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For immediate release

## **Recent Campaign Ads Spark Interest by Likely Voters**

### **With McCain and Edwards in ads, voters like what they see**

(Flemington, NJ, July 12, 2004) -- The latest Bush and Kerry campaign advertisements have sparked the interest of likely voters more so than the campaigns' previous ads. The positive approach of the Bush ad announcing McCain's support for Bush and Kerry's introduction of John Edwards as his running mate have produced the expected rise in interest in each candidate's ads. This is in contrast to the negative campaign ads viewed by likely voters over the past month which evoked less interest.

As reported on the web site ReadMyLipz.com, nearly 800 pre-selected nation-wide voters -- Republicans, Democrats and Independents -- were asked to respond, on a sliding scale for interest and believability to what is said and shown in ads by both the Bush and Kerry campaigns. After viewing the ads the respondents also were asked to accept or reject emotional statements that applied to them based on the battery of potential responses.

The well regarded pharmaceutical ad testing firm HCD Research, and Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion (MCIPO) have partnered and created ReadMyLipz.com to obtain and report data regarding voters' responses to Presidential candidates' advertisements over the Internet. This real time approach is groundbreaking in its scope and the first time a quantitative analysis of this sort has been performed for political advertising. As a part of an ongoing test of voters, HCD Research and MCIPO are evaluating participant's reactions to various ads the campaigns are running and have begun to gain insight into the effect the ads are having on voters.

The findings of the research reinforce the preferences of the party faithful but question the ability of these ads to persuade the unconvinced. "The positive approach taken in each of these advertisements gives the viewer something to feel good about. The previously tested ads which had negative statements did not hold the viewers interest and believability. With this round of ads you get the Democrats feeling good about Kerry and the Republicans feeling good about Bush," explained Arthur J. Kover, Ph.D., management fellow at the Yale School of Management and former editor of the *Journal of Advertising Research*.

One clear example is found on the question of whether the ads are “attention-getting.” Bush’s ad captured the attention of 90 percent of Republicans, while Kerry’s ad captured only the attention of 29 percent of Republicans. Similarly, Kerry’s ad captured the attention of 81 percent of Democrats and Bush’s ad captured the attention of 54 percent Democrats. These numbers fall along party lines.

This trend continued during the emotional testing as the Republican’s dominant reaction to the Kerry ad was suspicious and skeptical and the Democrat’s dominant reaction to the Bush ad was disgusted, irritated, enraged and contemptuous. When viewing their own party’s ads, Democrats and Republicans evoked the same strongest emotions feeling competent, confident, in control and proud. (Additional data is available; methodology, charts and graphs can be provided to support data).

“These advertisements resound so well within each candidates own party. After the negative ads of late, it is a wise approach to keep the supporters in tact,” said Christopher P. Borick, Ph.D., associate professor of Political Science and Director of MCIPO. “The data shows greater interest by the viewers which means the campaign teams are doing a better job of targeting their audience.”

Independent voters found Kerry’s ad to be more positive than Bush’s with only 7 percent finding something negative or troublesome with Kerry’s ad yet 20 percent responded this way to Bush’s ad. When asked to agree or disagree with the statement, “This ad gives me a positive feeling about the campaign,” 69 percent of Independents agreed with this on some level regarding the Kerry campaign yet only 40 percent did regarding the Bush campaign.

In the Bush ad, McCain’s presence elicited a strong increase in interest and believability versus previous Bush ads that made no mention of McCain. The ad carefully avoids showing Bush until McCain is halfway through his introduction of the President. The exact point before Bush is shown is the high point in believability and interest. Once Bush appears, the numbers decline sharply. Interest falls five points in the first two seconds, and believability falls ten points in the first six seconds.

Both interest and believability in the Kerry ad were very strong among Democrats and Independents with a strong continual rise in both categories among Democrats. By the end of the ad, Democrats showed more interest and believability than they had at any point in any other Kerry ad.

**Read My Lipz.com** was developed by HCD Research in conjunction with the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion, (MCIPO) and Emmy Award-winning Network Television Producer Stu Kreisman. Headquartered in Flemington, New Jersey, HCD Research is a pioneer in Internet health care marketing and advertising research. Headquartered in Allentown, Pennsylvania, MCIPO is a respected source of public opinion data on local, state and national issues. Kreisman is a writer/producer best known for his work on popular network television series such as Cheers, Night Court,

Newhart and SCTV. For more information or to share your views on current campaign political advertising, access [www.readmylipz.com](http://www.readmylipz.com).

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