

THE ROCKY Mountaineer

June 2022, Issue 11

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- **VOTERS TRUST DEMOCRATS ON ABORTION AND STAND WITH DEMS IN OPPOSING OVERTURNING ROE V. WADE**
- **DEMOCRATS BENEFIT AT THE BALLOT BOX WHEN FRAMING THE ELECTION AROUND ABORTION RIGHTS**
- **MAJORITIES OF COLORADO VOTERS LOOKING TO ADDRESS GUN VIOLENCE**

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 eleventh publication will focus on Colorado voters' attitudes on some of the most salient issues of the day – abortion and guns. See our tenth report for more on the political landscape in Colorado heading into the fall general election.

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VOTERS OPPOSE OVERTURNING ROE AND PREFER DEMOCRATS ON ABORTION



Voters trust Democrats on the issue of abortion over Republicans by 20 points. By a two-to-one margin, voters oppose overturning *Roe v. Wade*, with a plurality of less-conservative Republicans joining overwhelming majorities of Democrats and unaffiliateds in opposing the decision.

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MESSAGING AROUND ABORTION HELPS DEM ELECTORAL CHANCES



Democrats can run up the score with key groups and even gain considerable leads with traditionally non-Democratic groups like white men, older whites, and less-conservative Republicans when focusing the 2022 election on abortion. The issue also significantly boosts Democratic motivation to participate in November.

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A DEBATE ON COLORADO'S GUN LAWS IS A WINNER FOR DEMOCRATS



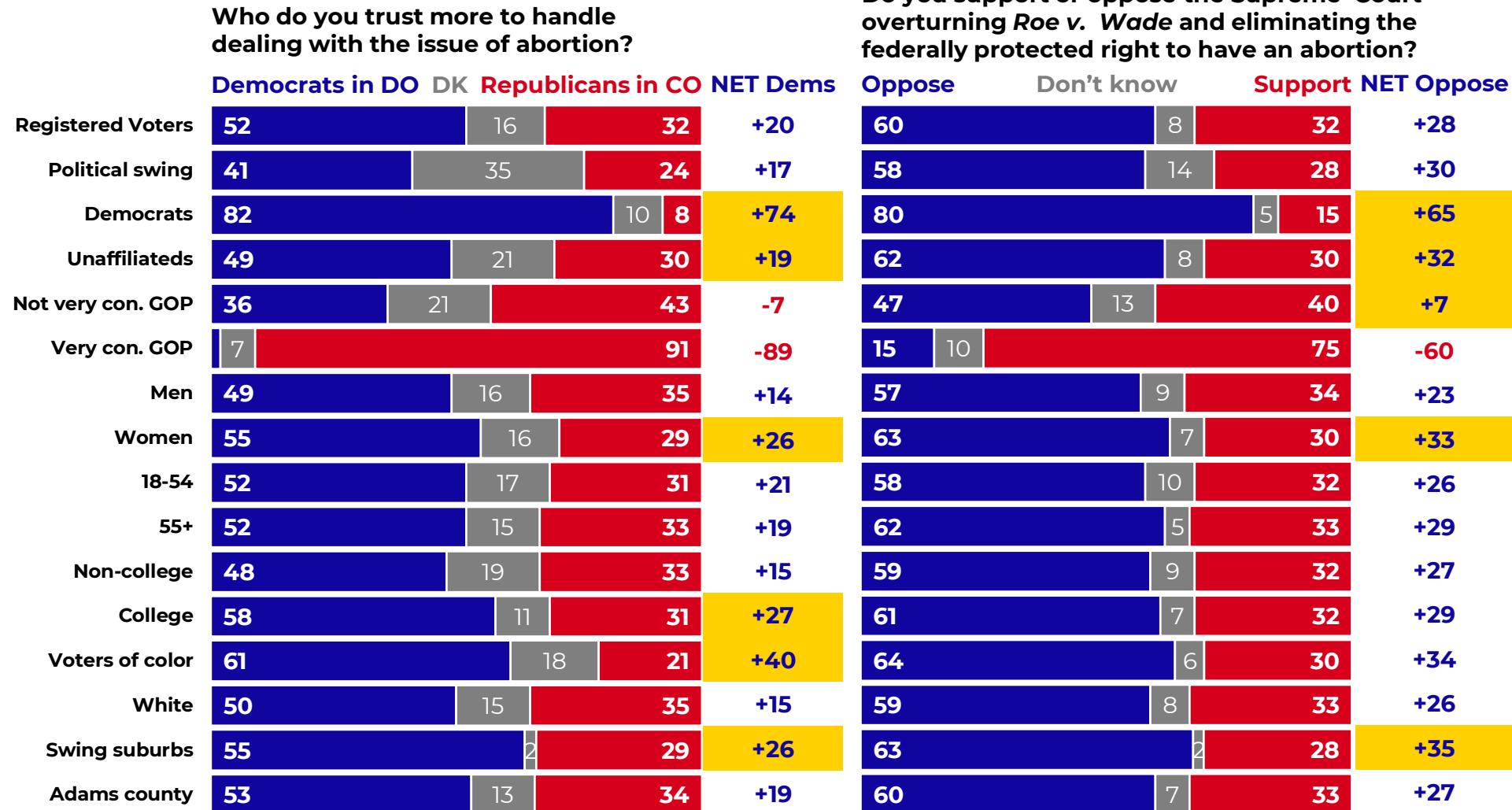
Voters want to see action on gun violence, reject the GOP “solution” for school shootings, and would reward Democratic candidates in a debate over Colorado’s background check, magazine limit, and red flag laws. However, they also express some concern about Democrats going too far (though not as much concern as they have about Republicans not doing enough).

