



*behavior research center's*

# ***Rocky Mountain Poll***

NEWS RELEASE [RMP 2014-II-03]

Contact: Earl de Berge  
Research Director  
Jim Haynes  
President

**THE PUBLIC'S KEY ISSUES: PUBLIC EDUCATION, CHILD PROTECTION,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONSUMER FRAUD PROTECTION**

**80% THINK LEGISLATURE MUST DO MORE TO REPRESENT THEM**

Phoenix, Arizona. May 20, 2014. Eighty percent of the public in Arizona think the state legislature should be doing more to represent the views of voters such as themselves, a finding which may help explain why less than one in five think the legislature is doing a good job and why so many voters are turning their backs on political parties and re-registering as Independents.

Among 13 issues the public was asked to evaluate as regards whether the legislature should be “doing more” or “doing less”, five emerge with 70 percent or more of the public calling for more legislative focus.

These include:

- protecting children from neglect and abuse
- strengthening the quality of public education in Arizona
- attracting new employers to locate in Arizona
- more consumer fraud protection
- broader representation of all consumer views

Seven other issues draw demands from large majorities, but with some dissent. These include:

- environmental protection
- growing the state's solar industry
- strengthening trade relations with Mexico
- cutting small business taxes
- cutting consumer taxes
- protecting the rights of children of illegal immigrants and
- protecting the rights of gay and lesbian people

- more-

Only one of the 12 items tested produced significantly less demand for legislative action. Indeed, nearly as many called for less action as for more in the arena of cutting taxes on big business.

“For each of the following, would you say the current Arizona state legislature should be doing more or should it be doing less in each of the following public policy areas?”

LEGISLATURE SHOULD BE DOING:

	<u>More</u>	<u>Less</u>	<u>Net More/Less</u>
Child protection	89%	2%	+87
Improving public education	88	2	+87
Representing the views of people such as yourself	80	3	+77
Attracting new employers	78	5	+73
Consumer fraud protection	72	2	+70
Environmental protection	66	6	+60
Growing solar industry	68	12	+56
Strengthening trade relations with Mexico	67	14	+53
Cutting small business taxes	71	19	+52
Cutting consumer taxes	68	17	+51
Protecting children of illegal immigrants	66	16	+50
Protecting gay/lesbian rights	56	13	+43
Cutting big business taxes	38	35	+ 3

~~~~~

This survey also affords us an opportunity to examine what differences, if any, are registered between the issue orientation of Democrats, Independents and Republicans. And because a plurality of voters in Arizona are now registered as political Independents and may prove to be an increasing force to be reckoned with in future elections, notwithstanding their distaste for participating in the primary nomination elections of political parties, we took a closer look at their views on these 12 issues.

Independents are very much of the opinion that the state legislature needs to pay more attention to them, as may be seen in the finding that by a ratio of 78 to six percent, they want the legislature to pay more attention to their views. However, they are not alone in this demand: an even greater percent of Democrats (89%) also hold this view. But if the Republican-controlled legislature thinks it need not be concerned whether voters in their own party believe they are well represented, they might be well advised to think again: 71 percent of registered Republican voters in this survey also think the legislature needs to do more to represent their views.

- more-

Independent voters also have a pretty clear set of priorities when asked whether they expect the legislature to do more, less or about the same on each of 12 major issues facing the state. Of the 12, seven have strong priority with Independent voters, who say the legislature should be doing more to:

- improve public education (91%)
- protect Arizona children from abuse and neglect (89%)
- protect Arizona's natural environment (77%)
- reduce taxes on small businesses (77%)
- grow the solar energy industry in Arizona (76%)
- attract new employers to the state (75%) and
- protect the public from consumer fraud (64%)

Independents also give priority, but at somewhat lesser levels, to four other issues including the following:

- reducing consumer taxes (63%)
- developing stronger trade relations with Mexico (60%)
- protecting the rights of children of illegal immigrants (58%) and
- protecting the rights of gay and lesbian people (53%)

Of least importance to Independent voters (36%) is that the legislature take more steps to reduce taxes on big business in Arizona.

Republican voters have their own priorities and although they stack up more or less along the same lines as the general public, there are some exceptions. For example, GOP voters place less priority on environmental protection, growing the solar industry, trade relations with Mexico, protecting the rights of children of illegal immigrants and protecting gay and lesbian rights. In general, Democrats want the legislature to do more in every category except reducing taxes on big business.

The belief that the current state legislature is not attentive to the views of voters is held not only by 78 percent of Independents voters, but also by 89 percent of Democrats and by an astonishing 71 percent of Republicans whose party controls both houses of the legislature. Clearly, the low approval ratings the state legislature receives for its overall job performance (30% negative to only 19% positive) reflects far deeper distaste for this legislature than merely the increasingly popular sport of disliking politicians. While low approval ratings for the legislature might be expected among Democrats, the views of Republican voters reflect how deep the rupture has become between the public and elected officials in the state Senate and House. It may also help explain the steady increase in the number of people re-registering as Independents.

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

RMP (2014-II-03)

EDITOR'S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona (2014-II-03), is based on 710 interviews with adult heads of household statewide, conducted between April 16 and 27, 2014. Interviewing was conducted in English or Spanish by professional interviewers of the Behavior Research Center on both land lines and cell phones. Where necessary, figures for age, sex, and race 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.

“Would you say that the Arizona State Legislature is doing an excellent, good, fair, poor or a very poor job?”

|               | Excellent/<br>Good | Fair | Poor/<br>Very Poor | Unsure |
|---------------|--------------------|------|--------------------|--------|
| All Arizonans | 19%                | 29%  | 30%                | 22%    |
| Independents  | 24                 | 25   | 37                 | 14     |
| Democrats     | 14                 | 25   | 48                 | 13     |
| Republicans   | 25                 | 36   | 25                 | 15     |

~~~~~

“Would you say that the current state legislature in Arizona should be doing more, less or about the same in representing the views of people such as yourself?”

LEGISLATURE SHOULD BE DOING:

<u>Representing You</u>	<u>More</u>	<u>Less</u>	<u>Same/ Unsure</u>
All Arizonans	80%	3%	17%
Independents	78	5	17
Democrats	89	2	9
Republicans	71	3	26

~~~~~

STATISTICAL DATA

Behavior Research Center  
Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona  
RMP (2014-II-03)

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

| STATE LEGISLATURE SHOULD GIVE MORE ATTENTION TO EACH ISSUE |              |          |             |            |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|-------------|------------|
|                                                            | Total Public | Democrat | Independent | Republican |
| Child protection                                           | 89%          | 85%      | 89%         | 83%        |
| Improving public education                                 | 88           | 84       | 91          | 82         |
| Representing your views more                               | 80           | 89       | 78          | 71         |
| Attracting new employers                                   | 78           | 84       | 75          | 84         |
| Consumer fraud protection                                  | 72           | 73       | 64          | 60         |
| Environmental protection                                   | 66           | 71       | 77          | 56         |
| Growing solar industry                                     | 68           | 77       | 76          | 25         |
| Strengthening trade relations with Mexico                  | 67           | 76       | 60          | 49         |
| Cutting small business taxes                               | 71           | 74       | 77          | 81         |
| Cutting consumer taxes                                     | 68           | 72       | 63          | 73         |
| Protecting children of illegal immigrants                  | 66           | 82       | 58          | 48         |
| Protecting gay/lesbian rights                              | 58           | 66       | 53          | 43         |
| Cutting big business taxes                                 | 38           | 28       | 36          | 36         |