



Date: September 21, 2004
To: Interested Parties
From: Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research

RE: Science and Integrity Survey¹

Discussions of science and politics are increasingly entering into the political debate, most notably in the form of stem cell research but across a range of issues from the environment to reproductive health to national security. In recent months, scientists and scientific institutions have noted the unprecedented intervention of politics in science, for example through scientific advisory committees stacked with paid corporate consultants, and political interference in scientific advice that the government uses to set policy. For example, a scientific advisory committee on childhood lead poisoning prevention was found to include a member on payroll to the lead industry and another nominated by the lead industry. The Bush Administration altered language in research reports to create the false appearance of uncertainty about global climate change. Public outrage mandated the government restore scientific information previously removed from websites on public health issues like breast cancer.

It is clear that the Bush Administration's approach to scientific investigation is profoundly out of touch with the way Americans think about the conduct of scientific research and the use of science in policy formulation. Voters believe that science makes a crucial contribution to public health through the development of new cures and medicines, and that scientific innovation puts important safeguards in place to protect health and safety, particularly of children. Any interference with these contributions of science is unacceptable.

In fact, voters support a strong government role in the pursuit of scientific knowledge, which they strongly feel should be insulated from politics. While they acknowledge that it is difficult to truly separate science and politics, they believe in the value of objectivity and oppose the imposition of other agendas such as those of corporate America or religious conservatives that could undermine the goal of protecting health and safety. Voters think policy makers should seek out scientific information from

¹ The following memo is based on a national survey of 1,002 likely voters conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, Inc. between August 16-23, 2004 conducted on behalf of Integrity of Science Working Group. The survey employed random-digit-dial technology and has a margin of error of ± 3.1 percentage points.



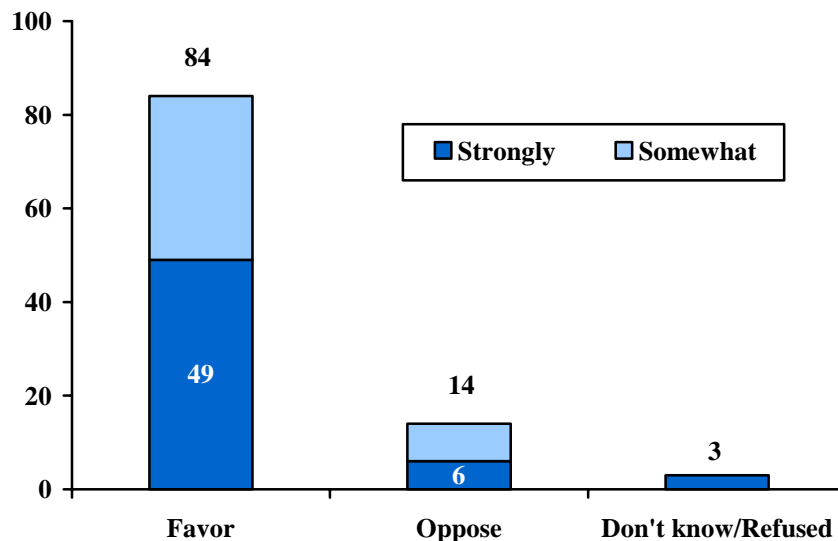
a broad array of experts who have strong academic credentials, and not surround themselves with a few like-minded advisors who share their political goals and policy agenda.

Ultimately, the Bush Administration struggles with credibility on scientific issues because voters understand that both big business and religious conservatives exert an important influence on the conduct of policy that has the potential to undermine people's health and safety. Earlier this year, 62 leading U.S. scientists issued a statement challenging the Administration's approach to the scientific research process; since then more than 5,200 scientists have signed on. This effort has tapped into the public's strong desire to see scientific integrity in federal policy making.

Main Findings

- **Although voters believe the federal government has an important role to play in scientific research, they strongly believe science should be kept separate from politics.** A strong majority (84 percent) agrees that the federal government has an important role to play in both funding and conduct of scientific research. They also believe that government science ought to be protected from political influences, rejecting the more cynical viewpoint that it is impossible to separate science and politics if the government is involved.

