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Senators facing backlash over Background Check votes

Raleigh, N.C. – New PPP polls in Alaska, Arizona, Nevada, and Ohio find serious backlash against the 5 Senators who voted against background checks in those states. Each of them has seen their approval numbers decline, and voters say they're less likely to support them the next time they're up for reelection. That's no surprise given that we continue to find overwhelming, bipartisan support for background checks in these states.

Here's the state by state rundown:

-After just 3 months in office Jeff Flake has already become one of the most unpopular Senators in the country. Just 32% of voters approve of him to 51% who disapprove and that -19 net approval rating makes him the most unpopular sitting Senator we've polled on, taking that label from Mitch McConnell.

70% of Arizona voters support background checks to only 26% who are opposed to them. That includes 92/6 favor from Democrats, 71/24 from independents, and 50/44 from Republicans. 52% of voters say they're less likely to support Flake in a future election because of this vote, compared to only 19% who say they're more likely to. Additionally voters say by a 21 point margin, 45/24, that they trust senior colleague John McCain more than Flake when it comes to gun issues.

-When we polled Alaska in February Lisa Murkowski was one of the most popular Senators in the country with a 54% approval rating and only 33% of voters disapproving of her. She's seen a precipitous decline in the wake of her background checks vote though. Her approval is down a net 16 points from that +21 standing to +5 with 46% of voters approving and 41% now disapproving of her. Murkowski has lost most of her appeal to Democrats in the wake of her vote, with her numbers with them going from 59/25 to 44/44. And the vote hasn't increased her credibility with Republican either- she was at 51/38 with them in February and she's at 50/39 now.

Mark Begich is down following his no vote as well. He was at 49/39 in February and now he's at 41/37. His popularity has declined with Democrats (from 76/17 to 59/24) and with independents (from 54/32 to 43/35), and there has been no corresponding improvement

with Republicans. He had a 24% approval rating with them two months ago and he has a 24% approval rating with them now.

60% of Alaska voters support background checks to just 35% opposed, including a 62/33 spread with independents. 39% of voters say they're less likely to vote for each of Begich and Murkowski in their next elections based on this vote, while only 22% and 26% say they're more likely to vote for Begich and Murkowski respectively because of this.

-We saw serious improvement in Rob Portman's poll numbers in the second half of 2012 following his consideration as the Republican Vice Presidential candidate, but he's taken a nose dive in 2013. Portman's approval has dropped a net 18 points over the last 6 months from +10 (35/25) in October to now -8 (26/34) in April. Portman's popularity decline has come across the board with Democrats (from 15/39 to 8/50), Republicans (62/11 to 46/19), and independents (28/23 to 24/32) alike.

72% of Ohio voters support background checks, including 87% of Democrats, 73% of independents, and 56% of Republicans. 36% of voters in the state say they're less likely to support Portman in a future election because of this vote to only 19% who consider it to be a reason to support him.

-And in Nevada Dean Heller has seen a more modest decline in his approval numbers, from 47/42 right before the election to 44/41 now. However with the independent voters who were critical to his narrow victory in November, his approval has dropped from 52/37 then to now 42/42.

70% of voters in the state support background checks compared to just 24% who are opposed to them. That includes 87% of Democrats, 65% of independents, and 54% of Republicans. 46% say they're less likely to support Heller the next time he's up for reelection compared to only 25% who are more likely to because of this vote, and as we saw last fall Heller has very little margin for error.

“The background checks vote is a rare one that really is causing these Senators trouble back home,” said Dean Debnam, President of Public Policy Polling. “All five of these Senators, as well as Kelly Ayotte, have seen their approval numbers decline in the wake of this vote. And the numbers make it clear that their position on Manchin/Toomey is a major factor causing the downward spiral.”

PPP surveyed 1,166 Alaska voters, 600 Arizona voters, 500 Nevada voters, and 601 Ohio voters on April 25th and 26th. The margins of error are +/-2.9% for the Alaska survey, +/-4.0% for the Arizona survey, +/-4.4% for the Nevada survey, and +/-4.0% for the Ohio survey. PPP surveys are conducted through automated telephone interviews.



Arizona Survey Results

Q1 Do you approve or disapprove of Senator Jeff Flake's job performance?

Approve 32%
Disapprove..... 51%
Not sure 17%

Q2 Would you support or oppose requiring background checks for all gun sales, including gun shows and the internet?

Support background checks 70%
Oppose background checks 26%
Not sure 4%

Q3 Does Jeff Flake's vote against requiring background checks make you more or less likely to support him for re-election, or does it not make a difference?

