Colorado Political Climate Survey 2019 Topline Election Report

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About the Study:

American Politics Research Lab

The American Politics Research Lab (APRL) is housed in the Department of Political Science at the University of Colorado Boulder. APRL is a non-partisan academic unit that supports basic research, educational activities, and public engagement on issues related to American politics. Lab faculty, student fellows, and affiliates pursue scholarly activities over a broad range of topics, utilizing a wide variety of research methodologies and analysis. Current lab projects include research on political behavior, state and local politics, and political agendas and recurring legislation in the U.S. Congress. The Lab is also home to the annual Colorado Political Climate Survey. APRL hosts a seminar series that includes talks by lab associates as well as distinguished scholars doing work related to the study of American politics.

Colorado Political Climate Survey

In October/November 2019, the American Politics Research Lab (APRL) conducted the fourth annual Colorado Political Climate (CPC) survey. The CPC is a survey of the political and policy attitudes of Coloradans. The study is designed to gauge the public's political and partisan leanings, their opinions on a number of key issues facing the state, their attitudes toward major statewide and national political figures, and the outlook for the 2019 and 2020 elections.

Methodology

The sample consists of 800 individual responses and has an overall simple random sample margin of error of +/- 3.5%. The margin of error for subgroups is larger due to smaller sample sizes. The sample is weighted to be representative of adult Colorado residents/the general state population; different weighting is used for certain (noted) items to make it representative of registered voters in the state. To account for the sampling approach, the final margin of error is slightly larger than the simple random sample margin of error and for the registered voter analysis is +/- 4.4% while the final margin of error for the general population analysis is +/- 4.6%.

The survey instrument was developed by APRL in the fall of 2019; it was administered online to a panel of Coloradans by the company YouGov between October 23 and November 1, 2019. YouGov selected respondents from its internet panel using sample matching. A random sample – stratified by gender, age, race, education, and region – was selected from the 2016 American Community Study. Voter registration information was included from the 2016 Current Population Survey Registration and Voting Supplement.

To generalize to Colorado residents, YouGov employed a weighting procedure based on demographics and political characteristics (specifically, gender, age, race, education and ideology). We use YouGov's weights for all analysis. The average time it took a respondent to complete the survey was approximately 10 minutes. More information on the sampling methodology employed by YouGov – similar to that used in previous years– can be found at: https://www.colorado.edu/lab/aprl/sites/default/files/attached-files/yougov_sampling_2018.pdf

Acknowledgements

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Table of Contents

(Initial) Topline Summary: Propositions and Impeachment

Between October 23rd and November 1, 2019 APRL conducted a full survey of Colorado voters, with questions ranging from propositions on the 2019 ballot, to evaluations of state and national figures, to public opinion about a variety of issues. However, in this initial topline report we focus only on the two statewide propositions on the ballot this fall, along with a peek into where Coloradans stand on the current (and rapidly evolving) controversy surround the presidential impeachment proceedings.

[An extended report will follow in the coming weeks that includes assessment of the Democratic Presidential primaries and the primary contest for the Colorado Senatorial race, as well as our ongoing assessment of Coloradans' stances on major policy issues and lawmakers.]

Proposition CC – that would allow the Colorado state government to keep tax revenue that would otherwise be refunded to taxpayers under the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) and spend it on education and transportation – appears headed for defeat, though the outcome is currently too close to call given the poll's margin of error. Half of respondents said they would vote "no" on the measure, with only 43% voting in the affirmative (with 7% unsure). Again, we note that this is close to the margin of error, and ballot measures in a low turnout election (such as 2019) are notoriously hard to call. However, the measure does appear headed for defeat.

We have been polling on the sentiment of Colorado voters regarding **TABOR** for the past four years (including this year). Every year TABOR has consistently had more support than opposition (between 45-53% support, while between 22-30% oppose). Accordingly, the vast majority of voters who oppose TABOR are supporting CC (84%), and the vast majority who favor TABOR are opposed to CC (76%).

