THE ROCKY
Mountaineer

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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 17 and June 24, 2024, among 800 registered voters in Colorado. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level for Colorado voters is +/- 3.5%. The margin of error on sub-samples is greater.

This fifteenth publication will focus on the political landscape and the major issues voters are focused on the summer ahead of the presidential election, as well as the Republican brand – including the recent ruling of a Manhattan jury that determined Donald Trump's guilt on 34 felony counts.

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DEMOCRATS IN COLORADO REMAIN BETTER POSITIONED THAN REPUBLICANS

Democrats maintain consistent advantages on multiple partisan metrics and hold the lead as being more trustworthy on major issues. While the Democratic Party's leader Governor Polis continues to be popular, Republicans in Colorado, including Boebert, are still well-underwater. Biden leads Trump by double digits. (Note: This research was completed before the first presidential debate on June 27.)

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GOP BRAND CONTINUES TO SUFFER, HURT BY RECENT "EXTREME" CO PARTY ACTIONS

Majorities believe that Colorado Republicans are "embarrassing," "out of touch," and want to ban abortion more than they want to fix the economy. They see Republicans' fealty to Trump as most concerning. And it only gets worse. Once voters are exposed to recent actions taken by the Colorado GOP, voters move even further against the party, which they label as "extreme" and "hateful."

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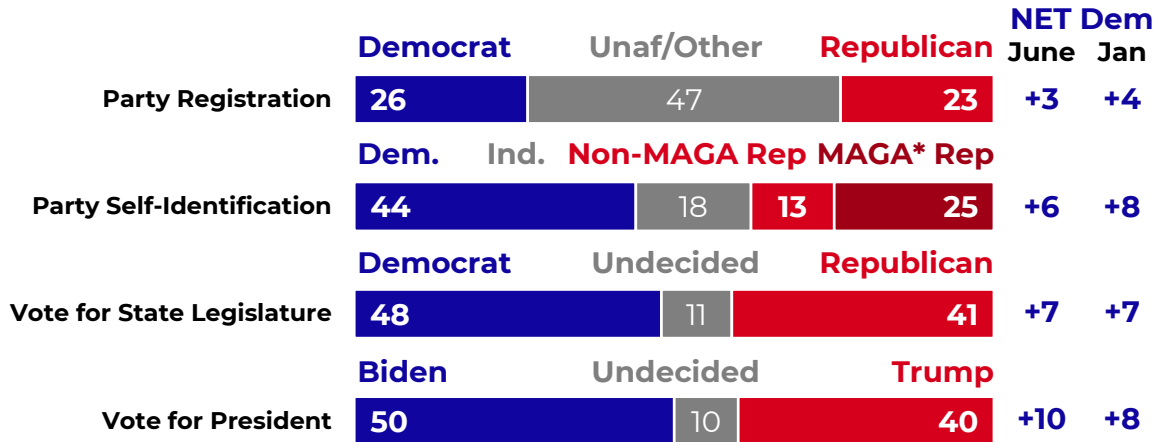### TRUMP'S GUILT IS A DISQUALIFIER FOR COLORADO VOTERS

