

METHODS STATEMENT

NATIONAL ELECTION POOL EXIT POLLS

November 2, 2004

NATIONAL/REGIONAL EXIT POLL

Edison Media Research and **Mitofsky International** conducted exit polls in each state and nationally for the **National Election Pool** (ABC, AP, CBS, CNN, FOX, NBC). The polls should be referred to as a **National Election Pool** (or **NEP**) **Exit Poll**, conducted by **Edison/Mitofsky**. All questionnaires were prepared by NEP.

The National exit poll was conducted at a sample of 250 polling places among 11719 Election Day voters representative of the United States.

In addition, 500 absentee and/or early voters in 13 states were interviewed in a pre-election telephone poll. Absentee or early voters were asked the same questions asked at the polling place on Election Day. The absentee results were combined in approximately the correct proportion with voters interviewed at the polling places. The states where absentee/early voters were interviewed for the National exit poll are: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas and Washington state. Absentee voters in these states made up 13% of the total national vote in the 2000 presidential election. Another 3% of the 2000 total vote was cast absentee in other states in 2000 and where there is no absentee/early voter telephone poll.

The polling places were selected as a stratified probability sample of each state. A subsample of the state samples was selected at the proper proportions for the National exit poll. Within each polling place an interviewer approached every n^{th} voter as he or she exited the polling place. Approximately 100 voters completed a questionnaire at each polling place. The exact number depends on voter turnout and their cooperation.

All samples are approximations. A measure of the approximation is called the sampling error. Sampling error is affected by the design of the sample, the characteristic being measured and the number of people who have the characteristic. If a characteristic is found in roughly the same proportions in all precincts the sampling error will be lower. If the characteristic is concentrated in a few precincts the sampling error will be larger. Gender would be a good example of a characteristic with a lower sampling error. Characteristics for minority racial groups will have larger sampling errors.

The table below lists typical sampling errors for given size subgroups for a 95% confidence interval. The values in the table should be added and subtracted from the characteristics percentage in order to construct an interval. 95% of the intervals created this way will contain the value that would be obtained if all voters were interviewed using the same procedures. Other non-sampling factors, including nonresponse, are likely to increase the total error.

%Error Due to Sampling (+/-) for 95% Confidence Interval								
Number of Voters in Base of Percentage								
% Voters with Characteristic	100	101-200	201-500	501-950	951-2350	2351-5250	5251-8000	8001-15000
5% or 95%	6	5	3	2	2	1	1	1
15% or 85%	11	7	5	4	3	2	1	1
25% or 75%	13	9	6	5	3	2	2	1
50%	15	10	7	5	4	3	2	1

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The National exit poll was conducted at a sample of 250 polling places among 11719 Election Day voters representative of the United States. 500 absentee and/or early voters were interviewed by telephone in a pre-election telephone poll in 13 states that cast about 80% of the 2000 absentee vote. All voters were asked the same questions and their results were combined.

The error due to sampling for a 95% confidence interval is +/- 3% for a typical characteristic. Characteristics that are more concentrated in a few polling places, such as race, have larger sampling errors. Other nonsampling factors may increase the total error.

% Error Due to Sampling for 95% Confidence Interval							
Number of Voters in Base of Percentage							
100	101-200	201-500	501-950	951-2350	2351-5250	5251-8000	8001-15000
+/- 15%	+/- 10%	+/- 7%	+/- 5%	+/- 4%	+/- 3%	+/- 2%	+/- 1%