



Democracy Corps

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***** Strong Kerry Win In Final Debate *****

John Kerry won the final presidential debate and produced the biggest shift yet in the actual vote for president. In this national representative survey of 1,030 likely voters, with data collected by Knowledge Networks, Kerry moved into a 3 point lead over Bush, 50 to 47 percent, after the debate. The survey participants began the evening evenly split, 48 to 48 percent, as the country as a whole. But Kerry got a clear a boost from Wednesday's debate, which will very likely reverberate in the coming days.

Kerry gained 2 points in the first presidential debate, according to the Democracy Corps survey, and 1 point in the 2nd Town Hall Debate.

Kerry also gained 2 points in the battleground states, where his lead is substantial, 54 to 44 percent after the debate.

As with nearly all other polls, the Democracy Corps national survey shows Kerry winning the debate by 5 points, 41 to 36 percent. Among independents, he won by 6 points and by 9 in the battleground states. While there are a small number of undecided (61 respondents), Kerry won by 8 points. (Among college educated women, Kerry won by 20 points.)

The biggest vote shift came among older men, an important target group in the election. Kerry moved from a deficit of 2 points to an advantage of 4 points, 51 to 47 percent. .

This was very much a personal victory for Kerry. There was a net 8-point shift in favorability: positive responses rose 5 points to 48 percent; negative ones dropped 3 points to 42 percent. Bush gained only 2 points on favorability. Kerry's gains reflected sharp rises on personal attributes, without a comparable gain for Bush.

- On strong convictions, Kerry rose 6 points to 63 percent.
- On honest and trustworthy, up 6 points to 57 percent.
- On gives me confidence, up 5 points to 52 percent.
- On likeable, up 5 points to 62 percent.
- On having clear plans, Kerry gained 6 points in comparison to Bush and ended up ahead (45 to 42 percent).

Bush attacks on Kerry missed their mark. In fact, worries about Kerry on flip flops, weakness on defense, being too liberal, and on taxes all went down after the debate.

The personal attributes moved more than issues, but even here, among independents, Kerry was more trusted than Bush on the economy by 16 points (54 to 38 percent) and on health care by 20 (54 to 34 percent).