

The Ninth Annual

# MIND OF COLORADO

Survey of Public Opinion

2003

Wells Fargo Public Opinion Research Program

Institute for Public Policy  
Graduate School of Public Affairs  
University of Colorado at Denver

June, 2003

# Mind of Colorado 2003

## Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| INTRODUCTION .....   | 1  |
| PART I: VIEWS ON CURRENT POLICY ISSUES .....                               | 3  |
| Water Use, Values and Policy .....   | 3  |
| Adequacy of Water Supply .....   | 3  |
| Understanding of Use Patterns .....  | 4  |
| Values to Be Maximized .....   | 4  |
| Preferred Strategies .....   | 5  |
| State Bond Issue for Water Development .....                               | 5  |
| Other Policy Options .....   | 6  |
| Trans-Basin Water Diversions: Desirability and Need for Compensation ..... | 6  |
| State Budget and Fiscal Policies .....                                     | 7  |
| Budget Deficit and Its Impacts .....                                       | 7  |
| Balancing the Budget .....   | 8  |
| The Constitutional Context .....   | 9  |
| TABOR: Key Concepts .....  | 9  |
| Possible TABOR Adjustments .....   | 11 |
| Amendment 23 .....   | 12 |
| Packaging Reforms .....  | 13 |
| Trust Fund for Open Space .....  | 13 |
| PART II: INDICATORS OF COMMUNITY WELL BEING .....                          | 15 |
| General Satisfaction .....   | 15 |
| Economic Climate .....   | 15 |
| Quality of Life .....  | 17 |
| Confidence and Trust .....   | 18 |
| Most Trusted Institutions .....  | 19 |
| Least Trusted Institutions .....   | 19 |
| Change Over Time .....   | 19 |
| Differences Among Sub-Groups .....   | 20 |
| Public Officials' Performance .....  | 22 |
| SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .....  | 23 |
| Community Well Being .....   | 23 |
| Public Policy .....  | 23 |
| A Note on Polling and Public Opinion .....                                 | 24 |
| APPENDIX A: SURVEY WITH FREQUENCIES .....                                  | 25 |
| PROGRAM INFORMATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....                              | 32 |

## INTRODUCTION

*The Mind of Colorado*, now in its ninth year, provides citizens and leaders in the state with two important types of information.

- C First, it portrays the public's views on key public policy issues, thereby strengthening the state's democracy. This year's survey focuses on two issue areas – water and fiscal policy – and explores both the public's understanding of the issues and their policy preferences.
- C Second, it provides an annual measurement of indicators that are useful in gauging the strength of civic institutions and the well-being of our community. Among these indicators are an assessment of economic conditions and future economic prospects; trust in key societal institutions; and, an evaluation of the perceived quality of life available in Colorado's communities.

This survey is based on a randomly drawn, representative sample of registered voters taken from records of the Secretary of State. The analysis is based on a telephone survey of 743 Coloradans conducted between March 31 and May 2, 2003. The interviews were completed by University staff and by VCR, a firm specializing in survey data collection.

Surveys with higher response rates are more likely to produce reliable findings. Interviewers made extensive efforts to maximize the proportion of completed calls.<sup>1</sup> The 743 completed interviews came from a total list of 2488 Colorado registered voters with valid phone numbers, for a response rate of 30%.

Surveys done using scientific sampling methods and following sophisticated calling protocols typically provide a good representation of what would have been found had it been possible to interview everyone in the population. A conservative estimate of error due to sampling is +/-3.7%. In other words, if different samples were taken from the same overall list of registered voters, the results from each survey should be within 3.7% of the responses recorded here.

Using the list of registered voters as a sampling frame allows us to test for response bias on key demographic parameters. This second type of error arises if some groups of people are more easily reached by phone or are more willing to participate in the study. Generally respondents to the *Mind of Colorado* survey look very much like the larger group of registered voters, with a couple of exceptions. People age 18 to 34 are under-represented, while those 50 to 64 are over-represented. Given that we found relatively few differences of opinion based on age, this response bias is unimportant. Republicans are also over-represented in the respondent group, while those without party affiliation are under-represented. Since party affiliation is a good predictor of response to many questions, this response bias did have an effect, albeit quite small, on findings.

In reporting the results of the survey, emphasis is placed on describing the opinions of the population as a whole. The

---

<sup>1</sup>Calls were made during the day, on weekday evenings and on weekends in order to ensure that employed persons and persons with different schedules were reached. Everyone on the list was called at least six times on five different days and most were called more often than that.

data also are tabulated for specific sub-groups, based on party affiliation, gender, region of residence, age and income. Differences of opinion based on these group identifications are only discussed if they meet the test of statistical significance.

The complete survey text and frequencies are reported in Appendix A.

# PART I

## VIEWS ON CURRENT POLICY ISSUES

### Water Use, Values and Policy

A major concern over the past few years in Colorado has been the drought and its impact on water supplies. The state's reservoirs have been at critically low levels and many communities were forced to adopt measures designed to reduce water use. While a wet spring offers the hope of some relief, the drought has had the effect of drawing attention to the long term adequacy of the state's water supplies. Many existing policies directly or indirectly related to water and its allocation or use are being re-examined. *The Mind of Colorado* sought to explore the public's perception and understanding of water issues and their priorities regarding its use, as well as some specific public policy choices.

#### Adequacy of Water Supply

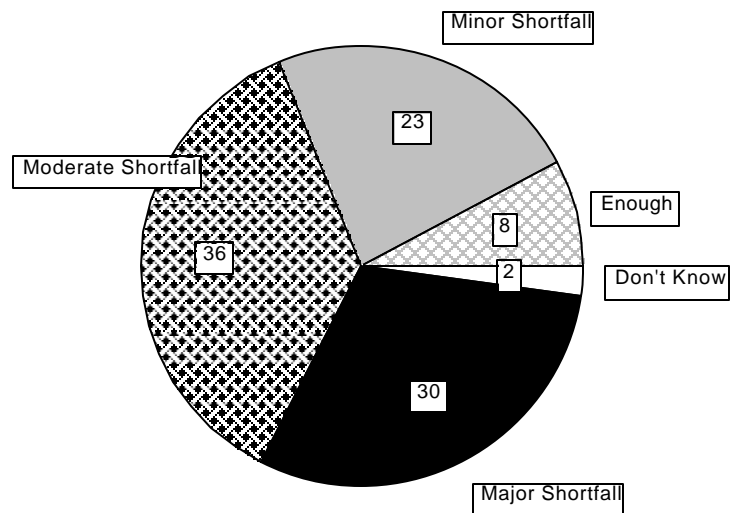
Two-thirds of Coloradans (67%) perceive that their area faces a major (30%) or moderate (36%) water shortfall. A little less than one-quarter (23%) thinks the shortfall is only minor, and 8% think their area of the state has enough water.

Perceptions of a water shortfall vary by region. Somewhat ironically given the city's extensive water system and senior water rights, Denver residents are more likely than Coloradans living elsewhere in the state to believe water is in short supply. In the city, 84% say there is a major or moderate shortfall, compared to 61% to 67% in the other three regions.

#### Understanding of Use Patterns

Coloradans don't have a very good understanding of how the state's water supply is currently used. Asked how much of the state's water is used in agriculture, 15% did not offer a response. Of those who did respond, most significantly under-estimated agriculture's use of water. Only 14% chose the correct answer: that is, that agriculture uses more than three-quarters of the state's water. Fifty-four percent (54%) of respondents think agriculture is responsible for less than half of the water used in the state.

Area's Water Supply



## Values to Be Maximized

Before public policies are crafted, decision makers typically seek an understanding of the values that might be affected and the importance assigned to each value by the public as a whole and by key stakeholders. Water policy is difficult to formulate because it affects so many different values. Six of these values that most frequently enter policy discussion were identified in the survey, and the public was asked to rate the importance of each in choosing the best strategy to meet the state's water needs. To ensure some differentiation among the alternatives, respondents were asked to use a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 signifies very important.

Three values clearly emerge as *most* important to Coloradans in framing water policy:

- C Preventing underground water from being used up, with a mean score of 7.8 and 61% assigning a rating of 8,9, 10.
- C Leaving enough water in streams and rivers to preserve wildlife habitat, with a mean score of 7.8 and 60% assigning a high rating.
- C Protecting water for agriculture and local economies based on farming, with a mean score of 7.8 and 59% assigning a high rating.

One value clearly emerges as *least* important – ensuring enough water to maintain traditional lawns and landscaping. The mean rating for this value is 4.4 and only 12% assigned a high rating.

Other values of moderate and roughly equal importance are:

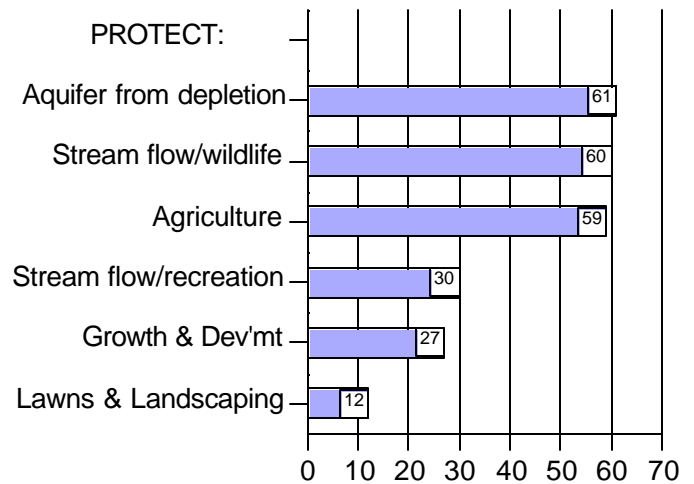
- C Leaving enough water in streams and rivers to protect recreation and local economies based on tourism, with a mean score of 6.3 and 30% assigning it high importance; and
- C Ensuring sufficient water supplies for growth and development, with a mean score of 5.8 and 27% assigning a high rating.

The same three-tiered pattern holds for all groups, regardless of party affiliation, gender, region, age, or income. The specific rank-ordering within the top tier may vary, but the actual ratings of the three values that fall in the top tier are always very similar.

While the values fall into the same three tiers for all groups, there are some differences in the average importance rating assigned to specific values. Aquifer depletion is more of a concern among Democrats (8.2) than Republicans (7.6) or Independents (7.8). It also is rated more highly by respondents age 35 to 49 than by those in other age groups.

## Values Important to Water Policy

% giving Rating of 8,9 or 10

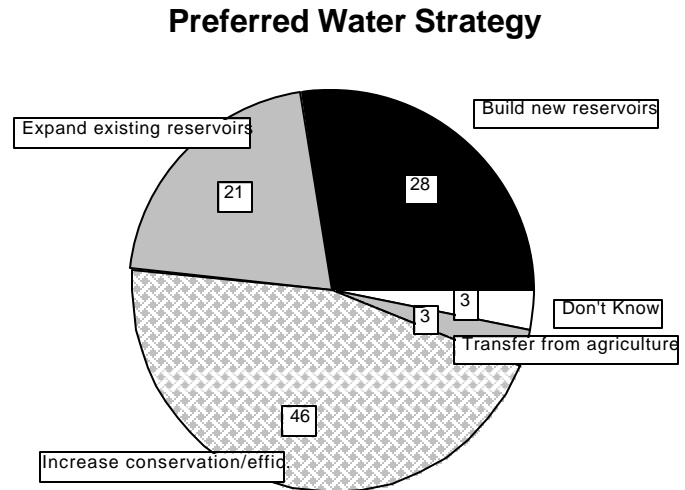


Leaving water in streams to support wildlife habitat is more important to younger people (<50), Democrats, and women. Protecting water for agriculture is rated more highly by women than by men. Water for traditional lawns and landscaping gets higher ratings in Denver and from the elderly.

