THE ROCKY Mountaineer

June 2022, Issue 10

MOVING COLORADO FORWARD

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Welcome Back to The Mountaineer

Welcome to *The Mountaineer*, a resource for progressives and a guide for advocates across Colorado, published by GSG and ProgressNow Colorado. Research presented in this publication is the result of a survey conducted between June 2 and June 8, 2022, among 800 registered voters in Colorado, plus an oversample of 150 Adams County voters for a total of 214 voters in Adams County. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level for Colorado voters is +/- 3.4%. The margin of error on sub-samples is greater.

This tenth publication will focus on the political landscape heading into the fall, including voters' views on the parties, who they prefer on their Governor and Senate ballot, and what language shapes attitudes on Republicans. A second report on this survey, focused on attitudes on abortion and guns, will follow next week.

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THE COLORADO DEMOCRATIC BRAND IS STRONG

Governor Polis is a strong and steady standard-bearer for Colorado Democrats who continue to have an advantage over Republicans on registration, self-identification, and the generic vote for state legislature. The GOP is dragged down by DC Republicans, Trump, and the MAGA movement.

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POLIS AND BENNET BOTH HOLD THEIR LEADS OVER POTENTIAL REPUBLICAN CHALLENGERS

The Governor and Senator are well-positioned heading into November against Republicans seeking to face them in the general election. Once again, our data shows Ganahl underperforming another Republican alternative against Polis. Meanwhile, Bennet holds a strong lead in the Senate race with no difference in the performance of Hanks and O'Dea.

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MESSAGING AGAINST REPUBLICANS DEFEATS ANTI-DEM CRITIQUES
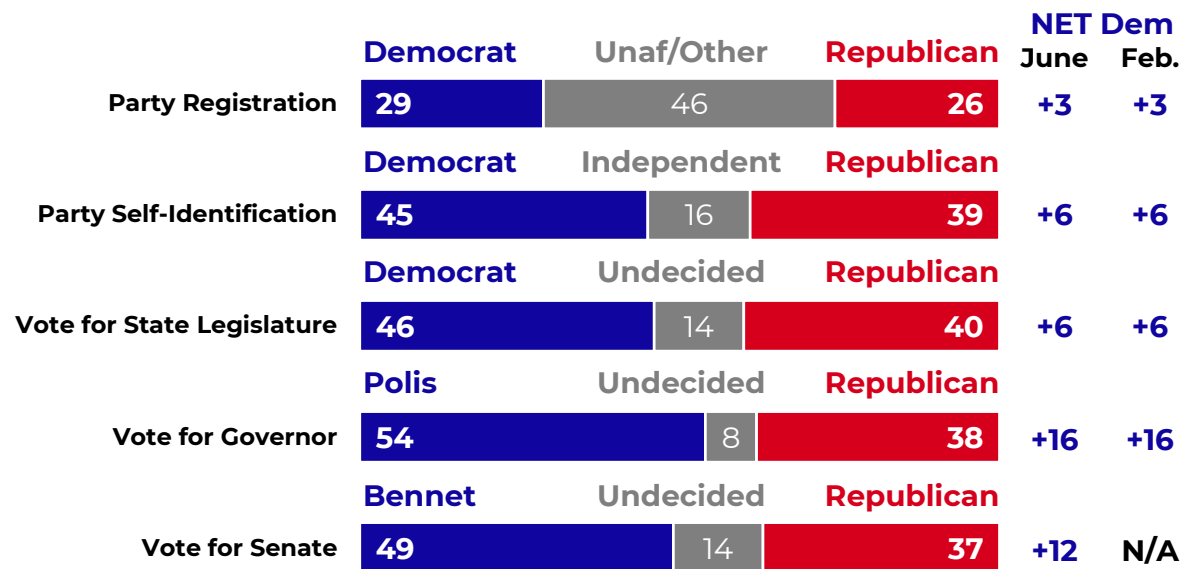