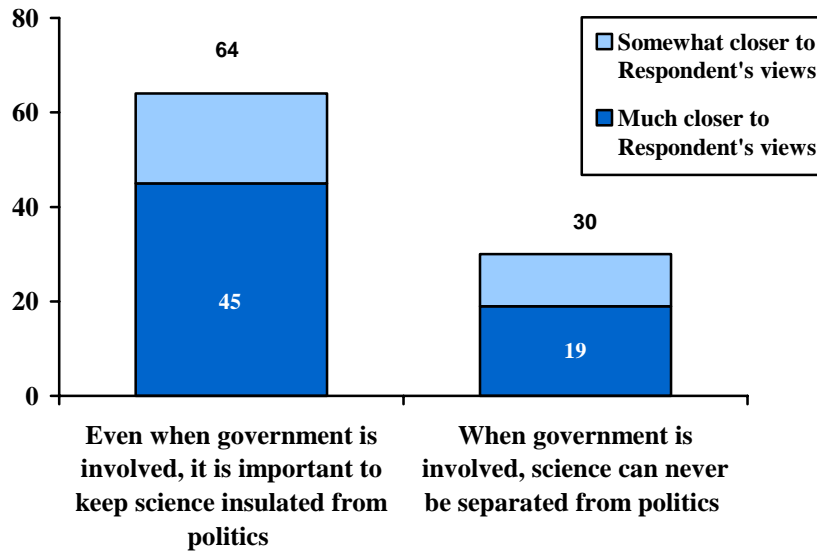
The Federal Government Has An Important Role to Play in Both Funding and Conducting Scientific Research





- **Voters strongly feel it is important for leaders to gather information from a variety of experts with whom they do not necessarily agree.** Voters want scientists and leaders in government to adhere to the principles of objectivity and to employ open methods of back-and-forth discussion. They strongly feel that our country's leaders should gather scientific advice from a diverse array of experts, rather than advisors who share their opinions (83 percent versus 13 percent). In appointing advisory committees, open-mindedness is almost as important a quality as expert knowledge (85 percent very important).

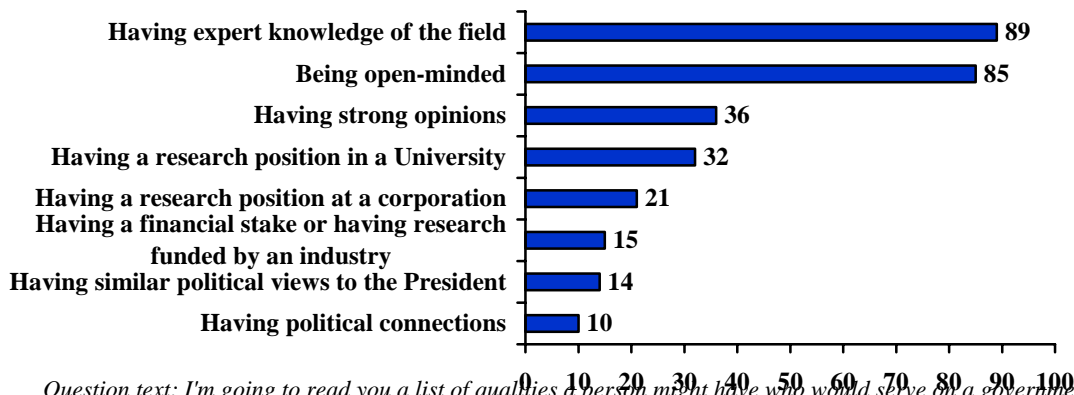
ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SEPARATION OF SCIENCE AND POLITICS





- **Appointments to scientific advisory committees should be made on expertise and it is not acceptable for administrations to ask nominees their party affiliation or voting history.** Voters balk at the notion of having administrations ask potential advisory committee candidates their party affiliation or their voting preferences. Voters feel it is most important that advisory committees be selected on the basis of expert knowledge (89 percent very important) and being open-minded (85 percent very important). Having similar political views to the President is not viewed as a priority (57 percent not at all important). Moreover two-thirds (67 percent) strongly feel it is not acceptable to ask about party affiliation or recent presidential voting when considering a candidate for an advisory committee.

