



*behavior research center's*

# *Rocky Mountain Poll*

NEWS RELEASE  
RMP 2001-III-13

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## DEATH PENALTY & MARIJUANA ISSUES DIVISIVE: BANNING ABORTION OPPOSED BY MOST

Phoenix, Arizona. August 10, 2001. Public policies pertaining to abortion, the death penalty or marijuana laws seem often to generate some of the most impassioned controversy and are rarely missing in political campaigns at all levels these days. Candidates taking strong visible stands on these issues in next year's elections may reasonably expect voters to take note and react.

Overall, by a very narrow 45 to 43 percent voters say they would look favorably on candidates who advocate repeal of laws that make it a crime for individuals to have possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use. By identical percentages voters divide on use of the death penalty for mentally retarded individuals convicted of murder. Finally, candidates seeking an outright ban on all abortion are opposed by 66 to 28 percent.

The findings outlined in this report are based on a survey of 702 adults across Arizona conducted in July, 2001 by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona as part of the Center's independent and non-partisan Rocky Mountain Poll series. The public is welcome to visit [www.brcpolls.com](http://www.brcpolls.com) to read this and other recent poll results.

**MARIJUANA:** Candidates who advocate repealing laws that make it a criminal act to possess small amounts of marijuana for personal use could draw a very divided response. Even though the public generally favors reform of marijuana laws to permit the drug to be prescribed by doctors for patients who they think may benefit from its use, the public splits down the middle on the idea of repealing possession laws: 41 percent say they would support such a candidate, 46 percent would oppose them and the balance are unsure. Among registered voters, however, a plurality (45%) say they would lean toward a candidate who favors repeal, while opposition slips to 43 percent.

**DEATH PENALTY:** Candidates in favor of eliminating the death penalty for individuals who are

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convicted of murder and who are also mentally retarded will also face a sharply divided public: 43 percent coming down on the side of not using the death penalty in those cases and 46 percent opposed. Registered voters are modestly stronger in their support of not using the death penalty, but by and large, the issue simply divides the public right down the center.

**BANNING ABORTION:** Of these three controversial issues, the only one which produces a heavily one-sided response pertains to banning abortion. By 65 percent to 29 percent, the public indicates it would oppose candidates who champion outlawing all abortion, including 66 percent of registered voters. The concept of an outright ban on all abortion produces an intensely negative response among registered Independents (81 percent). Among Democrats the figure is 74 percent, and among Republicans, 54 percent.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona (2001-III-13), is based on 702 interviews with adults throughout Arizona between July 5, 2001 and July 11, 2001. 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 +/- 3.7 percent of what they would have been had the entire adult 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.

For this and other polls, see [www.brcpolls.com/results](http://www.brcpolls.com/results).

**BELOW: Statistical tables.**

**STATISTICAL DATA**

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“In next year’s election for Governor and members of the legislature, would you vote for or would you vote against a candidate taking the following position on issues?”

		Would Vote		
		For	Against	Not Sure
Wants to pass laws banning all abortions in Arizona:				
	All Adults	29%	65%	6%
	Voters Only	28	66	6
Wants to repeal laws that make the possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use a crime:				
	All Adults	41	46	13
	Voters Only	45	43	12
Opposes use of the death penalty for mentally retarded individuals convicted of murder:				
	All Adults	43	46	11
	Voters Only	45	43	12

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