More than three-in-five voters say that, with respect to the Manhattan criminal case, Trump did commit a crime and that he thinks he's above the law. A similar majority believes that, as a convicted felon, Trump is unfit to serve again. So, it's not a surprise that it makes voters less likely to vote for the former president.
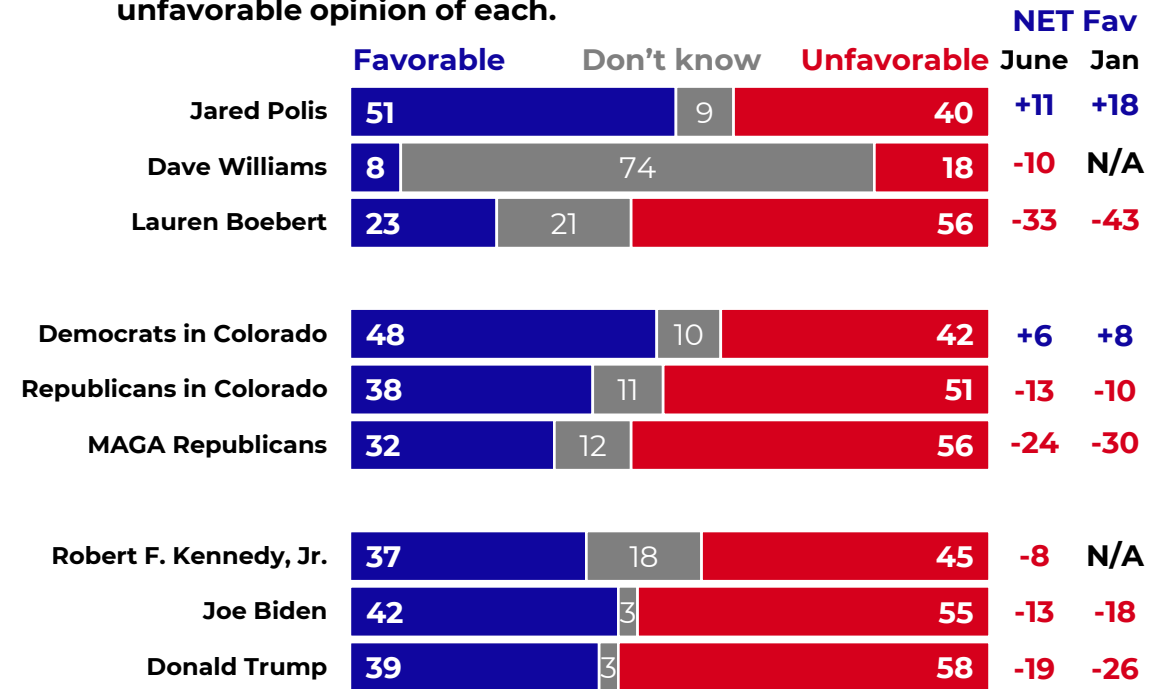
Colorado Democrats head into November with the upper hand on multiple partisan metrics

The overall political landscape remains relatively stable, with Colorado Democrats in a much stronger position than Colorado Republicans across the board. Democrats maintain their advantage on party self-identification, the generic vote for state legislature, and the vote for President. Governor Polis is popular, especially in comparison to Congresswoman Lauren Boebert and (for now) GOP State Party Chair Dave Williams, who is much less well known (but disliked among those who know him). Democrats in the state legislature enjoy a consistent positive image relative to Republicans, whose ratings have sunk a bit since earlier this year. MAGA and Trump remain major albatrosses for the GOP – though a quarter of Colorado voters consider themselves to be "MAGA Republicans."

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

	Favorable	Don't know	Unfavorable	NET Fav June	NET Fav Jan
Jared Polis	51	9	40	+11	+18
Dave Williams	8	74	18	-10	N/A
Lauren Boebert	23	21	56	-33	-43
Democrats in Colorado	48	10	42	+6	+8
Republicans in Colorado	38	11	51	-13	-10
MAGA Republicans	32	12	56	-24	-30
Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.	37	18	45	-8	N/A
Joe Biden	42	3	55	-13	-18
Donald Trump	39	3	58	-19	-26

	Democrat	Unaf/Other	Republican	NET Dem June	NET Dem Jan
Party Registration	26	47	23	+3	+4

	Dem.	Ind.	Non-MAGA Rep	MAGA* Rep	NET Dem June	NET Dem Jan
Party Self-Identification	44	18	13	25	+6	+8

	Democrat	Undecided	Republican	NET Dem June	NET Dem Jan
Vote for State Legislature	48	11	41	+7	+7

	Biden	Undecided	Trump	NET Dem June	NET Dem Jan
Vote for President	50	10	40	+10	+8

MAGA Republicans are voters who self-identify as Republican and "generally consider themselves a supporter of the MAGA movement."

Framing the generic ballot around abortion secures Dems' position – even in the context of Biden and the economy

Going back to 2022, in the wake of the repeal of *Roe v. Wade*, we have seen **just how powerful the issue of abortion can be in voters' decision making – including when considered in the context of broader economic issues**. Even now, two years out from the *Dobbs* decision, we see Democrats benefit by a net 6 points when the generic legislative ballot is reframed from being between an unnamed Democrat and an unnamed Republican to a Democrat who supports Biden's policies on taxes and inflation and will fight to protect a woman's right to choose an abortion and a Republican who will fight to lower taxes and combat inflation and will vote to ban abortion, even in cases of rape and incest. While Democrats gain ground with all key subgroups in this match-up, the political benefit for Democrats is biggest among unaffiliated voters, voters of color, white college voters, and Denver Metro voters.

