

The Star-Ledger/**Eagleton-Rutgers Poll**

September 25, 2000

CONTACT: CLIFF ZUKIN
or RACHEL ASKEW

RELEASE: (EP127-4)

A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo will appear in the Monday, September 25 Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll.*"

DYNAMICS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL: GOREGEIOUS

NJ PREFERS VP ON ISSUES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore is in solid shape in New Jersey. His current 10 percentage point lead among likely voters in the state is anchored both in voter alignment with him on the issues foremost in New Jerseyans' minds, and in a significant preference for him over his Republican opponent George W. Bush on a variety of leadership characteristics as well.

The latest Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers poll, conducted by telephone with 670 registered voters between June 6 and 13, asked voters what they think is the most important issue facing the country that whoever is elected president will have to deal with. Two general issues comprise a majority of New Jerseyans responses: Various economic concerns (excluding taxes) are mentioned by 30 percent, and "health care" related issues are mentioned by another 21 percent.

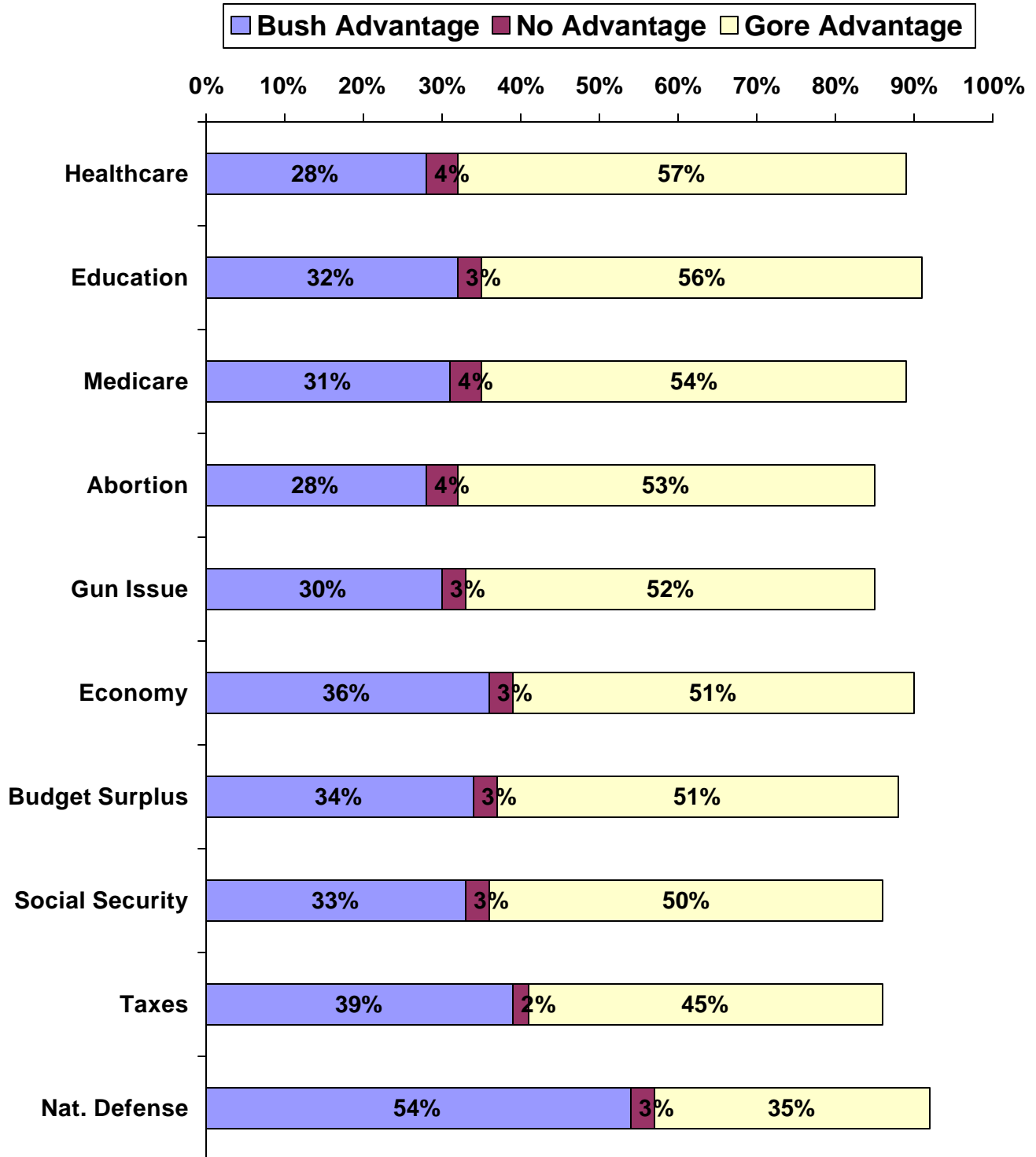
Gore holds a significant advantage over Bush as the candidate better able to handle both of these issues. Half (51%) give Gore the advantage in managing the economy, compared to just over one-third (36%) for Bush. In addition, Gore is preferred by a margin of two-to-one (57% to 28%) as the candidate better able to handle health care issues.

