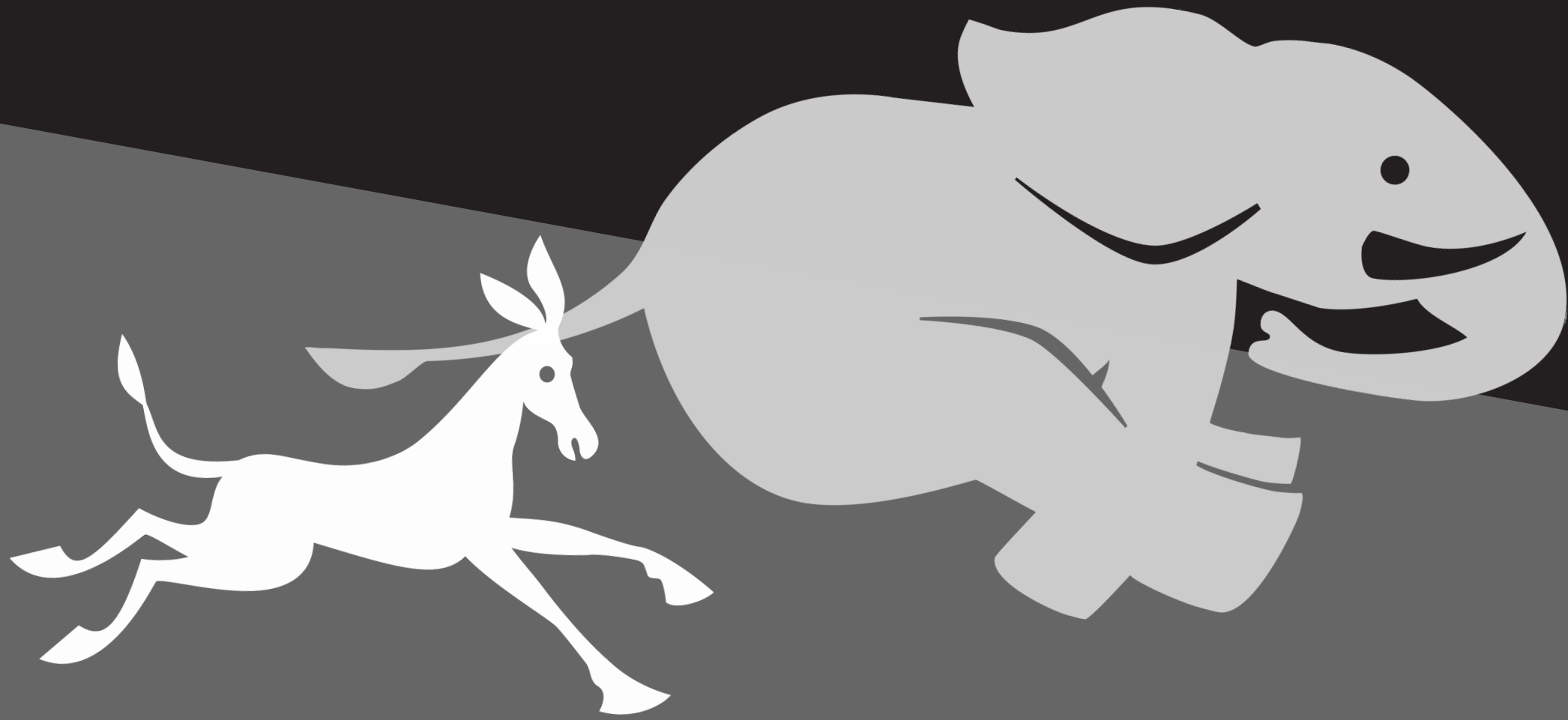


# GALLUP-ING TO THE RIGHT



## WHY DOES AMERICA'S TOP POLLSTER KEEP GETTING IT WRONG?

If John Kerry believed in the Gallup poll, he might as well give up.

A couple of weeks ago, a highly publicized Gallup poll of "likely voters" showed President Bush with a staggering 14-point lead.

But wait a minute. Seven other polls of likely voters were released that same week. On average, they showed Bush with just a three-point lead. No one else came close to Gallup's figures. And this isn't the first time the prestigious Gallup survey has been out on a limb with pro-Bush findings.

What's going on here? It's not exactly that Gallup's cooking the books. Rather, they are refusing to fix a longstanding problem with their likely voter methodology.

Simply put, Gallup's methodology has predicted lately that Republican turnout on Election Day is likely to exceed Democrats' by six to eight percentage points. But exit polls show otherwise: in each of the last two Presidential elections, Democratic turnout exceeded Republican by four to five points. That discrepancy alone can account for nearly all of Bush's phantom 14-point lead.

This is more than just a numbers game. Poll results profoundly affect a campaign's news coverage as well as the

public's perception of the candidates.

Two media outlets, CNN and *USA Today*,

bear special responsibility for this problem. They pay for many of Gallup's surveys, in exchange for the right to add their names

to the polls and trumpet the results first. They wind up acting as unquestioning promotional partners, rather than as critical journalists.

The public would be better served if journalists asked some tough

questions, beginning with the Gallup Organization, which has been asked to select the audience for the Bush-Kerry "town meeting" debate on October 8.

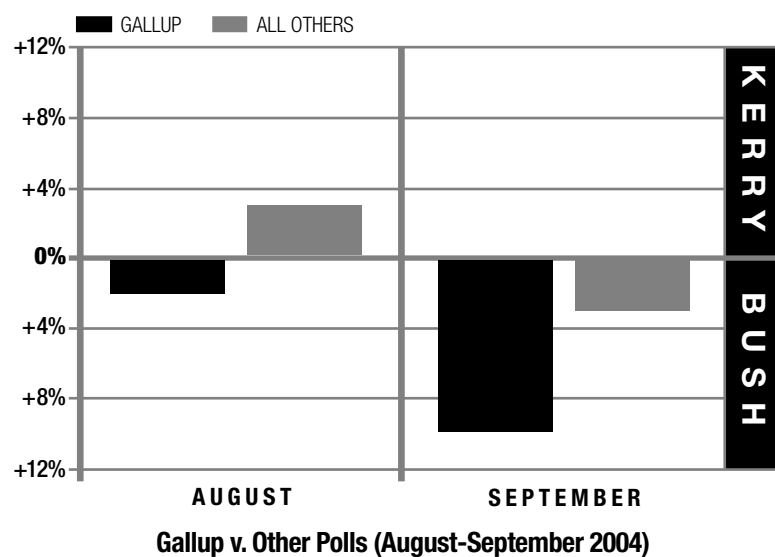
George Gallup Jr., son of the poll's founder, was the longtime head of the company and now directs its non-profit research center. Why hasn't he pushed for an update of the company's likely voter modeling, which his own father pioneered in the 1950s?

Gallup, who is a devout evangelical Christian, has been quoted as calling his polling "a kind of ministry." And a few months ago, he said "the most profound purpose of polls is to see how

people are responding to God."

We thought the purpose is to faithfully and factually report public opinion.

**THIS JUST IN: IT'S DOWN TO THE WIRE**  
*Excluding Gallup, 14 national polls of likely voters (all released in the last two weeks) show Bush with an average lead of only about three percent.*



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