

Fallout continues in and out of White House // Wood, Baird cases different, most say

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Body

President Clinton and Kimba Wood may have jumped the gun withdrawing her name from consideration as attorney general.

She might have been confirmed if the case had been taken to the American people, a new USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll Monday found.

Most adults _ 65% _ say Wood shouldn't have pulled out when it was revealed she hired an illegal immigrant to care for her child at a time when such hirings were within the law.

But the Clinton White House, burned when a firestorm of protest broke over his nomination of Zoe Baird as attorney general, wasn't ready to go to the mat for Wood.

However, the new poll shows Americans drew a clear distinction between Baird and Wood. Baird's hiring of illegal immigrants when it was against the law was found to be a disqualifying factor by 75% of the public.

Only one in five _ 20% _ said Wood's situation should disqualify her.

Clinton made it no secret he wanted to fill the attorney general post with a woman, and it wasn't missed by the public. Nearly half _ 45% _ say he was considering Wood primarily because she is a woman, while 38% say it was because she was the best qualified person for the job.

Men were more likely than women to say he was considering her
mainly because she's a woman _ 51% to 39%. While Clinton may have

been trying to please women's groups, the vast majority of the public _ 66% _ say selecting a woman for the post is not too important or not important at all. Only about one in three women _ 37% _ said it was very or somewhat important, compared with 28% for men.

Sparks from the Baird flareup also have singed Commerce Secretary Ron Brown. He admitted Sunday he hired a part-time household worker and failed to pay her Social Security taxes, as required by law. Four of 10 in the poll said he should resign as a result of the revelation. But almost half _ 49% _ say he should stay.

Overall, most Americans _ 55% _ are worried intense scrutiny of candidates for top federal posts will make it tough to find qualified nominees.

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There also has been widespread speculation the flap surrounding Clinton's handling of the attorney general appointments is causing him political damage. The poll, however, finds 73% **say** it hasn't had much affect on their confidence in Clinton's ability.

The child-care debate USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll

A majority of people in a new poll **say** they think child-care workers are not that difficult to find legally and that federal officials should follow the rules:

Most disagree that it's very difficult to make good, legal child-care arrangements

Agree 36%

Disagree 58%

...and that people should be disqualified from high federal office for unlawfully hiring an illegal immigrant

Disqualified 75%

Not disqualified 21%

But Ron Brown, the new secretary of Commerce, should not have to resign for hiring a part-time household worker and not paying her Social Security taxes

Resign 40%

Not resign 49%

More respondents **say** they think there is a double standard for women and men in federal appointments

Yes 48%

No 40%

...with women **saying** there is a double standard much more often than men Double standard

Women 56%

Men 39%

No double standard

Women 31%

Men 50%

Most say they think Kimba **Wood** shouldn't have had to withdraw from consideration as attorney general

Not withdraw 65%

Withdraw 28%

Notes

WASHINGTON; HIRING OF ILLEGALS; See info box at end of text

Graphic

GRAPHIC, b/w, Marty Baumann, USA TODAY, Source: USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll of 625 people Monday. Margin of error: 5 percentage points (Bar graphs)

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