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Rocky Mountain Poll

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VOTERS SPLIT 50-50 ON WHETHER TO RE-ELECT CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, BUT HARD-CORE OPPOSITION NOT STRONG

Phoenix, Arizona, September 15, 2005. Half of voters in Maricopa County say they may vote to re-elect their current congressional representative again next year. At the same time, however, half are either planning to vote for new representation or are fence-sitting for the time being. The proportion who say they will vote against retaining their incumbent congressman is far smaller (14%) than those planning on a retention vote, but with nearly four in ten unwilling to commit to incumbents, things could get interesting next Fall, particularly if public approval of President Bush continues to slide as it has throughout 2005. All but one of the Maricopa delegation are Republicans.

Republican congressmen in districts that are lopsided in registration favoring the GOP are probably in no difficulty, as six of ten registered Republicans plan on sticking with the incumbent. But in those areas where registration is more equally divided, incumbents will be facing 61 percent of Independent voters and 57 percent of Democrats who are not committed to the incumbent. Further, among these voters, fewer than a fifth say they are "strongly committed" to retaining incumbents.

Another warning sign that incumbents had best not take next year's voters for granted is the finding that only 22 percent say they are definitely committed to supporting incumbents, a figure that rises to only 26 percent among registered Republicans, a surprisingly modest percentage.

Among other voters, the lack of comfort with incumbents is even more apparent. For example, only 19 percent of women voters, 18 percent of Democrats and Independents, 15 percent of ethnic minorities and voters under 35 years of age say they are "definitely" committed to the re-election of incumbents.

The large percentages of uncommitted voters punctuates the reason challengers and incumbents often launch efforts to dismantle the character of their opponents: they know that even though voters say they dislike negative campaigning, demonizing one's opponent often brings results.

The findings outlined in this report are based on a survey of 455 registered voters throughout Maricopa County conducted between August 22 and September 2, 2005, 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 to read this and other recent polls.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll Arizona (2005-III-09) is based on 455 telephone interviews conducted from August 22 through September 2, 2005, with registered voters throughout Maricopa County. In a sample of this size, one may say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 4.68 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.

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

BELOW: Statistical data

For this and other polls, see www.brcpolls.com/results

STATISTICAL DATA

Behavior Research Center
Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona
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“As you know, elections will be held in Arizona next year. At this point in time, do you definitely, probably, probably not or definitely not plan to vote for the re-election of the congressman representing your district?”

	Plan to Vote to Re-Elect Incumbent		Plan to Vote Against Incumbent	Un-committed
	Definitely	Maybe		
Countywide	22%	27%	14%	37%
Voters most likely to vote in off-year elections	26	30	15	29
Men	24	30	16	30
Women	19	26	12	43
Republicans	26	34	10	30
Democrats	18	25	17	40
Independents	18	21	17	44
Phoenix	29	23	11	37
West Valley	15	30	14	41
Scottsdale/Paradise Valley	39	24	15	22
East Valley	18	32	16	34

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