



*behavior research center's*

# *Rocky Mountain Poll*

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## CHILD WELFARE AGENCY GIVEN THUMBS DOWN: CORPORATION COMMISSION DRAWS MIXED REVIEWS

Phoenix, Arizona, October 23, 2003. On the eve of a special legislative session regarding what to do about the state's troubled child welfare agency, 48 percent of Arizonans opine that the Arizona Child Protective Services (CPS) is doing a poor job. Not even a fifth are willing to characterize its performance in favorable terms.

By way of comparison, the Arizona Corporation Commission and the State Legislature receive "poor" job ratings from only a fifth to a quarter of the general public and voters. Even when the state legislature is in bad odor with the public, negative ratings of that body rarely rise to even 35 percent.

Among likely voters and Republicans, the "poor" ratings for CPS climb to 54 percent while its favorable performance ratings fall to only 12 percent. These are the most negative state agency readings we have registered in more than three decades of polling in Arizona.

Additionally, as possible evidence of heightened public awareness of the concerns surrounding this agency, 87 percent of Arizonans have an opinion about CPS compared to only 66 percent with an opinion on the State Corporation Commission.

Governor Janet Napolitano has called the legislature into special session with a request to provide an additional 35.5 million dollars in funding to increase payments to foster parents, increase pay for caseworkers and ease their workloads. Some legislative leaders have expressed doubts about giving more money to an agency that appears to be broken and may explore other remedies to reform the agency.

Public opinion toward the Arizona Corporation Commission is mixed and more subdued. Thus, 17 percent think this regulatory agency is doing a good job and an equal percent characterize it as doing a poor job. Thirty-two percent say it is doing a "fair" job and 34 percent have no opinion. Political independents, likely voters and upper income voters are the least likely to praise the Corporation Commission.

The findings outlined in this report are based on a survey of 701 adults across Arizona conducted between October 9<sup>th</sup> and October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003, by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona as part of the Center's independent and non-partisan Rocky Mountain Poll series. The public is welcome to visit [www.brcpolls.com](http://www.brcpolls.com) to read this and other recent polls.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll Arizona (2003-IV-03) is based on 701 telephone interviews with adults, conducted from October 9<sup>th</sup> through October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003 throughout Arizona. In the overall sample, one may say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 3.8 percent of what they would have been had the entire adult population been surveyed. The Rocky Mountain Poll is conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program. The voter subset of this poll included 540 respondents and the margin of error for that sample is estimated to be plus or minus 4.3 percent at a .95 confidence interval.

This statement conforms to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

**ENCLOSED:** Statistical data for reference.

**STATISTICAL DATA**

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For this and other polls, see [www.brcpolls.com/results](http://www.brcpolls.com/results).

*“For each of the following, please just tell me if you think they are doing an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job?”*

	STATE LEGISLATURE	CORPORATION COMMISSION	CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES
Excellent/good	22%	17%	17%
Fair	38	32	22
Poor/very poor	20	17	48
Unsure	20	34	13
Percent able to evaluate	80	66	87

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