### Preferred Strategies

The state is likely to pursue a number of strategies to address water supply issues. *The Mind of Colorado* asked Colorado’s registered voters which strategy should be the state’s highest priority. The strategies, listed in order of their level of support, are:

- C Increasing water use efficiency and conservation, selected as the highest priority by 46% of respondents.
- C Building new dams and reservoirs to capture and store snow melt, selected by 28% of respondents.
- C Expanding existing dams and reservoirs, the priority for 21% of respondents.
- C Transferring water from agriculture to business and residential use, a priority strategy for just 3% of respondents.



Increasing water efficiency tends to be the preferred option regardless of how the data are broken down. Only among those over 65 does the pattern break down: seniors are as likely to choose expanding existing dams and reservoirs as they are to choose water efficiency as the preferred strategy.

There are differences, however, in the proportion voicing a preference for conservation measures. For example, 40% of Republicans opt for efficiency compared to 49% of Democrats and 51% of Independents. More than half of the Republicans interviewed prefer development of additional water storage, whether through new projects (31%) or expanding existing dams and reservoirs (24%). Among Democrats and Independents, however, even if the support for the two water storage options were added together, it remains lower than the support for water efficiency.

Respondents in the two younger age groups are more likely than those in the older groups to choose water efficiency as their preferred strategy. Low income respondents (<\$25,000) are less likely than those with higher incomes to choose water efficiency.

### State Bond Issue for Water Development

A majority of Coloradans support an increased state role in water development: 59% would vote for a ballot issue giving the state authority to borrow \$10 billion to finance water supply and development projects if the debt would be repaid by the users of the water. Half that number (29%) said they would vote against such a measure, while the

remaining respondents were undecided.

Supporters outnumber opponents in all of the groups analyzed. The proportion in favor of a bond issue for water development ranges from 52% to 65%.

While there is clear support for a state role in financing water development, most Coloradans want the development of new supplies only if reasonable steps have already been taken to ensure efficient water use. Eighty-five percent (85%) would like the state to require local authorities to implement water efficiency and conservation measures before they can apply for state help in building new water supply and storage facilities.

### Other Policy Options

About two-thirds of Coloradans (69%) are sympathetic to the idea of increasing the state's authority in times of serious drought, saying the state "should have the authority to override local water policies and to reallocate water among communities to ensure that everyone's indoor water needs are met." In general, support for the state assuming this role is strong among all of the different groups analyzed. Opposition emerges only in rural areas: outside the Front Range, 49% oppose the idea while 46% support it.

The public strongly supports several additional policies that would manage demand for water:

- C 88% think all new residential and commercial development should be required to use water conservation measures such as xeriscape landscaping and water efficient appliances.
- C 88% think new development should be permitted only if the water supply meets certain tests – that it can be sustained indefinitely, is reliable during droughts, and can be used without hurting neighbors' water supplies.
- C 81% think local water authorities should set prices to encourage water conservation by providing a basic amount to each household at a low price, and then charging more per gallon for additional use.

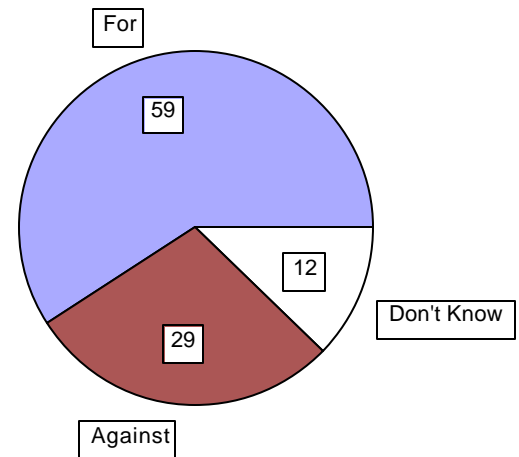
Each of these policies have strong support regardless of party, gender, region, age or income.

### Trans-Basin Water Diversions: Desirability and Need for Compensation

Opinion is evenly divided on the highly controversial issue of trans-basin water diversions. Growing municipalities on the Front Range often are forced to look outside of their own area to obtain new water, either buying from farmers downstream or obtaining water rights on the west slope and diverting the water across the Continental Divide. To determine public opinion on this difficult issue, *The Mind of Colorado* first described the situation and then presented two competing views: "Local water authorities can buy water rights or develop new supplies from a source in a different

### \$10 Billion Bond For New Water Supply

If on the ballot, how would you vote?



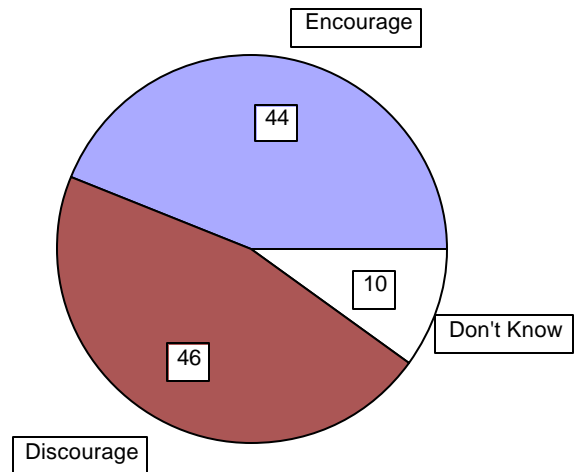


part of the state. Some people say these trans-basin water transfers should be encouraged because they get water where it is needed most. Others say they should be discouraged because they do too much harm to the communities from which the water is taken.” When asked which of these views was closer to theirs, 46% of respondents said diversions should be discouraged and 44% said they should be encouraged.

Not surprisingly, region accounts for the largest differences of opinion. Almost two-thirds of those living outside the Front Range think trans-basin diversions should be discouraged. The greatest support for water transfers is found in the Denver suburbs, where 52% said they should be encouraged. Republicans are more likely to favor and Democrats to oppose moving water from one basin to another, while Independents split evenly.

Eight out of ten respondents (82%) believe that local water authorities should be required to pay compensation for economic or environmental damages that might result when they buy or develop water and transfer it from one part of the state to another. Support for compensation is strong among both supporters and opponents of trans-basin diversion. Not surprisingly, however, the latter are more likely to support compensation than the former: compare 87% to 77%.

### Trans-Basin Water Diversions



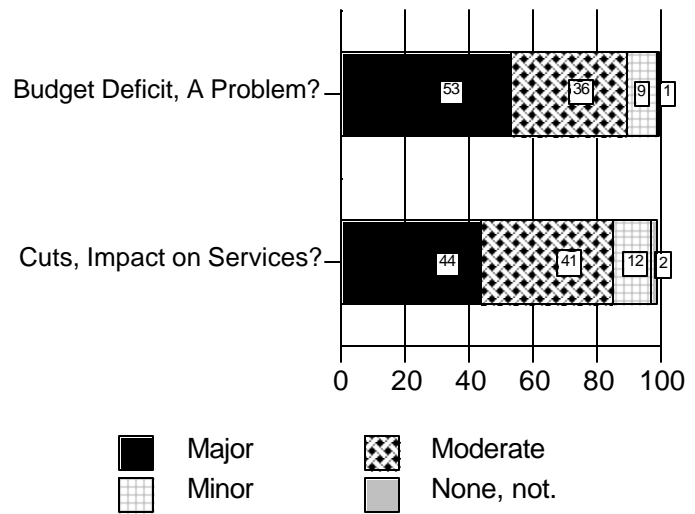
## State Budget and Fiscal Policies

### Budget Deficit and Its Impacts

Colorado, like many states, is facing a serious budget deficit. Many factors have contributed to the problem. On the revenue side, collections are low due to a weak economy and permanent tax cuts made in years when a strong economy produced more revenues than the state was allowed to spend. On the spending side, statutory and constitutional provisions require increased spending in some functional areas, forcing budget cuts to be concentrated in other areas.

Virtually all Coloradans perceive that the state’s budget deficit is a problem. Just over half (53%) identify the problem as being major, and an additional 36% see it as moderate. Less than 1% say the deficit is not a problem. This assessment was made prior to our providing any

### Views on Colorado's Budget



information on the magnitude of the revenue shortfall. Respondents were then told that the budget deficit had forced the legislature to cut over \$900 million or about 15% of the general fund budget this year, and were asked their expectation of the impact of these cuts on the level and quality of services provided by the state. Eighty-five percent (85%) anticipate a significant impact, with a nearly equal split between those expecting a major impact (44%) and a moderate impact (41%). Relatively few expect a minor impact (12%) or no impact (2%).

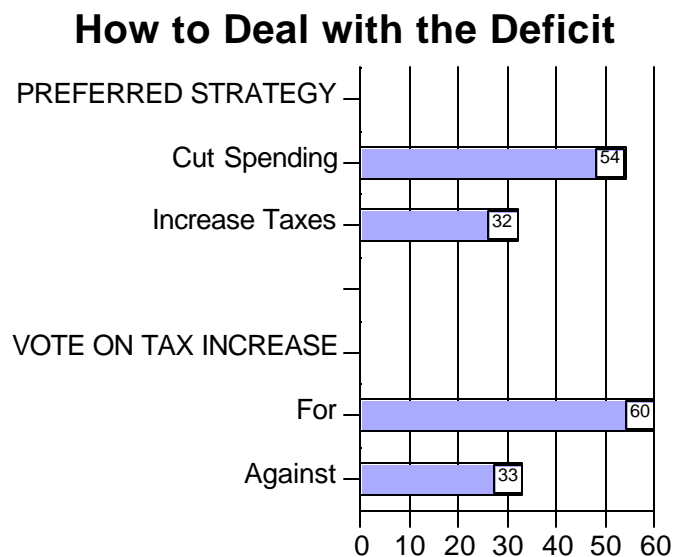
When the data are tallied for sub-groups, defined by party affiliation, gender, region, age and income, several conclusions emerge:

- C In every group, strong majorities see the budget deficit as a major or moderate problem. Whether groups are defined by party, gender, region, age, or income, a minimum of 80% or more choose these two answer codes out of a four-point scale.
- C Similarly, an equivalent proportion (80% or more) expect major or moderate impacts on service level or quality.
- C Despite the concern voiced by all groups, there are significant differences in perception based on party, gender and region. Republicans are markedly less likely (41%) to see the deficit as a major problem than are Democrats (69%) or Independents (53%). Similarly, Republicans are less likely to forecast a major impact on services: compare 31% with 59% among Democrats and 46% among Independents. There are also significant differences based on gender, with women more likely to see the deficit as a major problem and more concerned about service impacts. Regional breakdowns also indicate differences. Those living in more rural parts of the state not along the Front Range are the least likely (43%) and Denver residents are the most likely (70%) to say the budget deficit is a major problem. When asked about service impacts residents of Denver’s suburbs join those living outside the Front Range in being least likely to expect a major impact (41%) and Denver residents are most likely (52%).

### Balancing the Budget

More Coloradans prefer cuts in spending to revenue increases as the primary strategy for balancing next year’s budget. Respondents were told that the budget shortfall next year is projected to be larger than this year’s and that this would mean spending cuts totaling 30% over two years unless taxes or fees are raised. Then they were asked which strategy they preferred to balance the budget; 54% opted for spending cuts while 32% wanted an increase in taxes or fees. Ten percent (10%) rejected the forced choice and said a combination of both actions was required.

Despite the stated preference for spending cuts, six in ten Coloradans indicated a willingness to support a temporary state tax increase to prevent service cuts. The question read: “If it were on November’s ballot, would you vote for or against temporarily increasing the state’s sales and



income tax rates to the same levels they were in 1999 in order to prevent some cuts in services?” Sixty percent (60%) said they would vote for and 33% that they would vote against such a ballot issue.

When the data are broken down by party, clear partisan differences emerge. Republicans, and to a lesser extent Independents, have a clear preference for relying primarily on spending cuts to balance the budget. In contrast, Democrats would emphasize revenue increases. By a small margin, Republicans would vote against a temporary increase in sales and income taxes (48% against, 44% for). Among Democrats and Independents, however, the pattern reverses and by relatively large margins. Nearly 80% of Democrats and 62% of Independents say they would vote for a tax increase.

There also are differences in perspective based on place of residence. In every region, more people prefer spending cuts to tax increases as the primary approach to balancing the budget. Never-the-less, in every region supporters of a temporary tax increase outnumber opponents. The margin is much bigger in both Denver and its suburbs, however, than elsewhere in the state.

