

## **Press Release: *Harwich Student Exit Poll Shows Gender Gap***

Harwich – Nov. 8, 2000 – Harwich High School seniors taking American Government conducted an exit poll of voters yesterday. They interviewed 292 voters as they left the very busy Harwich Community Center. In the poll, Bush received 44% of the vote, Gore 39%, and Nadar 15%. While the results closely mirrored the official town numbers, some interesting trends emerged.

The gender gap, which has been reported across the nation this election season, was very much in evidence. Men voted for Bush over Gore 48% to 34%, while women supported Gore over Bush 46% to 42%. This appears to be caused by some basic differences in how men and women vote on the issues. For example, men were more likely to support the tax cut ballot questions than women. On question 6, giving tax credits for tolls and excise taxes, men voted in favor of the question 60% to 40%, while women voted against it, 55% to 45%. This seems to reflect the stands of the presidential candidates on the issue.

Interestingly, this gender gap was less prominent in the U.S. Senate race and nonexistent in the U.S. Representative and State Senate races. However, men were more likely to vote for third party candidates – twice as many men supported Carla Howell, and 50% more men supported Nadar.

Independents are always the swing vote in this state, where they outnumber Republicans and Democrats. In our poll Independents leaned toward Bush, 41% to 33%. This happened in spite of the fact that most independents approve of the job Clinton has done as president (55% to 36%). This would suggest that Gore never convinced voters that if they have been happy with the last eight years, he should get their vote. Independents also showed some sentiment against current drug laws, being most likely to vote for Question 8 (drug treatment law) and Question 10 (medicinal marijuana).

Younger voters (18-39) also were in favor of the drug law questions. They were most likely to vote for Nadar, and to approve of the job President Clinton has done. Older voters (60+) were most likely to disapprove of Clinton, and to support Sen. Kennedy.

When asked what issue mattered most to them, character and integrity was cited most often – by 41% of those polled. In what may have been a key to the election, these voters, voted 60% to 27% for Bush over Clinton.

Nadar received significant support, especially for young voters, and the drug issues may have been the basis for a lot of this support. On question 10, 95% of voters who supported Nadar voted in favor of legalizing the medicinal use of marijuana.

-Mr. John Dickson, Government Teacher, Harwich High School