Reframed Generic Ballot:

Thinking about the election for state legislature again, which of the following candidates would you be more likely to support if this were all you knew about them?

- A Democrat who supports Joe Biden's policies on taxes and inflation and will fight to protect a woman's right to choose an abortion

- A Republican who will fight to lower taxes and combat inflation and will vote to ban abortion, even in cases of rape and incest

	Generic Ballot for Legislature	Reframed Generic Ballot	Change
Democratic candidate	48	56	+8
Republican candidate	41	43	-2
NET Democrat	+7	+13	+6
Democrats	+68	+72	+4
Unaffiliateds	+12	+20	+8
Republicans	-71	-67	+4
Voters of color	+15	+24	+9
White men	0	+5	+5
White women	+11	+16	+5
White non-college	-5	-1	+4
White college	+20	+27	+7
Denver Metro	+20	+29	+9
Rest of state	-4	-1	+3

Democrats have the right focus and lead on key issues, with gains on abortion and, significantly, the economy

Voters, especially unaffiliated voters, see Governor Polis and Colorado Democrats as focused on the right things - and, importantly, disagree that Congresswoman Boebert and Colorado Republicans are doing the same. Democrats have also held their leads on those most important issues to Colorado voters, and actually improved their position on dealing with the issue of abortion, improving the economy, and protecting public safety (though they have lost a bit of ground on the cost of living). Unaffiliated voters give Democrats a massive 45-point lead on the issue of abortion and now also prefer Democrats by 13 points on the economy.

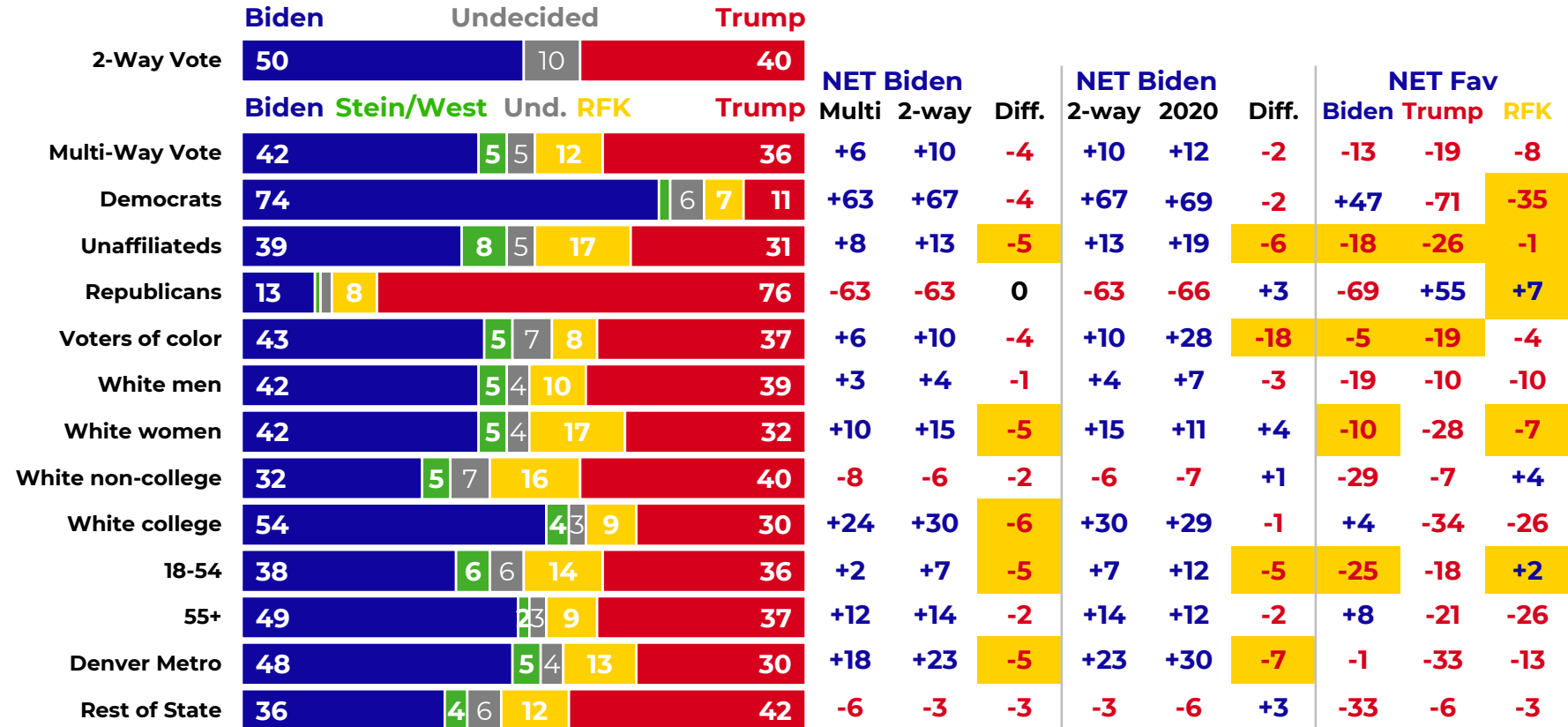## Do you agree or disagree with each statement?

