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AT&T customers get any local long

manners. Now we're amid a new epidemic of anger — sometimes deadly anger.

By Karen S. Peterson
USA TODAY

Two shoppers in a Westport, Conn., supermarket get in a fistfight over who should be first in a newly opened checkout lane.

A Continental Airlines flight returns to Anchorage after a passenger allegedly throws a can of beer at a flight attendant and bites a pilot.

A Reading, Mass., father beats another father to death in an argument over rough play at their sons' hockey practice.

And a high school baseball coach in Hollywood, Fla., turns himself in to face charges that he broke an umpire's jaw after a disputed call.

Bad tempers are on display everywhere. The media report incidents of road rage, airplane rage, biker rage, surfer rage, grocery store rage, rage at youth sports activities. Leading social scientists say the nation is in the middle of an anger epidemic that, in its mildest forms, is unsettling and, at its worst, turns deadly.

The epidemic rattles both those who study social trends and parents who fear the country is at a cultural precipice. "We have lost some of the glue holding our society," says parent Frank Smist Jr., 48, of Kansas City, Mo. "We have lost our respect for others. The example we are setting for our kids is terrible."

Experts searching for causes blame an increasing sense of self-importance, the widespread feeling that things should happen *my* way. Other factors, they say, include too little time, overcrowding, intrusive technology and too many demands for change in a society hurtling forward in the 21st century.

"Rage is the rage today," says C. Leslie Charles, author



By James Kegley for USA TODAY
Bad drivers: A sign warns motorists on the Beltway near Washington, D.C.



By Phil Velasquez, AP
Bad example: White Sox and Tigers come to blows in Chicago.

Cover story

Nine incidents in which anger turned violent
■ 2A

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DOUBTIES

\$2.2 trillion projection likely to stoke debate over tax cuts

By William M. Welch
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Federal budget surpluses will total \$2.2 trillion over the next 10 years, more than double a previous forecast, Congressional budget analysts will announce today.

The revised projection is sure to escalate the election-year debate over how best to use the money — on tax cuts or new programs.

The Congressional Budget Office's estimate is a recognition that tax revenue is far higher than analysts had expected, thanks to a strong economy that continues to boost incomes. The new estimate is \$300 billion larger than the White House's budget office projected June 26. And it is far larger than the \$893 billion, 10-year surplus the Congressional Budget Office predicted as recently as April.

The latest figure excludes even larger surpluses from excess Social Security taxes. Both parties have agreed not to use surpluses generated by Social Security for other programs. The estimate was sent to Congress late Monday and is being made public today.

The budget office also says it expects the government to end this fiscal year Sept. 30 with an \$84 billion surplus, up from its previous estimate of \$26 billion.

The 10-year revision comes as Congress debates Republican plans for major tax cuts despite President Clinton's threatened veto.

The Senate plans to vote today on a \$248 billion, 10-year income tax cut for married couples. Last week it approved another bill eliminating federal estate taxes, at a cost of \$105 billion over 10 years.

"We will see who supports marriage tax relief, and we will see who thinks American families are not entitled to this relief," said Senate Finance Committee Chairman William Roth, R-Del.

Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers denounces the GOP tax cuts. He said they "primarily benefit the highest-income Americans." The larger surplus figure might strengthen the Republicans' case for tax cuts and bolster GOP presidential candidate George W. Bush's proposal for tax cuts totaling \$1.3 billion over the same 10-year period. Vice President Gore, the Democratic candidate, has denounced Bush's plan as reckless.

Clinton and congressional Democrats have proposed more limited and more targeted tax cuts and using most of the surpluses to pay off some of the national debt and finance programs. In recognition of the forecasts, Gore last month doubled his proposal for tax cuts to a total \$500 billion over 10 years.

