



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **NC split over Libby, Distrustful of Bush**

**Raleigh, N.C.** – According to the latest Public Policy Polling (PPP) survey released today, North Carolinians are split over President Bush’s commutation of the sentence issued against Lewis “Scooter” Libby, Vice President Dick Cheney’s former Chief of Staff on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice in the White House leak investigation. The poll also indicates that North Carolinians hold a dim view of the ethics of the Bush administration.

The survey finds that 35% of people think Libby’s original punishment was too harsh, while 23% think it was too lenient, and 37% say it was just right. When it comes to the President’s commutation of Libby’s prison term, 50% said the President should have done nothing and let Libby serve his sentence. Forty-five percent of respondents think he made the right choice or should have gone even further, issuing a full pardon.

North Carolinians hold a relatively negative view of the actions of Vice President Cheney. Fifty-two percent of respondents think he was involved in a cover-up to try to prevent prosecutors from getting to the truth about who leaked Valerie Plame’s name. Thirty-seven percent said Cheney was not part of a cover-up.

When asked about how the leak scandal reflects on the White House, 50% say it indicates a larger problem of low ethics, while 38% say it was an isolated incident. However, slightly more people trust the President. Almost half of respondents, 48%, say that President Bush played no role in the scandal, while 17% think he did something unethical and 23% think he did something illegal.

PPP surveyed 434 North Carolina adults on July 12 and 13. The survey has a margin of error of  $\pm 4.7\%$ . Other factors, such as refusal to be interviewed and weighting, may introduce additional error that is more difficult to quantify.

Complete results are attached and can be found at [www.publicpolicypolling.com](http://www.publicpolicypolling.com). These include two questions about Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and the U.S. attorneys scandal and crosstabs breaking down the results by gender, party, race, and age.

For more discussion of the poll visit the Public Policy Polling blog at <http://publicpolicypolling.blogspot.com>.

If you have questions about this release or would like an interview regarding this release, please contact Mark Yacoub at 919-649-5263.

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## Introduction

Public Policy Polling surveyed North Carolina adults on Thursday, June 12 and Friday June 13, 2007 in order to better understand voters' opinions on the controversies concerning the fired US attorneys in the Justice Department and the Scooter Libby leak trial. We cross tabulated the responses to each of the eight questions asked against four key demographic measures: gender, political affiliation, race, and age.

## Results

### *Attorney Firings*

Earlier this year, allegations were made that the Justice Department fired eight federal attorneys for partisan reasons rather than on merit. There has been an ongoing effort by Congress to discover whether or not any Justice Department officials acted improperly.

In this survey respondents were asked two questions concerning the recent firings and Attorney General Alberto Gonzales' role in the matter. North Carolinians appear to be very interested in the matter, with 85% of respondents saying that they have been following the news either very or somewhat closely. Only 4% of respondents reported that they have not been following the situation at all. In a national poll conducted in April by CBS and The New York Times, only 50% of respondents claimed to be following the news closely while 49% said they were following the issue not too closely or not at all. Because the incident has received more national press over the past several months, it makes sense that more people are paying attention to the issue now than they were in April.

Opinion was split in PPP's poll over whether or not Attorney General Gonzales should resign over his handling of the situation and role in the matter. Respondents were only asked if they believe Gonzales should or should not resign considering how he has handled the firings, not what his role in the matter may have been. Forty-six percent of people think Gonzales should resign while 43% think he should not.

The question of Gonzales' resignation is split across gender and party lines. Women favor Gonzales resigning 52% to 34%, but men think he should not resign by a margin of 54% to 39%. Among Democrats, 67% think he should resign, but 70% of Republicans feel that Gonzales should stay on as Attorney General. Those results are not surprising, considering that this issue has become very partisan. Republicans are stalwartly backing Gonzales and feel he did nothing wrong while Democrats are claiming that Gonzales is not handling his role as Attorney General well.

Results from the national NY Times Poll in April show that Democrats feel the same way nationally as they do in NC, with 65% of Democrats in that poll saying Gonzales should resign. However, Republicans in NC are more favorable towards Gonzales. In the NY

Times poll, only 48% of respondents thought Gonzales should stay on, while 30% were unsure. However, the fact the poll was conducted just as the scandal was beginning explains why so many people were unsure at that time. The issue has received more coverage since April, allowing people fully form their opinions.

### *Scooter Libby Trial*

In 2003, the name of covert CIA agent Valerie Plame was leaked to the press by someone within the Bush administration. In the ensuing investigation, Scooter Libby, Vice President Cheney's Chief of Staff, was charged with lying to investigators and federal agents. He was subsequently convicted.