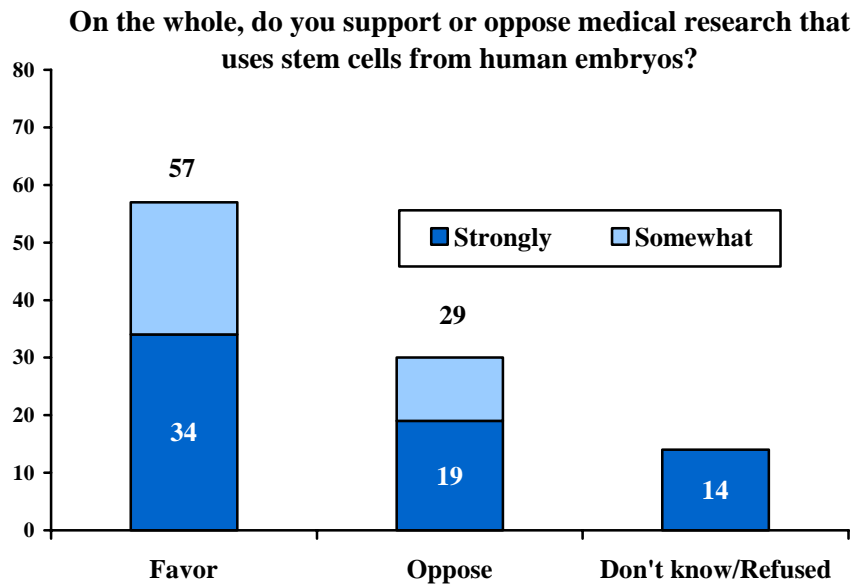
QUALITIES OF CANDIDATES FOR ADVISORY COMMITTEES
(percent very important)



Question text: I'm going to read you a list of qualities a person might have who would serve on a government scientific advisory committee. For each one, please tell me whether you think that quality is a very important, somewhat important, a little important, or not at all important quality for someone who would serve on an government scientific advisory committee.



- **Science, at its best, should address issues of health and safety.** Voters believe that the most important contribution science makes to society is in developing new medicines and curing diseases (62 percent mentioned). They prioritize health by a more than 2-to-1 margin over other important roles, such as developing new national security technologies (27 percent) and developing new technologies so businesses can grow (20 percent). Given this view of science, it is not surprising that we see support for stem cell research (57 percent favor), a possible source of new cures.



- **Voters are most concerned with administration practices that restrict the flow of information in ways that impact children’s health.** As seen throughout the poll, the public puts a premium on science that contributes to Americans’ health and safety. As expected then, the public is also quite alarmed when politics interferes with science’s ability to address health and safety, particularly when it relates to children. For example, more than half (52 percent) of voters found it completely unacceptable to remove scientific information from websites on public health issues if the scientific evidence contradicted administration policy and nearly half (48 percent) of voters found it completely unacceptable to weaken rules for mercury emissions while withholding evidence that many women of childbearing age have unhealthy levels of mercury in their system (see Data Appendix).
- **Voters are equally concerned about interference from corporate and religious interests.** Voters do not want to see people with outside agendas getting involved in government science. Over half of respondents voice serious doubts about the Bush administration’s approach to science and policy when

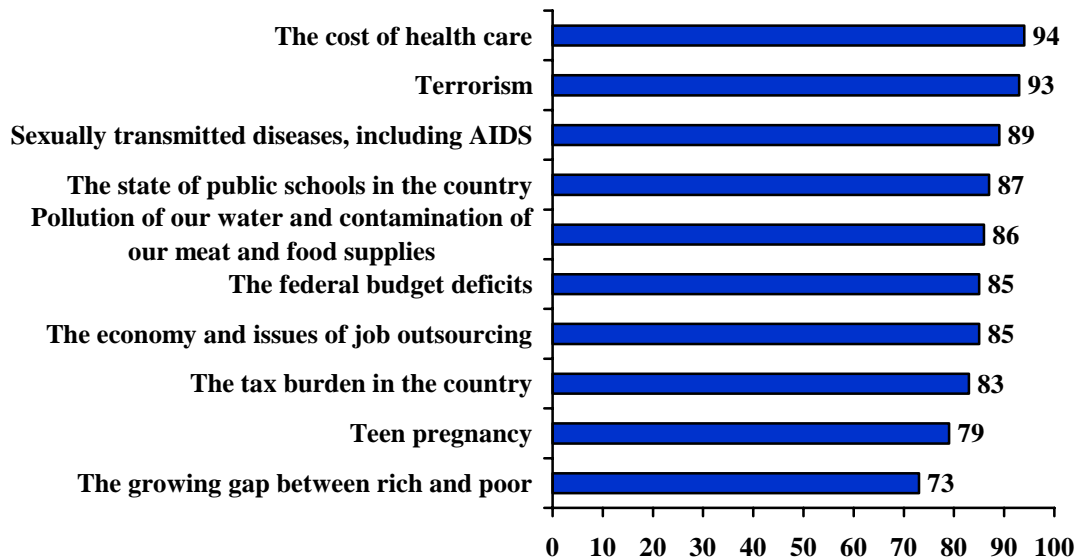


asked to react to statements that suggest they are working on behalf of corporate interests (54 percent serious doubts) or are deeply influenced by religious conservatives (50 percent serious doubts). (See Data Appendix)

