the generic congressional contest (53 to 41 percent). Democrats' electoral strength may be due as much to Republican weakness as their own strength at this stage, but it remains steady nonetheless.

As has been the case for over a year now, Iraq is the dominant issue driving this political environment. Bush's steadfast support for failed policies and his refusal to acknowledge the reality of the military and diplomatic situation both in Iraq and the Middle East as a whole have helped lead him to historic lows in job approval, and congressional Republicans' failure to stand up to Bush is a top reason for the marginalized position and deep unpopularity they now suffer. While different question wording and surveys often produce seemingly conflicting results when measuring public opinion on Iraq, the latest polls reveal certain data and trends that are unmistakable:

- 62 percent in the Gallup poll now say sending troops into Iraq was a mistake – the highest level yet
- Only 17 percent of Americans across two surveys believe the 'surge' is making the situation in Iraq better; 27 percent say it is making the situation worse, and 51 percent believe it is making no real difference
- A majority in the CBS poll believe current American involvement in Iraq is actually creating more terrorists rather than less
- Support for various formulations that include removing U.S. troops from Iraq within the next year consistently exceeds 60 percent

- 61 percent in the newest *Newsweek* release believe Iraqi leaders are either unwilling or unable to negotiate a viable power-sharing agreement, and 55 percent feel the readiness of Iraqi troops should not be a condition for the withdrawal of U.S. troops

BUSH JOB APPROVAL

		Approve	Disapprove	App – Disapp
Monthly Average – July 2007	Jul-07	29.3	65.0	-35.8
Newsweek	7/12/2007	29	64	-35.0
AP-Ipsos	7/11/2007	33	65	-32.0
USA Today/Gallup	7/8/2007	29	66	-37.0
Newsweek	7/3/2007	26	65	-39.0
Monthly Average – June 2007	Jun-07	30.8	63.2	-32.4
CBS	6/28/2007	27	65	-38.0
Fox News/Opinion Dynamics (RV)	6/27/2007	31	60	-29.0
CNN/Opinion Research	6/24/2007	32	66	-34.0
Newsweek	6/19/2007	26	65	-39.0
Gallup	6/14/2007	32	65	-33.0
NBC News/Wall Street Journal	6/11/2007	29	66	-37.0
Quinnipiac (RV)	6/11/2007	28	65	-37.0
LA Times/Bloomberg	6/10/2007	34	62	-28.0
Fox News/Opinion Dynamics (RV)	6/6/2007	34	57	-23.0
AP-Ipsos	6/6/2007	32	66	-34.0
USA Today/Gallup	6/3/2007	32	62	-30.0
Pew	6/3/2007	29	61	-32.0
ABC News/Washington Post	6/1/2007	35	62	-27.0
Monthly Average – May 2007	May-07	33.5	61.5	-28.0
Democracy Corps (LV)	5/31/2007	35	60	-25.0
CBS/NY Times	5/23/2007	30	63	-33.0
ABC News/Washington Post	5/23/2007	35	62	-27.0
Diageo/Hotline (RV)	5/20/2007	32	64	-32.0
Fox News/Opinion Dynamics (RV)	5/16/2007	34	56	-22.0
Gallup	5/13/2007	33	62	-29.0
AP-Ipsos	5/9/2007	35	61	-26.0
CNN/Opinion Research	5/6/2007	38	61	-23.0
USA Today/Gallup	5/6/2007	34	63	-29.0
Newsweek	5/3/2007	28	64	-36.0
WNBC/Marist (RV)	5/1/2007	33	61	-28.0
Quinnipiac (RV)	5/1/2007	33	61	-28.0
USA Today/Gallup	4/1/2007	35	61	-18.0
Monthly Average – April 2007	Apr-07	35.2	60.0	-24.8
Diageo/Hotline (RV)	4/30/2007	35	62	-27.0
Democracy Corps (LV)	4/29/2007	37	59	-22.0
NPR (LV)	4/29/2007	37	59	-22.0
CBS/NY Times	4/24/2007	32	61	-29.0
NBC News/Wall Street Journal	4/23/2007	35	60	-25.0
Pew	4/22/2007	35	57	-22.0
Fox News/Opinion Dynamics (RV)	4/18/2007	38	54	-16.0