In all income groups, spending cuts are preferred to tax increases. The preference for spending cuts is particularly large among those reporting incomes of less than \$25,000 per year. It is lowest among people with incomes between \$40,000 and \$55,000 per year. Despite this preference for spending cuts, there is a willingness among all income groups to support a temporary increase in sales and income taxes to address budget shortfalls. Support for a temporary tax increase is significantly higher among women than men.

## **The Constitutional Context**

The state’s current fiscal crisis has prompted many political leaders to re-examine a number of constitutional provisions that constrain the choices that can be made by the legislature regarding spending and taxing. Many believe that the combination of amendments that have been added to the constitution over the last several years via the initiative process place the state in a fiscal bind.

- C The TABOR (Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights) amendment limits the amount that the state can spend (regardless of the amount collected), and requires a vote of the people to raise tax rates.
- C The Gallagher amendment mandates that residential property can bear no more than 49% of the total tax burden. It has had the unintended effect (when coupled with TABOR and school finance laws) of reducing the share of education costs covered by local taxpayers and increasing the state’s financial responsibility.
- C Amendment 23 earmarks revenues and requires the state to increase its spending on education.

Some of the solutions to the state’s fiscal problems that have emerged in policy discussions require changes to one or more of these constitutional provisions. *The Mind of Colorado* sought to determine the level of public support for key concepts embedded in these amendments and the public’s willingness to make some changes in their provisions.

## **TABOR: Key Concepts**

Coloradans support the key concepts embedded in the TABOR amendment. The level of support for some features appears lower than in the past, however. The state’s leaders will find a receptive audience among the public for some

modifications to the amendment's provisions.

Who Should Have the Authority to Raise Taxes:

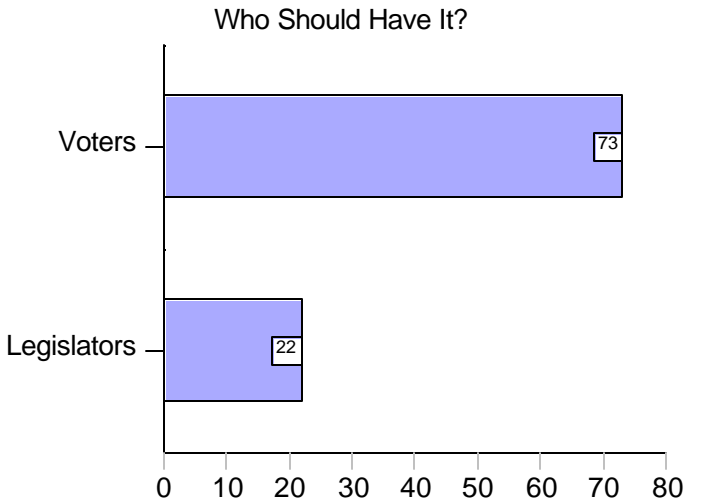
Coloradans strongly support the TABOR requirement that any tax increase be approved by a vote of the people. Fully 73% say voters in an election should make the decision to increase taxes, compared to 22% who say the authority should rest with the state legislature. Support for this feature is quite similar to the 71% level reported in a survey conducted in 2001 for the Colorado Commission on Taxation.

The strong pattern of support for voters retaining the right to vote on tax increases holds among all of the groups studied, and there are no statistically significant differences based on party, gender, region or age. There are some differences based on income. Higher income groups are somewhat more willing to cede decision-making authority to elected representatives, but even so, all income categories would keep the TABOR provision in place.

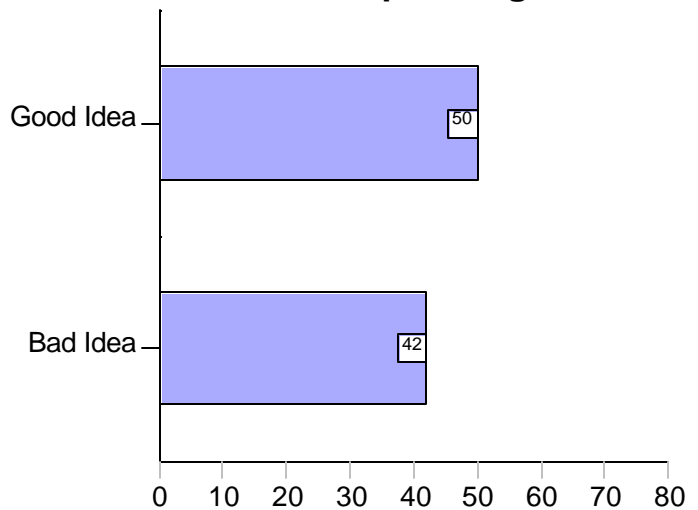
Tax and Spending Limits: More people support the idea of limits than oppose them: 50% think they are a good idea compared to 42% who think limits are bad. Before being asked their opinion, respondents were introduced to the major arguments for and against spending limits: "Some people think it is a good idea to limit the amount of money the state can collect and spend because they want low taxes and small government. Others think that limiting revenues and spending is a bad idea because it reduces the state's flexibility to provide needed services."

Support for this feature of TABOR appears to have dropped over time. In 2001, the Colorado Commission on Taxation survey found that 74% supported limits on the revenue government can spend. The current level of support is 50%, fully 24 points lower than in the Commission's survey.<sup>2</sup>

**Authority to Raise Taxes:**



**Tax and Spending Limits**

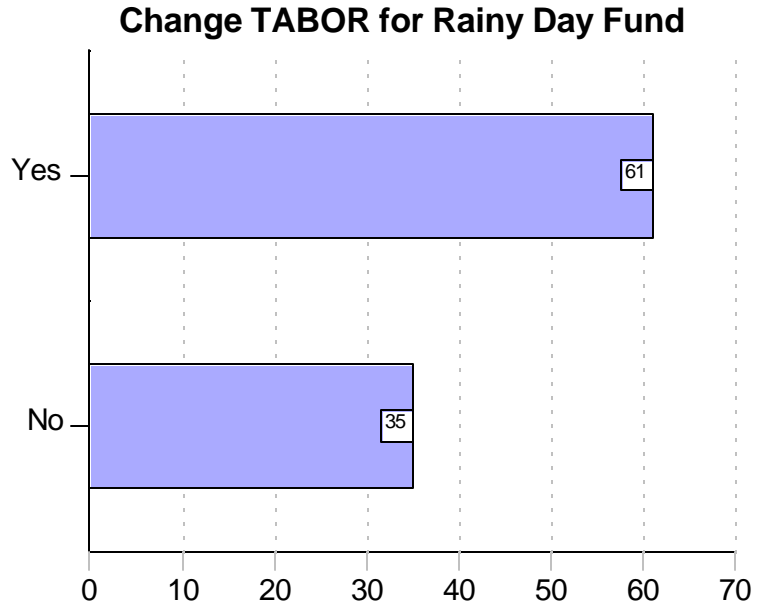


<sup>2</sup> See Attachment D of the report submitted to the Legislature by the Colorado Commission on Taxation on September 5, 2002. The statewide survey was conducted in the summer of 2001 by Cirulli Associates. The survey used a random digit dialing methodology and as a result did not focus on registered voters, as is the case in *The Mind of Colorado*.

Partisan differences emerge with respect to the desirability of tax and spending limits. Not surprisingly, by relatively large margins, Republicans think limits are a good idea (61% vs. 30%). Democrats think they aren't (36% vs. 55%). Opinion is fairly evenly divided among Independents— 47% favoring and 45% opposing the concept. Differences by gender, region, age and income are not statistically significant.

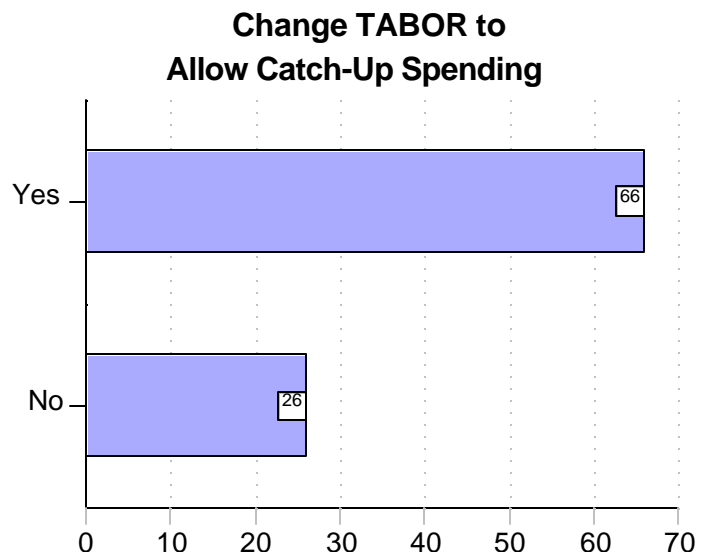
**Possible TABOR Adjustments**

Rainy Day Fund: A majority supports easing TABOR restrictions to make it easier to fund a rainy day account at a level that might avert spending cuts in a future recession. TABOR revenue limitations have made it difficult for the state to save money in past years when there were surplus revenues. TABOR requires any revenues exceeding limits to be returned to taxpayers, unless there is a vote of the people authorizing an alternative use. One of the changes to the TABOR amendment that has been discussed involves easing the revenue limit to make it easier to save money in a rainy day fund. After explaining these provisions, the survey asked whether or not the state “should be allowed to keep more revenues collected when the economy is strong so long as the money goes into a rainy day fund that can only be spent when the economy is weak.” Six out of ten respondents (61%) view such a change favorably, while 35% do not.



Support for TABOR modifications relevant to establishment of a rainy day fund holds in all groups for which data were separately analyzed. There are some differences in the margin of support, however, based on party, gender, region and income. The lowest levels of support (below 60%) are found among Republicans (55%), men (57%), Front Range communities outside the Denver metro area (52%), and persons with incomes between \$55,000 and \$70,000 per year.

Allow Catch-up Spending: Two-thirds (66%) of Coloradans would support modifying TABOR's spending limits to make it easier to restore services to pre-recession levels. One of the major concerns regarding TABOR is its “ratcheting down” effect. Services have to be cut when revenues fall, but TABOR's spending limits will make it difficult to restore spending even if revenues rebound strongly when the current economic recession ends.

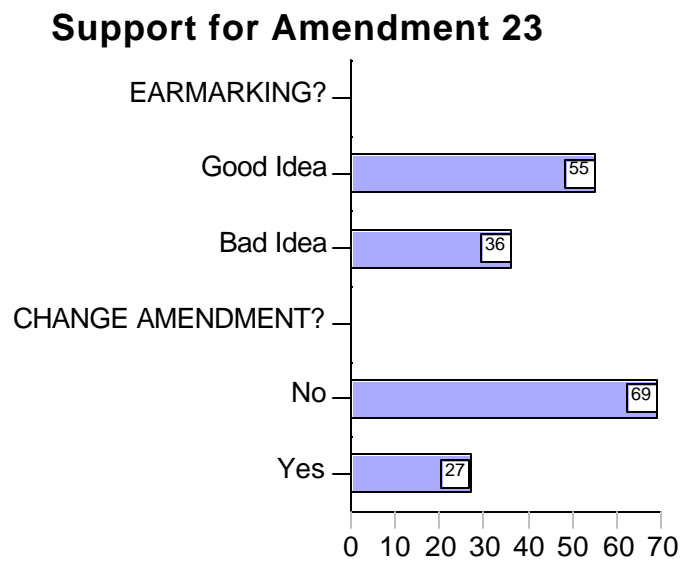


Again, when the data are broken down based on party, gender, region, age, and income, a consistent pattern of support is found for TABOR modifications to allow catch-up spending. The level of support, however, is lower among Republicans (54%) than among Democrats (79%) or Independents (72%). Gender differences are also statistically significant, with women more likely to favor the change to TABOR than men.

