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VOTERS BELIEVE NATION IS SAFER NOW THAN BEFORE SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS, THANKS TO BUSH AND GOP

Democrats Would Have Made The Nation Less Safe Than It Is Today

NEW YORK, August 24, 2006 – A plurality of voters believe the nation is safer from terrorism now than it was before September 11, 2001, and most attribute this to Republican policies and the Bush Administration, according to this month's *Diageo/Hotline* Poll, conducted by Financial Dynamics.

When asked if Republican policies have made the nation "safer" or "less safe" from terrorism, 49% of registered voters said "safer" (18% "much safer"; 31% "somewhat safer"); and 50% of likely voters responded "safer" (22% "much safer"; 28% "somewhat safer"). The Bush Administration did not fare quite as well, but still garnered a plurality of support with 46% of registered voters and 38% of likely voters stating that the administration's policies have made the country safer.

The *Diageo/Hotline* Poll of 800 registered voters, with a subsample of 425 likely voters, conducted by Financial Dynamics from August 17-20, shows that despite the 7 point advantage of Democrats in the generic congressional ballot, only 20% of registered voters and 23% of likely voters believe the nation would be safer from terrorism if they were in control of Congress. Among Independents, only 10% say that a Democrat-controlled Congress would make the U.S. safer than it is today. A generic Democratic president fared slightly better (25% registered; 29% likely) as well as specific candidates: John Kerry (22% registered voters; 25% likely voters) and Hillary Clinton (24% registered voters; 25% likely voters). The inverse of the same question reveals even stronger results - 23% of registered voters say the nation would be "much less safe" under Clinton, compared to 20% under Kerry as president. In contrast, only 8% of registered voters and 7% of likely voters feel the nation would be "much less safe" if Republican John McCain were president. Out of registered voters, 29% say the nation would be safer if McCain were president, and 34% of likely voters agree.

With the 2006 Congressional elections less than four months away, job approval for Congress and President Bush remains low. Disapproval for the way Congress is handling its job is at 61% -- a three point drop from July -- while approval for Congress is flat at 31% since July. Job approval for President Bush has improved one point from last month, with 39% of registered voters approving of his job as president and 58% disapproving. Among likely voters, 42% approve and 56% disapprove. Bush's favorability rating has dropped 3 points among registered voters to 39% (19% strongly; 20% somewhat). Among likely voters, Bush has a 40% favorability rating (22% strongly; 18% somewhat).

Despite a significant lead Democrats have over Republicans in voter perceptions that the nation would be "better off" if they controlled Congress (an 11 point advantage among registered voters, and a 13 point advantage among likely voters), Democrats' advantage in the generic congressional ballot has dropped dramatically since last month. In July, Democrats enjoyed a 16 point advantage. Now that advantage has been reduced to 7 points (40%-33%) among registered voters. Among likely voters, Republicans and Democrats are tied at 40%.

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