

THE ROCKY Mountaineer

November 2021, Issue 7

WHAT'S INSIDE:

- **DEMOCRATS RETAIN THEIR ADVANTAGE IN COLORADO, DESPITE BIDEN'S RATINGS DECLINING**
- **POLIS AND BENNET HOLD STRONG LEADS OVER THEIR OPPONENTS HEADING INTO 2022**
- **VOTERS CONTINUE TO TRUST DEMOCRATS MORE THAN REPUBLICANS ON THE BIG ISSUES**

A Note on Election Night 2021

As progressives, we know there's no way to sugarcoat Tuesday night's results nationally – nor should anyone try to if we want better results next November. It was a bad night for Democrats in Virginia, New Jersey, and many other places. And while individual campaigns matter, the breadth of the defeat shows that the national political environment, including President Biden's declining approval, was a significant driver. Republican voters were amped up in a way that Democratic voters weren't, and Democrats lost ground with swing voters in both the suburbs and rural areas.

All of that said, the results of this survey coupled with the election results here in Colorado demonstrate that the political dynamic that led to the results in Virginia, New Jersey, and other places has not been realized in Colorado – at least not yet. In Colorado, Democratic turnout relative to Republicans' was actually up compared to previous odd-year elections and voters defeated statewide ballot measures backed by conservatives that most pundits expected to pass. Municipal election results were less clear: the Jefferson County school board results suggested that this critical swing county continues its trend toward Democrats while the Douglas County results suggest this traditionally right-leaning county that had been trending more swing reverted to type, at least temporarily.

The data in this report paint a similar picture. President Biden's job ratings have taken a real hit and the personal standing of most Democrats are down a bit – though still quite solid. However, the fundamental political landscape remains remarkably stable given national trends. Governor Polis' job approval, which is a far more important metric than favorability for an incumbent, hasn't budged and remains very strong. Party ID and the generic legislative ballot haven't moved and remain solidly in Democrats' favor. The Republican brand continues to be tarnished, and the two best known Republicans in the state (Trump and Boebert) remain huge albatrosses. As we demonstrate on slide 8, the political situation in CO right now is very different than the one heading into this election in Virginia. Moreover, as [the report that we released Tuesday morning](#) showed, the GOP's embrace of extremism in the form of the Texas abortion ban, the Big Lie, and anti-vaxxers are significant vulnerabilities for the Party.

Of course, Virginia, New Jersey and elsewhere made clear that Democrats have real vulnerabilities too, and that the combination of the Delta variant, continued inflationary pressures, and six months of Democratic infighting in Washington has created a very challenging environment. So, while the fundamental political landscape in Colorado remains strong for Democrats, progressives can't take that for granted. Luckily, as our [July report](#) showed, progressives can point to real successes here. It would certainly be helpful if, during the 2022 campaign, we can also point to real successes in Washington in the form of an infrastructure and reconciliation bill that include popular policies that will really help people, like allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices.

Welcome Back to The Mountaineer

Welcome to *The Mountaineer*, a resource for progressives and a guide for advocates across the state of Colorado, published by Global Strategy Group and ProgressNow Colorado. Research presented in this publication is the result of a survey conducted between October 19 and October 24, 2021 among 800 registered voters in Colorado plus an oversample of 100 Latino voters, contributed by PowerMap, for a total of 206 Latino voters.

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 seventh publication will focus on the political landscape heading into an election year, including voters' views on the President and Governor and the Parties' handling of major issues facing Colorado.

In this issue

4

**VOTERS LEAN DEMOCRATIC,
PREFER DEMS FOR OFFICE –
DESPITE BIDEN DECLINE**



Colorado voters lean Democratic on their self-described partisanship and prefer Democrats for state legislature, Governor, and Senate by strong margins. The overall political landscape has remained stable even though Biden's job ratings have taken a significant hit.

6

**POLIS CONTINUES TO
RECEIVE HIGH MARKS,
LEADS GANAHL BIG**



Voters approve of the job Governor Polis is doing in office by a 20-point margin, contributing to a similar lead over Republican Heidi Ganahl.

