



behavior research center's

Rocky Mountain Poll

NEWS RELEASE
RMP 2002-III-10

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ONE-QUARTER OF INDEPENDENTS DEFINITELY PLAN PRIMARY VOTE

Phoenix, Arizona, August 24, 2002. Two-thirds of registered Independents in Maricopa County say they are interested in participating in the primary election, including one in four who say their plans to participate are “definite.” Either way, due to their growing numbers, the potential turnout of Independent voters could be impressive.

Independents with an inclination to participate, reveal wide-ranging party preferences, yet they seem more interested in the Democratic primary. Thus, about a third of Independents plan to vote in the Democrat primary, roughly a fifth in the GOP primary and perhaps a sixth in the Libertarian primary. Further, fully a third of Independents interested in voting in the primary have not as yet decided for which party ballot they will ask.

Although some party officials – most notably those in the Libertarian party – have objected to non-party people voting in their primary, and others have expressed concerns about a potential concerted sabotage strategy by Independents to cause parties to nominate weak candidates, it is far more likely that the decision by an Independent to vote in a particular party primary is a precursor step for them to follow that candidate with their vote into the general election. For most Independents, participation appears to trace principally, if not entirely, to a desire to have the same freedom of choice in the primaries that they have in the general election — to support candidates who most appeal to them. As well, we have found that when pressed, most Independents will say that they “lean” toward one of the parties more than another and will more likely than not, vote in that party’s primary.

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The findings outlined in this report are based on a survey of 452 registered voters throughout Maricopa County conducted between August 8th and August 15th, 2002, by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona as part of the Center's independent and non-partisan Rocky Mountain Poll series. The sub-sample of Independent voters was 95. The public is welcome to visit www.brcpolls.com to read this and other recent polls.

Also of interest in this survey is the profile of the emerging Independent voter in Arizona. Overall, 19 percent of the voters surveyed are registered in some way other than Democratic, Republican or Libertarian. By a ratio of 60 to 40 percent they are more likely to be men than women and they are disproportionately drawn from the ranks of lower income voters, possibly a sign of difficulties less-affluent Arizonans are having in identifying with either of the major parties. Most important, half are in the all-important high-efficacy voter group — that is to say, among the most likely to participate in any election. In years past, Independent voters were much less likely to be highly efficacious voters; in fact, many bordered on being alienated voters

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll Arizona (2002-III-10) is based on 452 telephone interviews conducted from August 8th through August 15th, 2002, with registered voters throughout Maricopa County. In a sample of this size, one may say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 4.7 percent of what they would have been had the entire adult population been surveyed. The sub-sample of 95 registered Independents has a margin of error of plus or minus 10.2 percent. The Rocky Mountain Poll is conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program.

This statement conforms to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

ENCLOSED: Statistical data

For this and other polls, see www.brcpolls.com/results

STATISTICAL DATA

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“Will you definitely, probably, probably not or definitely not vote in the September primary election to nominate candidates for the various political parties?”

Definitely plan to vote	38%
Probably will vote	<u>30</u>
(Total)	(68%)
Probably, definitely not + unsure	32%

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*“To vote in the primary, you must decide whether you want to vote in the Republican, Democratic or Libertarian Primary. At this time, which one political party do you think you will select?”*

|                      |           |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Democratic           | 22%       |
| Libertarian          | 13        |
| Republican           | 12        |
| Not sure yet         | 21        |
| Will not participate | <u>32</u> |
|                      | 100%      |

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PROFILE OF REGISTERED VOTERS AND INDEPENDENTS
IN MARICOPA COUNTY SAMPLE

	All Registered	
	Voters	Independents
<u>GENDER</u>		
Men	50%	60%
Women	50	40
<u>ETHNICITY</u>		
Caucasian	80	86
Hispanic	10	2
Asian/African-American/ Other	10	12
<u>AGE</u>		
Under 35	25	25
35 to 54	42	44
55 +	33	31
(Retirees)	(24)	(17)
<u>INCOME</u>		
Under \$35,000	26	39
\$35,000 to \$54,999	20	10
\$55,000 +	54	51
Likely voters	51	48

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