

Presidential Travel and The Permanent Campaign*

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It goes without saying that presidents spend much of their time outside the confines of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. But how do they determine where they will travel? Surely events dictate travel; a natural disaster, commemorating ceremony or other specific need for the president to be in a state. Yet travel is also strategic and destinations are chosen on the basis of a locale's sympathy to the president's agenda or the state's electoral importance. A review of domestic travel for Presidents Clinton and Bush indicates that these presidents spent a disproportionate share of their time in key battlegrounds states, suggesting that the quest for reelection begins well before election day.

Table 1: President George W. Bush Domestic Travel, 2001-2003

Total State Visits – Ranking

Rank	State /electoral vote	2001	2002	2003	Total	Rank	State	2001	2002	2003	Total
1	Virginia (13)	19	6	10	35	25	South Dakota (3)	1	6	0	7
2	California (55)	6	8	15	29	26	West Virginia (5)	1	5	1	7
3	Pennsylvania (21)	8	13	6	27	27	Kentucky (8)	1	2	3	6
4	Florida (27)	9	8	7	24	28	Louisiana (9)	3	3	0	6
5	Texas (34)	8	8	8	24	29	Mississippi (6)	0	3	3	6
6	Missouri (11)	5	7	6	18	30	Indiana (11)	1	2	2	5
7	Maryland (10)	7	3	7	17	31	New Hampshire (4)	0	3	2	5
8	Michigan (17)	3	6	8	17	32	New Mexico (5)	1	3	1	5
9	Ohio (20)	3	5	8	16	33	Alabama (9)	1	2	1	4
10	Georgia (15)	3	6	4	13	34	Maine (4)	1	3	0	4
11	New York (31)	5	6	2	13	35	Nebraska (5)	2	0	1	3
12	North Carolina (15)	2	7	3	12	36	Hawaii (4)	0	0	2	2
13	Wisconsin (10)	5	5	1	11	37	Massachusetts (12)	0	2	0	2
14	Illinois (21)	2	5	3	10	38	Oklahoma (7)	1	1	0	2
15	New Jersey (15)	2	3	4	9	39	Washington (11)	0	0	2	2
16	Arizona (10)	1	4	3	8	40	Alaska (3)	0	1	0	1
17	Arkansas (6)	3	3	2	8	41	Delaware (3)	1	0	0	1
18	Colorado (9)	2	3	3	8	42	Montana (3)	1	0	0	1
19	Minnesota (10)	1	5	2	8	43	Nevada (5)	0	0	1	1
20	Tennessee (11)	1	5	2	8	44	North Dakota (3)	1	0	0	1
21	Connecticut (7)	3	2	2	7	45	Utah (5)	0	1	0	1
22	Iowa (7)	2	5	0	7	46	Wyoming (3)	0	1	0	1
23	Oregon (7)	0	4	3	7		Total	117	168	131	416
24	South Carolina (8)	1	3	3	7						

Note: Shaded states denote swing state decided by less than 6% in 2000.

Top 10 Rankings: Swing States = 50% of Travel

Top 20 Rankings: Swing States = 45% of Travel

Table 2: Swing State Travel by Presidents Clinton and Bush, 1993-1995 & 2001-2003

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Clinton (n=302)	28%	33%	40%
Bush (n=416)	36%	45%	39%

Note: Swing states were defined as those in which the previous presidential election winner won by less than 6% points. There were 16 in the 2000 election (see table 1 for list). There were 20 such states in the 1992 elections, however, we selected the top 16 so that the sample sizes would be equal for both presidents. The 1992 swing states include: Georgia, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Ohio, Florida, Arizona, New Jersey, Montana, Nevada, Kentucky, Texas, South Dakota, Colorado, Wisconsin, Virginia and Louisiana.

