

## **Nader & Buchanan in the Debates?** **The Public Finds it Debatable**

Americans divide in the debate over debates: About half the public is content to limit the presidential debates this fall to George W. Bush and Al Gore, while slightly fewer say Pat Buchanan and Ralph Nader should join in the fun.

Forty-nine percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll favor two-way, Bush-Gore debates; 44 percent favor participation by Buchanan and Nader as well.

Other polls have found a bit more support for a four-person debate (ranging from 50 to 55 percent), generally by asking if Buchanan and Nader "should be allowed to participate." This poll used neutral language, asking if the debates should be between Bush and Gore or between Bush, Gore, Nader and Buchanan.

The bipartisan Commission on Presidential Debates plans three televised debates that it says will be open only to candidates who have at least 15 percent support in five separate pre-debate polls. This poll found Nader with seven percent support, Buchanan six.

Ross Perot likely would have been excluded from all three presidential debates had this rule been in effect in 1992. He didn't have 15 percent support in any ABC News or Gallup polls that would have been considered in the commission rules (polls done at least two days before each debate.) Perot's performance in the debates helped propel him to the second-best third-party showing this century.

This year even political independents aren't clamoring for participation by the third-party candidates. Just a bare majority, 51 percent of independents, say they should be included. That slips to about four in 10 Democrats and Republicans alike.

	Who should debate?	
	Bush-Gore	Bush-Gore-Nader-Buchanan
All	49%	44
Democrats	55	39
Independents	41	51
Republicans	57	40

**OTHER GROUPS** – Better-educated Americans are more likely to support third-party inclusion in the debates, as are those in higher income households, and whites.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone July 20-23, 2000, among a random national sample of 1,228 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Field work by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

Here are the full results:

10. Do you think the presidential debates this fall should be between Bush and Gore; or Bush, Gore, Nader and Buchanan?

	Bush & Gore	Bush, Gore & Nader & Buchanan	Both ways (vol.)	Bush, Gore & Nader (vol.)	Bush, Gore & Buchanan (vol.)	No opinion
7/23/00	49	44	1	1	1	4

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