Public Polling Report — July 16, 2007

USA Today/Gallup	4/15/2007	36	60	-24.0
ABC News/Washington Post	4/15/2007	35	62	-27.0
CBS	4/12/2007	31	61	-30.0
LA Times/Bloomberg	4/9/2007	36	62	-26.0
Time	4/9/2007	33	59	-26.0
USA Today/Gallup	4/5/2007	38	58	-20.0
AP-Ipsos	4/4/2007	35	65	-30.0
Diageo/Hotline (RV)	4/1/2007	35	61	-18.0
Monthly Average – July 2007	Jul-07	29.3	65.0	-35.8
Monthly Average – June 2007	Jun-07	30.8	63.2	-32.4
Monthly Average – March 2007	Mar-07	33.4	60.5	-27.1
Monthly Average – February 2007	Feb-07	34.1	59.6	-25.6
Monthly Average – January 2007	Jan-07	34.0	61.3	-27.9
Monthly Average – December	Dec-07	35.6	59.8	-24.2
Monthly Average – November	Nov-06	36.6	58.1	-21.5
Monthly Average – October	Oct-06	37.7	57.3	-19.6
Monthly Average – September	Sep-06	41.3	54.0	-12.7
Monthly Average – August	Aug-06	37.9	56.7	-18.8
Monthly Average – July	Jul-06	38.1	56.2	-18.1
Monthly Average – June	Jun-06	37.8	56.6	-18.8
Monthly Average – May	May-06	34.4	59.7	-25.3
Monthly Average – April	Apr-06	35.9	58.0	-22.1
Monthly Average – March	Mar-06	37.5	57.4	-19.9
Monthly Average – February	Feb-06	40.6	54.5	-13.8
Monthly Average – January	Jan-06	42.2	53.2	-10.9
Monthly Average – December	Dec-05	42.1	53.5	-11.3
Monthly Average – November	Nov-05	38.4	56.3	-17.9
Monthly Average – October	Oct-05	40.1	55.1	-15.1
Monthly Average – September	Sep-05	42.4	52.4	-10.0
Monthly Average – August	Aug-05	43.0	52.0	-9.0
Monthly Average – July	Jul-05	46.1	50.2	-4.1
Monthly Average – June	Jun-05	45.6	51.1	-5.4
Monthly Average – May	May-05	46.4	49.0	-2.6
Monthly Average – April	Apr-05	46.9	49.1	-2.2
Monthly Average – March	Mar-05	48.3	46.5	1.8
Monthly Average – February	Feb-05	50.5	45.5	5.0
Monthly Average – January	Jan-05	50.9	44.1	6.8
Monthly Average – December	Dec-04	49.8	45.5	4.3
Monthly Average – November	Nov-04	52.8	43.3	9.5
Monthly Average – October	Oct-04	48.5	47.7	0.8
Monthly Average – September	Sep-04	50.6	45.8	4.8
Monthly Average – August	Aug-04	48.4	47.4	1
Monthly Average – July	Jul-04	47.8	48.2	-0.4
Monthly Average – June	Jun-04	48.5	48	0.5
Monthly Average – May	May-04	46	49.2	-3.2
Monthly Average – April	Apr-04	49.1	46	3.1
Monthly Average – March	Mar-04	49.8	45.5	4.3
Monthly Average – February	Feb-04	49.9	45.3	4.6
Monthly Average – January	Jan-04	54.3	40.5	13.8