7

**DEMOCRATS HAVE THE
ADVANTAGE OVER GOP
ON THE BIG ISSUES**

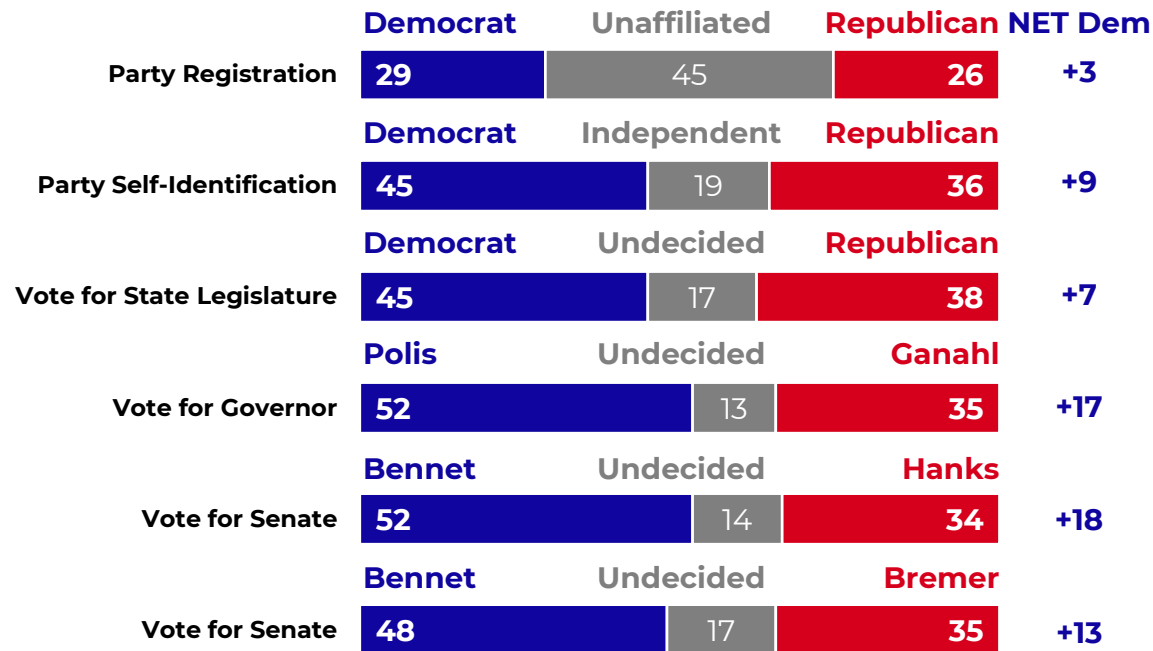


Democrats outpace Republicans on issues like climate change, improving wages, handling the coronavirus, public education, abortion, and public safety.

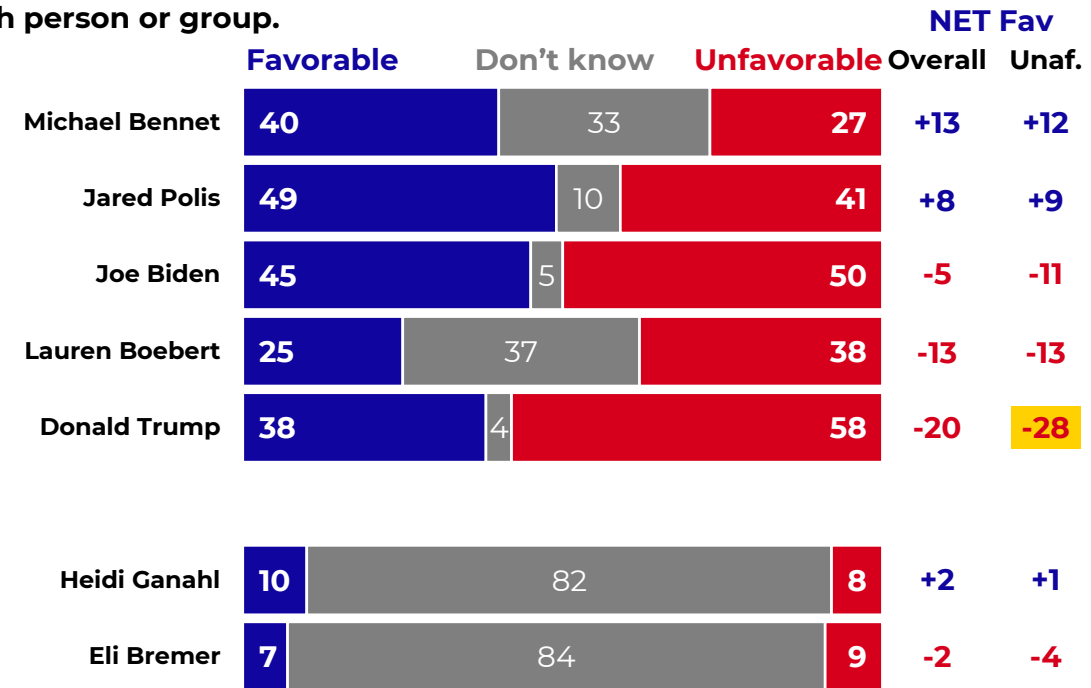
Coloradans lean Democratic and like Democrats more than Republicans