- **Voters are concerned with a variety of science-related public health issues.** Public health issues frequently emerged as some of the greatest problems that our current President and future presidents will have to face. The cost of health care is considered a very serious or important problem by virtually all voters (94 percent). Other health concerns, such as sexually transmitted diseases (89 percent) and pollution of our water and contamination of our food supplies (86 percent), are also regarded as important problems by a plurality of voters.

TOP 10 MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES OF THE FUTURE

(percent very serious or important problem)



Question text: I am going to read you a list of issues or problems that our current President, and future presidents, may have to address. Please tell me for each one whether it is--a very serious problem, important problem, a small problem or not a problem.



DATA APPENDIX

WAYS IN WHICH POLITICS HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN SCIENCE*		
<i>(Percent responding)</i>		
	Total unacceptable (rating = 0-4)	Completely unacceptable (rating = 0)
Appointing corporate experts with weak scientific qualifications and/or ideological conservatives to scientific advisory committees within federal agencies, including a doctor who thinks women should read the Bible to heal headaches and relieve pre-menstrual symptoms	68	51
Asking potential advisory committee members political questions like their political party or who they voted for, and then removing or rejecting appointees to scientific advisory committees that have opinions that do not agree with the Bush Administration.	66	52
Suppressing research results, either by removing key paragraphs from research reports, or by delaying publication of findings while decisions are being made, when that research contradicts the Bush Administration's positions or upsets corporations.	67	51
Weakening rules for mercury emissions from power plants, while withholding evidence that 1 in 12 women of childbearing age have high enough mercury levels to harm their unborn children	59	48
Stacking a scientific advisory panel on childhood lead poisoning with scientists hand-picked by the lead industry and paint companies.	60	47
Announcing, shortly after 9/11, that asbestos dust in the Ground Zero area was 'very low' and the air was 'safe to breathe' even though more than 25 percent of samples showed presence of asbestos above safety levels.	56	43
Removing scientific information from websites or not providing complete information on public health issues if scientific evidence contradicts administration policy	63	52
Removing findings from government reports on global warming and inserting terms like 'potentially' or 'may' to create the appearance of uncertainty about the problem	55	41
Claiming, as a reason for war in Iraq, that Iraq attempted to acquire materials to develop nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction while government scientists believed that Iraq was only building conventional weapons	50	41
Using outdated, incomplete or flawed science to support policies that favor the interests of the timber industry, developers and other corporate stakeholders over the protection of endangered species such as the Florida Panther, rare swans and Northwest Salmon	54	39
Promoting abstinence-only education, despite the fact that many studies have shown this does not effectively curb teen pregnancy or sexually-transmitted diseases	48	35

*Question text: Now, I am going to read to you some things the Bush Administration has done over the past three years. For each one, I'd like you to rate on a scale from 0 to 10 how acceptable you find each one of these things, where 10 is completely acceptable, 0 is completely unacceptable, and 5 is neither acceptable nor unacceptable. If you have no opinion or do not have enough information to make a decision, please say so.



MOTIVATIONS FOR INTERFERENCE IN SCIENCE* <i>(Percent responding)</i>		
	Very/ somewhat serious doubts	Very serious doubts
The Bush Administration is actively working on behalf of corporate interests by appointing corporate selected scientists to advisory committees as well as suppressing and distorting research	54	34
Public health is being hurt by administration officials, who manipulate science to score short-term political gains. We need to work to restore integrity in government science, so that it is used for its intended purpose, improving the public's health and safety.	50	32
The Bush Administration's stance towards scientific research is deeply influenced by religious conservatives inside and outside government. The patterns of appointments to advisory committees and the selective release of research about sex education and women's health is part of a larger effort to impose an abstinence-only policy and restrict access to birth control	51	31

**Question text: Now let me read you a series of statements that could be used to describe the Bush administration's approach to science and policy. For each statement, please tell me whether this description raises very serious doubts, serious doubts, minor doubts or no real doubts in your own mind about the Bush administration's approach to science and policy.*