



DOUBTS ABOUT BUSH'S CHARACTER Allayed by GOP Convention

By George Gallup, Jr. and Alec Gallup

PRINCETON, N.J. — Historical precedent suggests that the boost given to George Bush's presidential campaign by the GOP convention may be short-lived. Of perhaps more lasting value, Bush's performance at

Favorability Ratings

July* Aug. Aug.*

his character. The convention moved Bush into a statistical tie with Michael Dukakis for the November election, 48% to 44%. Dukakis had been the front runner, at times by substantial margins, from mid-May until the GOP convention.

Can't say	7	7	7
Michael Dukakis			
Favorable	69	61	55
Unfavorable	22	30	32
Can't say	9	9	13

Throughout this period voters consistently had a lower personal regard for Bush than for his Democratic rival. In an early-August, pre-convention poll, for in-

Please tell me which word or phrase better de-

scribed unfavorable ones, 51% to 42%. In contrast, assessments of Dukakis were 61% to 30% favorable.

neither phrase describes Bush, please say so.

The candidates now are on an equal footing in voters' perceptions, Bush with a favorable-unfavorable ratio of 60% to 33%, and Dukakis with 55% to 32%.

Impressions of Bush

Aug. 5-7 Aug. 19-21
% %

Bush Gains on Leadership Traits

Bush also has managed to dispel many of the doubts voters previously harbored about his leadership and other character traits. Before the convention, for example, 59% described him as "sincere"; currently, 74% do so. Perceptions of Bush as "steady and reliable" have increased from 50% to 73%. Fewer voters thought of him

Sincere	59	74
Insincere	26	15
Neither, not sure	15	11
Steady, reliable	59	73
Undependable	27	19
Neither, not sure	14	8

respectively.

One of Bush's greatest achievements has been to enhance voters' perceptions of him as a "leader" rather than a "follower" from 37% — 52% prior to the conven-

Warm, friendly	49	60
Cold, unfriendly	28	18
Neither, not sure	23	17

Following are the questions and key findings.

Is your overall opinion of (candidate) very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

A leader	37	50
A follower	52	39
Neither, not sure	11	11