	Agree	Disagree	NET Agree Overall	NET Agree Unaf.
Jared Polis and Colorado Democrats are mostly focused on the right things.	54	40	+14	+29
Lauren Boebert and Colorado Republicans are mostly focused on the right things.	31	56	-25	-32

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

	Democrats in Colorado	Republicans in Colorado	NET Democrats Overall June 24	NET Democrats Overall Jan 24	NET Democrats Overall Oct 22	NET Democrats Unaf. June 24
Reducing air pollution and addressing climate change	58	26	+32	+36	+32	+33
Dealing with the issue of abortion	58	30	+28	+23	+27	+45
Bringing down the cost of health care and RX drugs	51	34	+17	+23	+20	+19
Improving public education for Colorado's children	49	34	+15	+15	+12	+25
Looking out for working- and middle-class Coloradans	49	41	+8	+8	+14	+1
Dealing with the issue of guns	45	41	+4	+4	+6	+11
Improving the economy and creating good jobs	45	41	+4	-4	-3	+13
Protecting public safety	41	46	-5	-12	-3	-5
Addressing Colorado's rising cost of living	41	47	-6	+1	+2	-8
Dealing with property taxes	35	42	-7	-9	N/A	+2

Biden is up by 10, but 3rd party candidates could narrow his margin. Kennedy disliked but stronger with younger voters

President Biden leads Donald Trump in the two-way race by double digits, **but this lead is cut to six when voters consider the full list of candidates who will likely be on the November ballot.** Kennedy is not particularly well-liked (37% fav/45% unfav), but he earns a significant chunk of the vote with unaffiliated voters, white women, white non-college, and younger voters. Meanwhile, Stein and West combine for five points and pull mostly from Biden-leaning unaffiliated voters. Polls always overstate support for third-party candidates, but these three clearly have the potential to reduce Biden's margin. Kennedy is particularly dangerous with younger voters who are down on Biden while also being more favorable to Kennedy. Looking at the two-way vote, Biden also underperforms his 2020 vote performance with some key subgroups: unaffiliateds, Denver Metro voters, younger voters, and, especially, voters of color. Voters of color give Biden underwater ratings, though clearly dislike Trump more; so, Biden's current underperformance is more a reflection of their dissatisfaction with Biden rather than a new preference for Trump.