Key groups of Colorado voters trust Democrats on the issue of abortion and do not want to see *Roe* overturned

Voters prefer Democrats to handle the issue of abortion, giving them **a 20-point lead over Republicans on an issue that has the potential to define this election in a major way.**

Women, college-educated, and swing suburban voters (including those in Adams County) look to Democrats on this issue.

Further, a clear majority of voters and nearly every key subgroup, even Republicans who are not very conservative, oppose the Supreme Court's imminent overturning of *Roe v. Wade* and want to see the right to abortion protected under federal law. Again, women, college-educated voters, and swing suburban voters feel especially strongly.

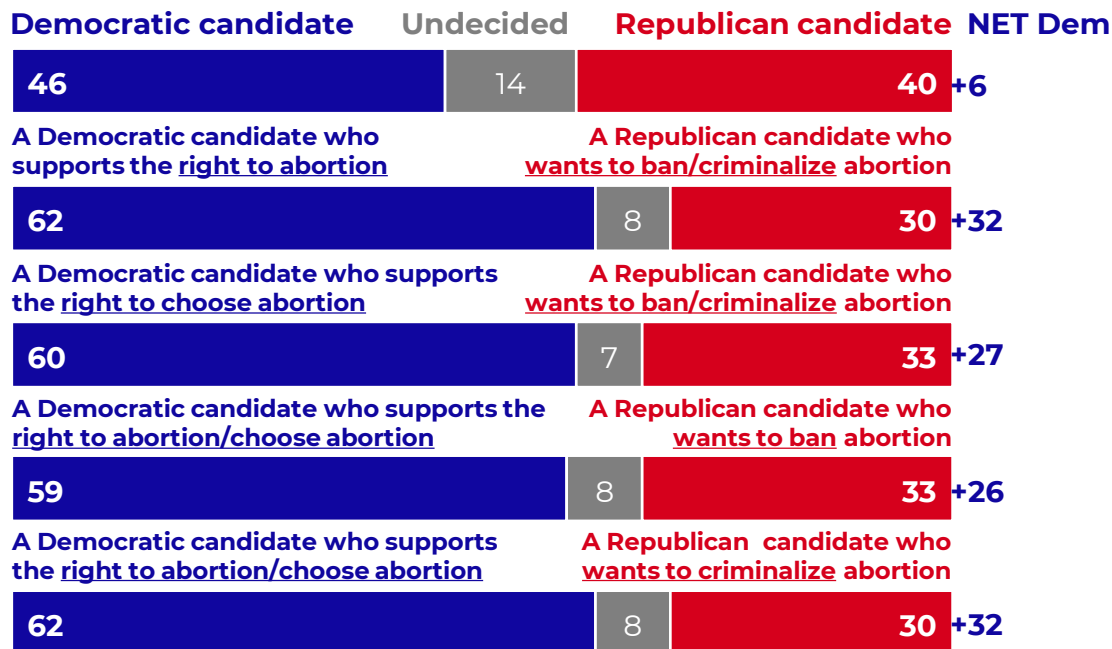


Democrats who support abortion rights make up significant ground running against Republicans who want to ban/criminalize them

