

DUI a Non-Issue for Bush's Backers -- and Even for Most of Gore's

The vast majority of likely voters say George W. Bush's 24-year-old arrest for drunken driving is irrelevant to the presidential race - and almost none of Bush's supporters say it could cost him their vote.

Only seven percent of all likely voters say the arrest raises serious concern in their minds about whether Bush is qualified to be president, and virtually all of them favor Gore anyway. Almost no Bush supporters - one person in this poll of nearly 700 - say it raises serious concern about his qualifications. Indeed, only 16 percent of Gore supporters say so.

Similarly, just five percent of all likely voters say the report of Bush's 1976 arrest makes them much less likely to support him, again including one solitary Bush supporter. About as many likely voters, four percent, say it makes them much *more* likely to vote for him.

Is it relevant to the campaign? Somewhat more likely voters, 17 percent, say yes. But again they're almost all Gore supporters, and thus predisposed against Bush. Thirty percent of Gore supporters say it's relevant; that falls to five percent of Bush supporters.

These results are in line with past ABC News polling on allegations against political figures. Few people tend to be concerned with misdeeds that occurred long ago and involved personal behavior. What tends to matter far more are current actions, especially ones that involve professional malfeasance.

	All	Supporters of	
		Bush	Gore
Arrest raises serious concerns about Bush's qualifications	7%	<1%	16
Much less likely to support Bush	5	<1	10
Think it's relevant to the campaign	17	5	30

PARTY - The divisions by political party are similar - what concerns do exist appear chiefly among Democrats. Specifically:

-Fourteen percent of Democrats say the matter raises serious questions about whether Bush is qualified to be president. That falls to six percent of independents and two percent of Republicans.

-Nine percent of Democrats say it makes them much less likely to support Bush; that falls to four percent of independents and one percent of Republicans.

-Thirty percent of Democrats call it relevant to the campaign; that falls to 13 percent of independents and five percent of Republicans.

METHODOLOGY - This poll was conducted by telephone Nov. 3, 2000, among a random national sample of 697 likely voters. The results have a four-point error margin. ABC News and The Washington Post are sharing data collection for this tracking poll, then independently applying their own models to arrive at likely voter estimates. Field work by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

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

Here are the full results (* is less than 0.5 percent.). Call for full trend.

1. Have you read or heard anything about George W. Bush being arrested for drunken driving in 1976?

11/3/00

	Yes	No	No opin.
All	91	9	*
Gore supporters	90	10	0
Bush supporters	91	8	*
Democrats	90	10	0
Republicans	91	8	1
Independents	91	9	0

2. Does knowing about this arrest raise questions in your mind about whether Bush is qualified to be president, or not? (IF YES) Is it a serious concern, or not serious?

11/3/00

	NET	-----Yes-----		No	No opin.
		Serious concern	Not serious concern		
All	15	7	7	84	1
Gore supporters	25	16	9	74	1
Bush supporters	5	*	4	95	1
Democrats	24	14	10	75	1
Republicans	6	2	4	92	1
Independents	12	6	6	88	*

3. As a result of the reports about Bush's drunken driving arrest in 1976, are you (more likely to vote for him), (less likely to vote for him), or won't it make any difference in your vote?

11/3/00

	----More likely----			----Less likely----			No diff.	No opin.
	NET	Much	Somewhat	NET	Much	Somewhat		
All	5	4	1	7	5	3	87	1

Gore supporters	1	0	1	15	10	5	84	0
Bush supporters	9	7	2	1	*	1	89	1
Democrats	3	1	1	14	9	5	83	*
Republicans	8	7	1	2	1	1	89	1
Independents	5	3	2	5	4	1	89	0

4. Do you think Bush's drunken driving arrest in 1976 is or is not relevant to the presidential race?

11/3/00

	Relevant	Not relevant	No opinion
All	17	82	1
Gore supporters	30	69	2
Bush supporters	5	94	1
Democrats	30	68	2
Republicans	5	94	1
Independents	13	86	1

END