	Biden	Undecided	Trump
2-Way Vote	50	10	40

	Biden	Stein/West	Und.	RFK	Trump	NET Biden Multi	NET Biden 2-way	Diff.	NET Biden 2-way	NET Biden 2020	Diff.	NET Fav Biden	NET Fav Trump	NET Fav RFK
Multi-Way Vote	42	5	5	12	36	+6	+10	-4	+10	+12	-2	-13	-19	-8
Democrats	74		6	7	11	+63	+67	-4	+67	+69	-2	+47	-71	-35
Unaffiliateds	39	8	5	17	31	+8	+13	-5	+13	+19	-6	-18	-26	-1
Republicans	13			8	76	-63	-63	0	-63	-66	+3	-69	+55	+7
Voters of color	43	5	7	8	37	+6	+10	-4	+10	+28	-18	-5	-19	-4
White men	42	5	4	10	39	+3	+4	-1	+4	+7	-3	-19	-10	-10
White women	42	5	4	17	32	+10	+15	-5	+15	+11	+4	-10	-28	-7
White non-college	32	5	7	16	40	-8	-6	-2	-6	-7	+1	-29	-7	+4
White college	54	4	3	9	30	+24	+30	-6	+30	+29	-1	+4	-34	-26
18-54	38	6	6	14	36	+2	+7	-5	+7	+12	-5	-25	-18	+2
55+	49	2	3	9	37	+12	+14	-2	+14	+12	-2	+8	-21	-26
Denver Metro	48	5	4	13	30	+18	+23	-5	+23	+30	-7	-1	-33	-13
Rest of State	36	4	6	12	42	-6	-3	-3	-3	-6	+3	-33	-6	-3

On first consideration, Coloradans consider the GOP to be out of touch, embarrassing, and prioritizing an abortion ban

The GOP brand is hurting. By a sizable margin, majorities of Colorado voters believe that their state's GOP is "embarrassing," "out of touch with the needs of everyday Colorado families," "care more about banning abortion than improving the economy," and "care more about pleasing Trump than doing what's best for Colorado." A majority also believes they are "extreme," though voters are more uncertain about that. Importantly, unaffiliated voters are especially likely to perceive Colorado Republicans as caring more about banning abortion that improving the economy and are also more likely than voters as a whole to view the GOP as extreme.

How well do each of these describe the Republican Party in Colorado?

	Well	Not well	Not sure	NET Well Overall	Unaf.
Out of touch with the needs of everyday Colorado families	56	32	12	+24	+23
Embarrassing	56	33	11	+23	+19
Care more about banning abortion than improving economy	54	35	11	+19	+36
Care more about pleasing Donald Trump than doing what's best for Colorado	53	37	11	+16	+15
Extreme	50	35	15	+15	+20
Care more about helping giant corporations than helping working families	48	38	14	+10	+20

GOP's positions on abortion and taxes and preventing child abuse victims from pursuing justice stand out

Democrats have several effective messages to make the case against Colorado Republicans in 2024, including with political swing voters (those who do not vote straight Democrat or straight Republican on every ballot in the survey).

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 raise major doubts among half of voters and total doubts among 60% or more.**

Republican's efforts to ban abortion, votes against tax cuts for working families, and siding against victims of child sexual abuse concern voters most, including swing voters, who are especially bothered by the Abortion and Child Abuse messages.

Dave Williams' hateful email about Pride month is so beyond that pale that a quarter of voters can't believe it's true – suggesting that this message would be even more potent when delivered with visuals showing what the GOP said.

Please indicate <u>how much doubt</u> each statement gives you about voting for Colorado Republicans up and down the ballot in November. If you don't believe the statement, please choose that option.

	Overall				Swing			
	% Major Doubts	% Total Doubts	% No Doubts	% Don't believe	% Major Doubts	% Total Doubts	% No Doubts	% Don't believe
[ABORTION] Every year for the last 12 years, Colorado Republicans have tried to pass legislation that would not only have sent women who get an abortion to jail, even in the case of rape, incest, or when the life of the mother is at risk, but also would have banned in vitro fertilization and many common forms of birth control.	52	64	17	19	48	66	19	15
[ECONOMY] Even as everyday Coloradans struggle with rising costs, Republicans in the legislature continue to push for more tax cuts for millionaires while voting AGAINST tax cuts for working Coloradans and AGAINST a new tax cut to help working families deal with the high cost of childcare.	49	60	20	20	43	61	21	19
[CHILD ABUSE] Every single Republican in the Colorado State Senate voted to block a proposal to allow victims of child sexual abuse from more than six years ago to sue their abusers. Instead of siding with victims and law enforcement, Republicans sided with big insurance companies and institutions that have covered up abuse.	49	63	15	22	45	67	16	17
[TRUMP CASE] The Colorado Republican Party, Lauren Boebert, Dave Williams, and nearly every major Republican candidate for Congress in the state have continued to defend Donald Trump - and pledged to vote for him - even after he was convicted of 34 felonies by one jury of 12 regular citizens and found liable for rape by another.	47	58	33	9	40	59	28	13
[PRIDE] To mark the beginning of Gay and Lesbian Pride Month, the Colorado Republican Party sent out a mass email calling gay people "godless groomers," calling for the burning of all gay pride flags, and using the headline "God Hates Flags" - echoing the anti-gay slur used on the picket signs of the infamous Westboro Baptist Church.	45	56	19	25	37	59	15	26
[PUBLIC SCHOOL] The Colorado Republican Party recently called on all Colorado parents to remove their children from public schools because they claim Colorado teachers are trying to indoctrinate students and "turn more kids trans."	44	56	26	18	38	56	23	21

