

Elephants & Donkeys by Kathleen Klenetsky

Poll says Bush has lock on electoral college

An ABC-*Washington Post* poll released on Oct. 12 gives Republican presidential nominee George Bush a virtual lock on the electoral college, and thus, the presidency.

According to the poll, the largest and most comprehensive conducted during the 1988 elections, Bush held a clear or slight advantage in 28 states which have a combined total of 270 electoral college votes—the precise number required for election.

Governor Dukakis was clearly or slightly ahead in only seven states and the District of Columbia, with a total of 51 electoral votes.

This doesn't mean that Bush has got the election sewn up, however. Aside from the fact that there were still nearly four weeks to go before election day, the poll indicated that 15 of the most populous states, totaling 217 electoral votes, were a toss-up. These include California, New York, and Pennsylvania, where the Democratic Party has pulled out all the stops in its "turn out the vote" vote-fraud apparatus.

Still, the Dukakis camp was clearly dismayed by the poll. Jack Corrigan, a key campaign official, went on ABC-TV's "Nightline" the evening the poll was released, to complain bitterly that its findings were skewed, and that it could adversely affect the outcome

for Dukakis by discouraging his supporters from voting.

Robb reels under drug charges in Senate race

Even if Dukakis gets smashed in November, it is highly probable that the Democrats will continue their control of both the Senate and the House. But in some states, Republicans are giving the Democrats a run for their money.

Take Virginia, where Lyndon Johnson's son-in-law, former governor Chuck Robb, is vying for the Senate seat vacated by Republican Paul Trible. Robb was considered a shoo-in—until the Republicans nominated Maurice Dawkins, a retired black minister and former Democrat.

No one expects newcomer Dawkins to be able to defeat the well-oiled, well-financed Robb machine, but he's certainly making Robb pay a very stiff political price for his electoral victory, and exposing an issue of pressing concern to voters.

Dawkins has successfully put Robb on the defensive over several issues, especially Robb's close association with a group of fast-track types linked to cocaine usage. Local newspapers have been reporting for over a year that Robb frequently attended parties thrown by these friends, at which cocaine use was rampant.

Robb has strenuously denied any knowledge of the drug use. But questions about his denials, and his judgment, linger.

Dawkins has aggressively exploited this weak flank, as in a Sept. 17 debate, when he accused his opponent of having done little to quash the "cocaine wheeling and dealing" that swirled around him.

The former governor looked and acted shaken, nearly shrieking in defense of his anti-drug record, and denying the press reports.

Sources close to the Dawkins campaign say that the candidate himself was directly responsible for commissioning a new television advertisement that zeroes in on Robb's association with cocaine users. "Newspapers report Chuck Robb at numerous parties with open cocaine use. . . . Robb's friends have been indicted, given immunity for testimony, or gone to prison," says an announcer.

There is a pause, and then the announcer comments, "Bad judgment."

The ad contains a short segment with Dawkins arguing for stricter anti-drug measures, including the death penalty for some drug-related crimes.

The Robb camp is up in arms over the ad, especially since, according to some sources, there had been a deal with the Dawkins campaign to "play by the rules," and to ease off on the drug issue. But that deal—if it ever existed—is clearly off.

Dawkins again raised the drug connection when he and Robb addressed a Virginia Municipal League convention. "For the governor of Virginia to permit cocaine users and cocaine dealers to carry on under his nose, well, its not wisdom—it's arrogance."

Robb, visibly shaken, accused his opponent of being used by his advisers as a "blunt instrument" for their own GOP agenda, a charge which drew a big grin from the Republicans in the audience.

"Dawkins really believes that Chuck Robb is not morally fit to hold high office in this land," said a source. "He is going to make sure that the people of this state address this question of Robb's moral qualifications. Since Robb is such an evasive wimp on almost everything, the drug issue is a key litmus test. How can Robb sound pious and high and mighty about being against drugs when his friends are coke-heads?"