Public Polling Report — July 16, 2007

Monthly Average – December	Dec-03	55.9	38.7	17.2
Monthly Average – November	Nov-03	52.2	43.3	8.9
Monthly Average – October	Oct-03	52.3	41.7	10.6
Monthly Average – September	Sep-03	53	42.3	10.7
Monthly Average – August	Aug-03	56.3	37.8	18.5
Monthly Average – July	Jul-03	57.2	36.8	20.4
Monthly Average – June	Jun-03	61.7	33.1	28.6
Monthly Average – May	May-03	64.8	29.5	35.3
Monthly Average – April	Apr-03	69.1	25.4	43.7
Monthly Average – March	Mar-03	62	31.9	30.1
Monthly Average – February	Feb-03	58.2	35.8	22.4
Monthly Average – January	Jan-03	58.5	35.6	22.9
Monthly Average – December	Dec-02	62.5	31.6	30.9
Monthly Average – November	Nov-02	64.3	29.6	34.7
Monthly Average – October	Oct-02	63.2	31.1	32.1
Monthly Average – September	Sep-02	66.5	28.1	38.4
Monthly Average – August	Aug-02	64.9	29.1	35.8
Monthly Average – July	Jul-02	68.3	25.6	42.7
Monthly Average – June	Jun-02	71.5	21.3	50.2
Monthly Average – May	May-02	73.7	20.2	53.5
Monthly Average – April	Apr-02	75.4	18.7	56.7
Monthly Average – March	Mar-02	76.6	18	58.6
Monthly Average – February	Feb-02	77.9	15.5	62.4
Monthly Average – January	Jan-02	81.1	14	67.1
Monthly Average – Dec.	Dec-01	83.3	11.5	71.8
Monthly Average – Nov.	Nov-01	85.5	9.2	76.3
Monthly Average – Oct.	Oct-01	87.7	8.3	79.4
Monthly Average – Sept.	Sep-01	84.7	9.2	75.5
Monthly Average – Sept.	Sep-01	53.3	40	13.3
Monthly Average – August	Aug-01	54.8	34.7	20.1
Monthly Average – July	Jul-01	54.8	34.8	20
Monthly Average – June	Jun-01	53.3	35.8	17.5
Monthly Average – May	May-01	54.8	32.9	21.9
Monthly Average – April	Apr-01	57.9	31.3	26.6
Monthly Average – March	Mar-01	57.1	25.9	31.2
Monthly Average – Feb.	Feb-01	55.2	22.9	32.3

Poll	COUNTRY DIRECTION				
	Direction /Satisfied	Date	Right	Wrong	Right-Wrong
Monthly Average - July 2007		Jul-07	25.7	68.0	-42.3
Newsweek	S	7/12/2007	27	68	-41
AP/Ipsos#	D	7/11/2007	26	69	-43
Newsweek	S	7/3/2007	24	67	-43
Monthly Average - June 2007		Jun-07	22.8	70.8	-48.0
Newsweek	S	6/19/2007	26	68	-42
Gallup#	S	6/14/2007	24	74	-50
NBC News/Wall Street Journal#	D	6/11/2007	19	68	-49
LA Times/Bloomberg	D	6/10/2007	24	69	-45
AP/Ipsos#	D	6/6/2007	21	75	-54
Monthly Average - May 2007		May-07	24.5	71.5	-47.0
Democracy Corps#	D	5/31/2007	23	71	-48
Gallup#	S	5/13/2007	25	73	-48
AP/Ipsos#	D	5/9/2007	25	71	-46
Newsweek	S	5/3/2007	25	71	-46
Monthly Average - April 2007		Apr-07	26.5	66.7	-40.2
Monthly Average - March 2007		Mar-07	26.9	65.6	-38.7
Monthly Average - February 2007		Feb-07	28.3	66.0	-37.7
Monthly Average - January 2007		Jan-07	30.3	62.2	-31.9
Monthly Average - December 2006		Dec-06	28.4	63.9	-35.4
Monthly Average - November 2006		Nov-06	31.4	62.0	-30.6
Monthly Average - October 2006		Oct-06	29.3	62.3	-33.0
Monthly Average - September 2006		Sep-06	32.0	60.8	-28.8
Monthly Average - August 2006		Aug-06	28.3	65.9	-37.6
Monthly Average - July 2006		Jul-06	29.5	63.5	-34.0
Monthly Average - June 2006		Jun-06	28.1	64.0	-35.9
Monthly Average - May 2006		May-06	25.0	69.8	-44.8
Monthly Average - April 2006		Apr-06	26.0	67.8	-41.8
Monthly Average - March 2006		Mar-06	29.9	64.0	-34.1
Monthly Average - February 2006		Feb-06	35.5	59.8	-24.3
Monthly Average - January 2006		Jan-06	35.0	57.9	-22.9
Monthly Average - December 2005		Dec-05	33.2	60.7	-27.5
Monthly Average - November 2005		Nov-05	30.9	63.9	-33.0
Monthly Average - October 2005		Oct-05	32.8	61.3	-28.5
Monthly Average - September 2005		Sep-05	33.5	61.5	-28.0
Monthly Average - August 2005		Aug-05	36.7	57.7	-21.0
Monthly Average - July 2005		Jul-05	37.8	56.4	-18.6
Monthly Average - June 2005		Jun-05	35.0	55.5	-20.5
Monthly Average - June 2005		Jun-05	37.1	55.9	-18.8
Monthly Average - May 2005		May-05	36.1	55.4	-19.3
Monthly Average - April 2005		Apr-05	36.9	54.6	-17.7

