



behavior research center's

Rocky Mountain Poll

NEWS RELEASE [RMP 2011-II-06]

Contact: Earl de Berge
Research Director
Jim Haynes
President

RANKS OF POLITICAL MODERATES GROWING IN ARIZONA, ONLY 20 PERCENT ARE “VERY CONSERVATIVE”

Phoenix, Arizona. May 17, 2011. In 2010 while the Tea Party made big waves throughout Arizona, polling results suggested that the ranks of conservatives here were swelling to historic highs – approaching the point where close to half of voters (46%) self-classified their political philosophy as “conservative”. Today conservatism is still the dominant view and conservatives still outnumber liberals by two to one, but some of the steam may be seeping from the conservative engine. The proportion of political moderates rose to 36 percent from 32 percent in 2010 while simultaneously the ranks of conservatives subsided from its all-time high of 46 percent in 2010, to 43 percent today.

The ranks of political liberals, which have lacked political cohesion in Arizona for decades, have remained fundamentally unchanged since 1990 – roughly a fifth of the electorate in Arizona – and remain concentrated mostly within the ranks of the Democrat party.

Political moderates’ numbers shrank steadily from a high of 50 percent in 1988 to 32 percent in 2010, while the ranks of conservatives grew from 35 to 46 percent. The recent decline in the conservative figures may signal deepening questions in the minds of voters as to whether either liberals or conservatives have practical answers or an ability to work together on issues of the day. In Arizona, the very conservative GOP-dominated legislature is receiving some of its lowest job performance ratings in recent history and simultaneously, both U.S. Senators, President Obama and Arizona’s Governor Jan Brewer are in the dog house with most voters.

Among registered Republicans, even though two-thirds (65%) still call themselves political conservatives, this figure is down from the record high of 71 percent in 2010. At the same time, 35 percent of Republicans today call themselves political moderates or liberal – compared to 29 percent in 2010.

The study registers little to no change in the political orientation of Democrats since the last measure in 2010. Then as now, 42 percent call themselves liberal, a third consider themselves to be moderates and a quarter are political conservatives.

(Continue)

When we turn to registered Independents, we see that 46 percent think of themselves as political moderates and the balance split about two to one in favor of being conservative.

It also appears that the conservative perspective reflects deep generational divides that may become very important in the years to come. For example, older voters are nearly three times more likely to call themselves conservative than liberal. But among voters under 35 years of age, the split is pretty even, with 29 percent now calling themselves liberal and 33 percent calling themselves conservative. And while conservatives are dominant in rural Arizona (54%) they total only 41 percent in Maricopa county and 36 percent in Pima county.

Hispanic voters appear to be moving to the center and left with 37 percent in the liberal column and 34 percent politically moderate, while fewer than three in ten Hispanics think of themselves as political conservatives.

-30-

EDITOR'S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona (2011-II-06), is based on 700 interviews with adult heads of household statewide, conducted between April 15 and 30, 2011. Interviewing was conducted in both English and 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 3.8 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.

ENCLOSED: Statistical tables.

STATISTICAL DATA

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

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

“On a scale of one to ten where ‘one’ means you think of yourself to be very liberal and ‘ten’ means you think of yourself as very conservative, how would you rate yourself politically? Of course, you can use any number between one and ten.”

	STATEWIDE – ARIZONA					
	2011	2010	1991	1990	1989	1988
Very liberal (1-2)	10%	10%	8%	9%	4	4%
Liberal (3-4)	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>
(Total liberal)	(21%)	(22%)	(22%)	(22%)	(16%)	(15%)
Middle of the road (5-6)	36	32	43	41	48	50
Conservative (7-8)	23	28	23	24	26	25
Very conservative (9-10)	<u>20</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>
(Total conservative)	(43%)	(46%)	(35%)	(37%)	(36%)	(35%)
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

~~~~~

|                        | LIBERAL<br>(1-4) | MODERATE<br>(5-6) | CONSERVATIVE<br>(7-8) | VERY<br>CONSERVATIVE<br>(9-10) |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <u>STATEWIDE</u>       | <u>21%</u>       | <u>36%</u>        | <u>23%</u>            | <u>20%</u>                     |
| <u>POLITICAL PARTY</u> |                  |                   |                       |                                |
| Democrats              | 42               | 34                | 16                    | 8                              |
| Independents           | 16               | 46                | 19                    | 19                             |
| Republicans            | 8                | 27                | 30                    | 35                             |
| <u>AGE</u>             |                  |                   |                       |                                |
| Under 35               | 29               | 38                | 22                    | 11                             |
| 35-54                  | 18               | 39                | 22                    | 21                             |
| 55+                    | 19               | 30                | 25                    | 26                             |
| <u>COUNTY</u>          |                  |                   |                       |                                |
| Maricopa               | 23               | 36                | 21                    | 20                             |
| Rural                  | 16               | 30                | 30                    | 24                             |
| Pima                   | 23               | 41                | 20                    | 16                             |

~~~~~