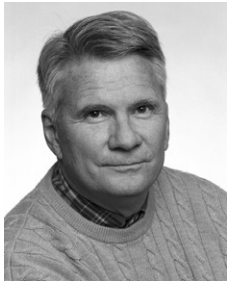


# the Variable

CIRULI ASSOCIATES  
MAY 2005

## Hickenlooper has Highest Favorable to Unfavorable Rating Along Front Range



Analysis by  
Floyd Ciruli

Front Range voters, which comprise about 80 percent of Colorado's electorate, have an overwhelmingly positive view of Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper. Sixty-one percent of voters rate him favorably, and his positive-to-negative ratio is more than 10-to-1, exceeding that of many of the state's leading politicians and President George W. Bush.

Hickenlooper achieved his 61 percent favorable score despite more than a third (34%) of voters not being familiar with him.

Newly elected U.S. Senator Ken Salazar has the highest favorability rating (71%). He is the second most popular in terms of positive-to-negative ratio at 7.9-to-1 positive.

Gov. Bill Owens maintains the rating he has received during most of his term in office (66% favorable). He received a 64% favorability rating statewide in August 2001, just before 9/11, and earned 66% in October 2003.

President Bush received only a 54 percent favorability, with nearly as many Front Range voters rating him negatively (44%). He attracts the most intense feelings. At 33 percent, he has the highest "very favorable" rating, and a nearly equal number (31%) give him a "very unfavorable" rating. (His most recent national favorability has been in the low

50% range.)

U.S. Senator Wayne Allard's 53 percent favorability is relatively low. However, because his negative rating is also low (only 16% unfavorable), he earns a slightly higher positive-to-negative ratio than the governor. Note that U.S. senators tend to be less well-known than governors. Even during their elections and re-elections, they have up to a quarter of voters regularly unable to rate them.

Not surprising, the negative ratio was earned by University of Colorado Professor Ward Churchill (6.4 negative-to-positive as opposed to negative-to-positive). Seventy percent of voters view him as unfavorable compared to 11 percent who rate him favorably.

### Hickenlooper Scores High Rating in Denver Metro Area

Hickenlooper scores his highest favorability rating (75%) in the Denver metro area where he also is very well-known (only 19% can't rate him). Nearly half of northern Colorado voters are unable to rate him and 78 percent of southern Colorado voters are unfamiliar with him. Because his positive-to-negative ratio is high in the North and South Front Ranges, as more voters become familiar with him, his ratings should improve, at least under current circumstances.

### Hickenlooper Leads Ratio of Favorable to Unfavorable Ratings By Front Range Voters

Leader	Total Favorable	Total Unfavorable	Don't Know	Ratio of Favorable Unfavorable
Ken Salazar	71%	9%	21%	7.9
Bill Owens	66%	26%	8%	2.5
Hickenlooper	61%	6%	34%	10.1
G.W. Bush	54%	44%	2%	1.2
Wayne Allard	53%	16%	30%	3.3
Ward Churchill	11%	70%	19%	(6.4)

*Ciruli Associates, N505, 2005*

### "Mayor Hick" makes TIME

Hickenlooper was chosen by *Time Magazine* as one of the five best big-city mayors. The article quoted a Ciruli Associates poll showing Hickenlooper's 75% approval rating in Denver, and 61% along the Front Range.

The telephone survey for *The Variable* polls was conducted March 14-17, 2005, by Ciruli Associates with 505 Colorado Front Range registered active voters ( $\pm 4.4$  percentage points). Front Range counties are: Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, Elbert, El Paso, Jefferson, Larimer, Pueblo and Weld (the 12 counties have a total of 2,554,000 voters or 80% of all voters statewide). This analysis is part of a series of reports on Colorado and national issues published by Ciruli Associates. Additional analysis in this series can be found on [www.ciruli.com](http://www.ciruli.com).

## War in Iraq Seen as Mistake, But Little Pressure for Withdrawal

Analysis by Floyd Ciruli

A plurality of Colorado Front Range voters no longer believe it was worth going to war in Iraq (46% to 44% believe it was "not worth going to war"). Colorado voter opinion has been closely divided on the worth of the war, at least since last fall. However, more than two-thirds of Front Range voters (68%) support the continued presence of troops and oppose immediate withdrawal (26%).

