

THE COMMONWEALTH POLL

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Bush Leads Over Gore in Virginia

Richmond, VA—Virginians are likely to throw their support to George W. Bush over Al Gore in the presidential race this November according to a survey released today. The Commonwealth Poll of Virginia Commonwealth University shows Bush leading over Gore. 45% of likely voters favor Bush while 41% favor Gore.

	Vote Choice for President			
	Bush	Gore	Undecided	Other
Likely Voters	45%	41%	10%	5%

While Bush's lead over Gore is within the margin of sampling error, it is consistent with Virginia's voting history. In 1991, George Herbert Bush beat Bill Clinton in Virginia by a 45 to 41% margin. In 1996, Bob Dole carried the state with 47% of the vote to Clinton's 45%.

The Commonwealth Poll was conducted May 1-9, 2000 with 555 likely voters in Virginia. The margin of error is +/- 5%. Details on the question wording and methodology can be found below.

The McCain Factor

Many commentators have suggested that supporters of John McCain will play a critical role in the Presidential election. Among the likely voters in Virginia, 37% viewed McCain favorably and 16% unfavorably. Among all those who rated McCain favorably Bush leads Gore by 45 to 38%. Among Republicans with a favorable view of McCain, Bush holds a 73 to 5% advantage over Gore. Dr. Cary Funk, Director of the Commonwealth Poll, notes that "in Virginia, McCain Republicans are now Bush Republicans."

No Gender Gap for Gore

The gender gap which has helped Bill Clinton and other Democrats over the last decade appears to give Al Gore little traction in Virginia. Bush leads among men by 47 to 40%. Among women, Bush retains a slight edge with 43% favoring Bush and 41% for Gore. This is in stark contrast to U.S. Senate Race in Virginia where incumbent Sen. Chuck Robb (D) is favored among women by a 45 to 34% margin over his Republican challenger George Allen.

	Support Bush	Support Gore	Undecided
Men	47%	40%	8%
Women	43%	41%	12%

METHODOLOGY OF THE COMMONWEALTH POLL

Interviewing for the Commonwealth Poll was conducted from the facilities of the Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond May 1-9, 2000 with a randomly-selected sample of 791 adult Virginians. The results reported above were asked of 555 likely voters, that is those who said they are registered to vote at their current address and are either “definitely” or “probably” going to vote in the November elections.

The sample of telephone numbers was prepared by Genesys Sampling Systems of Ft. Washington, Pennsylvania, and was designed so that all residential telephones, including new and unlisted numbers, had a known chance of inclusion. Interviews were obtained with respondents in 43% of the known or assumed residential households in the sample. The data were weighted to adjust for unequal probabilities of selection due to multiple telephone lines and multiple adults living in the household. In addition, the data were weighted on sex, race, age, and region of residence to reflect the demographic composition of the Virginia adult population. Percentages reported in the text and tables are weighted, while the number of cases shown in the tables for various subgroups is the actual number of respondents. Questions answered by the sample of 555 likely voters are subject to a sampling error of plus or minus approximately 5 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples like the one used here, the results obtained should be no more than 5 percentage points above or below the figure that would be obtained by interviewing all Virginia likely voters with telephones. Where the answers of subgroups are reported, the sampling error would be higher. Because of nonresponse (refusals to participate, etc.), standard calculations of sampling error are apt to understate the actual extent to which survey results are at variance with the true population values. Surveys are also subject to errors from sources other than sampling. While every effort is made to identify such errors, they are often difficult or impossible to measure. Readers making use of the results are urged to be mindful of the limitations inherent in survey research.

Further information is available on request from the Director of the Commonwealth Poll, Dr. Cary Funk, at 804 827 1430 or clfunk@vcu.edu.