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll • Eagleton Institute of Politics

191 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

Phone: 732-932-9384 - Website: <http://slerp.rutgers.edu> - Fax: 732-932-6778

RATING OF CANDIDATES ON ISSUES*

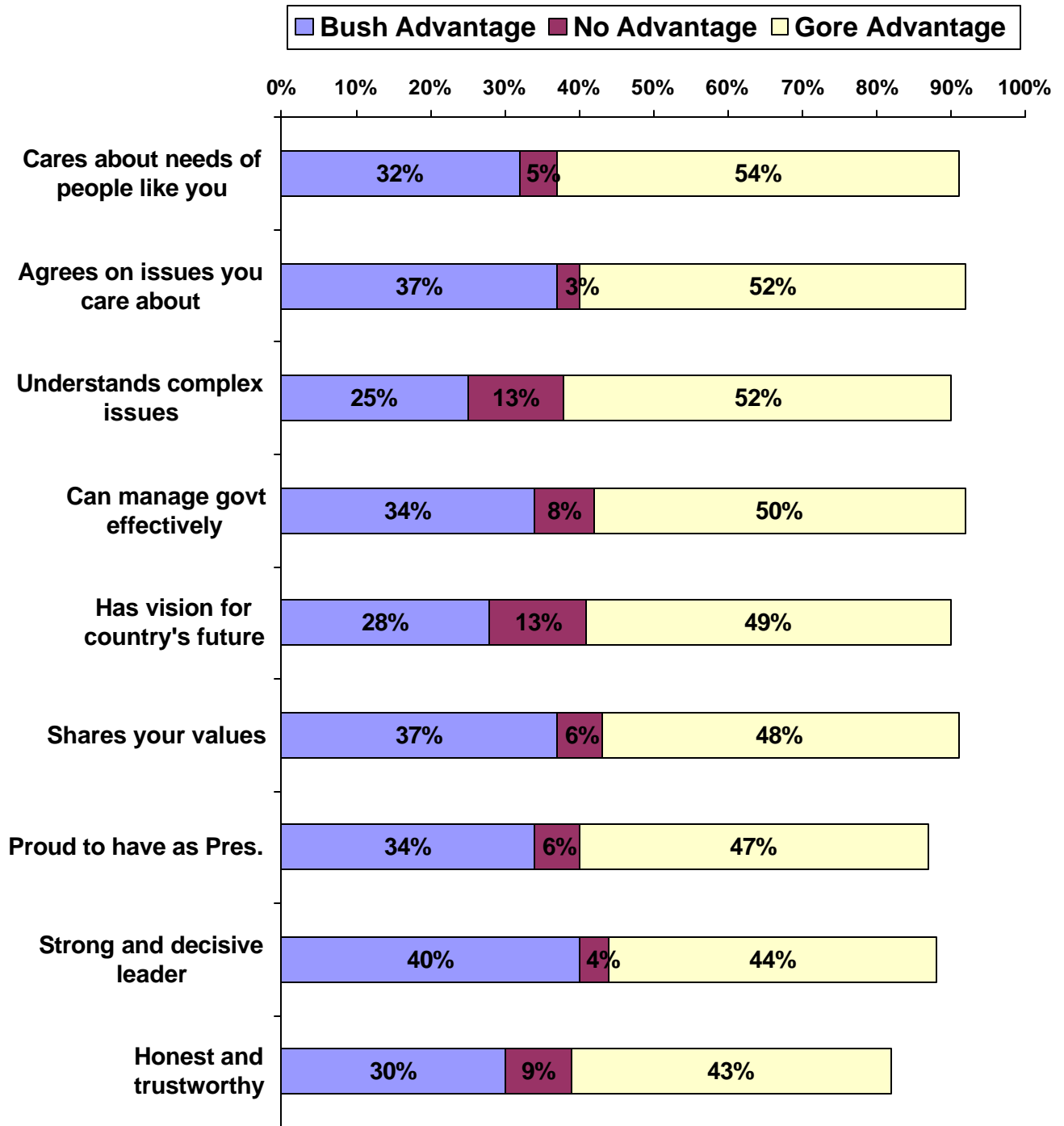


* Advantage refers to the percentage of registered voters who reported that a candidate “would better handle” an issue; No advantage refers to the percentage who volunteered that both candidates would handle an issue equally well.

