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## What Are the Voters Thinking? Titan Poll Surveys Bloomington Voters On Local, National Issues

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## **What Are the Voters Thinking? Titan Poll Surveys Bloomington Voters On Local, National Issues**

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*... Markowitz Strong ... Downtown Redevelopment "About Right" ...*

*... Growth Too Fast ... Even Split on Gay Rights Ordinance ...*

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*... Bush Beats Gore for White House in 2000 ...*

*... Senate Right on Impeachment ...*

*... Clinton, Starr Unpopular ...*

*... Bradley, Dole, Bush, Ryan, Ewing Viewed Favorably ...*

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. -- Voters in the city of Bloomington overwhelmingly favor Texas Gov. George W. Bush (R) for president in a match up with Vice President Al Gore (D), and they agree that the U.S. Senate did the right thing not removing President Bill Clinton from office after he was impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives.

On local issues, almost two-thirds of Bloomington voters have a positive view of Bloomington Mayor Judy Markowitz. Bloomington voters also believe downtown redevelopment is moving at the right pace, the physical growth of the city is moving too fast, and they are evenly split over whether an ordinance barring discrimination in employment and housing is needed to protect gays.

These are some of the conclusions of a Feb. 22-23 poll of 401 Bloomington city voters on national and local issues conducted by 19 Illinois Wesleyan University students enrolled in Political Science Research Methods, a course taught by Tari Renner, associate professor and chair of political science.

### **White House Beauty Contest; Impeachment**

In a head-to-head contest for the White House, Bloomington city voters favor Bush 51.6 percent to Gore 32.4 percent, with 16 percent undecided or not responding.

Poll respondents agreed 56.4 percent to 36.2 percent that Clinton should not have been stripped of his office in the aftermath of the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal, with 7.5 percent undecided or not responding.

### **Local Growth; Gay Rights**

Looking at local issues, 41.4 percent of those responding to the Titan poll believe that Bloomington downtown redevelopment is taking place at the right pace; 38.2 percent believe redevelopment is moving too slow, while 3.5 percent think urban renewal is too fast and 17 percent were undecided or did not respond.

More than half of those responding to the canvass--52.1 percent--think the physical growth of Bloomington is proceeding too quickly and 40.9 percent believe growth is on target. Only 3.5 percent of respondents think growth is too slow and another 3.5 percent were undecided or didn't respond to the query.

Asked whether the city of Bloomington should enact an ordinance prohibiting discrimination in employment and housing against gays, 42.9 percent of respondents supported such a measure, 42.4 percent opposed it, and 14.7 percent were undecided or not responding.

### **Assessing National Leadership**

Survey respondents were asked if they had a "generally positive" or "generally negative" view of seven national leaders--some of whom are declared and undeclared presidential candidates for Campaign 2000:

- o Bill Clinton--32.4 percent positive; 57.1 percent negative; 10.5 percent undecided/not responding.
- o Al Gore--43.6 percent positive; 36.7 percent negative; 19.7 percent undecided/not responding.
- o Retired U.S. Sen. Bill Bradley (D-N.J.)--50.9 percent positive; 7 percent negative; 42.1 percent undecided/not responding.
- o Former U.S. Labor Secretary and American Red Cross President Elizabeth Dole--73.3 percent positive; 12 percent negative; 14.7 percent undecided/not responding.
- o Texas Gov. George W. Bush (R)--65.1 percent favorable; 16.2 percent negative; 18.7 percent undecided or not responding.
- o Former Vice President Dan Quayle (R)--30.9 percent positive; 47.9 percent negative; 21.2 percent undecided or not responding.

Independent counsel Kenneth Starr, who spearheaded the Clinton impeachment probe, took a drubbing in the IWU public opinion survey. Only 21.7 percent of respondents had a positive view of him, while 61.3 percent viewed him negatively and 17 percent were undecided or didn't respond to the question.

### **Assessing State, Local Leaders**

Survey respondents also were asked to assess some state and local leaders:

- o Gov. George Ryan (R)--60.3 percent positive; 16.5 percent negative; 23.2 percent undecided/not responding.
- o U.S. Rep. Thomas Ewing (R)--53.6 percent positive; 20.2 percent negative; 26.2 percent undecided/not responding.
- o Bloomington Mayor Judy Markowitz--65.3 percent positive; 14 percent negative; 20 percent undecided/not responding.

#### **Democrats, Republicans and Campaign 2000**

Looking to possible Democratic party presidential candidates, who might square off in the 2000 primaries, 38.7 percent of Bloomington city voters favored Bradley, while 37.2 percent supported Gore, with 24.2 percent undecided or not responding.

Looking to possible GOP presidential candidates, who might contest primary elections in 2000, 41.1 percent of Bloomington city voters favor Bush, 40.4 percent favor Dole, 5.2 percent support Quayle, and 13.2 percent were undecided or not responding.

## Environment

Survey respondents believe U.S. environmental regulations are just about right in their scope--46.9 percent--while 29.2 percent viewed these rules as "not restrictive enough," 11.7 percent think they are "too restrictive," and 12.2 percent are undecided or didn't respond to the query.

## Poll Demographics

Of those surveyed, 45.9 percent characterized themselves as political moderates, 32.7 percent labeled themselves as conservatives, 14 percent dubbed themselves as liberals, and 7.5 percent were undecided or didn't respond.

Of those canvassed, 40.6 percent said they were Republicans, 28.4 percent viewed themselves as Independents, 26.7 percent said they were Democrats, and 4.2 percent were "other" or didn't respond to the question.

The religious preferences of survey respondents shaped up along these lines: 52.6 percent, Protestant; 22.7 percent, Catholic; 15.2 percent, other or no response; 8.5 percent, unaffiliated; and 1 percent, Jewish.

Survey respondents fell into these age groups: 44.1 percent, ages 31-50; 23.7 percent, over age 65; 19.5 percent, ages 51-65; 11.5 percent, ages 18-30; and 1.2 percent, no response.

The educational background of those responding to the survey was: 31.9 percent--four-year college graduate; 30.9 percent, some college; 19.2 percent, high school graduate; 13 percent, graduate degree; 2.7 percent, less than a high school diploma; and 2.2 percent, other or no response.

The annual household income of those canvassed had this breakdown: 43.9 percent, more than \$50,000; 31.7 percent, between \$25,000-\$50,000; 14 percent, no response; 10.5 percent, under \$25,000.

Of the poll respondents, 59.4 percent were female and 40.6 percent were male.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and individual schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art, and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletics and recreation center, a \$25 million science center, a \$6.8 million residence hall, and a \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts.

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| [Top of Page](#) |

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