

UNH/WMUR Poll Shows Bush, Gore in Tight Race

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DURHAM, N.H. -- Vice President Al Gore and Texas Governor George W. Bush are tied in the race for President in New Hampshire.

These findings are based on the latest **WMUR / UNH Poll**, conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. The WMUR / UNH Poll is sponsored by WMUR-TV, in Manchester. Seven-hundred eighty-six (786) likely voters were interviewed between Sept. 1 and Sept. 6. The margin of sampling error is +/-3.5%.

The Real Campaign Begins

Labor Day is traditionally seen as the end of summer and the beginning of the election season. Families are back from vacation, kids are back to school, and voters start paying attention to political campaigns. It is also true that the candidate who is ahead after Labor Day usually wins the election. In the race for President in New Hampshire, Vice President Al Gore and Texas Governor George W. Bush are starting the final stretch neck and neck. In the latest WMUR / UNH Poll, both Gore and Bush are favored by 42% of likely voters; Green Party candidate Ralph Nader gets 4%; Reform Party candidate Pat Buchanan gets 2%; 4% prefer other candidates, and 6% remain undecided.

Fight for the Middle

New Hampshire has more registered Republicans (36%) than registered Democrats (27%), and this advantage in party base helps Bush. To win New Hampshire's four electoral votes, Bush needs to win strongly among his Republican base, but he must also win a significant portion of Independent voters, as well. For Gore to win, he needs to capture almost all of the Democratic base, as well as a majority of the Independent vote.

Currently, neither Bush nor Gore have locked up their own party's vote -- 77% of Republicans say they plan to

vote for Bush, while 76% of Democrats plan to vote for Gore. Because neither candidate has locked up his base vote, their campaigns will have to spend time and money on this constituency that would otherwise be spent attracting the all important independent vote. Currently, Gore has a slight lead over Bush among undeclared, or "Independent" voters, getting 43% to Bush's 36%.

Subgroup Analysis

Gore gets his strongest support from Democrats, liberals, voters with post-graduate educations, and residents of "donor" towns. Bush gets his strongest support from Republicans, conservatives and residents of northern New Hampshire.

WMUR / UNH Poll Methodology

These findings are based on the most recent WMUR / UNH Poll conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center from September 1 through September 6, 2000. A random sample of 786 likely New Hampshire general voters was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to plus or minus 3.5 percent. Results reported for other subgroups have potential for somewhat larger variation than those for the entire population.

The data have been weighted to adjust for numbers of voters and telephone lines within households, and respondent sex. In addition to potential sampling error, all surveys have other potential sources of non-sampling error including question order effects, question wording effects, and non-response.

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