In fact, the overall Gore advantage on issues is striking--significantly more New Jerseyans think Gore is better able to handle nine of the 10 issues the poll asked its cross-sectional sample of New Jersey respondents about. In addition to the economy and health, these include: education (56% to 32%), Medicare (54% to 31%), abortion (53% to 28%), guns (52% to 30%), the budget surplus (51% to 34%), Social Security (50% to 33%) and even taxes (45% to 39%). Bush is seen as better able than Gore to handle only one issue--“national defense and the military,” by a margin of 54 to 35 percent, with the remainder saying there would be no difference between the two candidates’ ability to handle this issue.

In addition to a greater affinity with the democrat on policy issues, New Jerseyans give Gore the edge over Bush on *each* of nine personal qualities and characteristics asked about. These include: caring about people like them, agreeing on issues people care about, understanding complex issues, being able to manage government effectively, having a vision for the country’s future, sharing peoples’ values, being someone they would be proud to have as a president, being a strong and decisive leader, and being honest and trustworthy.

RATING OF CANDIDATE TRAITS*



* Advantage refers to the percentage of registered voters who reported that a characteristic or quality “applies more to Al Gore or to George W. Bush.” No advantage refers to the percentage who volunteered that a quality applied to both candidates equally well.

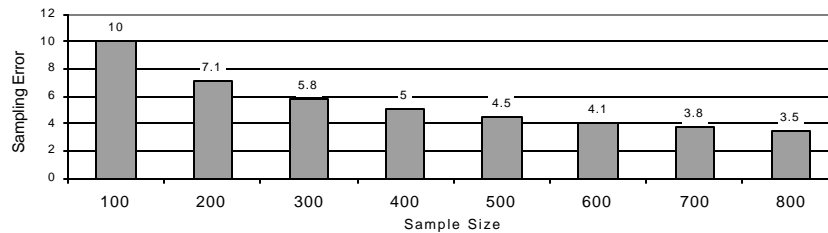
Cliff Zukin, director of the Rutgers-based survey, commented, “At the present time in New Jersey, Al Gore is an extremely formidable candidate. He is viewed as more in touch with what Garden State residents want in terms of the policies he would pursue and the type of leader he would be as President. Comparing our results to national polls it is clear that Gore runs stronger on both of these dimensions in New Jersey than he does in the country as a whole. Bush’s performance in the first presidential debate on October 3 is critical to his chances of winning here. Viewership should be massive, and will offer perhaps a last opportunity for Bush to change voter perceptions of him. Otherwise, voters inclinations to support Gore are likely to be reinforced, making Bush’s task of winning New Jersey doubly difficult.”

In addition to the two lead issues of “the economy” and “health care” which account for the primary concerns of a majority of voters, smaller numbers mention a variety of other problems: 16 percent mention a variety of social issues--including abortion and moral/family values, and 10 percent cite educational concerns. Fewer are concerned with foreign policy/military affairs (8%), specifically mention taxes in some form (5%), or explicitly comment on government functioning (including campaign finance, future Supreme Court appointments, or integrity in politics (4%). Environmental issues are the primary concern of only two percent of registered voters.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP127-4), MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2000

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* Poll was conducted between September 6-13 with a scientifically selected random sample of 916 New Jersey adult residents interviewed by telephone. This sampling yielded a total of 670 respondents who reported being registered to vote. The figures in this release are based on this sample size. All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error for registered voters is ± 4 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey registered voters were found to have a favorable opinion of Democratic Senate Candidate Jon Corzine, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46 and 54 percent (50 ± 4) had all New Jersey registered voters been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported for Republicans, Independents or Democrats, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. The following chart shows the relationship between sample size and sampling error.