After learning more, voters say Colorado Republicans are "extreme," "hateful," and a cult for Trump

While not the top-testing message, Republican's fealty to Trump joins abortion in a post-messaging open-end about what gives voters the most doubts about voting for Colorado Republicans.

Perhaps more important, messaging increases voters' belief that each of the initial descriptions tested fit the Colorado GOP well – with a notable increase in the belief that they are "extreme." In fact, when asked to describe Colorado Republicans in one or two words at the end of the survey, it's "extreme" that stands out most clearly – along with "hateful," "dangerous," "out of touch," and "selfish."

How well do each of these describe the Republican Party in Colorado?

	Post-Messaging			Initial	
	Well	Not well	NET Well	NET Well	Change
Out of touch with the needs of everyday Colorado families	61	32	+29	+24	+5
Embarrassing	61	31	+30	+23	+7
Extreme	60	30	+30	+15	+15
Care more about banning abortion than improving economy	58	33	+25	+19	+6
Care more about helping giant corporations than helping working families	56	35	+21	+10	+11
Care more about pleasing Donald Trump than doing what's best for Colorado	55	36	+19	+16	+3

What gives you the most doubts about voting for Colorado Republicans?

"They side with Trump, a convicted felon."

"Their blind allegiance to Trump, party over country mentality"

"I do not trust Colorado Republicans to make good decisions considering their devotion to Trump despite his convictions. I also do not believe anyone should try to regulate women's bodies."

"Their rigid stance on abortion rights"

What one or two words would you use to describe Colorado Republicans?

"Colorado Republicans are extremists pushing the agendas of the rich and corporations"

"Extreme, cult members for Trump, not serious about people who need help"

"Wacko extremists"

"Hateful, self-interested"

Colorado voters believe Trump is guilty and unfit to serve. Conviction will hurt him with center-right voters

Over 60% of Colorado voters believe that Trump has committed a crime, that Trump thinks he's above the law, and that he is guilty in regard to the Manhattan criminal case. Slightly smaller, but still robust, majorities say that as a convicted felon, Trump is unfit to serve. Trump's guilt makes voters less likely to vote for him, too. **Only MAGA Republicans defend Trump, as even their non-MAGA counterparts believe he is guilty and are less likely to vote for him now.**

