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Rocky Mountain Poll

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REGISTERED VOTERS IN ARIZONA: DIVERSITY - NOT PARTY - IS THE HALLMARK. MODERATES AT PARITY WITH CONSERVATIVES

Phoenix, Arizona, November 10, 2011. The battle over control of the commission drawing legislative district lines in Arizona may never result in a fair or non-political outcome, but a glance at the party and political philosophy distribution of voters in the state certainly suggests no need to give either Democrats or Republicans undue advantage. Indeed, favoritism of any kind may fly in the face of common sense and thus in the face of what is good for Arizona debate of public policy issues in the coming decade.

It is well known that neither Democrats nor Republicans have a majority of registered voters. This traces to growing dissatisfaction within the electorate toward both political parties – so great that registered independents are already more numerous than Democrats, and if registration trends continue their present course, they may soon eclipse Republicans as well.

But it is also widely thought that Arizona is a very conservative state politically – that the views of the public are well reflected in the legislature which is among the most conservative in the United States. In truth, however, self-defined political conservatives constitute only 38 percent of the electorate while political moderates are close behind at 34 percent and political liberals represent 28 percent of registered voters. The impression of Arizona as a majority conservative state is more a reflection of gerrymandering and the historically superior strength of conservative forces in getting their voters to the polls. IN ADDITION TO THIS PATTERN OF POLITICAL SELF-IDENTIFICATION, the recent recall of State Senator Russell Pearce, the most powerful conservative voice in state government, may be a harbinger of what can happen when voters in the center organize to get out their vote and make their election preferences felt. As of today, political moderates in Arizona outnumber political liberals and are within four percentage points of parity with political conservatives.

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STATISTICAL DATA

Behavior Research Center
Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona
RMP (2011-IV-06)

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

The distribution of political party and political philosophy may be seen in the tables attached to this report and provides a picture of how truly diverse the electorate in Arizona is and why there is so much grumbling that without gerrymandering, legislative politics in this state would be more competitive as regards ideas and policies.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona (2011-IV-06), is based on 581 interviews with registered voters statewide, conducted between October 13 and 24, 2011. Interviewing was conducted in both English or Spanish by professional interviewers of the Behavior Research Center on both landlines and cell phones. Where necessary, figures for age, sex, race and political party were weighted to bring them into line with their actual proportion in the population. In a sample of this size, one can say with a 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 4.1 percent of what they would have been had the entire voter population been surveyed. The Rocky Mountain Poll is conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program sponsored by the Center.

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

ENCLOSED: Statistical tables.

ARIZONA VOTERS BY PARTY AND PHILOSOPHY

	Republican	Independent	Democrat	Total
Conservative	21%	9%	8%	38%
Moderate	10	13	11	34
Liberal	4	11	13	28
Total	35	33	32	100%

Table reads: Among registered voters, 21 percent call themselves conservative Republicans while ten percent call themselves moderate republicans