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News Release

Bush Slips but Still Leads in Northern Pennsylvania, Lycoming College Poll Finds

President George W. Bush leads Senator John Kerry 50 to 37 percent across the northern tier of Pennsylvania, according to a Lycoming College poll released today. That lead is down from September when the Lycoming poll found Bush ahead of Kerry 53 to 36 percent. “Bush appears to have lost ground with the end of a post convention bounce and his struggles in the debates, although the changes are not statistically significant,” said Dr. Jonathan Williamson, assistant professor of political science and director of the Lycoming College Polling Institute.

Political science students under the direction of Dr. Williamson surveyed 703 likely voters from October 10-13 in the 5th and 10th congressional districts which comprise all or part of the following counties: Bradford, Cameron, Centre, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Forest, Jefferson, Lackawanna (the 10th does not include the city of Scranton), Luzerne (the 10th excludes the city of Wilkes-Barre), Lycoming, McKean, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Pike, Potter, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Venango, Warren, Wayne and Wyoming. The poll’s margin of error is +/- 3.7%

The poll found that Bush lost ground on his strongest issues. Among the 46 percent of respondents who feel the most important problem facing the country is Iraq, terrorism or homeland security, Bush leads Kerry 63 percent to 27 percent. In September, Bush led those respondents 67 percent to 26 percent. Kerry however also lost ground among respondents who

feel his signature issues are most important. Among the 28 percent of respondents who feel the most important problem is the economy or jobs, Kerry leads Bush 52 percent to 32 percent, down from 59 percent to 31 percent in September. “While Kerry succeeded in raising doubts during the debates in some voters minds about Bush’s security record, he failed to capitalize because Bush in turn raised doubts for other voters about Kerry’s economic agenda,” said Williamson.

Respondents were asked if their plan to vote for either Bush or Kerry was more a vote for their chosen candidate or against his opponent. Among Bush voters, 84 percent said they were casting their vote in support of Bush. Among Kerry voters, only 51 percent were casting their vote for Kerry, with 49 percent indicating their vote would be a vote against Bush. “This election is clearly a referendum on the president,” said Williamson.

Question: If the election for president were held today, would you vote for George W. Bush, the Republican or John Kerry, the Democrat?

	All Respondents	Republicans	Independents	Democrats
Bush	50%	83%	35%	13%
Kerry	37	9	41	75
Other	1	0	4	1
Undecided	12	8	20	12
Percent of Total	100%	47%	20%	32%