Episode #11 Annenburg Video Public Opinion

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Before the video, answer the following:

* What is public opinion?
* What role should public opinion play in a democracy?
* What role does it play in democracy?
* What are the consequences of relying heavily on polls to understand public opinion?

**1. A Change of Heart about Federalizing Airport Security**

* Why did the Republicans eventually give in on the airport security bill?
* How did political leaders know what the public wanted?
* Is this example atypical of the power of public opinion?

**2. The Voice of the People. Really?**

* What was wrong with Mr. Perot's poll?
* What would he have needed to do to create a better poll?
* What kinds of things should we, as consumers of polls, know about polling in order to evaluate their accuracy?

**3. The Case of Vermont and Its Civil Unions Legislation**

* How did Vermont's citizens express their views on civil unions?
* Polls can show what position people may take on issues, but it does not do a good job of showing the intensity of those feelings. Given that, should they be ignored in favor of participation in rallies or letter-writing campaigns?
* Given public opinion on this issue, did Senator MacDonald do the right thing?