Though a plurality of voters are registered as unaffiliated, a large plurality of voters self-identify as Democrats and prefer Democratic candidates for state legislature, Governor, and Senate.

Voters, including unaffiliateds, have positive impressions of Governor Jared Polis and Senator Michael Bennet, dislike Lauren Boebert, and disdain Trump. Other Republicans are less-known – more than eight in 10 voters are unfamiliar with Heidi Ganahl, Republican candidate for Governor, and Republican Eli Bremer, candidate for Senate.



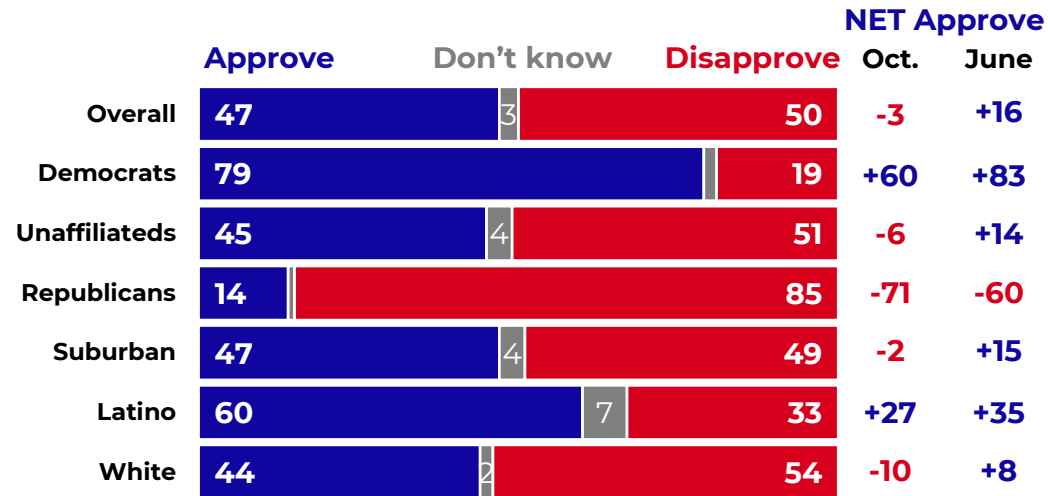
Please indicate whether you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of each person or group.