More likely..... 19%
Less likely 52%
No difference 24%
Not sure 4%

Q4 Who do you trust more on the issue of guns: John McCain or Jeff Flake?

John McCain..... 45%
Jeff Flake 24%
Not sure 31%

Q5 If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

Woman 50%
Man..... 50%

Q6 If you are a Democrat, press 1. If a Republican, press 2. If you are an independent or identify with another party, press 3.

Democrat 38%
Republican..... 41%
Independent/Other..... 21%

Q7 If you are Hispanic, press 1. If white, press 2. If African American, press 3. If other, press 4.

Hispanic..... 11%
White 82%
African American..... 2%
Other..... 5%

Q8 If you are 18 to 29 years old, press 1. If 30 to 45, press 2. If 46 to 65, press 3. If you are older than 65, press 4.

18 to 29..... 6%
30 to 45..... 22%
46 to 65..... 44%
Older than 65..... 28%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Jeff Flake			
Approve	32%	28%	37%
Disapprove	51%	49%	53%
Not sure	17%	23%	10%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Background Checks			
Support background checks	70%	75%	65%
Oppose background checks	26%	18%	33%
Not sure	4%	6%	2%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Jeff Flake's vote			
More likely	19%	13%	26%
Less likely	52%	54%	50%
No difference	24%	28%	20%
Not sure	4%	4%	5%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
McCain or Flake Trust			
John McCain	45%	49%	41%
Jeff Flake	24%	19%	30%
Not sure	31%	32%	30%





Crosstabs

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Jeff Flake				
Approve	32%	10%	57%	25%
Disapprove	51%	71%	29%	58%
Not sure	17%	19%	15%	16%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Background Checks				
Support background checks	70%	92%	50%	71%
Oppose background checks	26%	6%	44%	24%
Not sure	4%	2%	6%	6%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Jeff Flake's vote				
More likely	19%	5%	34%	17%
Less likely	52%	72%	35%	51%
No difference	24%	21%	26%	25%
Not sure	4%	3%	5%	6%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
McCain or Flake Trust				
John McCain	45%	58%	33%	47%
Jeff Flake	24%	10%	40%	19%
Not sure	31%	32%	27%	35%





Crosstabs

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African American	Other
Jeff Flake					
Approve	32%	20%	35%	-	33%
Disapprove	51%	52%	50%	95%	42%
Not sure	17%	28%	15%	5%	24%

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African American	Other
Background Checks					
Support background checks	70%	75%	69%	95%	65%
Oppose background checks	26%	21%	27%	5%	25%
Not sure	4%	4%	4%	-	10%

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African American	Other
Jeff Flake's vote					
More likely	19%	10%	20%	-	28%
Less likely	52%	61%	52%	65%	36%
No difference	24%	27%	23%	30%	32%
Not sure	4%	1%	5%	5%	4%

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African American	Other
McCain or Flake Trust					
John McCain	45%	47%	45%	58%	33%
Jeff Flake	24%	28%	24%	-	21%
Not sure	31%	25%	30%	42%	46%





Crosstabs

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Jeff Flake					
Approve	32%	21%	39%	31%	32%
Disapprove	51%	36%	50%	53%	50%
Not sure	17%	43%	11%	15%	18%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Background Checks					
Support background checks	70%	71%	70%	71%	69%
Oppose background checks	26%	21%	29%	25%	25%
Not sure	4%	7%	2%	4%	6%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Jeff Flake's vote					
More likely	19%	7%	19%	23%	16%
Less likely	52%	36%	49%	57%	50%
No difference	24%	50%	29%	16%	27%
Not sure	4%	7%	3%	3%	7%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
McCain or Flake Trust					
John McCain	45%	43%	41%	46%	48%
Jeff Flake	24%	36%	29%	22%	21%
Not sure	31%	21%	30%	32%	31%





Alaska Survey Results

Q1 Do you approve or disapprove of Senator Mark Begich's job performance?

Approve 41%
Disapprove..... 37%
Not sure 21%

Q2 Do you approve or disapprove of Senator Lisa Murkowski's job performance?

Approve 46%
Disapprove..... 41%
Not sure 13%

Q3 Would you support or oppose requiring background checks for all gun sales, including gun shows and the internet?

Support background checks 60%
Oppose background checks 35%
Not sure 5%

Q4 Does Mark Begich's vote against requiring background checks make you more or less likely to support him for re-election, or does it not make a difference?

More likely..... 22%
Less likely 39%
No difference 36%
Not sure 3%

Q5 Does Lisa Murkowski's vote against requiring background checks make you more or less likely to support her for re-election, or does it not make a difference?

