

MEMORANDUM

TO: COLORADO POLICY INSTITUTE

**FROM: DAVE SACKETT
NICHOLAS THOMPSON**

RE: KEY FINDINGS FROM A SURVEY OF VOTER ATTITUDES IN COLORADO

DATE: SEPTEMBER 21, 2009

The Tarrance Group is pleased to present the Colorado Policy Institute with the key findings from a survey of voter attitudes in Colorado. These key findings are based on telephone interviews with N=500 “likely” registered voters throughout the State. Responses to this survey were gathered September 16-17, 2009 and the confidence interval associated with a sample of this type is $\pm 4.5\%$.

Barack Obama Job Approval

- Colorado voters are split in their impressions of Barack Obama’s job performance as president, with 48% approving and 47% disapproving. Approval is higher in Denver (60%) and the north suburbs (65%), while less than half approve throughout the rest of the state. Approval drops to its lowest point in the eastern plains (35%).

Direction of the State

- A plurality of voters (48%) say the state is off on the wrong track, while only 41% say the state is headed in the right direction. A majority of voters in Denver (53%) and the north suburbs (58%) say the state is headed in the right direction, compared to only 33% in Colorado Springs, 40% in Jefferson/Arapahoe and 40% in the east plains.
- Women (43%) are slightly more optimistic about the state’s direction than men (39%), with a significant gap in opinion between suburban (42%) and rural (31%) women. Belief that the state is headed in the right direction also falls with age, going from 46% among 18-34 year olds to 38% among seniors.
- While only 24% of conservatives say the state is headed in the right direction, the percentage increases to 52% among moderates and 66% among liberals. Similarly, 15% of Republicans say the state is headed in the right direction, compared with 64% of Democrats and 44% of Independents.

Most Important Issue

Economy/jobs:	31%
Health care:	16%
Illegal immigration:	14%
Education:	13%
Taxes:	11%

- Jobs and the economy dominate the issue matrix, with virtually twice as many concerned with this issue than other issues. Voters in Denver are split between the economy/jobs and health care, while voters in the north suburbs (32%), Colorado Springs (36%), and Jefferson/Arapahoe (38%) are most concerned with economy/jobs.
- Men (35%) are more concerned with the economy/jobs than women (28%), while women (19%) are more concerned than men (13%) with health care. Younger voters are strongly concerned with the economy/jobs (41%), with 24% most concerned with education. Concern over the economy falls with age, with 27% of seniors are most concerned with this issue.

Rating the Public Education System

- Respondents were asked what grade they would give the public education system in Colorado. Below are the results:

A	4%
B	35%
C	38%
D	10%
F	6%

- As you can see from the results above, most voters rate the state's education system with either a B or C, with only 4% giving it an A. This is fairly consistent throughout the state, with a plurality in all regions giving the state a C rating except for Colorado Springs and the west slope. Colorado Springs voters give the state's education system a B rating, while voters in the west slope are split between B/C at 40%.
- There is no gender gap on rating the state's public school system. A slim plurality of men give the state a C (38%), while 35% give the state a B. Women are split at 37% between B and C.

BILL RITTER

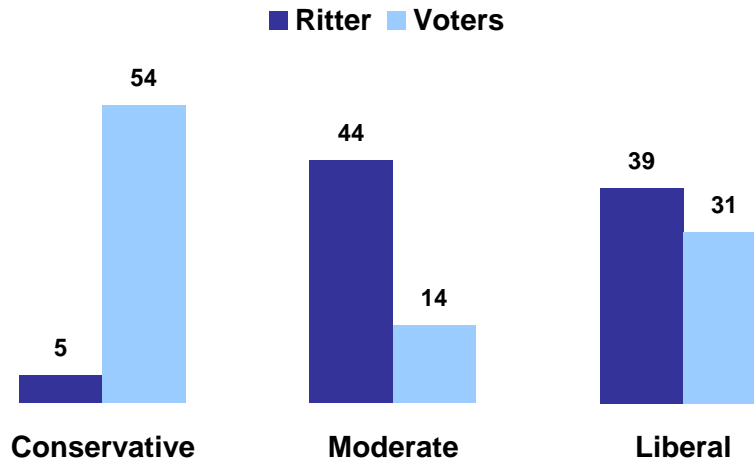
		All Voters
Image Rating	Favorable	47%
	Unfavorable	43%
Ideology	Liberal	40%
	Moderate	44%
	Conservative	5%
Overall Job Performance	Approve	48%
	Disapprove	46%
Soft Re-elect	Deserves re-election	33%
	Unsure/Depends on opponent	12%
	New person	56%
Improving CO's transportation system	Approve	47%
	Disapprove	44%
Improving quality of ed. in state	Approve	43%
	Disapprove	46%
Improving state's economy & creating jobs	Approve	41%
	Disapprove	53%
Being effective at fighting crime	Approve	57%
	Disapprove	29%
Solving CO's water needs	Approve	49%
	Disapprove	33%
Creating a workable solution to protecting the state's environment	Approve	60%
	Disapprove	30%