Public Polling Report — July 16, 2007

Monthly Average - March 2005	Mar-05	40.3	55.5	-15.3
Monthly Average - February 2005	Feb-05	41.2	51.8	-10.7
Monthly Average - January 2005	Jan-05	42.0	51.0	-9
Monthly Average - December 2004	Dec-04	42.5	49.5	-7
Monthly Average - November 2004	Nov-04	44.5	50.5	-6
Monthly Average - October 2004	Oct-04	40.9	53.6	-12.7
Monthly Average - September 2004	Sep-04	42.4	51.7	-9.3
Monthly Average - September 2004	Sep-04	42.4	51.7	-9.3
Monthly Average - August 2004	Aug-04	40.0	53.4	-13.4
Monthly Average - July 2004	Jul-04	39.1	54.3	-15.2
Monthly Average - June 2004	Jun-04	38.6	54.4	-15.8
Monthly Average - May 2004	May-04	34.6	58.6	-24
Monthly Average - April 2004	Apr-04	38.8	56.8	-18
Monthly Average - March 2004	Mar-04	39.0	54.8	-15.8
Monthly Average - February 2004	Feb-04	42.0	53.5	-11.5
Monthly Average - January 2004	Jan-04	46.9	47.2	-0.3
Monthly Average - December 2003	Dec-03	46.0	45.9	0.1
Monthly Average - November 2003	Nov-03	40.7	52.0	-11.3
Monthly Average - October 2003	Oct-03	40.3	53.4	-13.1
Monthly Average - September 2003	Sep-03	38.2	54.8	-16.6
Monthly Average - August 2003	Aug-03	40.8	52.8	-12
Monthly Average - July 2003	Jul-03	43.5	49.3	-5.8
Monthly Average - June 2003	Jun-03	47.2	46.0	1.2
Monthly Average - May 2003	May-03	51.0	42.2	8.8
Monthly Average - April 2003	Apr-03	56.5	35.0	21.5
Monthly Average - March 2003	Mar-03	46.6	46.6	0
Monthly Average - February 2003	Feb-03	40.0	52.8	-12.8
Monthly Average - January 2003	Jan-03	38.6	52.0	-13.4
Monthly Average - December 2002	Dec-02	43.4	48.2	-4.8
Monthly Average - November 2002	Nov-02	46.8	46.5	0.3
Monthly Average - October 2002	Oct-02	42.8	48.3	-5.5
Monthly Average - September 2002	Sep-02	46.2	45.3	0.8
Monthly Average - August 2002	Aug-02	46.0	47.0	-1
Monthly Average - July 2002	Jul-02	46.2	48.3	-2.2
Monthly Average - June 2002	Jun-02	49.6	39.0	10.6
Monthly Average - May 2002	May-02	52.0	40.2	11.8
Monthly Average - April 2002	Apr-02	55.5	34.3	21.3
Monthly Average - March 2002	Mar-02	56.0	36.3	19.8
Monthly Average - February 2002	Feb-02	63.0	31.5	31.5
Monthly Average - January 2002	Jan-02	63.5	28.0	35.5
Monthly Average - December 2001	Dec-01	67.7	22.7	45
Monthly Average - November 2001	Nov-01	63.7	27.3	36.3
Monthly Average - October 2001	Oct-01	67.0	29.0	38
Average - September 11-30, 2001	9/11-30/01	59.3	32.7	26.7
Average - January 1-September 10, 2001	1/1-9/11	48.1	43.2	5
Yearly Average - 2000	2000	53	37	16.5
Yearly Average - 1999	1999	52	39	12.5
Yearly Average - 1998	1998	54	38	15.4
Yearly Average - 1997	1997	46	46	0.2