Democrats benefit when the generic ballot is framed around the issue of abortion, with a Democrat who supports the right to an abortion or the right to choose an abortion outpacing a Republican who wants to ban or criminalize abortion by strong double digits. While there are minor differences in the language test we conducted, it appears that **the strongest framing is a Democrat who supports the right to abortion* versus a Republican who wants to criminalize it.**

The Democratic margin improves by 23 points when voters consider the issue of abortion, with the largest gains among center-right voters and sizeable improvements among nearly every demographic group, including traditionally less-Democratic groups like white men, white non-college voters, and white older voters.

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



	Generic Legislative Ballot	Generic Ballot Framed Around Abortion Issue (Combined)	Change
Democratic candidate	46	61	+15
Republican candidate	40	32	-8
NET Democrat	+6	+29	+23
Democrats	+74	+79	+5
Unaffiliateds	-3	+33	+36
Not very conservative Republicans	-35	0	+35
Very conservative Republicans	-91	-81	+10
Voters of color	+25	+47	+22
White men	-8	+19	+27
White women	+10	+30	+20
White 18-54	+2	+25	+23
White 55+	0	+25	+25
White non-college	-4	+19	+23
White college	+6	+32	+26
Swing suburbs	+14	+36	+22

*A regression analysis shows that "right to an abortion" is stronger than "right to choose an abortion."**

Abortion is a big motivator for Democratic voters, especially when they are made aware of GOP intentions after *Roe*

Initially, intense Democratic motivation to vote lags just slightly behind Republican motivation, with some important Democratic-leaning groups like young people and voters of color among the least motivated. But when voters are asked to consider the general election in the context of the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, Democrats perk up. **The result is especially impactful among key groups like Democrats, young voters, voters of color, and white women when they are made aware of Republican intentions to pass bans on abortion in Colorado and nationwide.**

[SPLIT] As you may know, Republicans in Colorado and in Congress have said that when *Roe* is overturned, they will seek to pass bans on abortion at the state and national level.

[ALL] Knowing that the Supreme Court is very likely to overturn *Roe v. Wade* later this month, please, once again, rate your level of motivation to vote in this year's 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 in the November election, and 10 means you are extremely motivated to vote in the November election.

	Initial	With Abortion Framing + GOP Abortion Ban Info	Change	Initial	With Abortion Framing Only	Change
	% Very motivated			% Very motivated		
Registered Voters	65	68	+3	59	58	-1
Democrats	67	72	+5	62	67	+5
Unaffiliateds	60	63	+3	54	50	-4
Republicans	72	71	-1	66	62	-4
18-44	53	59	+6	48	49	+1
45-64	73	75	+2	66	62	-4
65+	81	80	-1	75	74	-1
Voters of color	52	61	+9	45	45	0
White men	67	65	-2	69	63	-6
White women	68	74	+6	58	60	+2
Swing suburbs	70	70	0	65	66	+1
Adams County	66	70	+4	62	66	+4

Messaging around a national ban and the lack of a rape exception are particularly potent with swing voters

Democrats have several effective messages to make the case against Colorado Republicans in 2022 – which are also effective with political swing voters (those who do not vote straight Democrat or straight Republican on every ballot in the survey – a group that leans to the center-right).

Even though voters were given the explicit option to indicate that they didn't believe these messages (which usually depresses message scores), the top messages are convincing to 60% of voters, with strong intensity, and most are quite believable.

The “Rape” and “National Ban” messages emerge as a bit stronger than the others among swing voters, while swing voters

are a slightly more skeptical about claims that Republicans would jail women or doctors over abortions in the case of rape and incest, that the *Roe* decision could lead to a same-sex marriage ban, and that Republicans would criminalize abortion in the case of ectopic pregnancies.

Please indicate how **convincing** each is as a reason to vote **against Colorado Republicans up and down the ballot in 2022**. If you don't believe the statement, please choose that option.