### Partisanship is Main Factor in Views

Partisanship is the main factor associated with strong views on the war. For example, 75 percent of Republicans – the largest group of partisans (42%) among Front Range voters – believe the Iraq war was worth it, but 80 percent of Democrats disagree. Also, while Democrats are closely divided between keeping troops in Iraq (46%) and immediate withdrawal (47%), Republicans are overwhelmingly in favor of keeping troops in place (86%).

### Americans are Divided on War's Worth, But Don't Favor Withdrawal

A Ciruli Associates poll during the presidential election shows that a plurality (47%) of statewide voters said going to war was worth it and 43 percent said it wasn't worth it. Also, during the presidential election, 64 percent of statewide voters said

we should keep troops in Iraq to assist security and only 26 percent said troops should be withdrawn.

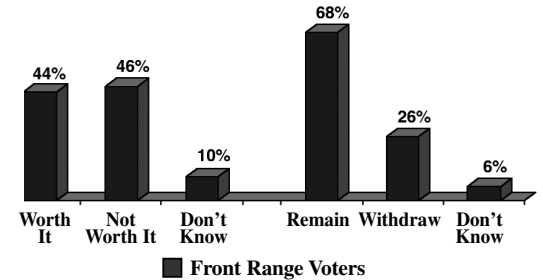
Colorado voter views are similar to their American counterparts. The Gallup Poll has asked a series of questions concerning the Iraq war since its beginning in March 2003. In the poll of May 2005, 48 percent of Americans believe Iraq was not a mistake and 49 percent believe it was a mistake. Opinion on that question since the fall of 2003 (when the cost of the war was first identified as \$87 billion and 500 troops had been killed) has gone back and forth on whether the war was or wasn't a mistake.

### Gallup Poll of Americans Was the War in Iraq a Mistake?

Additional findings of Gallup surveys conducted in 2005 are:

- Terrorism and Iraq are still top priorities for President Bush and Congress to address. Fifty-four percent of Americans rate terrorism and 53% rate Iraq as extremely important to address. Americans then cite domestic issues, such as health care (49%), education (45%) and Social Security (41%), as top priorities. (Gallup, N1010, Feb. 4-6, 2005)

### Support for U.S. Military Presence in Iraq



Question: All in all, do you think it was worth going to war in Iraq or not worth going to war?

Question: Should we keep troops in Iraq to assist the new Iraqi government with security or should we begin an immediate withdrawal of troops?

Ciruli Associates, N505, 2005

- The president receives good grades for handling terrorism (58% approve the way George W. Bush is handling terrorism), but only 42% believe he is handling the war in Iraq well. (Gallup, N1008, June 7-9, 2005)

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## Colorado Front Range Voters Want Ward Churchill Fired

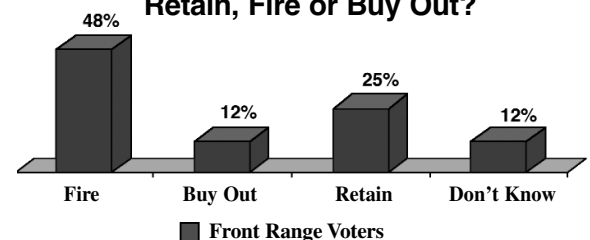
Analysis by Floyd Ciruli

University of Colorado Professor Ward Churchill has little support among voters in his effort to retain his job. Only 25 percent of Front Range voters believe he should be retained, whereas nearly half (48%) believe he should be fired. A buy out receives only 12 percent support. A few voters did not have an opinion (12% not familiar with Churchill or didn't have an opinion).

### Key Demographic Characteristics

Churchill's highest level of support to retain his job is held by younger voters (40%) and Democrats (34%). Support for firing Churchill is correlated with age; older voters are most supportive of removing him (57% would fire him). Republicans also strongly support firing him (66%).

### CU Professor Ward Churchill Retain, Fire or Buy Out?



Question: Ward Churchill is a tenured professor at the University of Colorado in Boulder. CU is currently considering whether or not to fire him. Given what, if anything, you have seen or heard about the issue, as of today, do you believe Ward Churchill should be fired, bought out of his teaching contract or remain in his job as a CU professor?

Ciruli Associates, N505, 2005