### Amendment 23

Two key concepts underlie Amendment 23: earmarking revenues for a specific purpose and mandating a specific level of spending increase for K-12 education. In the current budget context, Amendment 23 became somewhat controversial since it had the effect of concentrating budget cuts in other areas of the state’s budget. Since K-12 accounts for approximately half the state’s spending, cuts required in other areas had to be more than twice as large as they would have been had cuts been made proportionally in all areas.

Earmarking of revenues is an approach to public finance that is favored by a majority of voters. *The Mind of Colorado* determined this to be the case by testing the basic arguments for and against this fiscal practice. “Some people think earmarking of taxes for a specific program or purpose is a good idea because it allows voters to establish budget priorities. Others think earmarking is a bad idea because it limits the ability of elected officials to respond to changing circumstances.” After hearing this introduction, 55% took the position that earmarking is a good idea, while 36% sided with its opponents.



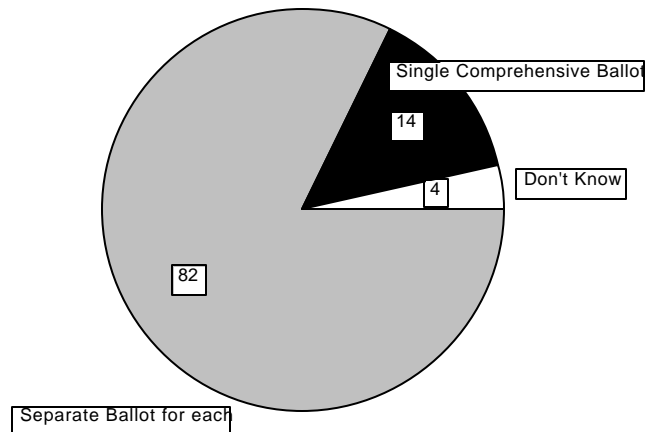
Voters are unwilling to modify the spending mandate in Amendment 23 to give greater flexibility to the Legislature in times of recession. Respondents were told: “Amendment 23 requires annual increases in funding for K-12 education. When revenues drop due to recession, this requirement forces large cuts to other parts of the state’s budget.” They were then asked: “Should Amendment 23 be modified to give the legislature flexibility in times of recession to cut K-12 education along with other programs, or would you prefer to keep Amendment 23 as it is?” Seven in ten Coloradans (69%) would not modify Amendment 23's spending provisions while 27% would prefer the proposed modification.

The cross-tabulations show all groups favor earmarking and no significant differences in viewpoint. Similarly, all of the groups analyzed favor keeping Amendment 23's spending mandates unchanged. The margin of support for retaining Amendment 23 does vary to some extent based on party, gender and age. Focusing on these crosstabs only where differences are statistically significant, support for Amendment 23 is strongest (70% or greater) among Democrats, Independents, women, and those under 50. Of all the groups separately analyzed, support for Amendment 23 is lowest among Republicans – but even here, 56% prefer no changes while 38% would support modifications.

## Packaging Reforms

Many of the state's leaders believe that Colorado's fiscal problems result from the interplay of the provisions in the various amendments. For both political and substantive reasons, some have suggested that a comprehensive reform package be developed and submitted for voter approval. *The Mind of Colorado* sought the public's views on this, asking whether it would be better for the leadership to ask voters "to approve or reject a single ballot issue that includes all proposed changes, or should each proposed change be voted on separately." By a large margin of 82% vs. 14%, the public prefers having the opportunity to vote on each change separately rather than as a comprehensive package.

## Change Constitution on Finance Issues



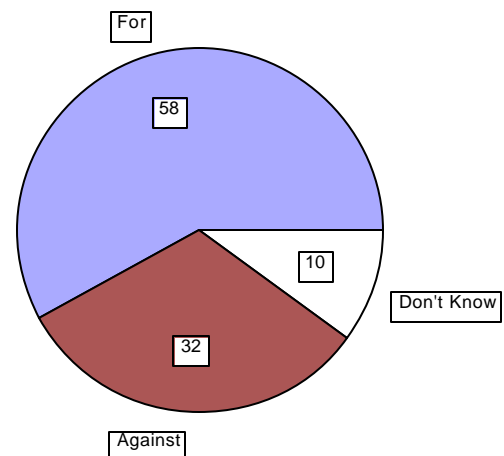
Regardless of how the data are cut, all groups oppose packaging reforms and want the opportunity to vote on each idea separately. There were no statistically significant differences based on party, gender, region, age or income.

## Trust Fund for Open Space

Open space advocates have been working to create a new state trust fund to protect open space, wildlife habitat, river corridors and wetlands, and to preserve land in agricultural use. *Mind of Colorado* respondents were asked if they would vote for or against a proposal for a \$75 million fund financed by an increase in the state sales tax, costing approximately 10 cents on every \$100 of purchases. Statewide, 58% indicated they would vote for a proposal while 32% said they would oppose it.

## \$75 million Trust Fund for Open Space

If on ballot, how would you vote?



Among Republicans, equal numbers would vote for (46%) and against (46%) the proposal. Supporters far outnumber opponents among Democrats (72% to 19%) and Independents (62% to 25%). Differences by region are also significant with support much higher in the Denver metro area than it is elsewhere in the state. In all regions, however, there are more supporters than opponents of the measure. In the more rural areas of the state, there are an especially large number of undecideds. Support is also higher in the two lower income groupings than it is for the two higher income groups (>\$55,000).

Affordable housing advocates have also been working to create a state trust fund. A leadership group on growth issues convened by the Wirth Chair on Sustainable Development suggested that open space and affordable housing advocates join forces.<sup>3</sup> *The Mind of Colorado* sought to determine whether adding affordable housing to an open space proposal would increase or decrease potential voter support. Fifty-five percent (55%) indicated they would be more willing to support creation of a state trust fund, if in addition to open space preservation, a portion of the fund were set aside to support affordable housing for low and moderate income people. One-third of respondents (33%) said they would be less willing to support the trust fund.

Among supporters of the potential open space trust fund, 26% said the addition of affordable housing would decrease their interest in the proposal. Among opponents of the fund, 36% said they would view the addition of affordable housing favorably. Adding affordable housing to the trust fund as an allowable use appears as if it might increase the likelihood of the proposal obtaining the electorate's support.

---

<sup>3</sup>*Colorado: The Problems, Challenges and Opportunities Concerning Growth*, Summary Report of The Plenary Leadership Group and Task Forces, Convened by The University of Colorado at Denver's Wirth Chair. December, 2002.

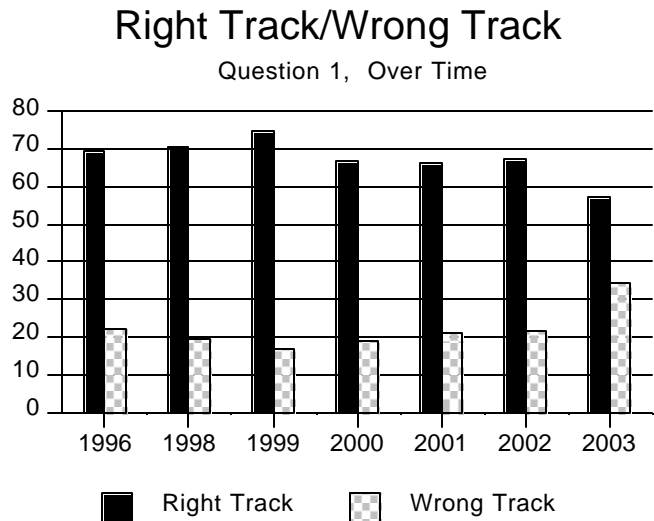


## PART II INDICATORS OF COMMUNITY WELL BEING

### General Satisfaction

A majority (57%) think that the state is generally going in the right direction. Thirty-four percent (34%) said it is going in the wrong direction. Respondents are less likely to think that things are on the right track than they were in the past three years, when two-thirds said the state is going in the right direction and about one-fifth said that it is going in the wrong direction.

Consistent with last year's results, Republicans (72%) are much more likely than Unaffiliated voters (50%) or Democrats (46%) to be satisfied with the general state of affairs. Men continue to be more likely than women to think that things are on the right track: compare 63% with 55%. Persons living outside the Front Range are most likely (66%), and those living in Denver least likely (51%) to be satisfied.



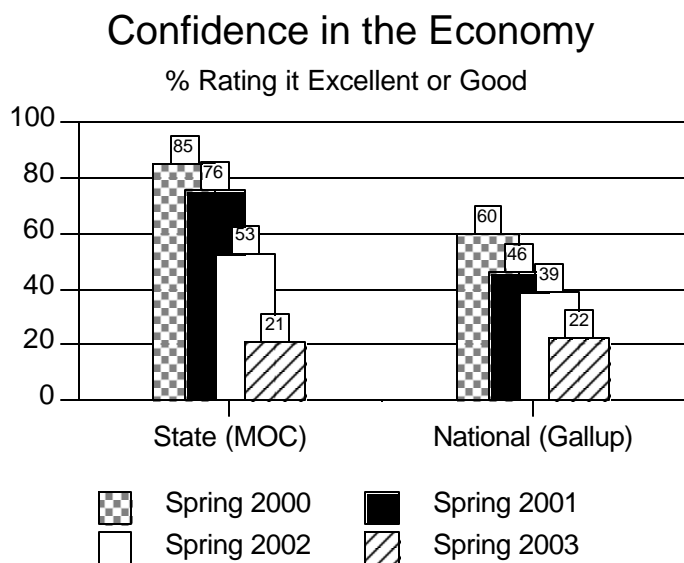
### Economic Climate

Coloradans express serious concerns about the economic conditions in the state. Only 21% rate the state's economy as either excellent (1%) or good (20%). Fully 53% say that economic conditions in Colorado are only fair, while 25% rate the economy as poor. This change in the public's views reflects the worsening recession in the state.

The change over time in Coloradans' assessment of economic performance is dramatic. In 2003, the 21% rating economic conditions as excellent or good is less than one third of what it was just two years ago (76%).

The comparison with national data is also interesting.

Coloradans' rating of state economic performance is virtually identical to Americans' ratings of the U.S. economy. In prior years, however, the ratings in *the Mind of Colorado* were substantially higher than ratings on an identical question asked nationally by the Gallup organization.



There are substantial regional variations in the assessment of state economic conditions. Persons living in Denver were half as likely as those living in the suburbs or elsewhere along the Front Range to say that economic conditions in Colorado are excellent or good: compare 11% with 21%. Residents living in the rest of the state had the most positive view of the economy, with 31% giving it a good rating. This represents a major shift from past years. Last year there was no significant regional variation, and prior to that residents of the urbanized Front Range were consistently more positive about the economy than were residents of other parts of the state.

Republicans (32%) are twice as likely as Unaffiliated voters (16%) and Democrats (12%) to say that economic conditions in Colorado are excellent or good.

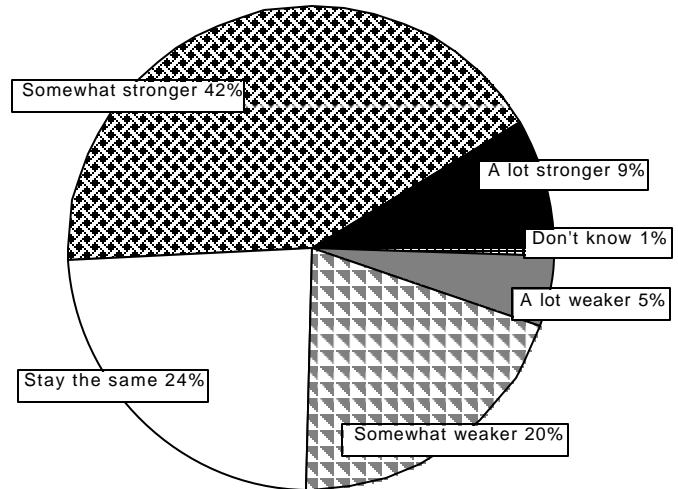
Coloradans are more optimistic than pessimistic about the future. Half expect that the state's economy will get either a lot stronger (9%) or somewhat stronger (42%) over the course of the next year. One-quarter (24%) think it will get either somewhat (20%) or a lot weaker (5%). Another quarter (24%) think it will stay the same. Given the current state of the economy, however, a case could be made for grouping this quarter with the pessimists. If this is done, the state is evenly divided between optimists and pessimists.