Sample Size and Sampling Error



Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects. The verbatim wording of all questions asked is reproduced in this background memo. The sample has been stratified based on county and the data have been weighted on age to insure an accurate proportional representation of the state. In this release we also refer to 'likely voters.' These figures are based on the 58% of the eligible New Jersey electorate deemed most likely to vote based on a combination of reported voting intention, reported past voting behavior and interest in the election. Turnout in the 1996 Presidential election was approximately 51% of those eligible (or 72% of all those registered) and was 56% in 1992. Turnout in 2000 may, of course, be somewhat higher or lower. The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

“Thinking ahead, what do you think is the most important issue facing the country that whoever is elected president will have to deal with? PROMPT, What Else? Anything else?” TAKE UP TO FOUR RESPONSES. IF DON’T KNOW CODE 99 (Q22)

	FIRST MENTION	ANY MENTION
ECONOMIC ISSUES BESIDES TAXES—TOTAL	30%	44%
--General	7	10
--Social Security concerns	11	17
--Maintain economic growth	4	4
--Jobs/unemployment	2	4
--Pay down national debt	3	4
--Other	3	5
HEALTH CARE—TOTAL	24%	43%
--General	12	17
--Senior care/prescription drugs	3	8
--Health insurance for uncovered people	2	4
--Medicare	4	7
--Universal access	1	2
--Other	2	5
SOCIAL ISSUES—TOTAL	16%	28%
--Abortion	4	5
--Moral fiber of country	3	3
--Family values	1	2
--Gun control/gun violence	1	3
--Income gap between rich and poor	1	3
--Other	6	12

EDUCATION ISSUES—TOTAL	10%	20%
--General	8	15
--Educational funding	1	2
--Other	1	3
FOREIGN POLICY—TOTAL	8%	13%
--General	3	5
--Military/national defense	2	4
--World peace	1	2
--Other	2	2
TAXES —TOTAL	5%	7%
--General	3	5
--Taxes too high	1	2
--Other	1	1
GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONING—TOTAL	4%	7%
--Supreme Court appointments	2	2
--Bring integrity back to politics	1	2
--Other	1	3
ENVIRONMENT	2%	3%
OTHER ISSUES/DK	1%	2%
TOTAL	100%	167%

**This was asked as an open-ended question, where response categories are not supplied to respondents. Interviewers were instructed to take up to three different responses, which were later coded. The “any mention” column contains responses in any of the substantive categories that were given on any one of the four answers, and thus totals to over 100%

“What’s your impression...do George W. Bush and Al Gore take different positions on the issues, or are they pretty similar in their positions on the issues?” (Q23)

	<u>Different positions</u>	<u>Pretty similar positions</u>	<u>DK/Refuse</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Registered Voters					
Sept. 2000	60%	32%	7%	99%	(670)
<u>National Comparison</u>					
Pew, July 2000	51	33	16	100	(1,673)
<u>Party ID</u>					
--Democrat	69	23	8	100	(256)
--Independent	54	40	6	100	(182)
--Republican	59	36	5	100	(163)
<u>Likely Voters</u>	63	31	6	100	(542)

“Regardless of which presidential candidate you support, please tell me if you think Al Gore or George W. Bush would better handle each of the following issues. How about... (RANDOMIZE... Gore or Bush?” CATI SPLIT HALF FORMS A& B (Q24)

This table includes national comparison data from a survey done from August 18-19, 2000 by the Gallup Organization.

	<u>Gore</u>	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Both/Same</u>	<u>DK/Refuse</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
The budget surplus	51%	34%	3%	12%	100%	(337)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	48	41	3	8	100	(1,043)
Taxes	45%	39%	2%	15%	101%	(337)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	47	43	3	7	101	(1,043)
Social Security	50%	33%	3%	14%	100%	(337)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	53	38	4	5	100	(1,043)
Health care	57%	28%	4%	11%	100%	(337)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	57	33	4	6	100	(1,043)
The gun issue	52%	30%	3%	15%	100%	(333)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	45	42	3	10	100	(1,043)
Abortion	53%	28%	4%	15%	100%	(333)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	48	36	4	12	100	(1,043)
National Defense and the Military	35%	54%	3%	8%	100%	(333)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	38	54	2	6	100	(1,043)
Medicare	54%	31%	4%	11%	100%	(333)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	56	34	4	6	100	(1,043)
Managing the economy	51%	36%	3%	10%	100%	(670)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	50	40	5	5	100	(1,043)
Education	56%	32%	3%	9%	100%	(670)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	51	39	4	6	100	(1,043)

“Suppose there were only two major candidates for president and you had to choose between Al Gore, the Democrat; and George W. Bush, the Republican. Who would you vote for?” (Q11)

