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### **FLAGSTAFF VOTERS: “KEEP IT POSITIVE!”**

Flagstaff voters are tired of negative campaigning, according to results of a recent survey conducted by the Social Research Laboratory at Northern Arizona University. Most voters support asking candidates to sign a code of campaign conduct. Flagstaff voters are similar to national voters in wanting candidates to pledge not to make personal attacks on other candidates, not to say anything negative about other candidates, and to demand that outside groups pull unfair ads. Flagstaff voters are more supportive than national voters of candidates agreeing not to publicly question another candidate’s honesty or integrity.

The survey was conducted by Social Research Laboratory with 356 likely Flagstaff voters. Calling took place between March 26 and April 5, 2004. Results are accurate with a +/- 5.18 percent margin of error, at a 95 percent confidence level. National level data are drawn from the 2002 Civic Values Study conducted by Pew Charitable Trusts and the Institute for Global Ethics. The national survey was conducted with 800 likely voters and has a sampling error of +/- 3.5%.

### **SIGN THE PLEDGE!**

The election contests for mayor and city council are underway in Flagstaff, with the election to be held on May 18. Most Flagstaff voters would like the candidates to sign a pledge of campaign conduct. This pledge would require candidates to promise to campaign ethically and honestly and refrain from negative attack-oriented campaigns. When asked to rate the idea

of having a code of campaign conduct on a scale of '1' to '10' with '10' being "an extremely good idea," two-thirds of Flagstaff voters (66%) rated the idea as 8 or above. When the same question was put before voters throughout the nation, 65 percent rated the idea as 8 or above.

Flagstaff voters are interested in seeing the following rules included in the pledge:

- ✓ 87% think candidates should agree not to make any personal attacks on other candidates.
- ✓ 78% think candidates should agree to demand that outside groups pull unfair ads.
- ✓ 72% think candidates should agree not to publicly question another candidate's honesty or integrity.
- ✓ 65% think candidates should agree not to say anything negative at all about the other candidates.

For the most part, Flagstaff voters express the same levels of interest in a campaign pledge as do voters throughout the nation. Flagstaff voters differ in one noticeable area, however. They are more concerned about candidates agreeing not to publicly question another candidate's honesty or integrity. Seventy-two percent of Flagstaff voters would like to see this rule included in a campaign pledge compared to 64 percent of voters nationwide.

Fred Solop, director of the Social Research Laboratory commented, "Flagstaff voters, like voters throughout the nation, do not like negative campaigning. Local voters are particularly sensitive to having the honesty or integrity of candidates called into question. The message from Flagstaff voters comes through loud and clear: 'Keep it positive! Keep it clean!'"

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Social Research Laboratory, Northern Arizona University

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**FLAGSTAFF ELECTION SURVEY  
BACKGROUND MEMO**

Spring 2004

The *Flagstaff Election Survey* was conducted between March 26 and April 5, 2004. A random sample of 356 likely Flagstaff voters was asked questions regarding campaign conduct. Survey question results are subject to a sampling error of +/- 5.18 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in the population versus a scientific sample taken from the population. Sampling error does not take into account additional sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion. The data referred to in this release are presented below. Flagstaff data are compared to national data derived from the 2002 Civic Values Study conducted by Pew Charitable Trusts and the Project on Campaign Conduct. National results can be viewed at <<http://www.campaignconduct.org/polling.htm>>.

Suppose that in the upcoming Flagstaff election there was a non-partisan effort to get candidates to publicly sign a code of campaign conduct. This code would require candidates to promise to campaign ethically and honestly and refrain from negative attack-oriented campaigns. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “not a good idea at all” and 10 being “an extremely good idea,” how would you rate the idea of having a code of campaign conduct?

	<b>0-4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6-7</b>	<b>8-9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Flagstaff	13%	8%	12%	28%	38%	1%
National	8%	9%	15%	25%	40%	3%

Thinking about a code of conduct...I'm going to read a list of different rules that might be included in the code. For each one, please tell me how important you think it would be to include in the code of conduct: VERY important, SOMEWHAT important, NOT VERY important, or NOT AT ALL important.

Agreeing not to make any personal attacks on the other candidates

	<b>Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
Flagstaff	87%	12%
National	88%	11%

Agreeing not to say anything negative at all about the other candidates

	<b><u>Important</u></b>	<b><u>Not Important</u></b>
Flagstaff	65%	33%
National	68%	30%

Agreeing to demand that outside groups pull unfair ads

	<b><u>Important</u></b>	<b><u>Not Important</u></b>
Flagstaff	78%	17%
National	78%	18%

Agreeing not to publicly question another candidate's honesty or integrity

	<b><u>Important</u></b>	<b><u>Not Important</u></b>
Flagstaff	72%	26%
National	64%	32%