Voters see Democrats as more trustworthy on important issues facing the state, though Republicans have a modest leg up on the economy and jobs, cost of living, and public safety. Still, Democrats have strong messaging against Republicans, and there is the potential to bolster Democratic support by framing Republicans as caring more about Trump and the wealthy and big corporations.
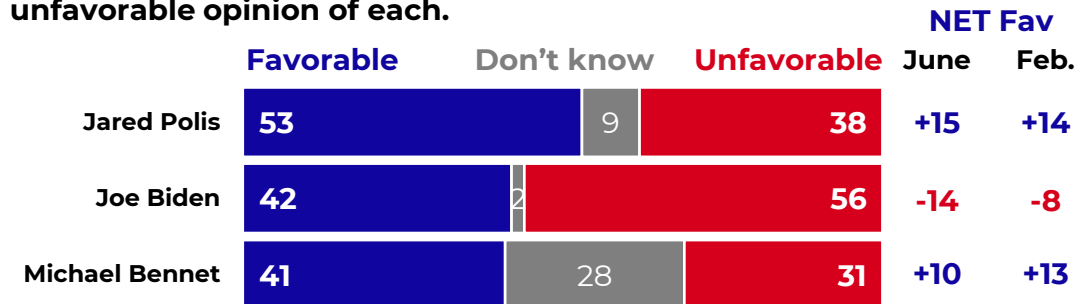
Colorado Democrats continue to hold strong margins, even as Biden's standing has declined further

Democrats still lead Republicans on all partisan metrics, which have stayed remarkably consistent since we last polled in February. Governor Jared Polis and Senator Michael Bennet, who are both well-above water in favorability ratings, lead in their respective races for re-election. The Democrats' lead on the generic legislative ballot has also held steady, even as President Biden's standing in Colorado has declined further.

	Democrat	Unaf/Other	Republican	NET Dem June	Feb.
Party Registration	29	46	26	+3	+3

	Democrat	Independent	Republican		
Party Self-Identification	45	16	39	+6	+6

	Democrat	Undecided	Republican		
Vote for State Legislature	46	14	40	+6	+6