	<u>Gore</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Registered Voters					
September 2000	50%	13%	36%	99%	(633)
--June 2000	44	16	40	100	(578)
--March 2000	44	15	41	100	(601)

“In terms of his issue positions would you describe Al Gore/George W. Bush as liberal, moderate, conservative, or aren’t you sure?” (Q25 & Q26)

	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>DK/Not Sure</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
GORE							
Registered Voters, September 2000	34%	38%	8%	2%	18%	100%	(670)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	21	47	9	2	21	100	(256)
--Independent	36	41	8	1	15	101	(182)
--Republican	55	22	6	2	15	100	(163)
<u>Likely Voters</u>	36	39	7	2	16	100	(542)
<u>Vote Intention</u>							
--Gore	23	49	8	2	18	100	(317)
--Bush	54	22	7	2	15	100	(229)
<u>Ideology</u>							
Liberal	37	40	8	2	13	100	(120)
Moderate	26	43	8	2	21	100	(380)
Conservative	55	23	7	3	12	100	(155)
BUSH							
Registered Voters, September 2000	7%	26%	40%	2%	25%	100%	(670)
<u>Party ID</u>							
--Democrat	8	10	47	1	34	100	(256)
--Independent	9	33	38	1	19	100	(182)
--Republican	6	41	37	5	11	100	(163)
<u>Likely Voters</u>	7	27	43	3	20	100	(542)
<u>Vote Intention</u>							
--Gore	8	12	47	1	32	100	(317)
--Bush	6	44	35	4	11	100	(229)
<u>Ideology</u>							
Liberal	7	16	55	1	21	100	(120)
Moderate	7	26	37	3	28	101	(380)
Conservative	9	34	39	3	16	101	(155)

“Regardless of the political party you might favor, do you consider yourself to be a liberal, conservative, or somewhere in between?” (D2)

	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Other/DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Registered Voters, Sept 2000	17%	58%	23%	2%	100%	(707)
<u>Party ID</u>						
--Democrat	27	12	60	2	101	(263)
--Independent	18	18	61	2	100	(194)
--Republican	4	48	48	--	100	(169)

“Thinking about the following characteristics and qualities, please say whether you think each one applies more to Al Gore or more to George W. Bush. How about... [RANDOMIZE] Gore or Bush?” CATI:
SPLIT HALF FORMS A& B. (Q 27)

This table includes national comparison data from a survey done from August 18-19, 2000 by the Gallup Organization.

	<u>Gore</u>	<u>Bush</u>	<u>Both/Same</u>	<u>Neither</u>	<u>DK/Refuse</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Cares about the needs of people like you	54%	32%	5%	5%	4%	100%	(337)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	51	35	7	5	2	100	(1,043)
Is a strong and decisive leader	44%	40%	4%	7%	5%	100%	(337)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	42	46	6	3	3	100	(1,043)
Is someone you would be proud to have as president	47%	34%	6%	9%	3%	99%	(337)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	46	38	7	6	3	100	(1,043)
Can manage government effectively	50%	34%	8%	2%	6%	100%	(333)
-- Gallup	46	40	9	3	3	100%	(1,043)
Is honest and trustworthy	43%	30%	9%	10%	8%	100%	(333)
-- Gallup	45	35	11	6	3	100%	(1,043)
Understands complex issues	52%	25%	13%	4%	7%	101%	(333)
-- Gallup	47	36	9	3	5	101%	(1,043)
Shares your values	48%	37%	6%	5%	5%	101%	(670)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	48	40	5	4	3	100	(1,043)
Generally agrees with you on issues you care about	52%	37%	3%	2%	6%	100%	(670)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	50	40	3	3	4	100	(1,043)
Has a vision for the country's future	49%	28%	13%	5%	4%	99%	(670)
-- Gallup, Aug. 2000	46	37	12	2	3	100	(1,043)

CATI RANDOMIZE QUESTION 17:

“I'd like to learn a little more about your opinions of the candidates. After I read each name, please tell me if your general impression of him is favorable or unfavorable, or if you don't really have an opinion about him. First (RANDOMIZE...) Favorable or unfavorable? **(IF FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE, PROBE: Is that very (favorable/unfavorable) or somewhat (favorable/ unfavorable)?**” (Q17)

	<u>Very Favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat Favorable</u>	<u>Somewhat Unfavorable</u>	<u>Very Unfavorable</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
Registered Voters September 2000							
BUSH	24%	26%	18%	24%	8%	100%	(670)
GORE	35	28	15	15	6	99	(670)