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[ABOUT AAPOR](#) |
 [PRESS ROOM](#) |
 [POLL & SURVEY
FAQS](#) |
 [RESOURCES FOR
RESEARCHERS](#) |
 [FIND A
RESEARCHER](#) |
 [MEMBERS ONLY](#) |
 [CONTACT US](#)

SEARCH OUR SITE

Press Room

[Media Contacts](#)

[Questions to Ask When
Writing About Polls](#)

[AAPOR Launches Journalist
Education Partnership with
Poynter](#)

[Recent Press Releases](#)

[Archived Press Releases](#)

[AAPOR Clarifies Focus
Group Criticism](#)

[Focus Groups Misused](#)

[Web Surveys Unlikely to
Represent All Views](#)

[AAPOR Finds Frank Luntz
in Violation of Ethics Code](#)

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[Home](#) → [Press Room](#) → [Archived Press Releases](#) → [AAPOR Finds Frank Luntz in Violation of Ethics Code](#)

Wednesday, April 23, 1997 -- The Executive Council of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) announced Wednesday that a 14 month investigation found pollster Frank Luntz violated the Association's [Code of Professional Ethics and Practices](#).

AAPOR found Luntz, who heads the Luntz Research Companies in Arlington, Virginia, repeatedly refused to make public essential facts about his research on public attitudes about the Republicans' "Contract with America." In particular, the AAPOR inquiry focused on Luntz's reporting, prior to the November elections in 1994, that his research showed at least 60 percent of the public favored each of the elements in the GOP "Contract." When later asked to provide some basic facts about this research, Luntz refused.

AAPOR holds that researchers must disclose, or make available for public disclosure, the wording of questions and other basic methodological details when poll findings are made public. This disclosure is important so that claims made on the basis of opinion research findings can be independently evaluated. Section III of the AAPOR Code states: "Good professional practice imposes the obligation upon all public opinion researchers to include, in any report of research results, or to make available when that report is released, certain essential information about how the research was conducted."

Richard A. Kulka, chair of AAPOR's Standards Committee noted that AAPOR's investigation of Luntz began in January 1996, after receiving a complaint from a member. According to Kulka, "AAPOR tried on several occasions to get Luntz to provide some basic information about his survey, for example, the wording of the questions he used. For about a year, he ignored these requests. Subsequently, he provided partial information, but still refused to let us make any of the information public, arguing that the results were proprietary, even though he had been discussing the conclusions of the survey in public for nearly two years."

AAPOR's President, Diane Colasanto, adds "When researchers make public arguments based on their research data, then refuse to say how their research was conducted, that harms the public debate on issues and reduces the credibility of all survey and public opinion research."

AAPOR is an organization of over 1,400 research professionals from government agencies, colleges and universities, non-profit organizations, and commercial polling firms. It is the primary professional association representing public opinion researchers, and has a strong interest in protecting and strengthening the credibility of survey research. The organization was founded in 1947 by such pioneers of polling as George Gallup, Hadley Cantril, and Paul Lazarsfeld. Luntz is not a member of the organization.

[Back to top](#)