



Date: 06/22/00

To: Interested Parties

From: Ridder/Braden Inc.

Re: Summary of Polling Results

---

## Methodology

Ridder/Braden, Inc. surveyed 600 likely voters from June 7-13, 2000. The margin of error is +/- 4.38% at the 95% confidence level.

## Colorado Voter Issue Concerns

The survey tested voter attitudes concerning a number of major political issue concerns (Q. 3-11). The three issues which received the highest response from voters were education (mean 8.73 on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest level of concern), clean air and water (mean 8.17) and crime and drugs (mean 8.05).

Several different descriptions of environmental issues were tested and of those, "clean air and water" ranked easily highest, with a mean of 8.17. "Sprawl and over-development" placed second with a 7.67 mean, "the environment" overall received a mean of 7.65, and "global warming" was the lowest rated issue tested, receiving a mean of only 6.16.

On the issue of clean air and water, the lower the income of a voter, the more likely they were to rank the issue 8 or higher. 54% of those earning under \$35,000 did so, with the responses falling incrementally through each successively higher income bracket to 44% for those earning \$75,000 or more. Women were more likely to view the issue with high concern (55% ranked it 8 or higher) than men (44%). The issue was also non-partisan, as over one-third of self-identified Republicans, Democrats, and Independents gave it a 9 or a 10.

When asked to consider conservation or environmental concerns specifically (Q. 12), voters were most likely to be concerned about sprawl and uncontrolled growth (28%) and water quality (19%). Of those naming water quality as their highest concern, 52% were women and 62% lived in households without children. Similarly, of those naming sprawl as their highest concern, 58% were women, and 65% lived in households without children. Republicans, Democrats, and Unaffiliateds ranked sprawl and uncontrolled growth as the environmental issue they were most concerned about.

## The Influence of Money in Politics

Voters were asked whether they thought that campaign contributions influenced politicians' actions on environmental issues (Q. 13). 81% overall felt that money does direct action on environmental issues (62% strongly so). Baby-boomers were the most likely to hold this view, with 91% of those 45-54 believing that money controls political action on environmental matters. Coloradans who feel that things are off on the wrong track in their communities are more likely to think that campaign contributions influence how elected officials vote on environmental issues than voters who say that things are headed in the right direction (72%-56% say it influences officials "a lot").

## Environmental Concerns in Voting Behavior

Environmental and conservation concerns are a major motivating factor for Colorado voters. In a split sample, 87% said that issues involving “clean air, clean water and open space” were at least somewhat important in their voting decisions, while 83% said that “conservation or environmental issues” were at least somewhat important in their voting decisions. (Q. 15). Those without children living in their households were more likely to place high value on these concerns: 87% placed importance on “conservation or environmental issues” and 91% on “issues involving clean water, clean air and open space.” Those without children fell 14 points behind on the broad language question (73% important) and 9 points lower on the specific language example (82% important). Income was also an important factor. Those who earned under \$35,000 were more concerned with the environment than any other economic group. 56% of this group, compared to 41% of the overall sample says, “issues involving clean water, clean air and open space are “very important in making a voting decision.”

Voters are largely satisfied with the current number of environmental laws on the books, with 55% feeling that current laws are strong enough and need to be strictly enforced (Q. 16). Among those who believe that current laws are sufficient and need only be enforced more strongly, income was a factor. 62% of those earning under \$35,000 agreed with the statement, with support for the statement falling through each successively higher income group to 49% for those earning \$75,000 or more. The highest income group was the only one in which more than 10% believe that current laws are too strict and need to be relaxed (11%).

## Candidate Profiles

Voters were given the following profiles of candidates and asked which they would support (Q. 19):

“Candidate A believes we must protect the environment, and supports strong laws and enforcement of those laws.

Candidate B believes there are too many government regulations, and supports efforts to relieve the burden of regulation on business.”

60% of Colorado voters support Candidate A while 31% support Candidate B. Voters who earn \$50,000 to \$75,000 are the most likely to strongly support Candidate A (53% compared to 44% of the overall sample). Coloradans living in suburban Denver give the greatest margin to candidate A (68%-8%).

As noted above, when the candidate profiles are altered to include language noting that Candidate A gets money from environmental groups and Candidate B gets money from developers and polluters, the overall sample shifts support in favor of Candidate A, from 60% support to 72%. The youngest subgroup of voters (18-34) support Candidate A over Candidate B more than any other age group (81%-10%).

Ridder/Braden, Inc. is a political survey research firm based in Denver, Colorado. RBI has conducted research for members of Congress, not-for-profit organizations and foreign political parties and heads of state.