



behavior research center's

Rocky Mountain Poll

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SHERIFF ARPAIO'S POPULARITY COLLAPSES

Phoenix, Arizona. January 27, 2010. Once the darling of the public in Phoenix and the surrounding communities and county, Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio's job approval ratings have collapsed from a high of 64 percent in 2007, to 54 percent in mid 2008 and have now tumbled to only 39 percent. Today, those with a negative opinion of his job performance have more than doubled to 34 percent compared to 2007 when barely 16 percent thought the Sheriff was doing a "poor job".

Most of the collapse has occurred because registered Independent voters are turning their backs on the once popular Sheriff. But it may trace as well to the findings that Republican support of Arpaio continues to soften and Democrats are decidedly negative regarding how Arpaio has handled his office. In a county in which neither Democrats (31%), Republicans (38%) nor Independents (31%) hold a majority, loss of two major blocks such as Democrats and Independents raises questions as to whether Arpaio could carry the county in a general election. There is little doubt that he could win a GOP primary since by a ratio close to three to one, GOP voters approve of his performance.

The Sheriff's hard nosed and sometimes perceived heavy handed tactics toward illegal aliens coupled with a pending U.S. Grand Jury exploration as to whether the Maricopa County Sheriffs Office (MCSO) has abused its powers may account for these precipitous drop in his ratings. On the other hand, if the federal grand jury exonerates the MCSO, Sheriff Arpaio's ratings could well rise again.

While Democrats have been less than impressed with Sheriff Joe Arpaio for some time, the most important factors underlying the collapse in his job ratings trace to registered Independent voters and Republicans. Among Independent voters, Arpaio's positive job ratings have been sliced in half falling from a lofty 62 percent in 2008 to only 34 percent today. During the same time frame, the proportion of Independent voters who disapprove of his job performance rose to 39 percent from 24.

Although the Sheriff is still admired by a majority of GOP voters, we register some erosion there as well with his positive job ratings declining to 57 percent from 66 percent in 2008 while negatives rose from 14 to 19 percent.

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Demographically, Sheriff Joe Arpaio has lost the most ground among voters under 35 years of age whose negative ratings are now nearly five times greater than his favorable ones (52% to 11%) . Among Latino and non-Latino minorities, his ratings are six to one unfavorable (67% to 11%). Also of interest is the finding that Sheriff Arpaio's negative job ratings increase as the income of the respondent rises. Thus, his negative job ratings register at 34 percent among the lowest income segments, rises to 39 percent in middle income segments and then rises to 45 percent among the highest income earners in the county.

By way of comparison to Sheriff Arpaio are the job ratings for Sheriff Clarence Dupnik in Pima County. Arpaio is significantly better known (95%) in his county than is Dupnik is in his county (70%), but among voters aware of Dupnik, performance ratings are 56 percent positive to only 14 percent unfavorable. Among those aware of Arpaio, positive ratings are only 41 percent and negatives are 37.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona (2010-I-01), is based on 800 interviews with adult heads of household statewide and 500 in Maricopa County, conducted between January 7 and 22, 2010. A total of 629 voters statewide and 476 in Maricopa County were included in this study. 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 5.0 percent of what they would have been had the entire 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.

STATISTICAL DATA

Behavior Research Center
Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona
RMP (2010-I-01)

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

“Next, would you say Sheriff Joe Arpaio is doing an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job in office?”

(COUNTY WIDE)

	EXCELLENT/ GOOD	FAIR	POOR/ VERY POOR	NOT SURE	NET TO POSITIVE
(COUNTY WIDE)					
SHERIFF JOE ARPAIO					
January 2010	39%	20%	34%	7%	+ 5
July 29, 2008	54	14	28	4	+26
November 2007	59	16	22	3	+37
March 2007	64	13	16	7	+48
(COUNTY WIDE)					
DETAIL ARPAIO - JANUARY 2010					
Democrats	23	25	50	2	- 27
Independents	34	25	39	2	- 5
Republicans	57	20	19	4	+38
Not registered	35	9	35	21	-0-

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