

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Andrew Baumann, Global Strategy Group
DATE: August 19, 2019
RE: **NEW CO SEN POLL RESULTS – Mike Johnston in Strong Position to Defeat Cory Gardner**

With increasing news last week that Governor John Hickenlooper planned to leave the presidential race and consider entering the Colorado Senate race, this poll was intended to test the notion that Hickenlooper is the only Democrat with the ability to defeat Cory Gardner. The results clearly show that the answer is no.

While Governor Hickenlooper would no doubt enter the race in a strong position against Gardner, the truth is that despite his near-universal name recognition he polls at the same level as a generic Democrat. Furthermore, once voters are informed about Mike Johnston, as they would be during the course of a campaign, Johnston's lead against Gardner mirrors that of Hickenlooper.

Gardner's personal ratings are significantly underwater and his ties to Donald Trump – who is even more unpopular – are a huge albatross for his re-election chances. As a result, Gardner trails Hickenlooper, who is known by nearly 90% of voters and has a rating that is just slightly above water, by a 10-point margin – identical to his 10-point deficit against a generic Democrat.

Unsurprisingly, Johnston is still unknown to three-quarters of the Colorado electorate. Still, he leads Gardner by 11 points (50% to 39%) – matching Hickenlooper's performance – in an informed ballot after voters are exposed to a brief profile that is reflective of his primary message, thus simulating how he would enter a general election. And with \$3.4 million raised in just two quarters, Johnston has demonstrated that he will have the resources to effectively introduce himself to the electorate.

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS:

- **The 2020 electorate tilts Democratic.** Even though the projected electorate is relatively even on party registration (32% Democrat/38% Unaffiliated/30% GOP), Democrats have a six-point advantage on party self-identification (46% Dem/40% GOP including self-identified independents who lean toward a party). The Democrats' advantage is even more pronounced on the generic Congressional ballot, with voters preferring an unnamed Democrat to an unnamed Republican candidate by 9 points (49% Dem/40% GOP).
- **Cory Gardner is unpopular, weak, and his close ties to Donald Trump are a huge liability.** Donald Trump is deeply unpopular with Colorado voters (40% favorable/58% unfavorable) and Cory Gardner is not much better off (32% favorable/44% unfavorable). As a result, Gardner trails a generic Democratic by 10 points (48% to 38%).
- **John Hickenlooper leads Gardner by the same margin as a generic Democrat.** The former governor is known by 87% of voters and his personal ratings are just slightly above water (46% favorable/42% unfavorable). He leads Gardner by a 49% to 39% margin, identical to Gardner's margin against a generic Democrat.

- **Mike Johnston has a strong profile and leads Gardner by 11 points in an informed ballot.** In an informed ballot after respondents are exposed to a short profile of Johnston that was meant to simulate his likely primary message, Johnston leads Gardner 50% to 39%, matching Hickenlooper's margin.

ABOUT THE POLL AND POLLSTER

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of 617 likely 2020 voters in Colorado on August 13 and 14. 345 interviews were conducted with voters sampled from the voter file and reached via text message. 272 interviews were conducted via voters recruited from an online panel and matched to the voter file. All 617 interviews were conducted with verified Colorado likely voters and care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of the expected electorate are properly represented based on historical turnout. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.9%

Andrew Baumann is a Senior Vice President at Global Strategy Group where he runs the firm's Mountain West office in Denver. In 2018, Baumann served as the pollster for Jason Crow's winning campaign in CO-6, Jacky Rosen's winning campaign in NV SEN, and Katie Porter's winning campaign in CA-45, among other races.