



behavior research center's

# ***Rocky Mountain Poll***

Rated in the Top 15% of Political Polls in the U.S.

NEWS RELEASE [RMP 2015-IV-03]

Contact: Earl de Berge  
Research Director

**47% OF GOP VOTERS REMAIN UNDECIDED IN U.S. SENATE  
PRIMARY RACE;  
ANN KIRKPATRICK COULD BE A FORMIDABLE CHALLENGER  
TO McCAIN IN GENERAL ELECTION**

Phoenix, Arizona, November 13, 2015. Incumbent U.S. Senator John McCain leads his closest challenger in the GOP primary election by four to one, but a stunning 47 percent of Republican voters say they are uncommitted to any of the primary candidates, including incumbent McCain. The lack of certainty is true across the state from populous Maricopa and Pima counties to Arizona's rural areas.

Of three GOP candidates we tested against McCain, Kelli Ward is the only one to currently stand out as potentially a significant primary challenger, attracting 12 percent of the GOP test vote. John McCain has 38 percent while Clair Steenvyk and Alex McLuskey garner only two and one percent respectively. But with 47 percent of rank and file Republicans fence-sitting in a race with a well-known and powerful incumbent asking to be sent back to Washington, who can say with certainty what might happen in the coming months. We cannot help but wonder if Arizona voters have adopted a less accepting view of so-called establishment office-holders in Washington..

The findings outlined in this report are based on a statewide random sample survey of 700 adult heads of household including 577 registered voters. It was conducted between October 24 and November 5, 2015 by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is part of the Center's Independent and non-partisan Rocky Mountain Poll Series. All interviewing was conducted via telephone by professional interviewers. The public is welcome to visit [www.BRCpolls.com](http://www.BRCpolls.com) for this and other polls.

When we next turned our attention to the potential vote in the general election next November, assuming John McCain and Ann Kirkpatrick win their respective primaries, we found that only six percentage points separate the two: McCain with 37 percent, Kirkpatrick with 31 percent and again, a large 32 percent undecided.

The lack of surety about how they may vote in a general election is surprisingly wide spread, affecting a quarter of Democrats, 37 percent of Republicans and 33 percent of Independents. In addition it appears that, assuming they turn out to vote, younger voters could play a significant role in the outcome

-more-

since nearly half (45%) are currently uncommitted to either candidate, as are 36 percent of Hispanic voters.

As might be expected, Democrat and Republican voters tend to vote for the candidate carrying their brand, but there is an interesting difference in that 59 percent of Democrats are staying with the home team, that is, voting for Kirkpatrick, while for McCain, the figure is only 51 percent. However, McCain can take some comfort that currently, Independents are splitting 41 to 26 in favor of his candidacy.

Ann Kirkpatrick is, of course, not as well-known to Arizona voters as John McCain but may nonetheless prove to be formidable if she takes an early opportunity to elevate awareness among voters of her platform and background rather than waiting, as have many Democrat candidates in the past, until after the primary and after the powerful and well-funded campaign of McCain and GOP-leaning super pacs have started running commercials to define her to voters as they see fit. There can be little doubt that McCain will be well-funded and he has proven many times that he is a skilled and articulate candidate.

Neither McCain nor Kirkpatrick appear to have a leg up among Hispanic voters: Kirkpatrick is currently attracting 33 percent of that vote while McCain has 31 percent and 36 percent remain uncommitted. Among non-Hispanic minorities (mainly Asian-American, African-American and Native Americans), Kirkpatrick appears to have a comfortable lead but the sample sizes among these voters are small and so the reading may be spurious.

This survey also reveals that John McCain leads Kirkpatrick modestly among middle and upper-income voters but the two are dead even at 32 percent among lower income voters. On the other hand, among the most seasoned voters, those over 55 years of age, McCain and Kirkpatrick are in a close battle, with McCain at 39 percent and Kirkpatrick at 37 percent. The two are also running very even in Maricopa county, but McCain enjoys a wider lead in Pima and the rural counties. Voter gender does not appear to be a significant factor in how a person will vote.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona (2015-IV-03), is based on 700 interviews with heads of household statewide, including 577 registered voters, (226 Republican) conducted between October 24 and November 5, 2015. Interviewing was conducted in both English and Spanish by professional interviewers of the Behavior Research Center on both land lines and cell phones. Where necessary, figures for age, sex, and race were weighted to bring them into line with their actual proportion in the population. In a sample of this size, one can say with a 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 4.2 percent of what they would have been had the entire adult voter population been surveyed and plus or minus 6.7 percent among Republican voters. The Rocky Mountain Poll is conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program sponsored by the Center.

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

ENCLOSED: Statistical Tables

“If the Republican primary election for U.S. Senate were being held today, which of the following candidates would you vote for?” (List of candidates randomly rotated)

	TOTAL	Republicans	Independents
John McCain	41%	38%	52%
Kelli Ward	11	12	7
Clair Van Steenwyk	2	2	1
Alex McLuskey	1	1	1
Uncommitted	<u>45</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>39</u>
	100%	100%	100%

~~~~~

“If the 2016 general election for U.S. Senator from Arizona were being held today, which of the following candidates would you vote for?” (List of candidates randomly rotated)

|                         | Republican<br>John McCain | Democrat<br>Ann<br>Kirkpatrick | Uncommitted |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Statewide               | 37%                       | 31%                            | 32%         |
| Maricopa                | 34                        | 32                             | 34          |
| Pima                    | 38                        | 32                             | 30          |
| Rural                   | 42                        | 28                             | 30          |
| Democrats               | 16                        | 59                             | 25          |
| Republicans             | 51                        | 12                             | 37          |
| Independents            | 41                        | 26                             | 33          |
| Hispanics               | 31                        | 33                             | 36          |
| Non-Hispanic minorities | 21                        | 51                             | 28          |
| Under 35                | 32                        | 23                             | 45          |
| 35 to 54                | 38                        | 31                             | 31          |
| 55+                     | 38                        | 37                             | 25          |

~~~~~