In any case, the number of optimists is lower this year than in the past. In the 2002 *Mind of Colorado* survey, 58% expected an economic rebound.

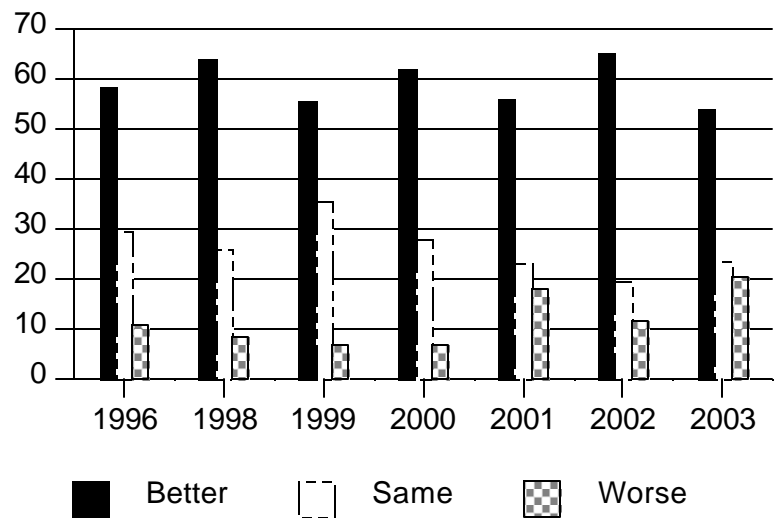
Men are considerably more optimistic than women about the future, with 56% of men compared to 46% of women thinking that the state's economy will get stronger over the course of the year. Substantially more Republicans (65%) than Independent voters (46%) or Democrats (35%) believe that the economy will improve.

Respondents' views of their personal financial prospects are similar to their forecast of the state's economic performance. Fifty-four percent (54%) expect that their family will be financially better off next year than they are now, while 21% think they will be financially worse off. About one-quarter think that their family's finances will stay the

## Expectations of Economy Over Course of Year



## Family Financial Forecast Question 10, Over Time



same. Coloradans are less optimistic about their financial futures than they were in 2002, when 65% expected that their family would be better off next year, and 12% that they would be worse off.

Men (58%) are more likely than women (50%), and Republicans (64%) are more likely than either Unaffiliated voters (49%) or Democrats (44%), to think that their family will be financially better off next year than they are now. Young persons age 18-34 are most optimistic (65%), and seniors age 65 and older are least optimistic (35%) that their family's financial position will improve during the course of the year.

The higher the income, the more confidence respondents have in their family's financial future. Sixty-three percent (63%) of persons with annual incomes greater than \$70,000, compared to 58% of those with incomes from \$55,000-\$70,000, and from 43%-47% of persons with lower annual incomes think that their family will be financially better off next year.

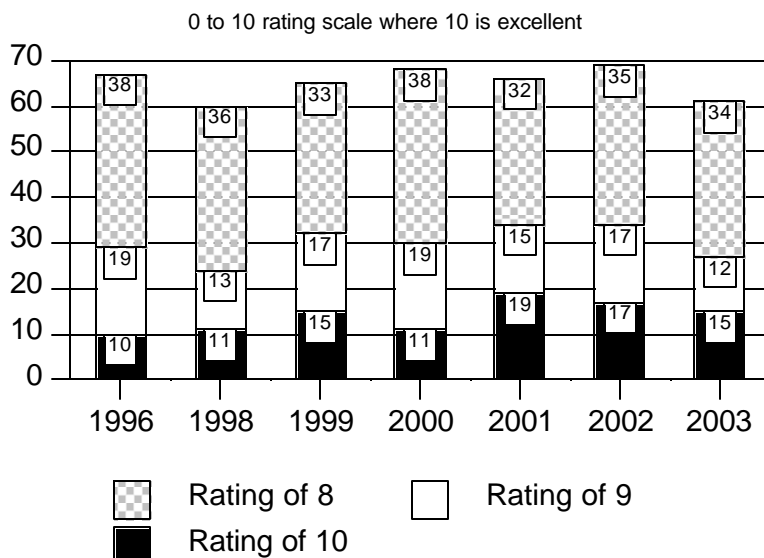
### Quality of Life

Despite their concerns about the economy, Coloradans continue to perceive that the quality of life available to them in the state is high. On a 10-point scale where zero means terrible and 10 means excellent, the average score is 7.7. This represents a slight drop from the 7.9 accorded quality of life in 2000, 2001 and 2002. Fifteen percent (15%) of respondents give the state a perfect 10; 12% give it a score of nine; and 34%, an eight.

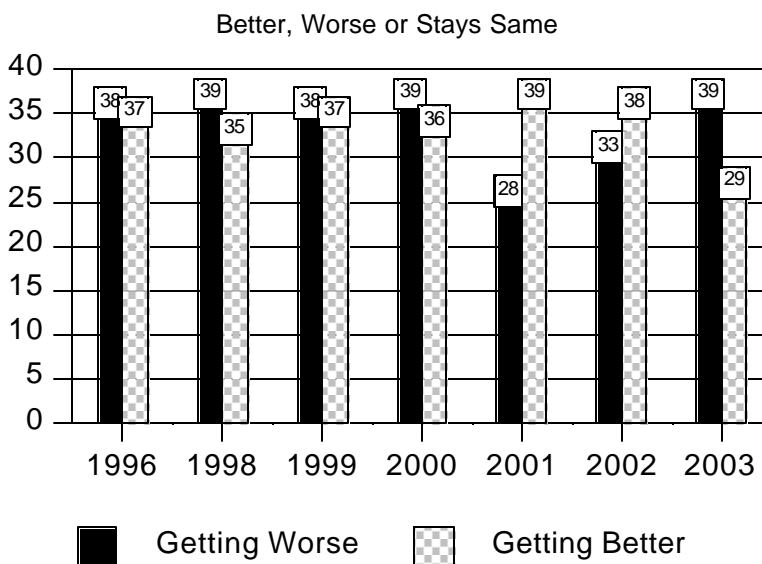
Quality of life ratings differ by political party affiliation and by income level. Persons with higher incomes and Republicans rate quality of life in Colorado higher than others.

There is some pessimism about the direction of change in the quality of life available in Colorado. Thirty-nine percent (39%) believe that, overall, quality of life is getting somewhat (34%) or much

### Quality of Life Rating



### Change in Quality of Life



(5%) worse. Only 29% think it is getting somewhat (26%) or much (3%) better. Thirty-four percent (34%) of respondents report no change. Last year, respondents were considerably more optimistic: then, 38% believed that quality of life was improving, while 33% believed it was declining. While pessimists have outnumbered optimists in past *Mind of Colorado* surveys (1996 through 2000), a ten-point gap to the negative is unprecedented.

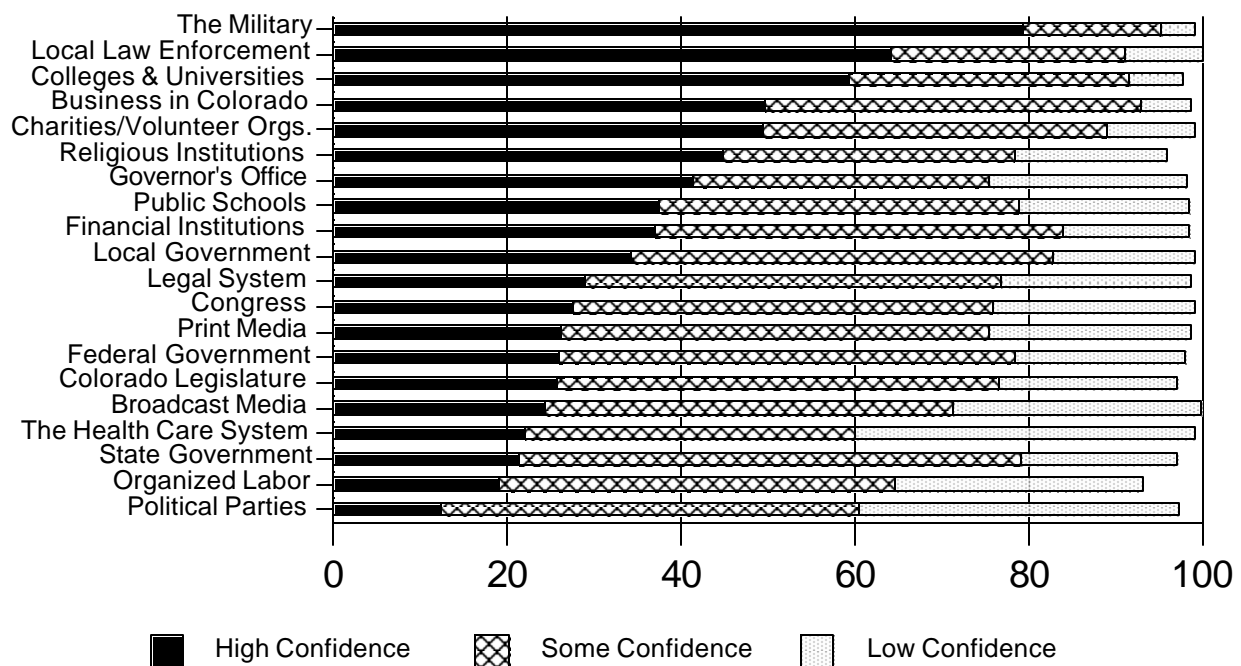
Republicans (37%) are more likely than either Democrats (27%) or Unaffiliated voters (18%) to think that quality of life is getting better, and less likely to think it is getting worse (32% of Republicans compared to 44% of Unaffiliateds and 45% of Democrats).

## Confidence and Trust

In a real sense, the heart of *The Mind of Colorado* is the confidence indexing it provides for key institutions in the Centennial State. Following the work of George Gallup for the National Civic League, institutions are rated by respondents on a five-point scale. For each institution, respondents indicated whether they had highest confidence, quite a lot, some, very little or no confidence. The results are analyzed by aggregating the percentage of respondents selecting the top two confidence categories to create a confidence index.

### Confidence in Institutions

#### Question 2



## **Most Trusted Institutions**

Only three institutions have the confidence of more than half of those surveyed. Consistent with 2002, the public has the most confidence in the military, with fully 79% reporting either highest or quite a lot of confidence. Local law enforcement is second, with a confidence rating of 64%.

Colleges and universities rank third, with the confidence of 59% of those surveyed.

## **Least Trusted Institutions**

Political parties have had the lowest confidence ratings of all the tracked institutions since 1996, and the pattern continues in 2003. Only 12% of respondents have confidence in political parties. Organized labor also fares poorly, with fewer than one-in-five respondents (19%) reporting confidence in this institution. In previous years, respondents had very little confidence in health insurance organizations; last year, they had the confidence of only 14%. In 2003, the question was broadened and respondents were asked about “The Healthcare System.” While respondents express slightly more confidence in the healthcare system than in health insurance organizations, confidence remains low, with only 22% reporting high confidence. Thirty-nine percent (39%) have little or no confidence. Similar to 2002, this is the highest non-confidence vote of any institution.

## **Change Over Time**

For half of the institutions examined (10), confidence is lower than it was in 2002. Six institutions have higher confidence ratings in 2003 than in 2002, while four are unchanged.<sup>4</sup>

The greatest increases in confidence were realized by the military and local law enforcement. The military’s score is six percentage points higher than last year and nearly 23 points higher than in 2001. This undoubtedly reflects support for the U.S. actions in Iraq as well as continued support for the war against terrorism. Local law enforcement also gained six points over last year, probably for many of the same reasons. Other institutions showing increases in confidence over 2002 gained three points or fewer.

