



behavior research center's

# ***Rocky Mountain Poll***

Rated in the Top 15% of Political Polls in the U.S.

NEWS RELEASE [RMP 2016-IV-01]

Contact: Earl de Berge  
 Research Director  
 Jim Haynes  
 President

**PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES AMONG ARIZONANS ON 23 ISSUES**

**TOP PRIORITY: IMPROVING THE ECONOMY**  
**LOWEST PRIORITY: BUILDING A BORDER WALL**

Phoenix, Arizona, October 17, 2016. When Arizonans were asked last week to prioritize each of 23 issues the next President could work on, the highest priority is improving the economy, while the lowest priority was assigned to “building and manning a wall along the southern border on the United States.”

Overall, Arizonans rated seven of the 23 issues as having high priority and as may be seen in the first table, their view of what is important is highly diverse and ranges from improving the economy to improving K through 12 education, fighting terrorism, reducing the national debt, caring for wounded warriors, food safety and health care for the poor.

*“Next I will read you a list of domestic issues facing the U.S. that the next president could work on. On a scale of zero to ten where zero means it is not important and ten means it is extremely important, how would you rate each of the following”*

PRIORITY ASSIGNED TO EACH ISSUE ON A SCALE  
WHERE 10.0 EQUALS HIGHEST POSSIBLE PRIORITY.

	Total	Under 35	35 To 54	55 Years+
Improving the economy	9.0	9.0	9.1	8.9
Improving K through 12 education	8.9	9.0	9.0	8.7
Protecting the U.S. From terrorism	8.8	8.0	8.2	8.9
Reducing the national debt	8.5	8.1	8.9	8.4
Providing more funding for America’s wounded warriors	8.4	7.4	8.9	8.4
Assuring safety in food sold to American consumers	8.1	8.0	8.1	8.2
Providing health care services to poor families	8.0	8.3	7.7	7.9

~~~~~

-more-

Of interest is the finding that with only a few notable exceptions, these priorities are fairly uniform across most demographic groups. The intensity of the prioritization of top issues may also suggest a thirst among voters for the candidates to tone down or abandon their personality attacks and focus more on specific issues of interest to Americans.

A second tier of priorities includes nine issues with scores of 7.0 to 7.9 which indicates that each has significant importance to voters and the general public, but they are not currently in the highest priority group. The diversity of these issues and their relatively high ratings helps give a picture of what issues today’s voters may be interested in seeing candidates debate. In this second tier, note that younger Arizonans give higher priority to making university education affordable but give lower priority to strengthening the U.S. military. Among these items, older Arizonans place their highest priority on tax abatement for the middle class, improving transportation infrastructure, strengthening the military and nailing computer hackers.

*“Next I will read you a list of domestic issues facing the U.S. that the next president could work on. On a scale of zero to ten where zero means it is not important and ten means it is extremely important, how would you rate each of the following”*

PRIORITY ASSIGNED TO EACH ISSUE ON A SCALE  
WHERE 10.0 EQUALS HIGHEST PRIORITY

|                                                                                                  | Total | Under 35 | 35 To 54 | 55 Years+ |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Making university education more affordable for Americans                                        | 7.7   | 8.3      | 7.7      | 7.4       |
| Lowering taxes on the middle class                                                               | 7.7   | 7.2      | 8.0      | 7.9       |
| Fund community colleges to provide affordable re-training of American workers for new technology | 7.6   | 7.5      | 7.5      | 7.6       |
| Protecting consumers from fraud on the internet                                                  | 7.6   | 7.2      | 7.7      | 7.9       |
| Repairing U.S. roads, highways and bridges.                                                      | 7.5   | 6.7      | 7.8      | 8.1       |
| Strengthening our nation’s military                                                              | 7.3   | 5.7      | 7.9      | 7.6       |
| Finding, arresting and jailing computer hackers                                                  | 7.3   | 6.1      | 7.9      | 8.0       |
| Preventing forest fires                                                                          | 7.3   | 7.2      | 7.2      | 7.7       |
| Protecting and funding our national park system                                                  | 7.2   | 7.4      | 6.9      | 7.4       |

~~~~~

Finally, seven of the 23 issues are at the bottom of the priority ratings. The lowest rating was given to building a wall on the southern border between Mexico and the United States, and this was the only issue to receive a priority rating below 5.0. But also receiving lower ratings were issues pertaining to taxation, gun control, deportation of “known” Muslim terrorists and giving more opportunity for companies to drill for oil and gas.