More likely..... 26%
Less likely 39%
No difference 33%
Not sure 2%

Q6 If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

Woman 56%
Man..... 44%

Q7 If you are a Democrat, press 1. If a Republican, press 2. If you are an independent or identify with another party, press 3.

Democrat 25%
Republican..... 30%
Independent/Other..... 45%

Q8 If you are white, press 1. If other, press 2

White 86%
Other..... 14%

Q9 If you are 18-45 years old, press 1. If 46-65, press 2. If older than 65, press 3.

18 to 29..... 9%
30 to 45..... 27%
46 to 65..... 40%
Older than 65..... 24%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Mark Begich			
Approve	41%	41%	41%
Disapprove	37%	36%	39%
Not sure	21%	22%	20%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Lisa Murkowski			
Approve	46%	50%	42%
Disapprove	41%	38%	44%
Not sure	13%	13%	14%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Background checks			
Support background checks	60%	65%	52%
Oppose background checks	35%	29%	44%
Not sure	5%	6%	4%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Mark Begich's vote			
More likely	22%	20%	25%
Less likely	39%	40%	37%
No difference	36%	35%	36%
Not sure	3%	4%	2%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Lisa Murkowski's vote			
More likely	26%	24%	29%
Less likely	39%	41%	37%
No difference	33%	32%	34%
Not sure	2%	3%	1%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Mark Begich				
Approve	41%	59%	24%	43%
Disapprove	37%	24%	51%	35%
Not sure	21%	17%	25%	22%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Lisa Murkowski				
Approve	46%	44%	50%	45%
Disapprove	41%	44%	39%	40%
Not sure	13%	12%	12%	15%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Background checks				
Support background checks	60%	83%	37%	62%
Oppose background checks	35%	14%	56%	33%
Not sure	5%	3%	6%	6%





Crosstabs

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Mark Begich's vote				
More likely	22%	20%	27%	20%
Less likely	39%	46%	32%	40%
No difference	36%	30%	37%	38%
Not sure	3%	4%	4%	2%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Lisa Murkowski's vote				
More likely	26%	18%	38%	23%
Less likely	39%	54%	25%	40%
No difference	33%	25%	34%	36%
Not sure	2%	3%	2%	1%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
Mark Begich			
Approve	41%	41%	43%
Disapprove	37%	38%	34%
Not sure	21%	21%	24%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
Lisa Murkowski			
Approve	46%	46%	47%
Disapprove	41%	41%	41%
Not sure	13%	13%	12%





Crosstabs

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
Background checks			
Support background checks	60%	61%	50%
Oppose background checks	35%	34%	45%
Not sure	5%	5%	5%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
Mark Begich's vote			
More likely	22%	21%	31%
Less likely	39%	40%	32%
No difference	36%	36%	36%
Not sure	3%	3%	1%

	Base	Race	
		White	Other
Lisa Murkowski's vote			
More likely	26%	26%	29%
Less likely	39%	39%	36%
No difference	33%	33%	32%
Not sure	2%	2%	2%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Mark Begich					
Approve	41%	42%	40%	44%	37%
Disapprove	37%	29%	37%	40%	36%
Not sure	21%	29%	22%	16%	27%





Crosstabs

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Lisa Murkowski					
Approve	46%	45%	42%	47%	50%
Disapprove	41%	42%	41%	43%	36%
Not sure	13%	13%	17%	10%	14%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Background checks					
Support background checks	60%	46%	60%	60%	63%
Oppose background checks	35%	49%	34%	36%	31%
Not sure	5%	5%	7%	4%	6%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Mark Begich's vote					
More likely	22%	29%	24%	22%	18%
Less likely	39%	34%	46%	36%	37%
No difference	36%	37%	28%	39%	40%
Not sure	3%	-	2%	3%	5%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Lisa Murkowski's vote					
More likely	26%	45%	21%	27%	24%
Less likely	39%	26%	46%	37%	39%
No difference	33%	26%	32%	35%	34%
Not sure	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%



Ohio Survey Results

Q1 Do you approve or disapprove of Senator Rob Portman's job performance?

Approve 26%
Disapprove..... 34%
Not sure 40%

Q2 Would you support or oppose requiring background checks for all gun sales, including gun shows and the internet?

Support background checks 72%
Oppose background checks 21%
Not sure 7%

Q3 Does Rob Portman's vote against requiring background checks make you more or less likely to support him for re-election, or does it not make a difference?