---

<sup>4</sup> One of the institutions showing a large gain in confidence is “the healthcare system.” Table1 shows a 7.5 percentage point gain. Given the wording – and focus – of the question was changed in 2003, this gain may reflect the change in wording rather than a change in confidence.

| <b>Table 1: CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS OVER TIME</b> |              |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |                            |
|--|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------|
|  | <b>1994*</b> | <b>1995</b> | <b>1996</b> | <b>1998</b> | <b>1999</b> | <b>2000</b> | <b>2001</b> | <b>2002</b> | <b>2003</b> | <b>Change in last year</b> |
| A. Religious Institutions                            | 39           | 49.5        | 51.9        | 49.6        | 45.9        | 54.2        | 51.1        | 41.9        | 44.7        | +                          |
| B. Local Government                                  | 23           | 24.1        | 27.6        | 30.3        | 31.0        | 33.2        | 38.2        | 34.8        | 34.1        | =                          |
| C. Charities/Volunteer Organizations***              | 34           | 43.8        | 55.3        | 54.2        | 55.0        | 58.8        | 57.8        | 56.5        | 49.3        | -                          |
| D. Public Schools                                    | 22           | 31.3        | 31.7        | 36.0        | 36.9        | 39.3        | 37.1        | 41.9        | 37.4        | -                          |
| E. Political Parties                                 | 9            | 9.3         | 7.8         | 9.0         | 9.7         | 10.2        | 10.9        | 13.4        | 12.4        | -                          |
| F. Broadcast Media (TV & Radio)                      | n/a          | 16.6        | 17.8        | 24.9        | 20.3        | 22.3        | 23.7        | 27.8        | 24.4        | -                          |
| G. Print Media (newspaper/magazines)                 | n/a          | 18.8        | 22.8        | 30.3        | 27.3        | 33.1        | 26.3        | 27.4        | 26.2        | -                          |
| H. The Colorado State Legislature                    | n/a          | 2.0         | 19.7        | 24.4        | 27.2        | 23.3        | 28.1        | 25.6        | 25.7        | =                          |
| I. State Government Agencies                         | 23           | 16.0        | 16.0        | 24.2        | 21.8        | 20.3        | 23.7        | 27.3        | 21.3        | -                          |
| J. The U.S. Congress                                 | n/a          | 12.5        | 15.1        | 17.4        | 12.0        | 15.3        | 20.2        | 26.7        | 27.5        | =                          |
| K. Federal Government Agencies                       | 12           | 12.1        | 12.5        | 16.9        | 13.5        | 14.2        | 17.4        | 23.9        | 26.0        | +                          |
| L. Local Law Enforcement**                           | 52           | 48.5        | 58.2        | 60.5        | 51.0        | 51.4        | 58.4        | 58.1        | 64.1        | +                          |
| M. The Legal System, including Courts                | n/a          | 2.9         | 16.7        | 26.7        | 22.4        | 33.5        | 26.7        | 33.2        | 28.8        | -                          |
| N. Financial Institutions                            | n/a          | n/a         | n/a         | n/a         | n/a         | n/a         | n/a         | 41.3        | 36.9        | -                          |
| O. Businesses in Colorado                            | n/a          | 34.9        | 63.6        | 63.2        | 65.1        | 65.0        | 61.4        | 54.1        | 49.5        | -                          |
| P. Organized Labor                                   | n/a          | 13.5        | 18.2        | 20.6        | 24.1        | 23.4        | 22.3        | 20.0        | 19.1        | =                          |
| Q. Colleges & Universities                           | n/a          | 53.5        | 55.6        | 65.2        | 66.8        | 72.5        | 66.4        | 65.9        | 59.2        | -                          |
| R. The Governor's Office                             | n/a          | n/a         | 33.6        | 29.5        | 33.9        | 32.5        | 36.6        | 38.4        | 41.3        | +                          |
| S. The Military                                      | n/a          | 41.6        | 39.9        | 51.1        | 51.0        | 54.4        | 56.5        | 73.0        | 79.1        | +                          |
| T. The Healthcare System ****                        | n/a          | n/a         | n/a         | n/a         | n/a         | 10.3        | 11.0        | 13.6        | 22.1        | +                          |

\*Uses valid percentages which do not include the number of people who responded "Don't Know."  
 \*\* Results shown for 1999 and earlier are based on a slightly different question that was included in a confidence assessment of various professions.  
 \*\*\*In 2003, "Charities/Volunteer Organizations" was modified slightly to "Non-Profits Including Charities/Volunteer Organizations."  
 \*\*\*\*In 2003, respondents were asked about "The Healthcare System"; in 2000-2002, they rated "Health Insurance Organizations."

The biggest loss in confidence was registered for non-profits including charities and volunteer organizations. Their rating was down seven percentage points from 2002.<sup>5</sup> Colleges and universities were down nearly seven points, falling to their lowest score since 1998. State government agencies lost six percentage points, reversing a recent upward trend. All of these drops might reflect public concerns about the organizations' ability to perform given the state's budget crisis and weak economy.

### Differences Among Sub-Groups

Men and women differ in their confidence in several institutions. Women have more confidence in non-profits including charities and volunteer organizations. Men have more confidence in political parties and federal

<sup>5</sup>This item was changed slightly from previous years, when asked as charities/volunteer organizations. Since the downward trend in confidence in charities and volunteer organizations began in 2001, there is no reason to believe that this year's drop in confidence was an artifact of the change in wording.

government agencies, although their levels of trust in these institutions are low (15% and 29%, respectively).

There are significant differences in confidence based on political affiliation for 14 of the 20 institutions. More often, Republicans indicate a higher level of confidence, especially with respect to government entities. Republicans have higher levels of confidence than Democrats and Independent voters in the following: Colorado State Legislature, local law enforcement, local government, the Governor's office, the U.S. Congress, federal government agencies, the military, businesses in Colorado, religious institutions and the healthcare system. Twice as many Republicans as Democrats and Independents have high confidence in the Governor's office (61% of Republicans versus 26% of Democrats and 27% of Independents) and in the Colorado State Legislature (36% of Republicans versus 17% of Democrats and 18% of Independents). While a majority of all three groups have high confidence in the military, fully 92% of Republicans compared to 69% of Democrats and 70% of Unaffiliated voters report this level of confidence. Democrats have higher confidence than Republicans or Independent voters in public schools, print media, organized labor, and colleges and universities.

As age increases, confidence in local law enforcement, the Governor's office and the military increases. Only half of those in the youngest age category (18 to 34 years) have highest confidence in local law enforcement, compared to 64% of persons age 35-49, 66% of those age 50-64, and 76% of seniors age 65 and older. The pattern is reversed for non-profits including charities and volunteer organizations, with 62% of persons in the youngest age group compared to fewer than half of older respondents expressing high confidence.

Persons living in Denver have the least confidence in local law enforcement and in the military, while persons living along the Front Range but outside the Denver metro area have the most confidence. Metro area residents not including Denver have less confidence in political parties than those living elsewhere in the state.

There are a number of differences based on income. Persons in the two lower income categories (annual income below \$40,000) have less confidence in local law enforcement and more confidence in organized labor than persons with higher annual incomes. Persons in the highest income categories (annual income above \$55,000) have higher levels of confidence in financial institutions and in the Governor's office than others. Persons with incomes of more than \$70,000 per year have the most confidence, and those earning less than \$25,000 per year have the least confidence, in colleges and universities: compare 68% with 43%.

## Public Officials' Performance

In addition to general questions regarding confidence, *The Mind of Colorado* seeks the views of registered voters on the job performance of some of our elected officials. President Bush receives the highest approval rating of the elected officials whose performance was assessed in this year's survey. Using a five-point scale where one indicates poor and five indicates excellent, 56% give the President either a four or a five.

Slightly fewer than one in four (24%) indicate dissatisfaction with his performance. Bush' rating has dropped since 2002, when 62% rated his performance a four or a five.

Almost half (49%) give Governor Bill Owens a high approval rating, up slightly from 47% in 2002. One-quarter (25%) are dissatisfied with his performance.

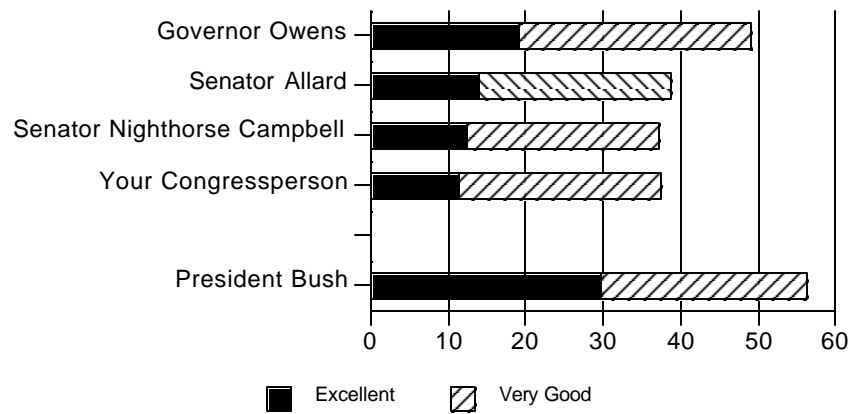
Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell has a 37% approval rating, up slightly from 35% last year. Senator Allard's performance rating has improved in 2003: 39% now give him a rating of four or five, up from last year's 32%.

Looking at Colorado's Congressional delegation, 38% of respondents give a positive job performance rating to their representative, an increase of four percentage points from the 34% rating in 2002. Mark Udall gets the highest approval rating, with 45% rating his performance excellent or good. This represents a 12 percentage point increase over his 2002 rating. Scott McInnis also has a high approval rating: 44%, up five percentage points from last year. The approval ratings for the other representatives are: 38% for Tom Tancredo, 37% for Joel Hefley, 36% for Diana DeGette, 33% for Bob Beauprez and 31% for Marilyn Musgrave.<sup>6</sup>

Since most of the elected officials that were evaluated are Republicans, it is not surprising that Republicans rate job performance substantially higher than either Democrats or Unaffiliated voters. Republicans are more than twice as likely to rate the President's, Governor's and Senator Allard's performance a 4 or a 5 than others. In

### Public Officials' Job Performance Rating

Questions 3 through 7



<sup>6</sup>Several representatives may have lower performance ratings because a relatively large proportion of respondents in their congressional district don't know how to rate their performance. In particular, one in five (20%) say they can't rate the performance of Musgrave or Hefley, while 17% are unable to rate DeGette's or Beauprez' performance.



the case of Senator Allard, nearly three times as many Republicans (59%) as Democrats (21%) like his performance.

Opinions also vary by region. Both the President's and Senator Allard's performance ratings are considerably lower in Denver than they are elsewhere in the state. Senator Campbell's performance is also rated more poorly in Denver than in the rest of Colorado, but the difference by region is less marked. There are no substantively important differences between men and women or by age in performance ratings of elected officials.

## Summary and Conclusions

### Community Well-Being

This year's *Mind of Colorado* paints a sobering picture. The statistics on most indicators of community well-being have moved in a negative direction. The public has less confidence in the state's economy and in our economic future. Trust in many of our societal institutions has dropped; it has increased in only a few. Quality of life ratings, which have been extraordinarily stable over time, are down this year and many Coloradans are concerned about the direction of change.

### Public Policy

The economy and the forces of nature have brought fiscal and water policy issues to the top of the state's agenda. Both issues are exceedingly complex and difficult and force the public and its leaders to reexamine their values and attitudes in the light of changing circumstances.

Despite the spring rains, most Coloradans remain concerned about the adequacy of water supplies in their local area. In framing water policy, they want the state to focus on preventing depletion of underground aquifers, maintaining water for agriculture and leaving enough water in streams to protect wildlife habitats. Water in streams for recreation and tourism, water for growth and development and irrigation of traditional landscapes are valued much less.

In developing strategies, most Coloradans would prefer an emphasis on water efficiency and conservation. There is support, however, for a balanced strategy as a majority say they would vote for a state bond issue to finance new water development projects. Most would prefer that state assistance be contingent on local water authorities putting in place efficiency and conservation programs. In times of serious drought, there is strong support for the state government assuming a greater role in allocating water to ensure that basic needs are met. Coloradans want greater attention to be paid to water issues in shaping growth and development policies. New developments should only be approved if they can demonstrate that they have a water supply that can be sustained indefinitely, even in drought years, and can be used without harming neighboring supplies. Opinion is

evenly divided on whether trans-basin water diversions should be encouraged or discouraged. If they occur, authorities that get the water should compensate for any economic or environmental harm they cause.