- The table above profiles the results to several key measures on Governor Bill Ritter. The data show that Ritter holds a weak image and job approval rating, and is vulnerable given that a strong majority (56%) of voters say it is time for a new person as Governor.
- Respondents were also exposed to a battery of six (6) issues, and were asked to rate Governor Ritter's job performance on each issue. A majority of voters approve of the Governor's handling of only two of the issues (crime and the environment), and fully 53% disapprove of his handling of the most important issue to voters (economy/jobs).

Ritter Ideology

- Respondents were asked how they would characterize Ritter's ideology, and later in the survey, were asked to characterize their own. The results are profiled below:

Ritter vs. Self-Described Ideology



- A majority of voters say that they are conservative, while only 5% say the same for Ritter. However, a plurality of voters (44%) say that Ritter is a moderate, while 39% say he is liberal. Ritter is viewed as a moderate throughout most of the State, while the percentage viewing him as a liberal increases in Denver (42%) and Colorado Springs (47%).

Ritter Job Approval

- Voters are essentially split on their impressions of Ritter's job performance, with 48% approving and 46% disapproving. Denver (65%) and north suburbs (60%) voters approve, while Colorado Springs (56%), west slope voters (52%) and eastern plains voters (53%) disapprove. While less than half, a plurality (49%) of Jefferson/Arapahoe voters approve.

Ritter Soft Re-elect

- The strongest measure of incumbent approval is the soft re-elect, where voters are asked if the incumbent deserves re-election, or if it is time for a new person in office. A strong majority (56%) say it is time for a new person, while 33% say he deserves re-election and 12% are unsure.
- Ritter's soft re-elect is weak throughout the state. A plurality of voters in Denver say it is time for a new person (41%), while half of north suburbs voters say he deserves re-election. A majority of voters throughout the remainder of the state say it is time for a new person, including a majority of men (60%) and women (52%).

PRIMARY BALLOT SERIES

- Respondents were exposed to a series of ballots on the 2010 election consisting of a Democratic and Republican primary ballot. Results of the ballot series are profiled below:

GOVERNOR

Primary Ballots				
Republican	%			
Scott McInnis	40			
Josh Penry	13			
Undecided	47			

SENATORIAL

Primary Ballots				
Republican	%		Democrat	%
Jane Norton	45		Michael Bennet	41
Ken Buck	15		Andrew Romanoff	27
Undecided	40		Undecided	32

COLORADO PROPOSALS

Respondents were exposed to a battery of nine (9) policy proposals regarding Colorado, and were asked if they favored or opposed each one. Results of the series are profiled below:

	% FAVOR					
	All Voters	Denver Media Market	Colorado Springs – Pueblo Media Market	GOP	DEM	IND
Creating “rainy day fund” so state can better respond to economic recessions without raising taxes or fees	73	73	68	70	75	73
Creating statewide illegal immigration effort rather than leaving to local communities	71	70	73	78	65	70
Requiring all fee increases by gov’t be approved by voters	68	65	79	83	53	68
Capping higher ed tuition increases to 1% above national inflation rate	62	62	65	60	66	60
U.S. Military expanding bases/training areas in CO	58	58	55	73	42	59
Repealing TABOR, which requires all tax increases to be	55	54	61	46	66	53

approved by voters						
Widening I-70 up to Eisenhower tunnels in Denver	50	52	48	48	53	49
Widening C-470 even if means using tolls to fund expansion	33	34	28	33	33	33
Raising vehicle licensing fees as way to fund transportation projects	32	34	26	24	39	32