As you may know, Donald Trump was found guilty on all 34 felony counts of falsifying business records in the Manhattan criminal case stemming from a payment to prevent an adult film star from publicizing their affair before the 2016 election.
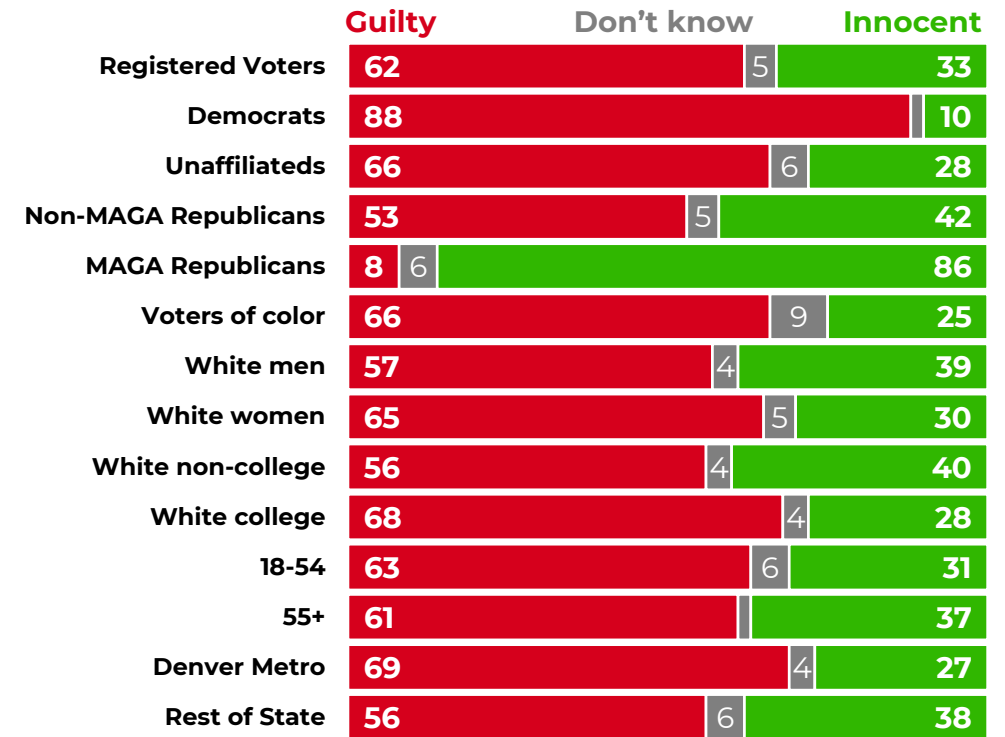
Just based on what you know, do you believe that Trump is guilty or innocent of the 34 felony counts on which he's been convicted?

	Guilty	Don't know	Innocent
Registered Voters	62	5	33
Democrats	88		10
Unaffiliateds	66	6	28
Non-MAGA Republicans	53	5	42
MAGA Republicans	8	6	86
Voters of color	66	9	25
White men	57	4	39
White women	65	5	30
White non-college	56	4	40
White college	68	4	28
18-54	63	6	31
55+	61		37
Denver Metro	69	4	27
Rest of State	56	6	38

Do you agree or disagree with each statement?

			NET Agree				
	Agree	Disagree	Overall	Dem.	Unaf.	Non-MAGA R	MAGA R
Donald Trump has committed a crime.	63	33	+30	+71	+37	+24	-66
Donald Trump thinks that he's above the law.	62	34	+28	+73	+37	+9	-75
As a convicted felon, Donald Trump is unfit to serve as president again.	59	38	+21	+77	+33	-5	-87

Does Donald Trump being convicted on all 34 felony counts make you more or less likely to vote for Trump, or does it not make any difference in your vote for President?

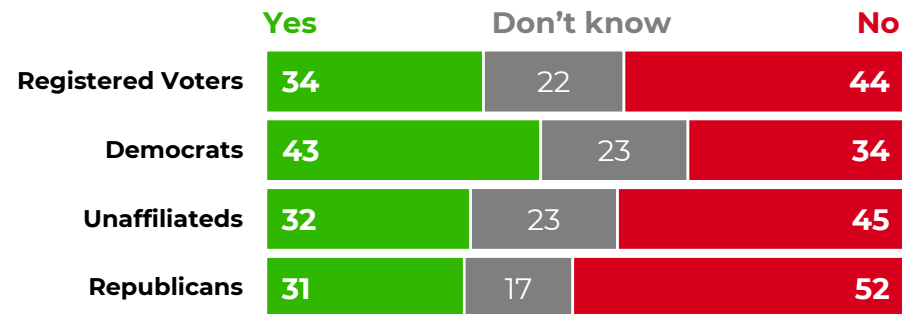|	More likely	No difference	Less likely	NET Less
Registered Voters	25	34	41	+16
Democrats	8	35	57	+49
Unaffiliateds	21	35	44	+23
Non-MAGA Republicans	30	32	38	+8
MAGA Republicans	68	29	3	-65

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Building new homes is popular; Initiative 50 is not