Most Coloradans perceive that the state's budget deficit is a problem and they anticipate impacts on the quality and quantity of governmental services. Spending cuts are preferred over revenue increases as the primary strategy for dealing with the deficit. But Coloradans appear willing to support a temporary tax increase as part of a strategy for dealing with the budget.

Some state leaders have noted that a number of constitutional provisions put in place through voter initiatives have made dealing with the state's budget a difficult challenge. Coloradans remain supportive of key concepts embedded in the TABOR amendment, particularly the notion that no tax rates should be increased without a vote of the people. They appear willing to make some modifications to TABOR's provisions: easing tax and spending limits to make it easier to establish a rainy day fund and to allow restoration of cuts made during recessions. *Mind of Colorado* respondents are less willing to consider changes to Amendment 23, preferring to keep its mandate to earmark funds and to increase state spending on education.

Open space acquisition and preservation have always ranked high on voter surveys and *The Mind of Colorado* shows that there is a willingness to support a tax increase for an open space trust fund. Somewhat surprisingly, the survey also shows support may increase if an open space initiative were joined with an effort to secure funds for affordable housing.

### **A Note on Polling and Public Opinion**

*The Mind of Colorado* is predicated on the view that the public's opinion is a valuable input to assessing community well being and shaping public policy. Ultimately, policies must be shaped in ways that are responsive to the public's values and to their views regarding the community, its problems, the role of government, and the acceptability of various solutions.

There is not and indeed, there should not be an immediate or direct translation from poll to policy. Many of the opinions expressed by the public in response to opinion polls are neither well formed nor informed. People are asked for an opinion and they render one, even though prior to the survey, some may have given little thought to the question. It is hard to distinguish well thought out judgements from more hastily formed, and possibly easily changed opinions. It is also hard to determine, without more extensive questioning, the intensity of opinions -- which judgements will drive a person to select a candidate, support a movement or take to the streets.

Despite these limitations, systematic, scientific, objective surveys provide useful information to community leaders. Elected officials certainly hear from the public in many ways. Although sanctioned by our political

process, money often buys influence in the form of direct dialogue between the wealthy and powerful and political leaders or access for lobbyists. Leaders also hear from activists who have a strong interest in and/or care intensely about a subject. Surveys introduce into the debate the views of citizens that don't have the time, passion, or money to communicate directly with decision makers.

Ultimately the test of democracy is the accountability of leaders to the public. The state's leaders in government, academia, the media, business, and the non-profit sector need to understand the public's opinions. But they don't need to follow that opinion blindly. Rather, opinion polls offer a starting point. Leaders need to structure an ongoing dialogue with the public on the issues, in which they both listen and offer guidance. Because they have access to greater information and analysis, they need to have the courage to inform and, at times, frame public opinion. Active dialogue will allow the public, including those who actively engage in deliberations as well as those who more passively absorb media accounts, to refine their thoughts, take a stand and make responsible public judgements.<sup>7</sup>

*The Mind of Colorado* is privileged to provide one more link between leaders and the public and to help frame the dialogue on important issues facing the state.

## APPENDIX A: Survey Instrument with Frequencies

Hello, my name is (first name). I am working with the University of Colorado at Denver. You have been selected to participate in our ninth annual Mind of Colorado survey on public confidence and public policy. Your responses will be kept confidential. Could you take a few minutes and assist in this survey?

1. Do you think things in our state are generally going in the right direction or are they off on the wrong track?

|             |             |                      |
|-------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Right Track | Wrong Track | Don't Know + Missing |
| 57.2%       | 34.2%       | 8.6%                 |

2. I will now read you a list of Institutions. Please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one -- Do you have highest confidence, quite a lot, some, very little or no confidence.

| ROTATE LIST<br>INSTITUTIONS:                              | Highest<br>1 | Quite a<br>lot<br>2 | Some<br>3 | Very<br>Little<br>4 | None<br>5 | DK + M<br>9 |
|---|--------------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|-------------|
| A. Religious Institutions                                 | 13.7%        | 31.0%               | 33.5%     | 12.2%               | 5.2%      | 4.3%        |
| B. Local Government                                       | 4.0%         | 30.0%               | 48.6%     | 12.4%               | 4.0%      | 0.9%        |
| C. Non profits such as Charity/Volunteer<br>Organizations | 9.6%         | 39.7%               | 39.6%     | 7.3%                | 3.0%      | 0.9%        |
| D. Public Schools   | 5.9%         | 31.5%               | 41.3%     | 16.2%               | 3.5%      | 1.6%        |
| E. Political Parties                                      | 3.0%         | 9.4%                | 47.9%     | 29.9%               | 7.0%      | 2.8%        |
| F. Broadcast Media (TV & Radio)                           | 4.8%         | 19.5%               | 46.7%     | 22.9%               | 5.7%      | 0.4%        |
| G. Print Media (newspaper/magazines)                      | 3.5%         | 22.7%               | 49.1%     | 18.7%               | 4.6%      | 1.3%        |
| H. The Colorado State Legislature                         | 3.4%         | 22.3%               | 50.7%     | 17.5%               | 3.0%      | 3.1%        |
| I. State Government Agencies                              | 3.1%         | 18.2%               | 57.7%     | 15.1%               | 2.8%      | 3.1%        |
| J. The U.S. Congress                                      | 5.1%         | 22.3%               | 48.2%     | 19.4%               | 3.9%      | 1.0%        |
| K. Federal Government Agencies                            | 3.1%         | 22.9%               | 52.4%     | 17.0%               | 2.6%      | 2.2%        |

<sup>7</sup>These are the last two stages of a seven stage process of public opinion formation. Daniel Yankelovich, "How Public Opinion Really Works," Fortune 1992.

|  |       |       |       |       |      |      |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|
| L. Local Law Enforcement, such as police | 17.1% | 47.0% | 26.9% | 7.1%  | 1.7% | 0.1% |
| M. The Legal System, including Courts    | 5.7%  | 23.1% | 47.9% | 16.2% | 5.7% | 1.5% |
| N Financial Institutions                 | 5.9%  | 31.0% | 47.0% | 11.3% | 3.0% | 1.8% |
| O. Businesses in Colorado                | 5.7%  | 43.9% | 43.3% | 4.6%  | 1.2% | 1.3% |
| P. Organized Labor                       | 3.5%  | 15.6% | 45.5% | 21.1% | 7.3% | 7.0% |
| Q. Colleges & Universities               | 11.8% | 47.4% | 32.3% | 4.8%  | 1.3% | 2.3% |
| R. The Governor's Office                 | 10.4% | 31.0% | 33.9% | 15.9% | 7.0% | 1.9% |
| S. The Military                          | 37.7% | 41.5% | 16.0% | 3.0%  | 1.1% | 0.8% |
| T. The Health System                     | 4.2%  | 17.9% | 37.8% | 29.7% | 9.4% | 1.0% |

| On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is "poor" and 5 is "excellent," how do you rate the job performance of: |       |       |       |           |       |       |      |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|------|
|  | Poor  |       |       | Excellent |       | DK+M  | Mean |
|  | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4         | 5     | 9     |      |
| 3. President Bush  | 11.8% | 12.2% | 19.0% | 26.6%     | 29.7% | 0.5%  | 3.5  |
| 4. Governor Bill Owens   | 9.6%  | 15.5% | 24.6% | 29.9%     | 19.1% | 1.3%  | 3.34 |
| 5. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell   | 8.6%  | 15.7% | 29.2% | 24.8%     | 12.5% | 9.2%  | 3.19 |
| 6. Senator Wayne Allard  | 11.0% | 15.1% | 28.8% | 24.6%     | 14.1% | 6.3%  | 3.17 |
| 7. Your representative in Congress   | 4.2%  | 12.1% | 31.0% | 26.2%     | 11.3% | 15.2% | 3.33 |

8. How would you rate economic conditions in the State today: excellent, good, only fair or poor?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Excellent            | 1.3%  |
| 2 | Good                 | 20.1% |
| 3 | Fair                 | 53.3% |
| 4 | Poor                 | 24.9% |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | .4%   |

9. Do you expect the state's economy to get a lot stronger, get somewhat stronger, stay the same, get somewhat weaker, or get a lot weaker over the course of the year?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | A lot Stronger       | 8.9%  |
| 2 | Somewhat Stronger    | 41.7% |
| 3 | Stay the same        | 24.1% |
| 4 | Somewhat weaker      | 19.9% |
| 5 | A lot weaker         | 4.7%  |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | .6%   |

10. At this time next year, do you expect that your family will be financially better off than it is now or will it be worse off?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Better               | 53.8% |
| 2 | Worse                | 20.5% |
| 3 | Same                 | 23.7% |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 2.0%  |

11. Please rate the quality of life for you in Colorado. Use a scale of 0 to 10, when 0 means “terrible” and 10 means “excellent.”

| Terrible |     |     |     |      |      |      |       |       |       |       | Excellent |      | DK + M |  |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|------|--------|--|
| 0        | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7     | 8     | 9     | 10    | 99        | Mean |        |  |
| .1%      | .4% | .5% | .5% | 1.7% | 7.5% | 8.3% | 19.2% | 34.2% | 12.1% | 15.1% | .1%       | 7.67 |        |  |

12. Overall, would you say that the quality of life here in Colorado is getting:

(READ RESPONSES)

|   |                        |       |
|---|------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Much Better            | 3.4%  |
| 2 | Somewhat better        | 25.7% |
| 3 | Staying the same       | 30.7% |
| 4 | Getting somewhat worse | 34.1% |
| 5 | Getting much worse     | 5.1%  |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing   | 1.1%  |

Now I am going to ask you about some important issues facing the state.

13. The state of Colorado is facing a budget deficit. How much of a problem do you think this is

(READ RESPONSES)

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | A major problem      | 52.9% |
| 2 | A moderate problem   | 36.2% |
| 3 | A minor problem or   | 9.2%  |
| 4 | Not a problem        | .9%   |
| 5 | Don't Know + Missing | .8%   |

14. The state is required to balance its budget. To do this lawmakers are cutting over 900 million dollars or about 15% of the general fund budget this year. Do you think these cuts will have a major, moderate, minor or no impact on the level and quality of services provided by the state?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Major impact         | 43.5% |
| 2 | Moderate impact      | 41.3% |
| 3 | Minor impact         | 12.1% |
| 4 | No impact            | 1.6%  |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 1.4%  |

15. Next year's budget shortfall is projected to be larger than this year's. This would mean spending cuts totaling 30% over two years unless taxes or fees are raised. Would you prefer that the state balance next year's budget primarily by cutting spending or primarily by increasing taxes and fees.

|   |                                   |       |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Cutting spending                  | 54.4% |
| 2 | Increasing taxes                  | 32.4% |
| 3 | Both                              | 10.2% |
| 4 | Neither, shouldn't balance budget | .8%   |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing              | 2.1%  |

16. If it were on November's ballot, would you vote for or against temporarily increasing the state's sales and income tax rates to the same levels they were in 1999 in order to prevent some cuts in services?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | For                  | 59.5% |
| 2 | Against              | 33.0% |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 7.5%  |

17. Some people think it is a good idea to limit the amount of money that state can collect and spend because they want low taxes and small government. Others think that limiting revenues and spending is a bad idea because it reduces the state's flexibility to provide needed services. Do you think limiting the state's revenues and spending is a good idea or bad idea?

|   |           |       |
|---|-----------|-------|
| 1 | Good idea | 49.8% |
|---|-----------|-------|

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 2 | Bad idea             | 41.5% |
| 8 | Other                | 2.2%  |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 6.6%  |

18. Who should have the authority to increase taxes: **(READ RESPONSES)**

|   |                             |       |
|---|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1 | The Colorado legislature or | 21.9% |
| 2 | Voters in an election?      | 72.9% |
| 3 | Both                        | 3.5%  |
| 4 | Neither                     | .1%   |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing        | 1.4%  |

19. Some people think earmarking of taxes, designating them for support of a specific program or purpose is a good idea because it allows voters to establish budget priorities. Others think earmarking is bad because it limits ability of elected representatives to respond to changing circumstances. In your view is earmarking of taxes a good or a bad idea?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Good idea            | 56.4% |
| 2 | Bad idea             | 36.1% |
| 3 | It depends           | 1.7%  |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 7.6%  |

20. As a result of the current fiscal situation, voters may be asked to consider changes to some of the constitutional amendments that reduce the state's fiscal choices. One of these is TABOR, which places a limit on revenues. Any money collected beyond the limit must be refunded to taxpayers. Should TABOR be modified to allow the state to keep more revenues collected in years when the economy is strong so long as the money goes into a rainy day fund that only can be spent in years when a weak economy causes revenue shortfalls.