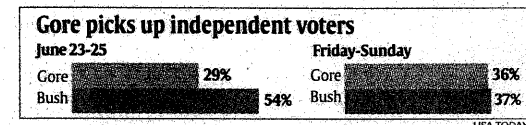
Gore pulls even with Bush, poll shows

Difference comes from swing-vote supporters

By Laurence McQuillan
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Vice President Gore has moved into a virtual tie with Texas Gov. George W. Bush in the latest USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll, mainly because of gains among independent voters.

The nationwide survey of likely voters in the presidential race, taken over the weekend, found Bush leading Gore 45%-43%. Among the 628 inter-



Source: USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll of 187 independent likely voters. Margin of error in poll subgroup: +/- 7 percentage points.

viewed, the margin of error was +/- 4 percentage points. A poll June 23-25 showed Bush with a 50%-38% lead.

Among independent voters who said they were likely to cast ballots on Election Day, 36% favored Democrat Gore and 37% backed Republican Bush. In June, Bush enjoyed a 54%-29% lead with that group.

The survey also found that Gore was picking up support among traditional Democrats

who have been tepid in their backing of the party's choice. Only 77% said they favored Gore last month; the figure rose to 86% in the new poll.

"Al Gore for the last several weeks has been talking about prosperity and progress and talking about fighting for the people and not the powerful," Gore spokesman Mark Fabiani said. "These are compelling issues for swing voters, and as people start to pay more and

more attention to the election, these issues will persuade them to vote for Gore."

Bush advisers reacted cautiously. Spokesman Ari Fleischer said, "When you average all the public polls for the month of July, the race is about a 6-point race," with Bush ahead. "We expect a close race, and we're very satisfied with the way this campaign has shaped up to date."

The Gore campaign in recent weeks has been talking about the nation's strong economy and trying to convince Americans that the vice president deserves a share of the credit, along with President Clinton.

When survey participants were asked if they were satisfied with the way things are

going in the USA, 61% said yes, up 5 points from last month.

Recent national polls have shown the vice president trailing Bush. Gore supporters have insisted that he would pull even by Labor Day, when voters are expected to pay closer attention to the race.

In a poll breakdown closely watched by political insiders, Gore's favorable/unfavorable ratings improved: 58% had a favorable impression of him, compared with 34% unfavorable. Last month, those figures were 52%-39%.

Bush also gained: 64% held a favorable opinion and 29% unfavorable. Last month, those figures were 60%-31%.

► Running mate views, 4A

Cellphone makers to display radiation levels

By Shawn Young
USA TODAY

NEW YORK — Cellphone makers soon will disclose on their packages how much radiation from the phone could enter the user's brain, at least under laboratory conditions.

The Cellular Telephone Industry Association (CTIA) will require manufacturers to disclose the data starting Aug. 1. It will appear on packaging in

three to six months.

The decision comes as concerns about mobile phone safety mount. Federal safety officials are studying the dangers of driving while using mobile phones, while scientists and government officials amass data on the effects of phone radiation. Studies have not found health risks from phone radiation, but experts say more research is needed.

The Federal Communications

Commission already requires cellphones to meet radiation safety standards that include a substantial safety margin, industry officials say. And consumers can get the radiation absorption numbers for specific models from the FCC, say Motorola and Ericsson officials.

The number, called specific absorbed radiation (SAR), measures the maximum quantity of radiation absorbed by a kilogram of tissue under laboratory

conditions. The FCC maximum: 1.6 watts per kilogram.

The numbers for specific models should not be used as safety ratings, industry officials say, because there can be variations in testing. In real-world conditions, absorption is generally far lower than the rating and varies widely because of a variety of factors, including how the phone is held.

"Little things can change the levels dramatically," Motorola's

Norman Sandler says. "It does not necessarily mean one phone is safer than another."

"Consumers need to know that their phones are tested and meet rigorous standards," Jo-Anne Basile of CTIA says.

The SAR information might also shield phone makers from lawsuits claiming they withheld information, as the tobacco industry is accused of doing.

► Teens hot for wireless, 3B