Political moderation still the norm for Colorado, survey finds

The third annual Colorado Political Climate Survey, released in full today, found that while Democrat-supported issues and candidates swept the state on election day, it wasn’t a completely liberal wave. According to Scott Adler, director of CU Boulder’s American Political Research Lab. moderate voters are still the mainstay of Colorado politics.

CUT 1 “Democrats did very well in those races. However, it was not a completely liberal wave on everything on the ballot. We did see a defeat of the tax measure for education. We did not see the passage for the setbacks for fracking. (:19) So Colorado voters don’t vote as a monolith. They understand the issues. And they are willing to moderate when they see that as appropriate.” (:31)

Adler says this was a midterm year, and it was expected to be a good year for Democrats nationally given the backlash toward the presidential administration. “But, he says, based on the survey’s findings he would not call the state a permanent or fixed blue state.

CUT 2 “Party affiliation returned back to what we think is more natural levels in the state of Colorado. So a slight downtick in terms of the number of voters who identify as Democrats. (:15) We think that it was an un-naturally high level in 2017 in reaction to the beginning of the Trump administration. That returned back to levels that we think are a little more regular.” (:30)

One finding that hasn’t changed since last year’s survey and doesn’t fall along party lines, says Adler, is Coloradans continue to overwhelmingly support allowing the “Dreamers” to stay in the United States.

CUT 3 “What we found was that over three-quarters of the respondents were supportive of a legal way that ‘Dreamers’ could stay in the United States. (:11) That’s a slight uptick even from what we saw a year ago. And it gets widespread support even among Republicans.” (:24)

As for politicians, Adler says former Governor John Hickenlooper remains very popular.

CUT 4 “John Hickenlooper remains the most popular of our high-profile state-wide law makers. The former governor was polling at similar approval rating that we saw a year ago. About 53 percent of voters approved of the job that Hickenlooper was doing. (:20) And that, of course, is going to be important as he is considering and very likely to jump in to a presidential race.” (:30).

And Adler says this year, Senator Cory Gardner’s approval rating, which was very low last year, improved significantly.

CUT 5 “For Senator Gardner, whose approval ratings had gone down considerably in our poll last year, that recovered by a fair amount. His approval rating went up about 11 percent from where it was a year ago. And we think that 2017 was probably not a very good year for him merely because of his party affiliation.” (:21)

For more on the survey go to <https://www.colorado.edu/lab/aprl/sites/default/files/attached-files/2018_colorado_political_climate_report_election_full_report_1-22-19.pdf>.