Three questions were included in the survey about the recent Scooter Libby trial and its aftermath. Again, a large majority of respondents claim to be following the case closely. Eighty-four percent of respondents say they are following the news of the trial very or somewhat closely. A national poll conducted by USA Today and Gallup earlier this month found that only 56% of people were following the issue closely. Though North Carolinians may be following the issue more closely than people are nationally, our poll's introduction attempted to weed out respondents who were not interested in the issue, resulting in a pool of respondents who were more interested in the issue than the average person. A majority, 60%, also agree that Libby's sentence of 30 months in prison and fine of \$250,000 was correct or too lenient. Only 35% of people say that the ruling was too harsh.

However, opinion was split over President Bush's handling of the Libby's punishment. While 50% of respondents think President Bush should have done nothing and let Libby serve his prison sentence, 45% of respondents thought that Bush should have taken some action. Specifically, 23% said his decision to commute Libby's prison sentence was correct, and 22% thought he should have gone even further and pardoned Libby completely. Nationally, though, people hold a more negative view of President Bush's decision. Sixty-six percent think he should have done nothing, while only 19% said pardoning or commuting Libby's sentence was the right decision.

The differences our poll found were, once again, drawn largely along party and gender lines, as the cross tabulation shows. In terms of party, 77% of Democrats thought that Libby's punishment was either too lenient or just right, while 58% of Republicans felt it was too harsh. Also, 71% of Democrats thought President Bush should have done nothing. Seventy-one percent of Republicans, on the other hand, thought that commuting or pardoning Libby was the right action. These numbers demonstrate the growing partisanship in Congress and in the public stemming from the Iraq War and how those feelings have begun to pervade other issues.

Women are much less forgiving than men when it comes to Scooter Libby. Sixty-eight percent of women thought Libby's punishment was too lenient or just right while a

plurality, 45%, of men said it was too harsh. More women thought President Bush should have done nothing while twice as many men than women thought Bush should have issued a pardon.

Also of interest, women are not following the case as closely as men. Twenty percent of women said they are following the news not too closely or not at all, which helps to explain why more women are unsure as to how the case should be handled than men.

### *White House Leak Fallout*

PPP asked three questions about the fallout from the leak scandal. It seems apparent that many people are distrustful of the Bush administration and feel that this was not an isolated incident. Fifty-two percent of people said that Vice President Cheney was part of a cover-up to try to prevent investigators from finding out who leaked Valerie Plame's name. Only 37% of respondents thought that Cheney was not part of a cover-up. Also, 50% of people think that the leak incident is not isolated and indicates low ethics in the administration. These numbers are very similar to national polls. A CNN poll found that 52% of people Cheney was part of a cover up, and a Gallup poll shows that 50% say that the incident indicates larger ethical problems in the administration.

It is not surprising that Democrats feel negatively toward Vice President Cheney and the administration as a whole, however, women and blacks also have a dim view of the administration. Fifty-nine percent of women and 65% of blacks think Cheney was involved in a cover-up. In addition, 57% of women and 61% of blacks think the incident indicates low White House ethics. Although these numbers might represent the more liberal nature of women and blacks, it should be a concern to the administration and the Republican Party as a whole that both demographic groups are so distrustful of President Bush's White House.

Respondents were also asked what role, if any, they think Bush played in the leak. On this issue, people are generally more trusting of the President than the Vice President. A plurality, 48%, think Bush had no role in the leak, while 28% think he did something illegal and 17% think he did something unethical. Women are also more trusting of Bush, with a plurality saying he had no role in the leak. Blacks, however, did not feel the same way. Forty-five percent think that President Bush did something illegal when it comes to the leak scandal. North Carolinians seem to support President Bush in this matter more than people do nationally. Only 28% of adults nationwide think Bush did nothing wrong, while 63% say he did something either unethical or illegal.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, these results show the partisan split in North Carolina concerning the Libby case and how President Bush chose to deal with it. Also, it is clear that the Bush administration is losing support in the state, as evidencing by the high percentage of

people showing mistrust of President and his administration. Although North Carolina has not abandoned Bush completely, Democrats are clearly set against him and Republican support for him is eroding.

Recently, many people have begun to discuss impeachment proceedings against President Bush. While it is very unlikely that those proceedings will happen in the House, the fact that a large number of people view the Bush administration and the President himself as having low ethics does not reflect well on him. Unless his policies and practices change in the next 16 months (which doesn't seem likely), his support will continue to dwindle, which could help the Democrats make further gains in North Carolina.

### **Methodology**

Public Policy Polling surveyed 434 likely North Carolina voters on July 12 and 13. The samples were chosen by randomly selecting voters from the North Carolina voter file.