	Polis	Undecided	Republican		
Vote for Governor	54	8	38	+16	+16

	Bennet	Undecided	Republican		
Vote for Senate	49	14	37	+12	N/A

Please indicate whether you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of each.

	Favorable	Don't know	Unfavorable	NET Fav June	Feb.
Jared Polis	53	9	38	+15	+14
Joe Biden	42	2	56	-14	-8
Michael Bennet	41	28	31	+10	+13

Donald Trump, his MAGA supporters, and national Republicans are big anchors for the GOP brand

While both Colorado Democrats and Colorado Republicans are much better liked than their DC counterparts, **Democrats start from a significantly better position, and Polis gives Democrats a popular standard-bearer.** While unaffiliated voters don't have much love for DC Democrats, they loathe DC Republicans, MAGA Republicans, and Trump. Lauren Boebert is only saved from having similar ratings by the fact that two-thirds of unaffiliateds are unfamiliar with her. The situation is much the same in the blue-collar swing suburb of Adams County (which we oversampled).
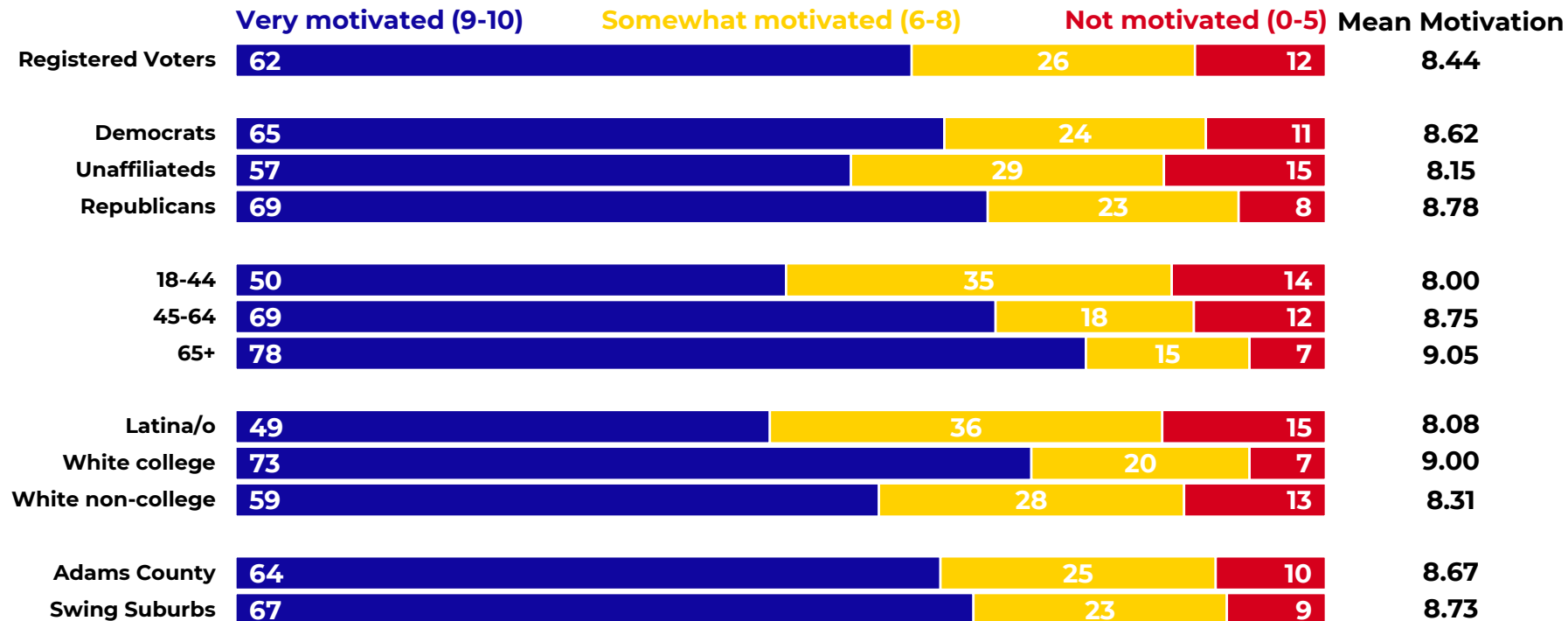
Please indicate whether you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of each.