**Table 3: Swing State Travel by Presidents Clinton and Bush,
1993-1995 & 2001-2003
(*Substituting Tennessee for Virginia in Clinton Data)**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Clinton (n=302)	20%	25%	28%
Bush (n=416)	36%	45%	39%

Note: Given the proximity of the White House to Virginia, presidents frequently visit the northern suburbs. In the case of the first three years of the Bush administration, Virginia was the top ranked state for presidential travel. In the case of the Clinton administration, it ranked number two overall. As such, we substituted the 17th most competitive state (Tennessee) and withdrew Virginia in an effort to analyze the travel without the outlier state.

**Table 4: Domestic Presidential Travel: Clinton and Bush,
1993-1995 & 2001-2003**

Total States Visited/Number of Visits

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total States/Visits
Clinton	32/93	32/111	27/98	40/302
Bush	36/117	39/168	34/131	46/416

Note: States in which President Clinton did not travel include during his first three years: Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, South Dakota, Alabama, South Carolina, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota and Utah. States in which President Bush did not travel include during his first three years: Idaho, Kansas, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Table 5: Total Visits by President George W. Bush to Swing States, 2001-2003

State	No. of Visits
Pennsylvania	27
Florida	24
Missouri	18
Michigan	17
Ohio	16
Wisconsin	11
Arkansas	8
Minnesota	8
Tennessee	8
Iowa	7
Oregon	7
New Mexico	5
New Hampshire	5
Maine	4
Washington	2
Nevada	1

*Methodology - All data obtained from official government documents published by the Government Printing Office. Clinton travel data obtained by the author from successive volumes of the *Public Papers of the President*. Bush travel data obtained from the Government Printing Office on-line site (www.gpoaccess.gov) by Brookings Institution Intern, Emily Charnock with verification assistance from intern Katie Schmidt, March 2004. All vacations, trips to Camp David or personal trips were excluded from calculations.

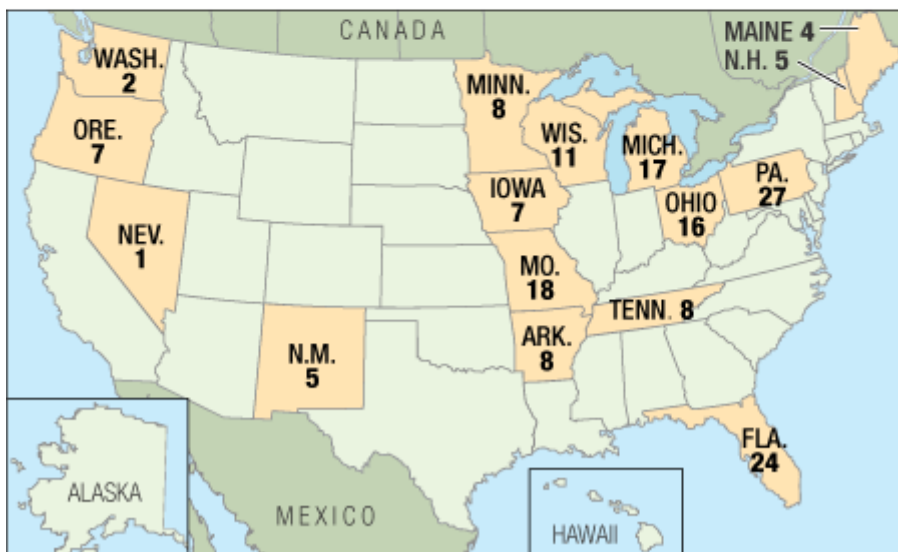
PRESIDENTIAL TRAVEL

SWING STATES VISITED OFTEN BY BUSH

A study released Monday by The Brookings Institution examined travel by President Bush during his first three years in office. Part of the research focused on travel to Wisconsin and 15 other swing states, those where the 2000 election was won by less than 6% of votes cast. Researchers counted each city Bush traveled to as a separate "visit" to that state. They excluded from their calculations Bush's personal trips, vacations and visits to the presidential retreat, Camp David, Md. Wisconsin, with 11 "visits" on eight trips to the state, ranked sixth.

TOTAL VISITS BY PRESIDENT BUSH TO SWING STATES, 2001-2003

SWING STATES



Source: The Brookings Institution,
Government Printing Office

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