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# *Rocky Mountain Poll*

NEWS RELEASE  
RMP 2002-IV-5

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## SEE-SAW GOVERNOR'S RACE: LEAD CHANGES AGAIN

Phoenix, Arizona, October 15, 2002. The lead in the see-saw struggle between Republican Matt Salmon and Democrat Janet Napolitano to capture the governor's office has changed again. As of Sunday night, Salmon has a 39 percent to 37 percent edge within the overall electorate. However, among voters most likely to cast ballots, where Napolitano has enjoyed dominance for a month or so, she still has an edge over Salmon, albeit now a narrow one: 40 percent for Napolitano to 36 percent for Salmon.

Salmon may have gained strength within the overall electorate principally by picking up votes within the ranks of Independents and by closing the lead Napolitano had within the ranks of women voters.

Additionally, Republicans have begun to coalesce even more strongly around his candidacy than was true just a few weeks ago, perhaps reacting to the attacks against Salmon's religion emanating from the camp of Independent Dick Mahoney. As a general electoral principal, attacks against the family, religious beliefs or personal integrity of candidates tends to result in party regulars rallying to the colors of their candidate rather than pushing them away, as might attacks on his or her political record. In this regard it is noteworthy that Napolitano's vote from among Democrats has similarly strengthened over the past week, perhaps as a result of Mahoney's innuendos that she is unfit for office for allegedly being soft on child abuse issues.

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This survey also finds Salmon is now doing considerably better in attracting the vote of registered Independents who until this week, were favoring Napolitano by nearly two to one. This may also trace to the attacks of Mahoney on his religion and conclusions among Independents that this affords them an opportunity to express their disgust at such political tactics.

The potential significance of Independent voters in this race continues to make itself felt in several ways. Notwithstanding the Mahoney slogan "Independent Like You," voters who are registered as Independent or non-partisan are brushing off his candidacy as irrelevant to their interests. Mahoney attracts only five percent of the overall vote and but 12 percent of the vote of persons registered as Independent or non-partisan. At the present time, independent voters are splitting evenly between Salmon and Napolitano. Additionally, 72 percent of Democrats and 71 percent of Republicans are "staying home" – that is, voting for the candidate of their party.

Thus, the race remains extremely close and given that the results are within the study margin of error, it is really only fair to conclude that it is a neck-and-neck horse race.

Napolitano continues to lead Salmon outside of Maricopa county, (44% to 33% in Pima county and 41% to 32% in the rural counties. On the other hand, she trails Salmon by an impressive eleven points (44% to 33%) in Maricopa county, the source of nearly six of ten votes that will be cast in any statewide election.

The findings outlined in this report are based on a survey of 686 registered voters across Arizona conducted between October 7<sup>th</sup> and October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2002, 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 polls.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This Rocky Mountain Poll Arizona (2002-IV-5) is based on 686 interviews with registered voters across Arizona conducted from October 7<sup>d</sup> through October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2002 who express interest in voting in the November election. 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 may 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 voter population been surveyed. The Republican sample was 293 and the Democratic sample was 257. Independents constituted 135. The respective margins of error for the Republican and Democrat samples are +/- 5.8 and +/- 6.2. 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 data for reference.

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

**STATISTICAL DATA**

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 Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona  
 RMP 2002-IV-5

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*“If the election for Governor of Arizona were being held today, which one of the following candidates would you vote for?”*

	ALL VOTERS			LIKELY VOTERS		
	10/7 – 10/13	9/30 – 10/3	9/23 – 9/29	10/7 – 10/13	9/30 – 10/3	9/23 – 9/29
Janet Napolitano (D)	37%	39%	35%	40%	41%	39%
Matt Salmon (R)	39	36	36	36	35	36
Dick Mahoney (I)	5	8	6	5	8	5
Barry Hess (L)	1	1	2	2	1	2
Uncommitted	<u>18</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>18</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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