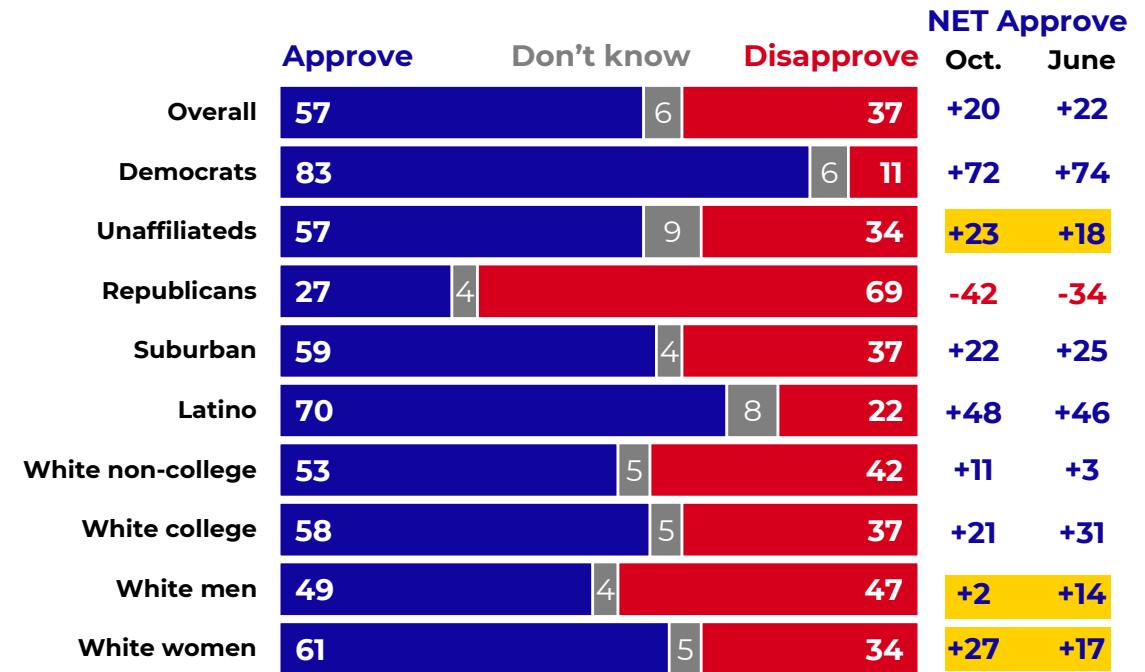
While Biden's job approval has fallen, Polis' ratings remain steady and strong

President Biden has seen his job approval ratings fall significantly in Colorado since June, mirroring the national trend. **However, those attitudes have not impacted Polis' ratings, which remain steady and strong, particularly with unaffiliated voters.** In fact, unaffiliateds feel even more positively about Polis than they did this summer. Meanwhile, his ratings with suburban and Latino voters have stayed steady. The one change for Polis is an emergence of a large gender gap among white voters as his ratings with white women have increased, while his ratings with white men have declined (but remain above water).

Do you approve or disapprove of the job Joe Biden is doing as U.S. President?



Do you approve or disapprove of the job Jared Polis is doing as Governor?