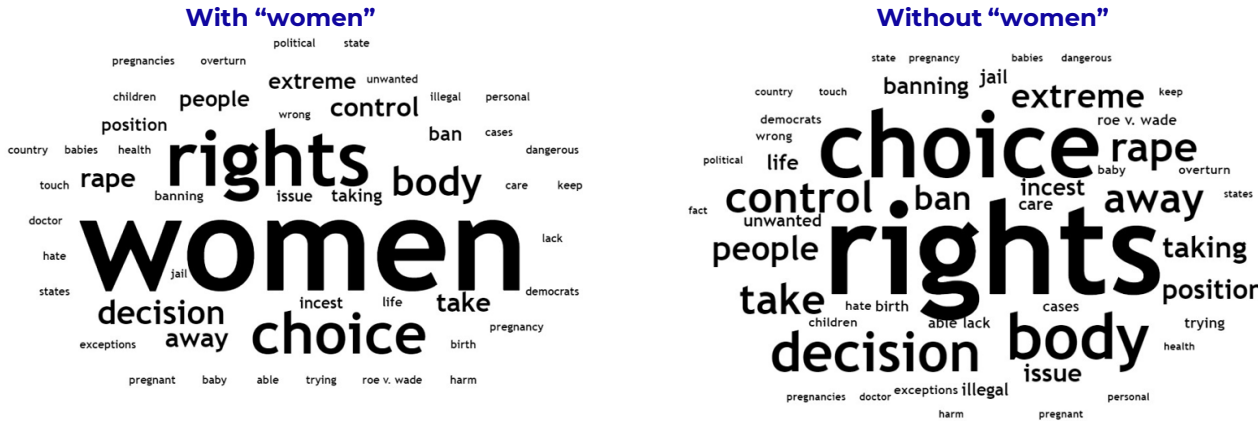
	Overall				Political Swing			
	% Very	% Total	% Not	% No believe	% Very	% Total	% Not	% No believe
[RAPE] With the Supreme Court set to overturn <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , Republicans across the country are pushing laws to criminalize all abortions. That would mean that a woman who was raped would be forced to carry her rapists' child to term and if she did have an abortion, her doctor would be sent to jail.	43	60	16	22	40	56	25	17
[NATIONAL BAN] With the Supreme Court set to overturn <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , Republicans in Congress are already working on a bill to ban abortion nationwide. And Republicans around the country are already introducing legislation that would put women who get abortions, or the doctors who perform them, in jail.	42	60	18	21	37	55	23	20
[CO LAW - RAPE AND INCEST] With the Supreme Court set to overturn <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , Republican candidates up and down the ballot in Colorado have pledged to overturn the Colorado law that guarantees a woman's right to choose and instead ban abortion, even in the case of rape and incest.	40	60	21	17	33	56	19	21
[NATIONAL BAN - RAPE AND INCEST] With the Supreme Court set to overturn <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , Republicans in Congress are already working on a bill to ban abortion nationwide. And Republicans around the country are already introducing legislation that would put women who get abortions, or the doctors who perform them, in jail - even in the case of rape and incest.	40	56	16	25	31	49	17	29
[CO LAW] With the Supreme Court set to overturn <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , Republican candidates up and down the ballot in Colorado have pledged to overturn the Colorado law that guarantees a woman's right to choose and instead ban abortion.	38	59	23	16	27	56	27	15
[SAME SEX MARRIAGE BAN] The Supreme Court has indicated that its decision to overturn <i>Roe v. Wade</i> isn't the end, and they may soon overturn the decision that protects the right to same-sex marriage. Republicans around the country, including here in Colorado, have already said that when the Supreme Court acts, they will push to ban same-sex marriage.	37	54	18	24	28	50	14	29
[BIRTH CONTROL BAN] The Supreme Court has indicated that its decision to overturn <i>Roe v. Wade</i> isn't the end, and they may soon overturn the decision that guarantees Americans the right to use birth control. Republicans around the country, including here in Colorado, have already said that when the Supreme Court acts, they will push to ban the birth control pill.	36	54	18	26	31	53	21	25
[ECTOPIC] With the Supreme Court set to overturn <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , Republicans across the country are pushing to criminalize all abortions. That could mean that if a woman who has an ectopic pregnancy that isn't viable and threatens her life has an abortion, the doctor who saved her life would be sent to jail.	35	51	17	29	24	46	15	33

Colorado voters clearly see the Republican position as an “extreme” and “out of touch” attack on women

Responding to open-ended questions after the battery of critiques against Republicans on abortion, voters are most concerned about women losing the right to make choices about their own bodies and use words like “extreme,” “dangerous,” “outdated,” and “out of touch” when describing the GOP position on abortion.