Our surveys are conducted using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phone technology. The same recorded voice is played to every respondent, who answer questions using their telephone keypad. The standardized voice dramatically reduces the effect of interviewer bias.

The survey responses are weighted to accurately reflect the demographic breakdown of the desired population. The survey has a margin of error of  $\pm 4.66\%$ . Other factors, such as refusal to be interviewed and weighting, may introduce additional error that is more difficult to quantify. The exact wording of questions can be found on the respective survey results page.

### **Who We Are**

Since 2001 Public Policy Polling (PPP) has provided poll data and expert analysis for the public, opinion leaders and public policy makers in the state of North Carolina. PPP continues to be dedicated to tracking issue trends, campaign match-ups, and approval ratings on key figures in the state. You can find more of our polling data and analysis at our website, [www.publicpolicypolling.com](http://www.publicpolicypolling.com).

This survey was a project of Mark Yacoub, a junior Political Science major at NC State University. Mark has lived in Raleigh since 1997. He is originally from Chicago, Illinois. Mark is one of two summer interns at Public Policy Polling.

## NC Survey Results

- Q1** How closely have you been following news about the firing of several U.S. attorneys? Have you been following it very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely, or not at all? If very closely, press 1 on your keypad now. If somewhat closely, press 2. If not too closely, press 3. If not at all, press 4.
- Very Closely*.....42% *Not Too Closely* .....12%
- Somewhat Closely* .43% *Not at all*..... 4%
- Q2** Attorney General Alberto Gonzales has testified before Congress about his handling of the situation involving eight fired federal prosecutors. Do you think that Alberto Gonzales should or should not resign over his handling of this situation? If you believe that Attorney General Gonzales should resign, press 1. If you think he should not resign, press 2. If you are not sure, press 3.
- Yes* .....46% *Not sure* .....11%
- No* .....43%
- Q3** If you are a woman, press 1, if a man, press 2.
- Women* .....52% *Men*.....48%
- Q4** How closely have you been following the news about the recently completed trial of Scooter Libby, the former vice presidential Chief of Staff: very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely, or not at all? If very closely, press 1. If somewhat closely, press 2. If not too closely, press 3. If not at all, press 4.
- Very Closely*.....47% *Not Too Closely* .....12%
- Somewhat Closely* .37% *Not at all*..... 4%
- Q5** As you may know, Libby was convicted of lying to a grand jury and to FBI agents. He was sentenced to 30 months in prison, ordered to pay a fine of \$250,000, and serve 2 years of probation. Do you think the punishment handed down to Libby was too harsh, too lenient, or just right? If you think the punishment was too harsh, press 1. If too lenient, press 2. If just right, press 3. If you are not sure, press 4.
- Too Harsh*.....35% *Just Right*.....37%
- Too Lenient*.....23% *Not Sure*..... 5%
- Q6** If you are a Democrat, press 1. If Republican, press 2. If other, press 3.
- Democrat*.....42% *Other*.....20%
- Republican*.....38%
- Q7** President Bush recently commuted Scooter Libby's sentence of 30 months in prison, but did not pardon him, allowing Libby's conviction, fine, and probation to stand. Do you think President Bush should have pardoned Libby instead of simply commuting his sentence, or was his decision the correct one, or should President Bush have done nothing and allowed Libby to serve his prison sentence? If you think President Bush should have issued a full pardon, press 1. If you think his decision to commute was correct, press 2. If you think President Bush should have done nothing, press 3. If you don't know, press 4.
- Full Pardon* .....22% *Done Nothing*.....50%
- Commutation correct*.....23% *Don't Know* ..... 5%



**Q8** Do you think Vice President Dick Cheney was or was not part of a cover-up to try to prevent the special prosecutor from getting to the truth about who leaked CIA agent Valerie Plame's name to the news media? If you think Vice President Cheney was part of a cover-up, press 1. If you think he was not part of a cover-up, press 2. If you are not sure, press 3.

Yes .....52% Not Sure.....12%  
No.....37%

**Q9** If you are white, press 1. If African-American, press 2. If other, press 3.

White .....79% Other..... 3%  
Black.....18%

**Q10** Some people think President Bush had a role in leaking the name of the CIA agent. If President Bush did have a role, do you think he did something unethical but not illegal, or do you think he did something illegal, or do you think he played no role at all? If you think President Bush did something unethical but not illegal, press 1. If you think President Bush did something illegal, press 2. If you think President Bush had no role in the leak, press 3. If you are not sure, press 4.

