

Beneath Broad Support for War Are Sharp Divisions in Intensity

While the war in Iraq continues to command support from a solid majority of Americans, beneath the surface remain sharp divisions in intensity – gaps as big as 60 percentage points between population groups most supportive of the war, and those less so.

At 99 percent, conservative Republicans almost unanimously support the conflict, while barely more than half of liberal Democrats agree. Whites remain more supportive than nonwhites – largely, though not exclusively, because they’re more apt to be Republicans.

And there are divisions between the sexes. Women who classify themselves as political independents are 15 points less likely than independent men to support the war. And “strong” support for the war is notably low – 28 percent – among Democratic women.

In the aggregate, though, support for the war remains high – 77 percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll, a new high numerically although not statistically different from its level last week, 73 percent. Fifty-seven percent support the war “strongly.”

Most younger adults – 67 percent – support the war. But “strong” support in this group (18- to 25-year-olds), at 40 percent, is a good bit lower than it is among their elders.

Partisanship and ideology continue by far to be the biggest source of division in opinion on the war. In probably the biggest gap, barely over a quarter of liberal Democrats “strongly” support the war, compared to 88 percent of conservative Republicans.

Views of the 1991 Gulf War also were highly partisan. An ABC/Post poll completed 20 days after that war began found a 22-point gap between Republicans and Democrats in their support for the war. In this poll, completed with the war 18 days old, it’s 30 points.

PERSONAL – Another result finds that for millions of Americans, the war in Iraq is a personal affair: Twenty-nine percent say they have a friend or loved one serving in the conflict as a member of the U.S. armed forces.

That’s especially true among younger adults – 41 percent of 18- to 25-year-olds have a friend or relative serving, compared to just 14 percent of retirement-aged Americans.

But having a friend or family member in the war does not significantly impact support for the conflict. The war’s supported by 79 percent of people who know someone who’s serving – and by 76 percent of those who don’t.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone April 2-6, 2003, among a random national sample of 1,030 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:
<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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Results follow. *= less than 0.5 percent

1. Do you support or oppose the United States having gone to war with Iraq? Do you support/oppose it strongly or only somewhat?

	-----Support-----			-----Oppose-----			
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	No op.
4/6/03	77	57	20	16	10	7	7
4/3/03	73	58	15	24	16	8	4
3/27/03	73	58	16	24	16	8	3
3/23/03	72	55	17	26	16	10	2
3/20/03	72	53	19	26	18	8	2
3/17/03*	71	54	16	27	19	8	3
3/9/03	59	40	19	35	21	14	6

*3/17/03 and previous: Would you support or oppose the United States going to war with Iraq?

2. Do you have any close personal friends or family members who are currently serving in Iraq or elsewhere in the Middle East as part of U.S. forces there?

	Yes	No	No opin.
4/6/03	29	70	1

END