	Favorable	Don't know	Unfavorable	RVs	Dem	Unaf.	Rep	Adams
						NET Fav		
Jared Polis	53	9	38	+15	+67	+14	-40	+12
Colorado Democrats	48	9	43	+5	+68	+1	-57	+9
Washington, D.C. Democrats	39	8	53	-14	+44	-19	-70	-10
Colorado Republicans	40	12	48	-8	-58	-10	+48	-2
Washington, D.C. Republicans	31	8	61	-30	-73	-33	+24	-27
Donald Trump	38	2	60	-22	-78	-22	+41	-19
MAGA Republicans	30	17	53	-23	-72	-26	+35	-19
Lauren Boebert	25	34	41	-16	-53	-19	+32	-18
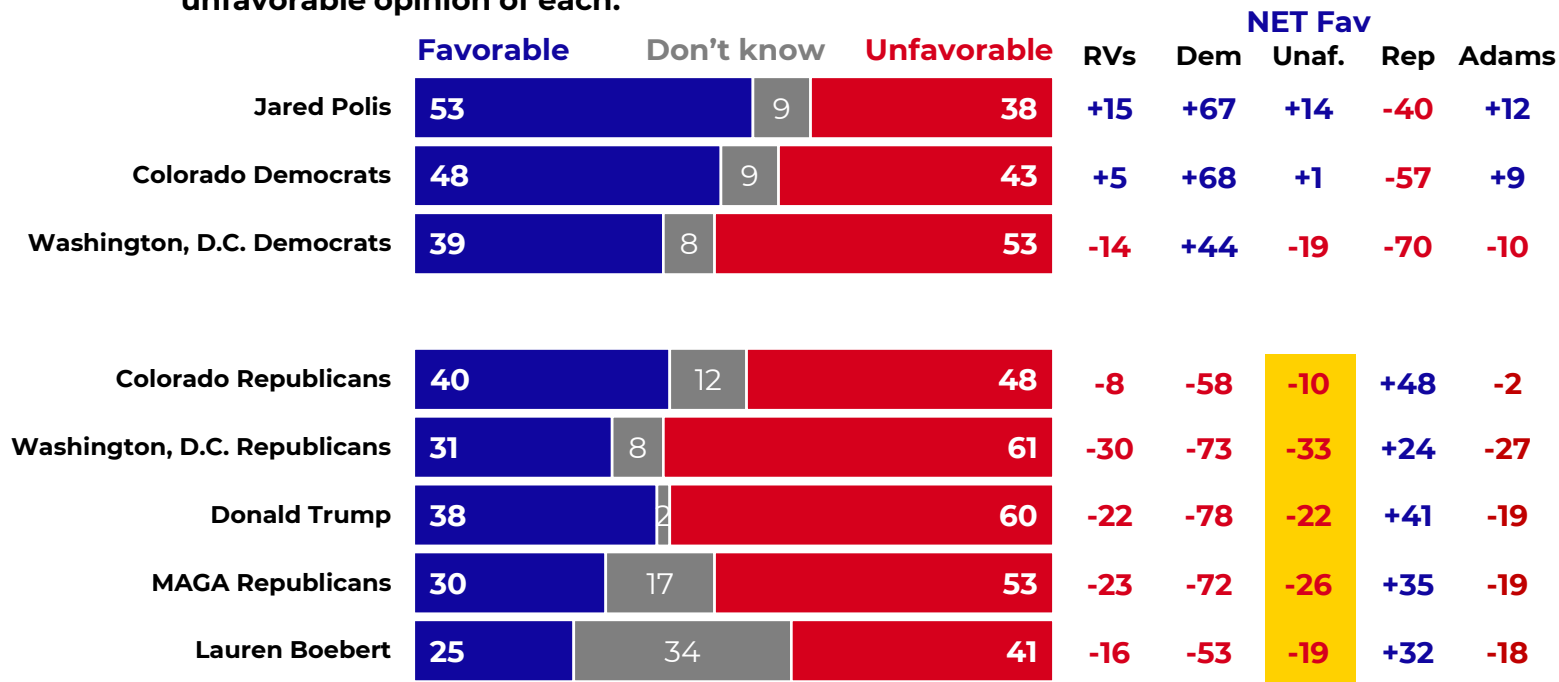
Democrats and Republicans are about equally motivated to vote, but there is work to do with key Dem groups