Unethical.....17% No Role.....48%  
Illegal .....28% Not Sure..... 7%

**Q11** 1. Do you think the situation with former vice presidential Chief of Staff Scooter Libby is an isolated incident or is it an indication of a larger problem of low ethical standards in the Bush Administration? If you think the situation is an isolated incident, press 1. If you think it indicates a larger problem, press 2. If you are not sure, press 3.

Isolated Incident.....38% Not Sure.....12%  
Indicates low ethics .50%

**Q12** If you are 18 to 29 years old, press 1. If you are 30 to 45, press 2. If 46 to 65, press 3. If older than 65, press 4.

18-29..... 9% 46-65.....45%  
30-45.....16% Older Than 65.....30%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
<b>How closely following attorney firings</b>			
<b>Very Closely</b>	42%	40%	43%
<b>Somewhat Closely</b>	43%	41%	46%
<b>Not Too Closely</b>	12%	16%	7%
<b>Not at all</b>	4%	3%	4%

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
<b>Should Alberto Gonzales resign?</b>			
<b>Yes</b>	46%	52%	39%
<b>No</b>	43%	34%	54%
<b>Not sure</b>	11%	15%	8%

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
<b>How closely following Libby trial</b>			
<b>Very Closely</b>	47%	47%	47%
<b>Somewhat Closely</b>	37%	34%	41%
<b>Not Too Closely</b>	12%	15%	9%
<b>Not at all</b>	4%	5%	3%

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
<b>Libby punishment</b>			
<b>Too Harsh</b>	35%	26%	45%
<b>Too Lenient</b>	23%	26%	20%
<b>Just Right</b>	37%	42%	31%
<b>Not Sure</b>	5%	6%	3%

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
<b>Bush reaction toward Libby</b>			
<b>Full Pardon</b>	22%	14%	31%
<b>Commutation correct</b>	23%	23%	22%
<b>Done Nothing</b>	50%	54%	46%
<b>Don't Know</b>	5%	8%	1%

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
<b>Cheney part of a cover-up?</b>			
<b>Yes</b>	52%	59%	43%
<b>No</b>	37%	28%	45%
<b>Not Sure</b>	12%	13%	11%

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
<b>Bush's role in leak</b>			
<b>Unethical</b>	17%	20%	13%
<b>Illegal</b>	28%	29%	28%
<b>No Role</b>	48%	42%	54%
<b>Not Sure</b>	7%	9%	5%

	Base	Gender	
		Women	Men
<b>Administrations' role in leak</b>			
<b>Isolated Incident</b>	38%	32%	45%
<b>Indicates low ethics</b>	50%	57%	43%
<b>Not Sure</b>	12%	11%	12%







**Crosstabs**

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
<b>How closely following attorney firings</b>				
<b>Very Closely</b>	42%	45%	36%	45%
<b>Somewhat Closely</b>	43%	43%	47%	38%
<b>Not Too Closely</b>	12%	10%	14%	9%
<b>Not at all</b>	4%	1%	3%	9%

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
<b>Should Alberto Gonzales resign?</b>				
<b>Yes</b>	46%	67%	19%	51%
<b>No</b>	43%	21%	70%	38%
<b>Not sure</b>	11%	12%	11%	11%

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
<b>How closely following Libby trial</b>				
<b>Very Closely</b>	47%	52%	39%	51%
<b>Somewhat Closely</b>	37%	35%	45%	27%
<b>Not Too Closely</b>	12%	11%	13%	13%
<b>Not at all</b>	4%	3%	3%	9%

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
<b>Libby punishment</b>				
<b>Too Harsh</b>	35%	17%	58%	28%
<b>Too Lenient</b>	23%	29%	17%	23%
<b>Just Right</b>	37%	48%	20%	45%
<b>Not Sure</b>	5%	6%	4%	4%

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
<b>Bush reaction toward Libby</b>				
<b>Full Pardon</b>	22%	11%	39%	13%
<b>Commutation correct</b>	23%	13%	32%	26%
<b>Done Nothing</b>	50%	71%	24%	56%
<b>Don't Know</b>	5%	5%	5%	4%

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
<b>Cheney part of a cover-up?</b>				
<b>Yes</b>	52%	74%	25%	55%
<b>No</b>	37%	14%	64%	31%
<b>Not Sure</b>	12%	12%	11%	14%

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
<b>Bush's role in leak</b>				
<b>Unethical</b>	17%	25%	10%	13%
<b>Illegal</b>	28%	43%	12%	28%
<b>No Role</b>	48%	26%	71%	50%
<b>Not Sure</b>	7%	7%	7%	9%