-more-

*“Next I will read you a list of domestic issues facing the U.S. that the next president could work on. On a scale of zero to ten where zero means it is not important and ten means it is extremely important, how would you rate each of the following”*

PRIORITY ASSIGNED TO EACH ISSUE ON A SCALE  
WHERE 10.0 EQUALS HIGHEST PRIORITY

	Total	Under 35	35 To 54	55 Years+
Raising income taxes on America’s richest individuals	6.6	7.5	6.5	6.2
Strengthening fire arm purchase background checks	6.5	6.5	6.3	6.9
Giving tax breaks to American homeowners who convert to alternative energy such as solar and wind.	5.9	5.5	6.0	6.1
Requiring people who own military style automatic weapons to register them with local police.	5.8	5.9	5.2	6.2
Deport all Muslims who the U.S. Government believes may be terrorists	5.7	5.0	6.0	6.3
Allowing companies more freedom to drill for oil and gas	5.2	4.2	5.2	5.7
Building and manning a wall along the southern border on the United States	4.7	3.9	5.4	5.1

~~~~~

This survey also reveals several interesting patterns in the issue orientation of Arizonans depending upon their political party affiliation. The first is that Republicans are more narrowly focused on six issues, that is, they give only six issues a priority rating of 8.0 or higher on the ten-point scale. In comparison, Democrats so rate eleven items and for Independents the number of items so rated rises to 12. Also note that the focus of GOP voters is more on the economy, national debt, military and terrorism issues, while among Independents and Democrats, although they give top prioritization to most of those same issues (except strengthening the military), their interests expand to include food safety, internet fraud, health care for the poor, national parks, middle-class taxes and prosecuting internet hackers.

-more-

PRIORITY OF 8.0 OR HIGHER GIVEN TO EACH ISSUE

| INDEPENDENTS                             | DEMOCRATS                                           | REPUBLICANS                |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| K through 12 education                   | K through 12 education                              | K through 12 education     |
| The economy                              | The economy                                         | The economy                |
| Terrorism                                | Terrorism                                           | Terrorism                  |
| National debt                            | Fund community colleges to retrain American workers | National debt              |
| Wounded Warriors Funding                 | Wounded Warrior Funding                             | Wounded Warrior Funding    |
| Protecting consumers from Internet fraud | University education more affordable                | Not rated an 8.0+ priority |
| Assuring food safety                     | Assuring food safety                                | Not rated an 8.0+ priority |
| Lower middle class taxes                 | Not rated an 8.0+ priority                          | Not rated an 8.0+ priority |
| Repair roads, highways bridges           | Repair roads, highways, bridges                     | Not rated an 8.0+ priority |
| Health care for poor families            | Health care for poor families                       | Not rated an 8.0+ priority |
| Prosecute computer hackers               | Not rated an 8.0+ priority                          | Not rated an 8.0+ priority |
| Protect/fund national park system        | Not rated an 8.0+ priority                          | Not rated an 8.0+ priority |
| Not rated an 8.0+ priority               | Raise income taxes on the wealthy                   | Not rated an 8.0+ priority |
| Not rated an 8.0+ priority               | Automatic weapons registration                      | Not rated an 8.0+ priority |
| Not rated an 8.0+ priority               | Not rated an 8.0+ priority                          | Strengthen the military    |

Finally, despite the marquee position that Donald Trump has made of building a wall along the U.S. / Mexico border, it was given the lowest priority by Arizonans: only 4.7 on the ten-point scale. For Democrats it has a rating of 2.6, for Independents,4.2 and rose to only 7.3 among registered Republicans.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** This Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona (2016-IV-01), is based on **700** interviews with adult heads of household statewide, conducted between **October 3 to 9, 2016**. 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.

**Further Note on Behavior Research Center**

Nate Silver of the website [fivethirtyeight.com](http://fivethirtyeight.com) rated BRC as one of the top 6 percent of political polling firms in the nation for methodology and accuracy, giving BRC an “A” rating. Mr. Silver and his website have correctly predicted national and state election outcomes in recent election cycles by aggregating polling results from multiple research firms.