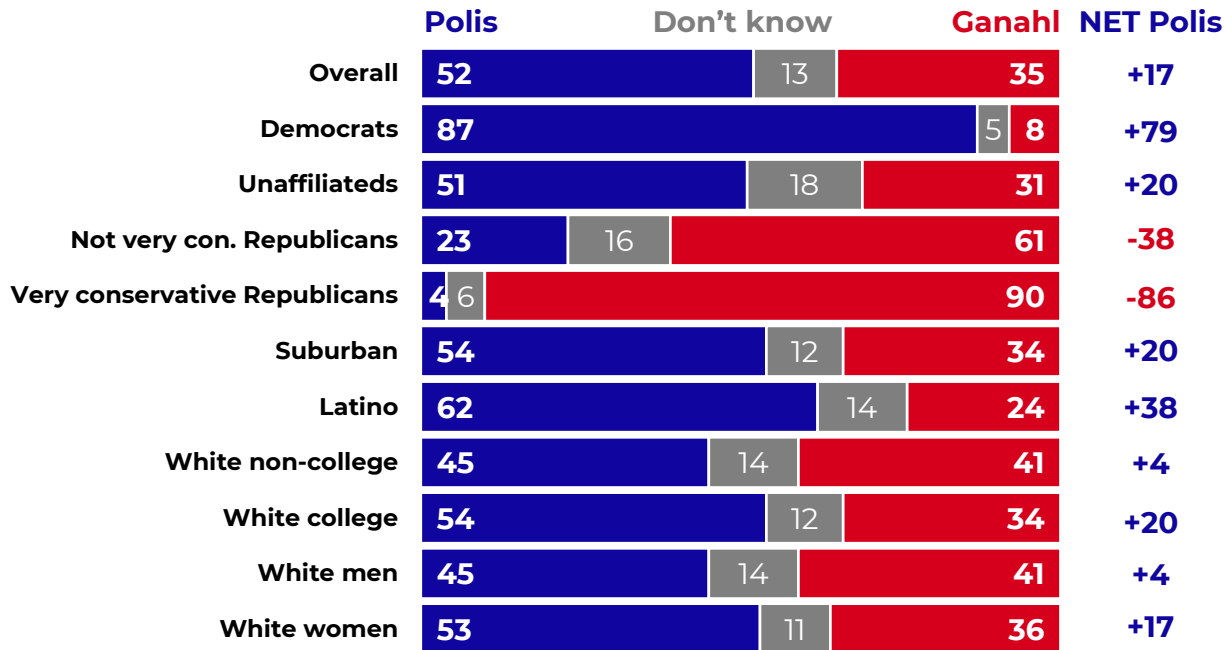


Polis and Bennet both have commanding leads over their unknown opponents

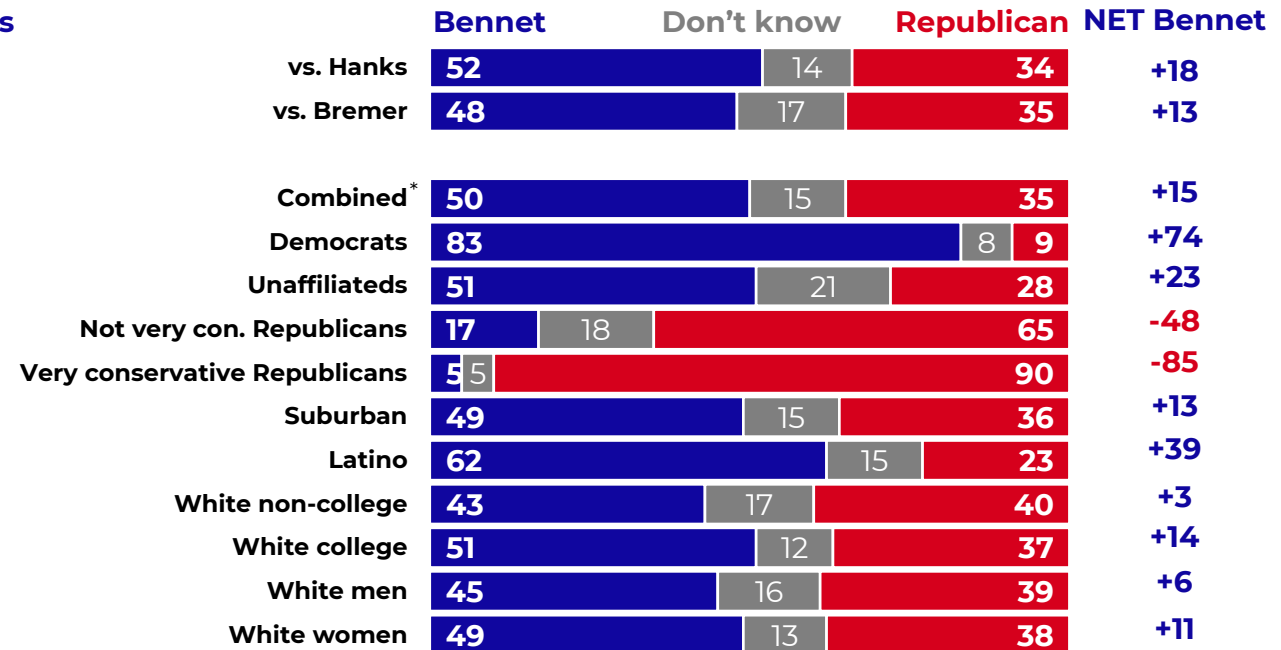
Jared Polis and Michael Bennet have big leads in each of their respective races.

Both incumbents hold strong leads over Republican challengers, with little difference in Bennet's performance against either Ron Hanks or Eli Bremer. Both Polis and Bennet lead with key groups like unaffiliated, suburban, and Latino voters. Bennet does slightly better than Polis with unaffiliateds, while Polis performs slightly better with white college-educated voters and white women (though both have healthy leads with all of these groups)

If the general election for Governor of Colorado were held today, for whom would you vote?



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



* Half of survey respondents were asked one version of the vote for Senate – Bennet vs. Hanks or Bennet vs. Bremer. Since Republican performance is similar in either scenario, and for the purposes of subgroup analysis, data presented here reflects the full sample size.

Voters continue to trust Democrats more than Republicans to handle the state's big issues

Democrats are preferred on nearly every issue tested and get credit for being able to tackle issues like climate change, wages, the pandemic, education, abortion, and even public safety. Unaffiliated voters also prefer Democrats on most issues, particularly climate and abortion, though they are slightly more skeptical about Democrats' ability to handle economic issues like the recovery after COVID and rising living costs.