After reading these statements, what concerns you the most about Republicans' position on abortion?

After reading these statements, how would you describe Republicans' position on abortion in your own words?



"They are trying to control a woman's body when the choice should be the woman's choice. No one should decide what a women does with her body."

"They are trying to set us back 100 years and take away a women's right to choose."

"That it is the first step in overturning personal rights of privacy and autonomy over our bodies and lives."

"They do not support abortions and are out of touch."

"They want to criminalize women and take their choice away."

"They are trying to control people."

"The issue of abortion extends to other privacy rights and could destroy other long held precedents that have nothing to do with abortion."

"Extreme invasion of women's rights"

"Their position is dangerous, and they have no right deciding how a woman can choose to decide whether or not they want an abortion or to use birth control."

"Radical, extreme, and unfair"

"Their position is very disturbing. It is an attack on women."

"The Republicans are out of touch and extreme and do not care about the babies after birth."

"Outrageously outdated"

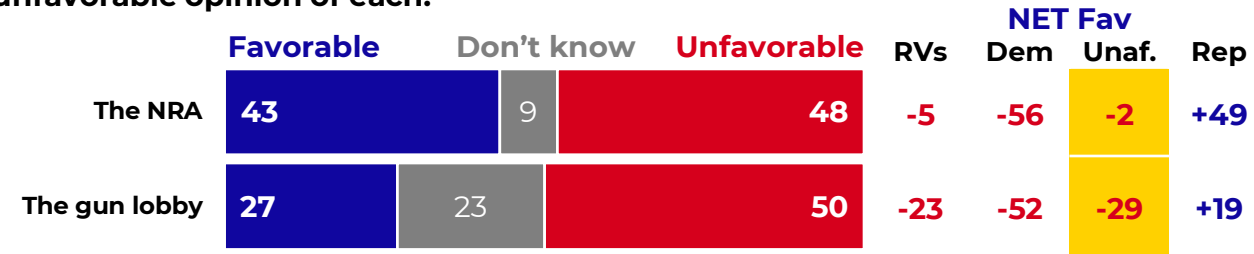
Voters want action on gun violence but also have some concern about Democrats going too far

The topic of guns is a bit more nuanced than the issue of abortion.

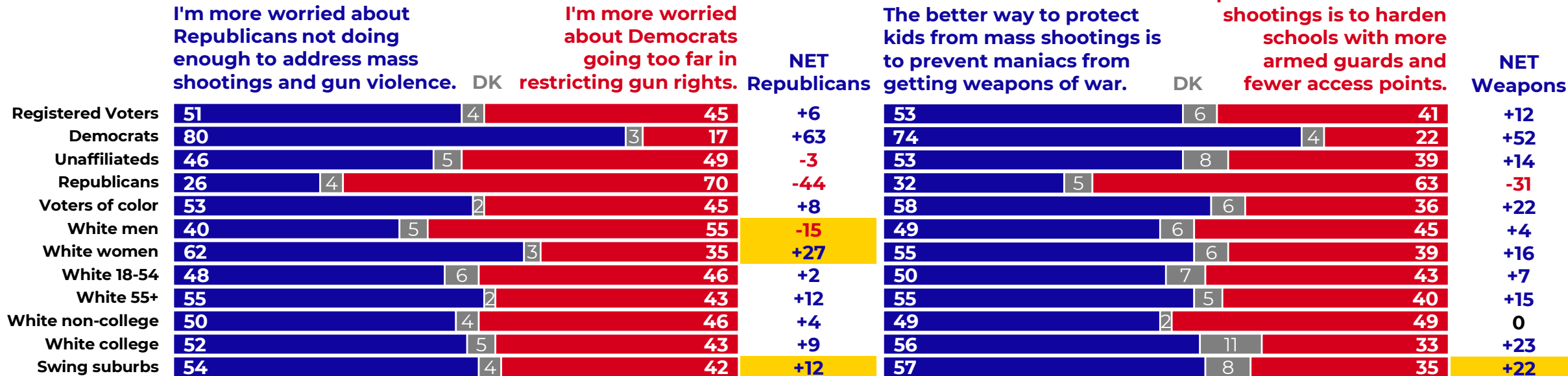
Though voters clearly dislike the gun lobby, the NRA is only just below water, with unaffiliateds having a more positive (but still ultimately negative) view of the group. And only a slight majority worry more about Republicans not doing enough to address gun violence than Democrats going too far in restricting gun rights – with a massive gender gap among white voters on this question.