	Base	Party affiliation		
		Democrat	Republican	Other
<b>Administrations' role in leak</b>				
<b>Isolated Incident</b>	38%	19%	64%	28%
<b>Indicates low ethics</b>	50%	75%	21%	55%
<b>Not Sure</b>	12%	6%	16%	17%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
<b>How closely following attorney firings</b>				
<b>Very Closely</b>	42%	41%	45%	40%
<b>Somewhat Closely</b>	43%	45%	35%	44%
<b>Not Too Closely</b>	12%	11%	16%	8%
<b>Not at all</b>	4%	3%	3%	8%

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
<b>Should Alberto Gonzales resign?</b>				
<b>Yes</b>	46%	45%	48%	52%
<b>No</b>	43%	46%	35%	28%
<b>Not sure</b>	11%	10%	16%	20%

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
<b>How closely following Libby trial</b>				
<b>Very Closely</b>	47%	47%	48%	44%
<b>Somewhat Closely</b>	37%	40%	23%	40%
<b>Not Too Closely</b>	12%	10%	23%	8%
<b>Not at all</b>	4%	3%	6%	8%

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
<b>Libby punishment</b>				
<b>Too Harsh</b>	35%	39%	19%	28%
<b>Too Lenient</b>	23%	22%	23%	44%
<b>Just Right</b>	37%	34%	52%	28%
<b>Not Sure</b>	5%	4%	6%	-

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
<b>Bush reaction toward Libby</b>				
<b>Full Pardon</b>	22%	24%	16%	16%
<b>Commutation correct</b>	23%	25%	10%	28%
<b>Done Nothing</b>	50%	46%	71%	52%
<b>Don't Know</b>	5%	5%	3%	4%

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
<b>Cheney part of a cover-up?</b>				
<b>Yes</b>	52%	48%	65%	56%
<b>No</b>	37%	41%	19%	28%
<b>Not Sure</b>	12%	11%	16%	16%

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
<b>Bush's role in leak</b>				
<b>Unethical</b>	17%	17%	19%	8%
<b>Illegal</b>	28%	24%	45%	36%
<b>No Role</b>	48%	52%	29%	44%
<b>Not Sure</b>	7%	7%	6%	12%

	Base	Race		
		White	Black	Other
<b>Administrations' role in leak</b>				
<b>Isolated Incident</b>	38%	42%	23%	20%
<b>Indicates low ethics</b>	50%	47%	61%	64%
<b>Not Sure</b>	12%	10%	16%	16%





**Crosstabs**

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-65	Older Than 65
<b>How closely following attorney firings</b>					
Very Closely	42%	62%	23%	41%	46%
Somewhat Closely	43%	23%	53%	47%	38%
Not Too Closely	12%	7%	17%	9%	13%
Not at all	4%	8%	6%	2%	3%

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-65	Older Than 65
<b>Should Alberto Gonzales resign?</b>					
Yes	46%	35%	41%	48%	49%
No	43%	53%	35%	45%	41%
Not sure	11%	12%	24%	8%	10%

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-65	Older Than 65
<b>How closely following Libby trial</b>					
Very Closely	47%	62%	31%	50%	46%
Somewhat Closely	37%	20%	42%	36%	40%
Not Too Closely	12%	7%	16%	12%	12%
Not at all	4%	10%	10%	2%	2%

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-65	Older Than 65
<b>Libby punishment</b>					
Too Harsh	35%	39%	29%	37%	33%
Too Lenient	23%	35%	22%	24%	19%
Just Right	37%	22%	44%	36%	40%
Not Sure	5%	5%	4%	3%	8%

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-65	Older Than 65
<b>Bush reaction toward Libby</b>					
Full Pardon	22%	41%	12%	20%	24%
Commutation correct	23%	9%	29%	24%	22%
Done Nothing	51%	40%	57%	53%	47%
Don't Know	5%	10%	3%	3%	7%

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-65	Older Than 65
<b>Cheney part of a cover-up?</b>					
Yes	52%	48%	45%	54%	53%
No	36%	44%	32%	36%	35%
Not Sure	12%	9%	23%	10%	11%

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-65	Older Than 65
<b>Bush's role in leak</b>					
Unethical	17%	14%	12%	16%	22%
Illegal	28%	36%	22%	30%	26%
No Role	48%	43%	53%	47%	46%
Not Sure	7%	7%	13%	6%	6%

	Base	Age			
		18-29	30-45	46-65	Older Than 65
<b>Administrations' role in leak</b>					
Isolated Incident	38%	37%	39%	39%	36%
Indicates low ethics	50%	48%	54%	50%	50%
Not Sure	12%	15%	8%	11%	14%

