

Originally Processed With FOIA(s):
2012-2218-F

FOIA Number:
2012-2218-F

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Record Group/Collection: George H.W. Bush Presidential Records
Collection/Office of Origin: Public Liaison, White House Office of
Series: Leonard, Jane, Files
Subseries:

OA/ID Number: 07785
Folder ID Number: 07785-002

Folder Title:
Right to Life

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
G	24	3	4	1



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TO: Jane Barnett

FROM: Carl A. Anderson

DATE: 8/24/92

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Complete

(F)
Right to Life

Bipartisan Consensus?

Abortion

ployment.

With the exception of abortion, voters have historically trusted the Democrats more than the Republicans to handle each of these social issues. And after the Democratic convention, Clinton seems to have the upper hand on the abortion issue as well. In Gallup's post-convention poll, college-educated female voters preferred Clinton to handle the abortion issue by a margin of 59% to 25%.

The Abortion Decision, Clarence Thomas

On the issue of abortion, college men and college women are about equally likely to take a "pro-choice" position. For example, a July Gallup Poll for *Newsweek* showed 46% of college men and 47% of college women expressing the view that abortion should be legal "under any circumstances." While sharing similar opinions on abortion, college women rate the issue much higher in terms of their presidential vote than do college men.

A January Gallup Poll found 18% of college women, compared with 6% of college men saying the abortion issue was so important that it would determine how they would vote for president. A July *Newsweek* poll found 60% of college women and 46% of college men saying the recent Supreme Court decision on abortion would be a major influence on their presidential vote.

Democratic Senate candidates Carol Moseley Braun in Illinois and Lynn Yeakel in Pennsylvania made an issue of the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill hearings in their primary campaigns and will no doubt continue to do so in the fall. At the presidential level, however, the Thomas-Hill hearings do not appear to have energized women voters the way the abortion decision has. A recent *Newsweek* poll found only about a quarter of college-educated women (24%) saying that the hearings will be a major influence on their vote, similar to the proportion of college men (21%) who express such views. The hearings, however, do appear to have affected college women differently than other Americans. A May Gallup Poll found a plurality of college women (46%) expressing an unfavorable opinion of Supreme Court Justice Thomas. Men and non-college-educated women tend to have favorable views of Thomas.

Clinton and the Character Issue

While Clinton and the Democrats have an advantage with better-educated women on issues, Bush may be able to counter by raising doubts about the Arkansas governor's character. The marital infidelity charges against Clinton early in the campaign may have had their most lasting impact among college-educated women. Prior to the Democratic convention, Gallup polls found close to half (47%) of college-educated women saying Clinton was not personally honest. Even after the convention, about a third of this group (32%) said Clinton did not have the honesty and integrity to serve as president, higher than the percentage seen for college men (23%), non-college men (19%) and non-college women (22%).

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American Viewpoint (R). July 8-13, 1992. N=1,000 adults nationwide:

	ALL %	Rep. %	Dem. %	Ind. %
<i>"Congress is considering legislation that would legalize the principles of the Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade decision in which abortion became legal. Under this bill, states would be prohibited from restricting the right of a woman to choose to have an abortion before fetal viability, or at any time if the abortion is necessary to protect the health or the life of the woman. In short, states would be prevented from enacting any legislation that would have the effect of denying access to abortion for women. In general, do you favor or oppose this legislation?"</i>				
Favor	55	51	60	54
Oppose	38	42	33	38
Not sure	7	7	7	8

"As you may know, the Supreme Court recently decided that a woman has the right to have an abortion until the fetus is viable but said that certain restrictions—such as a 24-hour waiting period, parental consent for girls under age 18, and requiring doctors to provide information on alternatives to abortion—are legal as long as an undue burden is not placed on a woman seeking an abortion. In general, do you approve or disapprove of the Supreme Court's decision?"

	ALL %	Rep. %	Dem. %	Ind. %
Approve	59	58	58	62
Disapprove	34	35	36	32
Not sure	7	7	6	6

CBS News/*New York Times* Poll. July 8-11, 1992. N=1,346 adults nationwide:

	ALL %	Rep. %	Dem. %	Ind. %
<i>"Which of these comes closest to your view? (1) Abortion should be generally available to those who want it; or (2) Abortion should be available but under stricter limits than it is now; or (3) Abortion should not be permitted."</i>				
(1) Generally available	41	36	45	41
(2) Available, stricter limits	39	42	32	42
(3) Not permitted	18	20	19	16
Don't know	2	2	4	1

"If each state could make its own laws about abortion, would you want your state to put limits on the availability of abortion, or not?"

	ALL %	Rep. %	Dem. %	Ind. %
Yes, limits	56	64	49	57
No limits	41	34	48	40
Don't know	3	2	3	3

CONSUMER COMFORT INDEX

The ABC News/*Money* magazine "Consumer Comfort Index" stood at -45, on its scale of +100 to -100, for the 30 day period ending Aug. 2. That's the same as the average for this year, and virtually unchanged from four weeks ago, when it was at -44. The average for 1991 was -37, for 1990-24, and for 1989-11. The Index is based on responses to questions about the national economy, personal finances, and the buying climate.