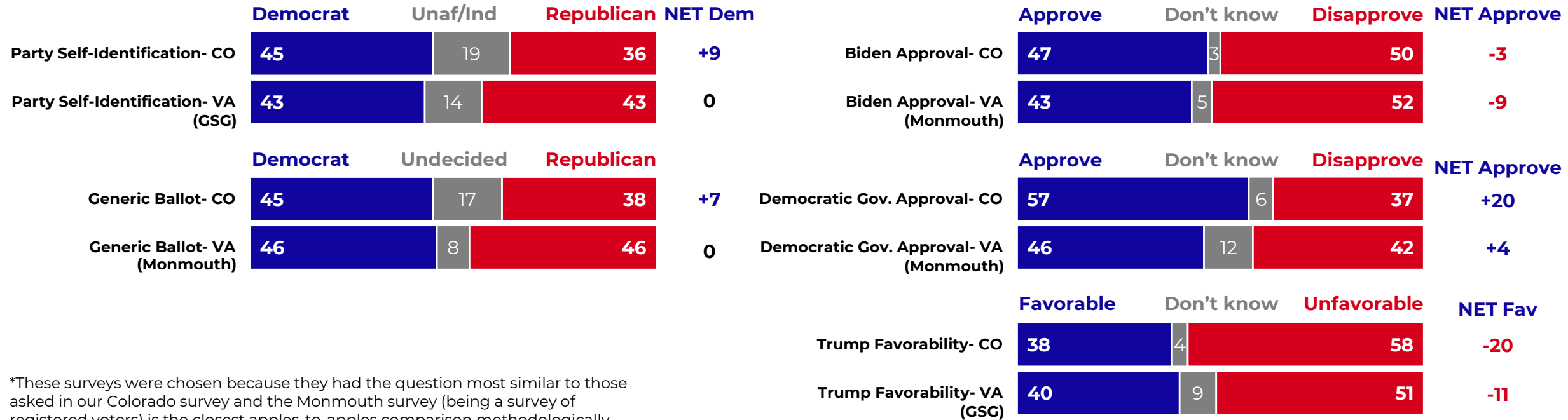
Who do you trust more to handle each of the following issues?

	Democrats in CO	DK	Republicans in CO	NET Dems	
				Overall	Unaf.
Reducing air pollution and addressing climate change	58	16	26	+32	+38
Improving wages for Colorado's workers so that they keep up with the rising cost of living	51	15	34	+17	+18
Responding to the coronavirus pandemic	51	14	35	+16	+16
Improving public education for Colorado's children	50	16	34	+16	+16
Dealing with the issue of abortion	50	19	31	+19	+26
Bringing down the cost of health care and prescription drugs	49	16	35	+14	+18
Improving Colorado's transportation infrastructure so that it keeps up with the state's rapid growth	47	20	33	+14	+12
Looking out for working-and middle-class Coloradans	46	14	40	+6	+7
Ensuring that Colorado has a fair and effective tax system	43	19	38	+5	+2
Handling the economic recovery after the coronavirus pandemic	43	16	41	+2	-3
Protecting public safety	42	17	41	+1	+6
Addressing Colorado's rising cost of living	40	21	39	+1	-4

The political dynamic that led to the results in Virginia and other places has not been realized in Colorado

The current political landscape in Colorado is very different than the one in Virginia.

This slide compares data from the new Mountaineer survey in Colorado with Monmouth's [October 19 survey](#) of registered voters, which was the first public survey to show the Virginia race moving into a tie, and a pre-election survey by GSG which had Youngkin winning by one point.* These comparisons show that Colorado voters lean more firmly Democratic on both Party ID and the generic legislative ballot and give the President slightly stronger ratings than their Virginia counterparts. Perhaps most important, Donald Trump is twice as unpopular in Colorado as he is in Virginia, and Governor Polis enjoys a *much* stronger job approval rating than Virginia Governor Ralph Northam.



*These surveys were chosen because they had the question most similar to those asked in our Colorado survey and the Monmouth survey (being a survey of registered voters) is the closest apples-to-apples comparison methodologically.

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 October 19-24, 2021, including an oversample of 100 Latino voters for a total of 206 Latino voters. 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.

For press inquiries contact:

Andrew Baumann
abaumann@globalstrategygroup.com

Sara Loflin
sara@progressnowcolorado.org