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Yes                  | 61.1% |
| 2 | No                   | 34.5% |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 4.4%  |

21. TABOR limits how much state spending can increase from one year to the next. This means it might take several years to restore services cut during a recession even though an improved economy generates enough revenue to restore services more quickly. Should TABOR spending limits be modified to make it easier for the legislature to restore services to pre-recession levels?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Yes                  | 66.4% |
| 2 | No                   | 26.1% |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 7.5%  |

23. Amendment 23 requires annual increases in funding for K-12 education. When revenues drop due to recession, this requirement forces large cuts to other parts of the state's budget. Should Amendment 23 be modified to give the Legislature flexibility in times of recession to cut education along with other programs, or would you prefer to keep Amendment 23 as it is?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Modify               | 26.9% |
| 2 | Keep                 | 68.6% |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 4.4%  |

24. Several state leaders have proposed a comprehensive review of all the constitutional provisions affecting state finances. Should they ask voters to approve or reject a single ballot issue that includes all proposed changes or should each proposed change be voted on separately?

|   |                                 |       |
|---|---------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | One comprehensive ballot issue  | 13.7% |
| 2 | Each change voted on separately | 81.6% |
| 3 | Other                           | .9%   |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing            | 3.8%  |

25. The next questions deal with water. Would you say your area has access to enough water or is it facing a minor, moderate or major water shortfall?

|   |                    |       |
|---|--------------------|-------|
| 1 | Enough water       | 8.1%  |
| 2 | Minor shortfall    | 23.3% |
| 3 | Moderate shortfall | 36.3% |

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 4 | Major shortfall      | 30.4% |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 1.8%  |

26. In water policy, a distinction is made between municipal water supplies – that is, the water going to homes and businesses – and agricultural water supplies. Thinking about the state's total water use, about how much would you say is used for agriculture? READ RESPONSES

|   |                             |       |
|---|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Less than one quarter       | 13.1% |
| 2 | From a quarter to half      | 33.4% |
| 3 | From half to three-quarters | 26.9% |
| 4 | More than three-quarters    | 12.0% |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing        | 14.6% |

| 27. In choosing the best strategy to meet the state's water needs, many values need to be considered. Using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is very important, please rate each of the following values |               |      |       |       |       |                |       |       |       |       |       |      |      |
|--|---------------|------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|
|  | Not important |      |       |       |       | Very Important |       |       |       |       | DK    | Mean |      |
|  | 0             | 1    | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5              | 6     | 7     | 8     | 9     | 10    | 99   |      |
| a. Protecting water for agriculture and local economies based on farming   | .1%           | .3%  | .7%   | .3%   | 1.6%  | 8.9%           | 11.2% | 16.7% | 22.7% | 11.3% | 25.3% | .9%  | 7.81 |
| b. Leaving enough water in streams and rivers to preserve wildlife habitat.  | .5%           | .5%  | .9%   | .8%   | 1.9%  | 7.8%           | 11.6% | 14.9% | 21.7% | 9.7%  | 28.4% | 1.2% | 7.79 |
| c. Leaving enough water in streams and rivers to protect recreation and local economies based on tourism.  | 1.3%          | 1.3% | 1.7%  | 4.2%  | 7.9%  | 22.3%          | 14.7% | 14.9% | 16.7% | 3.6%  | 10.0% | 1.2% | 6.27 |
| d. Ensuring sufficient water supplies for growth and development.  | 3.1%          | 1.5% | 5.8%  | 7.1%  | 9.4%  | 21.3%          | 13.1% | 10.5% | 13.1% | 4.3%  | 9.8%  | 1.0% | 5.78 |
| e. Ensuring enough water to maintain traditional lawns and landscaping.  | 5.0%          | 7.7% | 10.8% | 12.2% | 14.0% | 21.7%          | 9.2%  | 6.9%  | 6.9%  | 1.2%  | 3.9%  | .6%  | 4.41 |
| f. Preventing underground water from being used up.  | .1%           | .3%  | .9%   | .8%   | 2.0%  | 11.4%          | 8.7%  | 12.8% | 20.6% | 10.9% | 29.2% | 2.1% | 7.84 |

28. Which of the following four water strategies should be the state's highest priority.

|   |   |       |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | Build new dams and reservoirs to capture and store snowmelt     | 27.6% |
| 2 | Expand existing dams and reservoirs                             | 21.1% |
| 3 | Increase water use efficiency and conservation                  | 45.5% |
| 4 | Transfer water from agriculture to business and residential use | 2.7%  |
| 8 | Other   | 1.5%  |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing  | 1.6%  |

29. In times of serious drought, should the state have the authority to override local water policies and to reallocate water among communities if necessary to ensure that everyone's basic needs for water are met?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Yes                  | 68.6% |
| 2 | No                   | 27.6% |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 3.8%  |

30. Would you vote for or against a ballot issue giving the state authority to borrow 10 billion dollars to finance water supply and development projects if the debt would be repaid by the sale of the water?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | For                  | 59.4% |
| 2 | Against              | 28.8% |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 11.9% |

31. If the state does set up a financial assistance program for water development, should local authorities be required to implement water efficiency and conservation measures before they can apply for state help to build new water supply and storage facilities?

|   |     |       |
|---|-----|-------|
| 1 | Yes | 85.2% |
|---|-----|-------|

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 2 | No                   | 10.4% |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 4.5%  |

32. Under existing water law, local water authorities can buy water rights or develop new supplies from a source in a different part of the state. Some people say these trans-basin water transfers should be encouraged because they get water where it is needed most. Others say they should be discouraged because they do too much harm to the communities where water is taken from. Which is closer to your view?

|   |  |       |
|---|--|-------|
| 1 | Encourage Trans-basin water transfers  | 44.1% |
| 2 | Discourage trans-basin water transfers | 45.8% |
| 3 | Other                                  | 2.0%  |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing                   | 8.0%  |

33. Should local water authorities be required to pay compensation for economic or environmental damages that might result when they buy or develop water and transfer it from one area of the state to another?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Yes                  | 81.7% |
| 2 | No                   | 14.7% |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 3.6%  |

34. Should all new residential and commercial development be required to use water conservation measures such as xeriscape landscaping and water efficient appliances?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Yes                  | 88.3% |
| 2 | No                   | 9.2%  |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 2.5%  |

35. Should new developments be permitted only if they can prove they have access to a water supply that can be sustained indefinitely and is reliable during droughts and that use of the water will not hurt their neighbors' water supplies?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Yes                  | 87.9% |
| 2 | No                   | 8.7%  |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 3.3%  |

36. Should local water authorities set prices to encourage water conservation, by providing a basic needs amount to each household at a low price and then charging more per gallon for additional use?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | Yes                  | 81.4% |
| 2 | No                   | 14.4% |
| 3 | Other                | .4%   |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 3.7%  |

37. There may be an issue on the November ballot to create a statewide trust fund to protect open space, wildlife habitat, river corridors and wetlands and to preserve land in agricultural use. Would you vote for or against a proposal for a 75 million dollar fund, financed by an increase in the state sales tax, costing about 10 cents on every \$100 of purchases, not including food and prescription drugs?

|   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | For                  | 58.3% |
| 2 | Against              | 32.3% |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing | 9.4%  |

38. In general, would you be more or less willing to support creation of a state trust fund, if in addition to open space preservation, a portion of the fund were set aside to support affordable housing for low and moderate income people?

|   |   |       |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | More likely                               | 55.3% |
| 2 | Less likely                               | 32.6% |
| 3 | The same, it wouldn't change voter's view | 7.3%  |
| 9 | Don't Know + Missing                      | 4.8%  |

39. I have one last question. For statistical purposes only, would you say your total family income before taxes, during the last full year was:

|   |                           |       |
|---|---------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Less than 25,000 dollars  | 11.2% |
| 2 | Between 25,000 and 40,000 | 17.5% |
| 3 | Between 40,000 and 55,000 | 14.7% |
| 4 | Between 55,000 and 70,000 | 17.4% |



|    |                              |       |
|----|------------------------------|-------|
| 5. | Over 70,000.                 | 33.4% |
| 9  | Don't Know/Refused + Missing | 5.9%  |

That completes our survey. Thank you for your help. COMPLETE NOW FROM SAMPLE SHEET

|         |        |       |
|---------|--------|-------|
| Gender: | Male   | 46.8% |
|         | Female | 53.2% |

|                    |              |       |
|--------------------|--------------|-------|
| Party Affiliation: | Republican   | 42.9% |
|                    | Democrat     | 31.1% |
|                    | Unaffiliated | 26.0% |

|      |             |       |
|------|-------------|-------|
| Age: | 18 - 34     | 19.8% |
|      | 35 - 49     | 32.0% |
|      | 50 - 64     | 33.0% |
|      | 65 and over | 15.2% |

|             |   |       |
|-------------|---|-------|
| Cong. Dist: | 1 | 12.1% |
|             | 2 | 11.6% |
|             | 3 | 16.0% |
|             | 4 | 15.1% |
|             | 5 | 11.7% |
|             | 6 | 17.4% |
|             | 7 | 16.2% |

|         |                   |       |
|---------|-------------------|-------|
| Region: | Denver            | 11.2% |
|         | Other Metro       | 46.6% |
|         | Other Front Range | 26.1% |
|         | Rest of State     | 16.2% |

**Wells Fargo Public Opinion Research Program  
Institute for Public Policy  
Graduate School of Public Affairs  
University of Colorado at Denver  
1445 Market Street, Denver, 80202  
(303) 820-5628(p) (303) 534-8774  
tmccoy@carbon.cudenver.edu**

The Program links broad understanding of governance and public issues found in GSPA with specialized skills and technology needed in public opinion research analysis. The Program is an important resource for the public, private and non-profit sectors capable of responding to their information needs in a timely fashion. Staff specializes in all aspects of survey research and can assist with research design, sample selection, questionnaire development, survey administration via phone or mail, data analysis, and, strategy development.

**Staff**

Peggy L. Cuciti, Ph.D.  
Director

Christine V. Badar, M.A.  
Research Associate

Laura Appelbaum, Ph.D.  
Statistical Director

Tom McCoy, M.A.  
Program Coordinator

**Special Thanks to:**

Wells Fargo Bank for their continued support of the Wells Fargo Public Opinion Research Program;

Marshall Kaplan, Executive Director of the Institute for Public Policy and Kathleen Beatty, Dean of the Graduate School of Public Affairs for their encouragement and support;

Georgia Lesh-Laurie, our retiring Chancellor for her financial and moral support over the years;

Members of the Advisory Board including Marshall Kaplan, Kathleen Beatty, Georgia Lesh-Laurie, Pat Cortez, Leonard Dinegar, Ellen Fisher, Chris Gates, Ken Gordon, Russ George, Larry Kallenberger, Keith King, Mindy Klowden, Bob Nero, Tom Norton, Ken Bueche, David Miller, John Baron, Bill Vidal, Rutt Bridges and Ron Teck for their help in survey development;

Our phoners at the University, Bernard McIntyre, Vivian Lasky, Ken Zeigler, Zhibek Omarova, Jo Arney, Jeremy Arney and to Voter Consumer Research, for conducting interviews