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**CLINTON AND DOLE TIED IN ARIZONA;
INDEPENDENTS HOLD KEY TO RACE**

Bill Clinton and Bob Dole are locked in a dead heat in Arizona, according to a new poll of registered voters. The Democratic and Republican candidates are receiving solid support from their own parties. The fate of the Arizona race is now in the hands of Independent voters. These findings suggest that Arizona, the state with the longest record of supporting Republicans in presidential elections, is up for grabs this year.

The telephone survey was conducted by Northern Arizona University's Social Research Laboratory from September 5 through September 11, 1996. A random sample of 603 registered Arizona voters participated in this survey. The margin of error for a survey of this size is +/- 4.1 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

CLINTON AND DOLE LOCKED IN DEAD HEAT

Bill Clinton and Bob Dole are running even in Arizona with 43 percent support for Clinton and 42 percent support for Dole. Ross Perot is supported by 9 percent of registered voters in Arizona. Seven percent of registered voters remain undecided.

"Arizona is a battleground," according to Fred Solop, director of the survey. "This year both the Republican and Democratic candidates will need to invest time and energy in Arizona to win the state's support," he said.

Bob Dole's support is slightly more firm than Clinton's, however. Eighty-six percent of Dole supporters say they are firm about their choice while 14 percent of Dole supporters say they might change their mind before election day. Seventy-five percent of Clinton's supporters are firm about their choice with almost one-quarter of his supporters (24%) saying they might change their minds before election day. Only half of Perot's supporters (49%) are sure about their choice.

Among registered voters expressing either a lot of interest or some interest in the presidential election, Clinton and Dole each have 44 percent support and Ross Perot garners 6 percent support. Another 6 percent of the most interested registered voters are undecided.

INDEPENDENTS HOLD KEY TO RACE

Each of the major party candidates is retaining large numbers of supporters in their own party. Eighty-five percent of Democrats support Bill Clinton, their party's candidate, while 79 percent of Republicans support their party's candidate, Bob Dole. Ross Perot is receiving support from only 4 percent of Democrats and 6 percent of Republicans. Three percent of Democrats and 5 percent of Republicans say they are undecided.

Independents hold the key to the presidential race in Arizona. At this time, almost one-half of Independents (48%) support Bill Clinton. Half as many Independents (24%) support Bob Dole. Seventeen percent of Independents favor Ross Perot and 11 percent are undecided. One-third of Independents supporting Bob Dole (31%) and one-third of Independents supporting Bill Clinton (31%) say they might change their minds before election day.

"Republicans and Democrats are standing behind their respective candidates," said Solop. "The push is on now for the candidates to attract independent voters."

THE ROAD AHEAD

Half of the Arizona electorate has favorable impressions of both Bill Clinton and Bob Dole (50% favorability rating for Clinton and 48% for Dole). Clinton is disfavored by a larger number of registered voters, however. Forty-four percent of registered voters hold a negative impression of Clinton, while 32 percent hold a negative impression of Dole. Fifteen percent of registered voters, however, say they have yet to form an opinion about Dole. Only 8 percent of registered voters have no opinion about Clinton. These figures suggest that Dole must work hard over the next seven weeks to present a clearer image to Arizona voters if he is interested in winning the state in November.

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