We expect **Proposition DD** – the measure to legalize and tax sports gambling – to win handily. Sixty-two percent of Colorado voters favor the measure, and the proposition garners big majorities among Democrats (71%) and independents (64%) and approaches a majority among Republicans (48%).

Finally, as much of the discussion in Washington turns to the matter of **impeachment**, we asked the perspective of Coloradans. A clear majority favor the actions by the House of Representatives to open the impeachment inquiry (56% to 37% opposed). Not surprisingly, there is a deep partisan divide on the impeachment proceedings: the vast majority of Democrats favor it (89%), while the vast majority of Republicans oppose it (78%). Independents in the state seem to be almost evenly split (47% favor while 44% oppose).

Proposition CC

Question Text: Under current Colorado law, the state is required to refund taxpayers any revenue it collects that exceeds a specific amount. Proposition CC would change the law so that the legislature could keep and spend this additional revenue specifically to fund public schools, higher education, roads, bridges and transit systems along with requiring an annual independent audit to show how the funds were spent. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this proposition?

Proposition CC	
Yes	43%
No	50%
Not Sure	7%
Observations	768

Note: Analysis limited to Colorado Registered Voters

Proposition CC by Partisanship				
	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Other
Yes	65%	17%	38%	48%
No	23%	80%	56%	46%
Not Sure	12%	3%	5%	5%
Observations	304	231	201	32

Note: Analysis limited to Colorado Registered Voters

TABOR Item/Past Years/Comparison

TABOR Question Text: The Colorado Taxpayer Bill of Rights (also known as TABOR) limits the annual growth in state government spending based on the amount of population growth and inflation in the state. Some advocate keeping TABOR as the law of Colorado while others advocate repealing it. How much do you favor or oppose TABOR remaining the law in Colorado?

Favor/Opposition to TABOR by Year				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Strongly Favor	22%	20%	26%	34%
Favor	31%	25%	22%	15%
Oppose	12%	14%	11%	11%
Strongly Oppose	10%	12%	19%	15%
Not Sure	25%	30%	21%	25%
Favor Combined	53%	45%	49%	49%
Oppose Combined	22%	26%	30%	26%
Observations	1004	799	800	800

Note: Analysis of Colorado residents (not limited to registered voters)

Proposition CC by TABOR Support/Opposition			
	Favor TABOR	Oppose TABOR	Not Sure TABOR
Yes	22%	84%	35%
No	76%	13%	39%
Not Sure	2%	2%	26%
Observations	384	226	158

Note: Analysis limited to Colorado Registered Voters

Proposition DD

Question Text: Proposition DD would legalize and tax sports gambling at licensed casinos in Colorado with revenue from the 10% tax being spent to fund state water projects and commitments along with gambling addiction services. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this proposition?

Proposition DD	
Yes	62%
No	28%
Not Sure	10%
Observations	768

Note: Analysis limited to Colorado Registered Voters

Proposition DD by Partisanship				
	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Other
Yes	71%	48%	64%	71%
No	14%	44%	30%	24%
Not Sure	15%	8%	6%	5%
Observations	304	231	201	32

Note: Analysis limited to Colorado Registered Voters

Impeachment Inquiry Favorability

Question: As you may know, the US House of Representatives recently opened an impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump actions, how much do you favor or oppose this impeachment inquiry?

Note: Sample = Colorado Residents (not just registered voters)

Impeachment Inquiry Favorability	
Strongly Favor	47%
Slightly Favor	9%
Slightly Oppose	6%
Strongly Oppose	31%
Not Sure	7%
Favor Combined	56%
Oppose Combined	37%
Observations	800

Impeachment Inquiry Favorability by Partisanship				
	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Other
Favor	89%	17%	47%	48%
Oppose	3%	78%	44%	50%
Not Sure	7%	5%	9%	1%
Observations	323	231	211	35