

## **Clinton Fatigue is Still a Drag for Gore**

Although Al Gore's now more competitive in a general election matchup against George W. Bush, he's still being dogged by "Clinton fatigue."

Their race is closer not because Gore has gained support but because Bush has lost it, the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll shows. And while Bush's lead is down from double-digits to six points, it's now John McCain's turn to lead Gore by double-digits.

What's Gore's problem? A detailed statistical analysis of this poll and an ABC/Post poll last September shows that it has a lot to do with Clinton fatigue. As in September, about half of Americans still say they're tired of Clinton, that Gore is too close to Clinton, and that the country needs to elect a president who can set the nation in a new direction.

	2/27	9/2
Tired of Clinton	51%	53
Gore too close to Clinton	49	48
Country needs a new direction	48	47

This analysis helps explain why Gore still trails Bush even though Bush's favorable rating has dropped 12 points compared to last September, while Gore's has remained steady. The two now have similar favorability ratings (Gore 50 percent, Bush 49).

**INFLUENCE** - The best way to look at the influence of various factors on vote choices is regression analysis - a statistical method of separating out the importance of different factors. By controlling for favorability ratings, the influence of party identification and demographics, it's possible to measure factors influencing vote preferences while taking into account individuals' differing backgrounds and political predispositions.

Not surprisingly, the strongest predictors of the vote are the candidates' favorability ratings; people tend to vote for candidates they like. These results indicate that much of Bush's drop in the Bush-Gore matchup occurred because he's now viewed much less positively. At the same time that his favorability rating has dropped, it has become a stronger predictor of the vote since September.

But after controlling for favorability and party identification, Clinton fatigue again emerges as a key predictor of vote in this poll as in September. Its impact is significant above and beyond political predisposition and views of the candidates.

In the table below, the higher the score, the greater its influence on vote choice. (See the methodology statement for details.)

Significant Factors	Predicting Gore/Bush Vote	
	2/27	9/2
Candidate favorability		
Bush	.36	.29
Gore	.26	.29
Party identification	.22	.24
Clinton fatigue	.18	.20

**METHODOLOGY** - This poll was conducted by telephone Feb. 24-27 among a random national sample of 1,203 adults. The September poll was conducted by telephone Aug. 30-Sept. 2, 1999, among a random national sample of 1,526 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Fieldwork by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

A multiple regression analysis was used to identify key predictors of the Gore/Bush vote. Control variables included in the regression were party identification, candidate favorability, education, age, race, income, sex and ideology. "Clinton fatigue" is an index of three questions created using factor analysis (tired of Clinton, Gore too close to Clinton, and whether or not the country should go in the direction Clinton has been leading it). The dependent variable, Gore-Bush vote, is an ordinal variable based on the strength of support for each candidate. Standardized regression coefficients are reported in the table.

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ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet, at:  
<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html>