Belying the conventional wisdom, Democrats and Republicans are about equally motivated to participate in the upcoming election. However, some **important Democratic-leaning groups like young people and Latino voters are among the least motivated groups.** Balancing that out, college-educated white voters are much more motivated than their non-college counterparts, and voters in the Democratic-leaning (but swing) suburbs of Adams, Jefferson, and Arapahoe Counties are more motivated than voters in the rest of the state.

Please rate your level of motivation to vote in the November 2022 election for Governor, Senate, Congress, and other offices on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you are not at all motivated to vote and 10 means you are extremely motivated to vote.
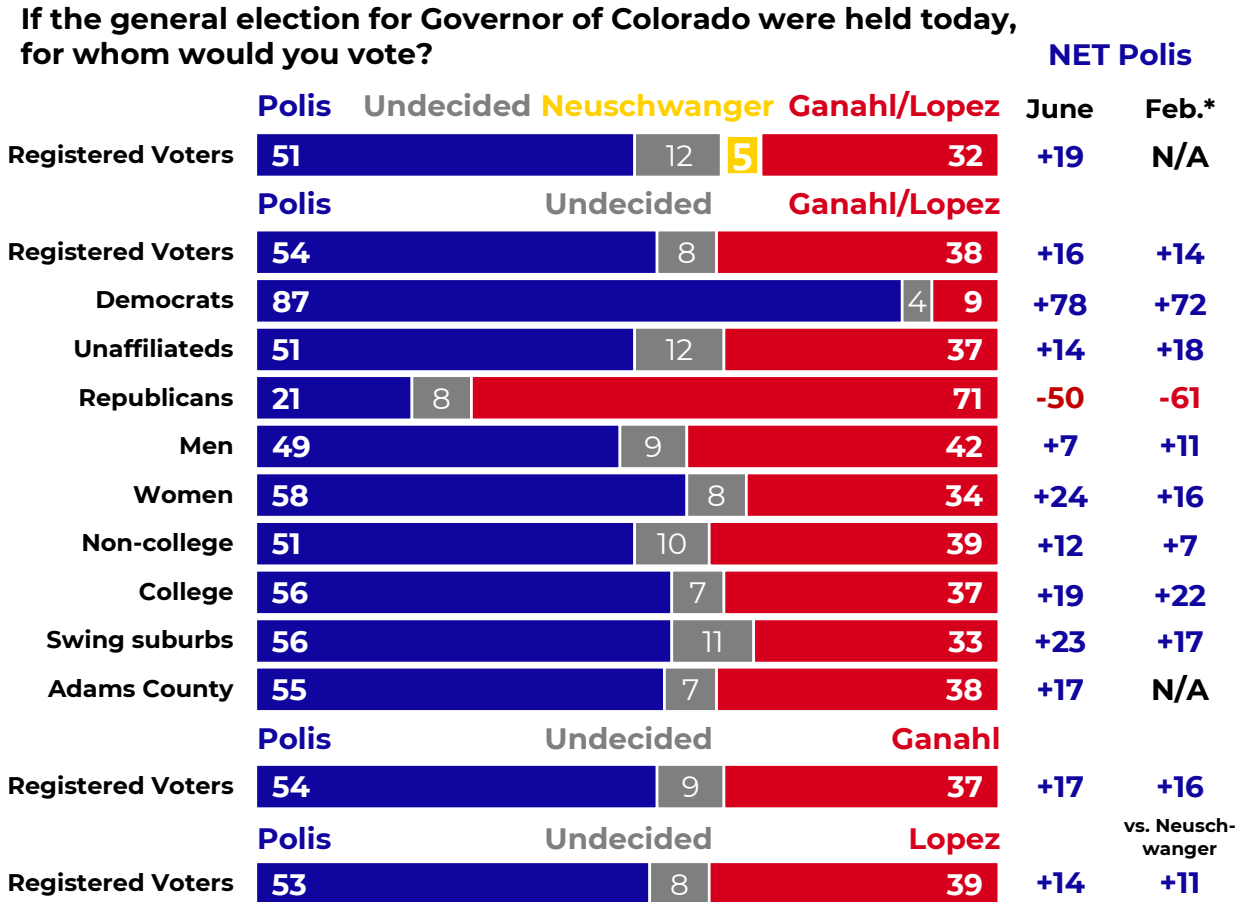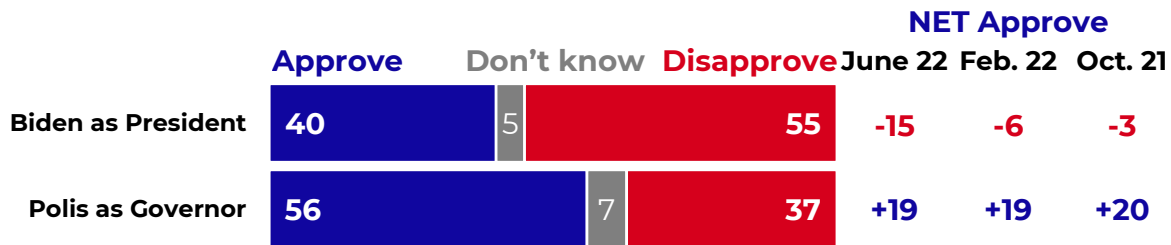
	Very motivated (9-10)	Somewhat motivated (6-8)	Not motivated (0-5)	Mean Motivation
Registered Voters	62	26	12	8.44
Democrats	65	24	11	8.62
Unaffiliateds	57	29	15	8.15
Republicans	69	23	8	8.78
18-44	50	35	14	8.00
45-64	69	18	12	8.75
65+	78	15	7	9.05
Latina/o	49	36	15	8.08
White college	73	20	7	9.00
White non-college	59	28	13	8.31
Adams County	64	25	10	8.67
Swing Suburbs	67	23	9	8.73