However, a clear majority agrees with the notion that the better way to protect kids from mass shootings is to prevent the bad guys from getting guns, not by adding more doors and security guards to schools. **On both questions, the swing suburbs tilt strongly toward the progressive position.**

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



Which statement do you agree with more even if neither is exactly right?

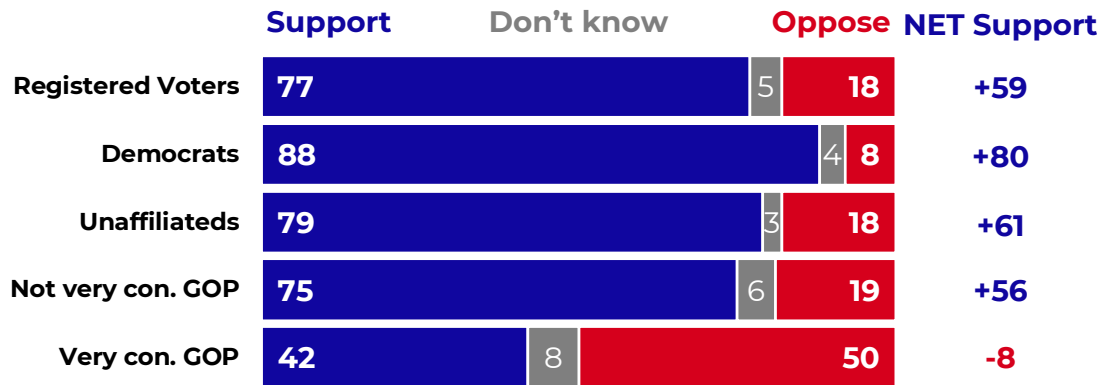


However, a debate over Colorado's gun laws is a clear electoral winner for Democrats

When the generic ballot is re-framed around the gun violence prevention laws that Colorado has put in place in recent years (specifically, background checks, magazine limits, and red flag laws), **a Democrat who supports these laws trounces a Republican who wants to eliminate them by a 23-point margin** (a 17-point improvement on the straight generic ballot). Democratic gains are particularly large with center-right voters, and white women, older voters, and college-educated voters.

Meanwhile, voters want to take these laws a step further and support raising the age required to purchase an assault weapon from 18 to 21 by a whopping 59-point margin.

Would you support or oppose raising the age required to purchase an assault weapon from 18 to 21, with exceptions for active military and police officers?



As you may know, in recent years, Colorado has implemented laws that require background checks on all gun sales, banned magazines that hold more than 15 rounds of ammunition, and allowed a judge to temporarily take away someone's gun if they were deemed a danger to themselves or others.

With that in mind: Thinking about the election for state legislature again, if the election were today, for whom would you vote – a Democrat who supports these laws, or a Republican who wants to eliminate them?

	Generic Legislative Ballot	Generic Ballot Framed Around Gun Laws	Change
Democratic candidate	46	57	+11
Republican candidate	40	34	-6
NET Democrat	+6	+23	+17
Democrats	+74	+77	+3
Unaffiliateds	-3	+24	+27
Not very conservative Republicans	-35	-12	+23
Very conservative Republicans	-91	-83	+8
Voters of color	+25	+36	+11
White men	-8	+8	+16
White women	+10	+31	+21
White 18-54	+2	+18	+16
White 55+	0	+22	+22
White non-college	-4	+11	+15
White college	+6	+29	+23
Swing suburbs	+14	+32	+18

About The Mountaineer

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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