Initiative 50, which will appear on the ballot in November, would require voter approval to allow local governments to retain property revenue above a certain level. **A plurality of voters oppose this proposal, and support is just 34%, well below the 55% threshold to pass.** Democrats are more supportive than Republicans, suggesting that the language is confusing voters.
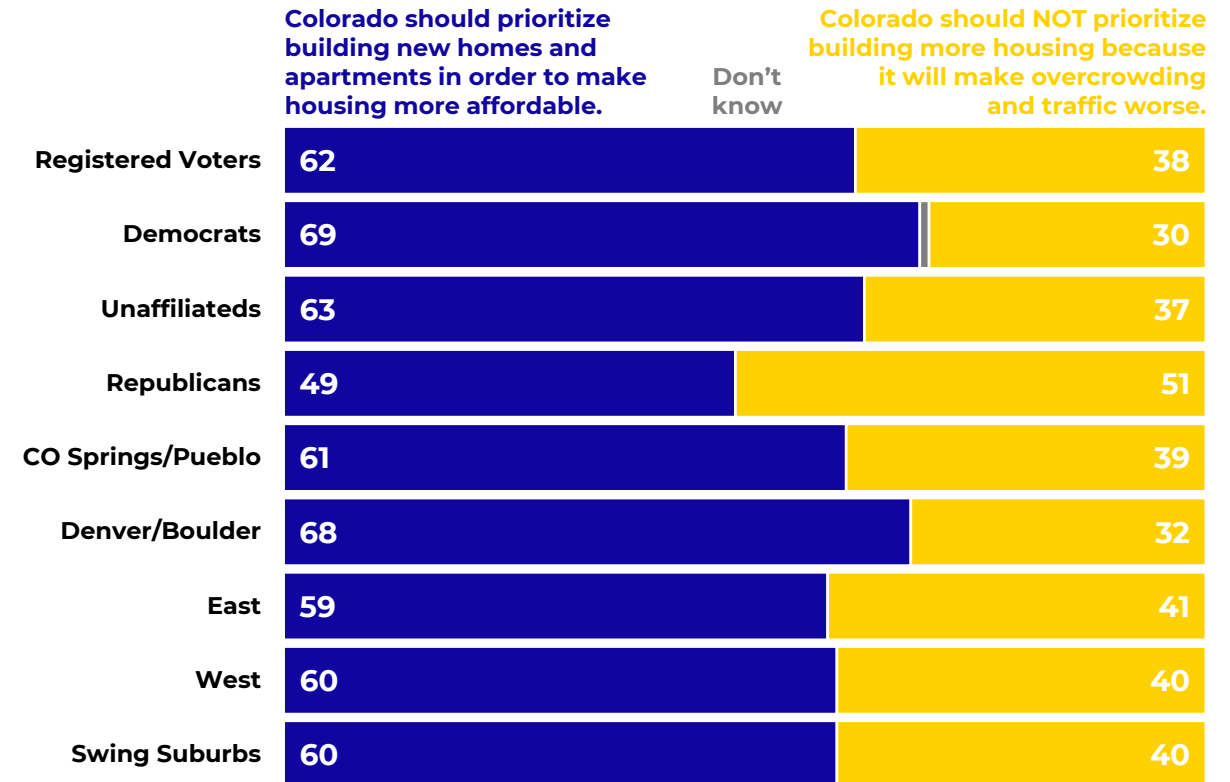
Meanwhile, **voters across the state believe the state should prioritize building more housing to make housing more affordable,** rather than forgo new housing in an attempt to limit growth and traffic.

Shall there be an amendment to the Colorado constitution concerning mandatory statewide voter approval to allow local governments to retain property tax revenue that exceeds 4% growth from the total statewide property tax revenue collected in the preceding year, and, in connection therewith, requiring any referred measure for such approval to be a stand-alone subject with specified language?

If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this proposed ballot measure?

	Yes	Don't know	No
Registered Voters	34	22	44
Democrats	43	23	34
Unaffiliateds	32	23	45
Republicans	31	17	52

Thinking about the issues of housing and the population increase in Colorado in recent years, which statement comes closest to your view, even if neither is exactly right

	Colorado should prioritize building new homes and apartments in order to make housing more affordable.	Don't know	Colorado should NOT prioritize building more housing because it will make overcrowding and traffic worse.
Registered Voters	62		38
Democrats	69		30
Unaffiliateds	63		37
Republicans	49		51
CO Springs/Pueblo	61		39
Denver/Boulder	68		32
East	59		41
West	60		40
Swing Suburbs	60		40

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, between June 17 and June 24, 2024 . The margin of error at the 95% confidence level for Colorado voters is +/- 3.5%. 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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