Polis' job approval and lead over Ganahl are consistently strong; Ganahl slightly underperforms Lopez

Polis' job rating remains strong and steady at +19, about the same as it has been going back to nearly two years – even as President Biden has seen his ratings continue to decline.

Relatedly, Polis continues to dominate opponents, holding a 19-point margin against a Republican on the three-way ballot including Danielle Neuschwanger and a 16-point margin against a Republican on the head-to-head match-up.

Similar to February when Heidi Ganahl performed worse in a head-to-head against Polis than Neuschwanger, **Ganahl also slightly underperforms Lopez** (who trails Polis by 14, as opposed to Ganahl who trails him by 17).
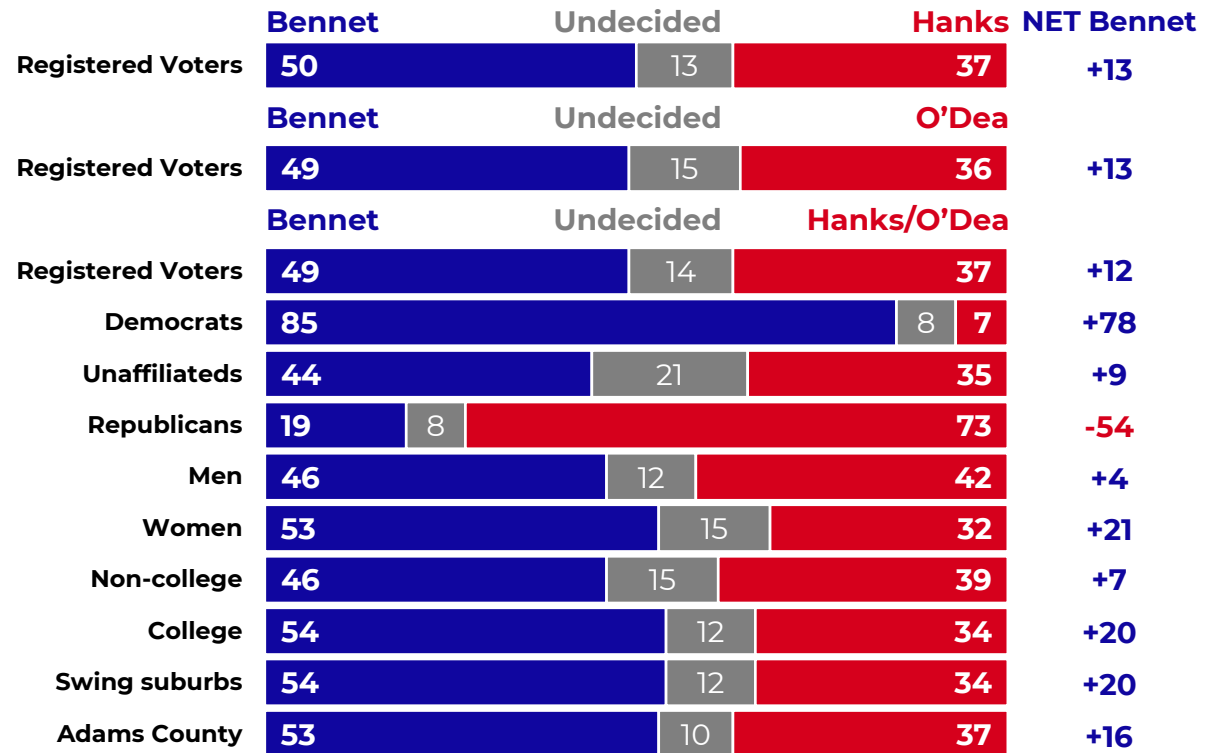
If the general election for Governor of Colorado were held today, for whom would you vote?

	Polis	Undecided	Neuschwanger	Ganahl/Lopez	NET Polis June	NET Polis Feb.*
Registered Voters	51	12	5	32	+19	N/A

	Polis	Undecided	Ganahl/Lopez	NET Polis June	NET Polis Feb.*
Registered Voters	54	8	38	+16	+14
Democrats	87	4	9	+78	+72
Unaffiliateds	51	12	37	+14	+18
Republicans	21	8	71	-50	-61
Men	49	9	42	+7	+11
Women	58	8	34	+24	+16
Non-college	51	10	39	+12	+7
College	56	7	37	+19	+22
Swing suburbs	56	11	33	+23	+17
Adams County	55	7	38	+17	N/A

	Polis	Undecided	Ganahl	NET Polis June	NET Polis Feb.*
Registered Voters	54	9	37	+17	+16

	Polis	Undecided	Lopez	NET Polis June	vs. Neuschwanger
Registered Voters	53	8	39	+14	+11

	Approve	Don't know	Disapprove	NET Approve June 22	Feb. 22	Oct. 21
Biden as President	40	5	55	-15	-6	-3
Polis as Governor	56	7	37	+19	+19	+20

* In February, the vote was asked between Polis and Ganahl and Polis and Neuschwanger.

Bennet also holds a strong lead against Republican opponents

In his race for re-election, **Senator Bennet also has strong leads over potential challengers Rob Hanks and Joe O'Dea, with no difference in the strength of the two potential GOP nominees.** Bennet has strong leads with women, college voters, and voters in the swing suburbs of Adams, Jefferson, and Arapahor Counties.

If the general election for Senate were held today, for whom would you vote?

	Bennet	Undecided	Hanks	NET Bennet
Registered Voters	50	13	37	+13

	Bennet	Undecided	O'Dea	
Registered Voters	49	15	36	+13

	Bennet	Undecided	Hanks/O'Dea	
Registered Voters	49	14	37	+12
Democrats	85	8	7	+78
Unaffiliateds	44	21	35	+9
Republicans	19	8	73	-54
Men	46	12	42	+4
Women	53	15	32	+21
Non-college	46	15	39	+7
College	54	12	34	+20
Swing suburbs	54	12	34	+20
Adams County	53	10	37	+16

* In February, the vote was asked between Bennet and Hanks and Bennet and Campana.

Democrats continue to lead on most issues, though Republicans have small leads on the economy, cost of living, and public safety

Voters prefer Democrats on major issues facing Coloradans, **including a 20-point lead on the issue of abortion – which has the potential to be a defining issue in this election** (more on that in the report we will be releasing next week). Republicans do have modest leads on the economy and jobs, cost of living, and public safety, all of which are significant drivers of the vote in a regression analysis. However, Democrats continue to be preferred on looking out for the working and middle classes – which is a slightly stronger driver of the vote. They also have a slight lead on guns, which is also a strong driver of the vote. We will be digging more deeply into the issue of guns (along with abortion) in a second report on this survey to be released next week.

Who do you trust more to handle each of the following?

	Democrats in Colorado	Republicans in Colorado	NET Democrats June	NET Democrats Feb
Reducing air pollution and addressing climate change	54	29	+25	+31
Dealing with the issue of abortion*	52	32	+20	+16
Bringing down the cost of health care and prescription drugs	46	31	+15	+12
Ensuring fair elections and protecting our democracy	49	38	+11	N/A
Improving public education for Colorado's children	48	37	+11	+10
Looking out for working- and middle-class Coloradans*	47	38	+9	+5
Dealing with the issue of guns*	45	42	+3	N/A
Ensuring that Colorado has a fair and effective tax system	41	40	+1	-2
Protecting public safety*	39	44	-5	-7
Addressing Colorado's rising cost of living*	37	42	-5	-6
Improving the economy and creating good-paying jobs*	39	46	-7	-9

* and <u>underline</u> indicates that this item was a significant driver of the generic ballot in regression analysis

Critiques of Republicans as having the wrong priorities – MAGA or the rich – defeat the GOP critique of Dems

Two potential critiques that Democrats can make against Republicans – that they are focused on MAGA and pleasing Trump or helping the rich get richer – defeat a typical Republican attack on Democrats centered on inflation, crime, and wokeness. The two critiques of the GOP perform about the same overall and with most groups, though the argument that MAGA Republicans have become so obsessed with pleasing Trump and criminalizing abortion that they are no longer focused on improving the economy does a bit better with women and white college-educated voters.

[GOP Statement] Colorado Democrats have become obsessed with race, divisive social issues like transgender rights, and giving out taxpayer-funded handouts. Under their leadership, crime and homelessness are soaring and schools are failing. And thanks to Colorado Democrats' out-of-control spending, we have a weak economic recovery, record inflation, and skyrocketing costs for housing, groceries, and gas.

[SPLIT: Focus/MAGA] Colorado Republicans started the latest legislative session by voting to officially thank the January 6th rioters and praise conspiracy theorists who are still trying to overturn the last election. Now, Republicans are making a ban on abortion their top priority and pushing to overturn Colorado's common-sense gun safety laws. These MAGA Republicans have become so obsessed with pleasing Trump, criminalizing abortion, and protecting the gun lobby that that they are no longer focused on improving the economy for working families.

[SPLIT: Rich Get Richer] Colorado Republicans only care about the rich getting richer, even when it hurts the rest of us. Their only plan for the economy is to hand out even more tax breaks to the billionaire class and CEOs who are already making record profits, even as they vote against tax cuts for middle class families. And now, instead of cracking down on price gouging, Colorado Republicans are protecting the giant corporations and Big Oil CEOs who are taking advantage of COVID by jacking-up prices on working Coloradans.

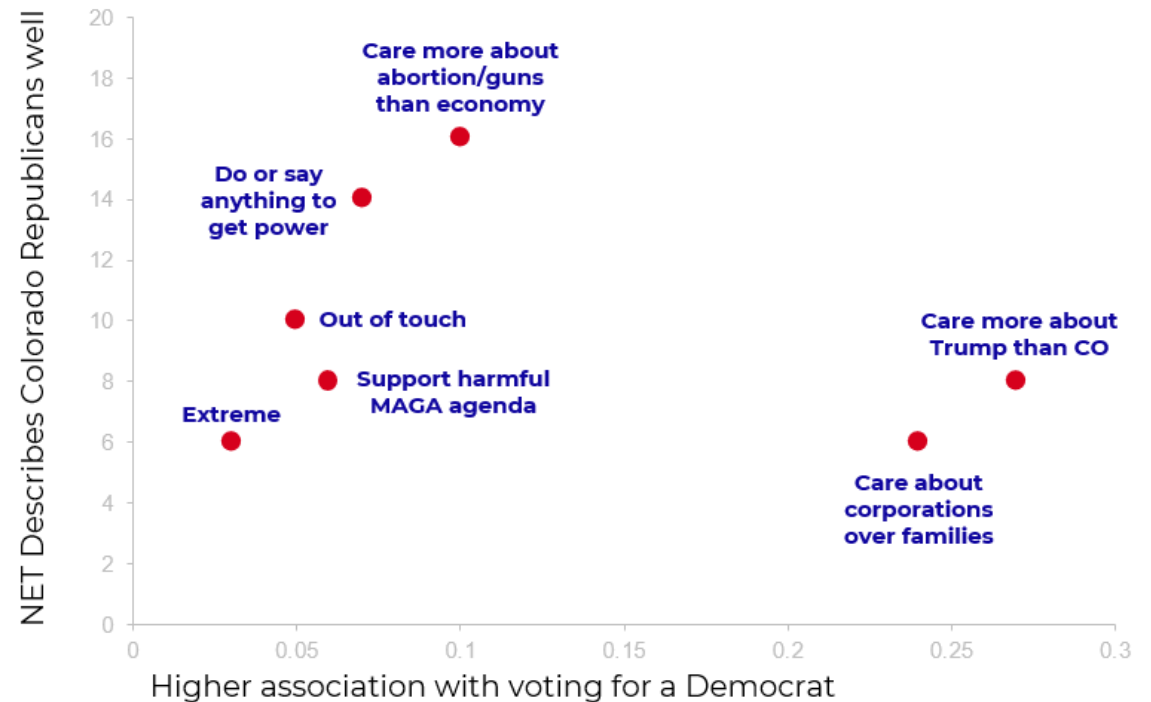|	Focus/MAGA	Richer
Which do you find more concerning?		
Dem. Statement	50	48
GOP Statement	39	37
NET Dem. Statement Overall	+11	+11
Unaffiliateds	+9	+15
People of Color	+23	+28
Women	+24	+16
Men	-2	+4
White Non-College	+10	+13
White College	+5	-7
Once again, if the general election for state legislature were held today, for whom would you vote?		
Democratic candidate	48	49
Republican candidate	41	42
NET Democrat	+7	+7
Change from Initial Generic Vote	+1	+1
Once again, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Colorado Republicans?		
Favorable	40	39
Unfavorable	55	52
NET Favorable	-15	-13
Change from Initial Favorability	-7	-5

Convincing voters that the GOP puts Trump over CO and corporations/wealthy over families can move the vote

After voters hear the exchange of critiques, majorities or pluralities agree that a series of negative descriptions fit Republicans well, especially that they care more about banning abortion and protecting the gun lobby than improving the economy for working families and that they'll do or say anything to gain power. However, <mark>believing that Republicans care more about Trump than Colorado and care more about corporations and the wealthy than working families are the biggest drivers of voting for a generic Democrat</mark> in a regression analysis. This suggests that successfully convincing more voters of these two facts could expand Democrats' already substantial advantage in Colorado.

How well do each of the following describe Colorado Republicans?

	Well	Not Well	NET Well RVs	NET Well Unaf.
Care more about banning abortion and protecting the gun lobby than improving the economy for working families	55	39	+16	+13
Will do or say anything to gain power	54	40	+14	+9
Out of touch	51	41	+10	+7
Care more about pleasing Donald Trump than doing what's best for Colorado	51	43	+9	+8
Support a MAGA agenda that will harm regular Colorado families	48	40	+8	+7
Only care about helping giant corporations and the wealthy, even when it hurts working families	49	43	+6	+1
Extreme	49	43	+6	0

About The Mountaineer

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Colorado has a long history as a leader in developing and implementing ground-breaking progressive policy, but as the state's leaders continue to build on this progressive tradition, they also face unique challenges that range from the state's TABOR amendment to its rapid growth.

The Mountaineer is designed to act as a consistent, flexible, and responsive tool to help inform the unique political and policy debates in Colorado. By conducting methodologically sound research and providing reliable guidance to inform allies, elected leaders, and the press, *The Mountaineer* will help progressive leaders and communicators shape the debate on the issues that matter most to Coloradans.

About the Study

Global Strategy Group conducted a public opinion survey among a sample of 800 registered voters in Colorado, plus an oversample of 150 voters in Adams County for a total of 214 interviews with Adams County voters, between June 2 and June 8, 2022 . The margin of error at the 95% confidence level for Colorado voters is +/- 3.4%. The margin of error on sub-samples is greater. The survey was conducted over the phone and online, with online respondents recruited from multiple opt-in online panel vendors. Respondents were verified against a voter file, and special care was taken to ensure the demographic composition of our sample matched that of Colorado's registered voter population across a variety of demographic variables including party registration, race, gender, age, education, region, and population density.

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