More likely..... 19%
Less likely 36%
No difference 39%
Not sure 6%

Q4 If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

Woman 50%
Man..... 50%

Q5 If you are a Democrat, press 1. If a Republican, press 2. If you are an independent or identify with another party, press 3.

Democrat 41%
Republican..... 38%
Independent/Other 21%

Q6 If you are white, press 1. If African American, press 2. If other, press 3.

White 86%
African American..... 9%
Other..... 5%

Q7 If you are 18 to 29 years old, press 1. If 30 to 45, press 2. If 46 to 65, press 3. If older than 65, press 4.

18 to 29..... 14%
30 to 45..... 20%
46 to 65..... 46%
Older than 65..... 20%



Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Rob Portman			
Approve	26%	22%	30%
Disapprove	34%	34%	35%
Not sure	40%	45%	35%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Background checks			
Support background checks	72%	80%	65%
Oppose background checks	21%	13%	28%
Not sure	7%	7%	7%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Rob Portman's vote			
More likely	19%	16%	22%
Less likely	36%	36%	37%
No difference	39%	41%	37%
Not sure	6%	7%	5%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Rob Portman				
Approve	26%	8%	46%	24%
Disapprove	34%	50%	19%	32%
Not sure	40%	42%	36%	44%





Crosstabs

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Background checks				
Support background checks	72%	87%	56%	73%
Oppose background checks	21%	7%	36%	19%
Not sure	7%	6%	8%	8%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Rob Portman's vote				
More likely	19%	7%	32%	18%
Less likely	36%	51%	22%	34%
No difference	39%	36%	40%	42%
Not sure	6%	6%	6%	6%

	Base	Race		
		White	African American	Other
Rob Portman				
Approve	26%	27%	16%	20%
Disapprove	34%	34%	38%	30%
Not sure	40%	39%	45%	49%

	Base	Race		
		White	African American	Other
Background checks				
Support background checks	72%	72%	89%	52%
Oppose background checks	21%	22%	3%	28%
Not sure	7%	6%	8%	21%





Crosstabs

	Base	Race		
		White	African American	Other
Rob Portman's vote				
More likely	19%	18%	8%	54%
Less likely	36%	37%	45%	13%
No difference	39%	39%	41%	28%
Not sure	6%	6%	7%	6%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Rob Portman					
Approve	26%	30%	22%	26%	27%
Disapprove	34%	24%	33%	38%	33%
Not sure	40%	46%	45%	36%	39%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Background checks					
Support background checks	72%	75%	65%	74%	72%
Oppose background checks	21%	17%	24%	20%	20%
Not sure	7%	8%	11%	5%	8%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Rob Portman's vote					
More likely	19%	22%	27%	16%	15%
Less likely	36%	32%	36%	40%	31%
No difference	39%	43%	35%	38%	43%
Not sure	6%	3%	2%	7%	11%





Nevada Survey Results

Q1 Do you approve or disapprove of Senator Dean Heller's job performance?

Approve 44%
Disapprove..... 41%
Not sure 15%

Q2 Would you support or oppose requiring background checks for all gun sales, including gun shows and the internet?

Support background checks 70%
Oppose background checks 24%
Not sure 6%

Q3 Does Dean Heller's vote against requiring background checks make you more or less likely to support him for re-election, or does it not make a difference?

More likely..... 25%
Less likely 46%
No difference 27%
Not sure 2%

Q4 If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

Woman 52%
Man..... 48%

Q5 If you are a Democrat, press 1. If a Republican, press 2. If you are an independent or identify with another party, press 3.

Democrat 39%
Republican..... 40%
Independent/Other 22%

Q6 If you are Hispanic, press 1. If white, press 2. If African American, press 3. If other, press 4.

Hispanic..... 13%
White 68%
African American..... 13%
Other..... 6%

Q7 If you are 18-45 years old, press 1. If 46-65, press 2. If older than 65, press 3.

18 to 29..... 12%
30 to 45..... 24%
46 to 65..... 39%
Older than 65..... 24%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Dean Heller			
Approve	44%	39%	49%
Disapprove	41%	42%	40%
Not sure	15%	19%	10%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Background checks			
Support background checks	70%	76%	63%
Oppose background checks	24%	19%	30%
Not sure	6%	6%	7%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Dean Heller's vote			
More likely	25%	21%	29%
Less likely	46%	44%	48%
No difference	27%	32%	21%
Not sure	2%	4%	1%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Dean Heller				
Approve	44%	22%	67%	42%
Disapprove	41%	58%	24%	42%
Not sure	15%	20%	10%	16%





Crosstabs

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Background checks				
Support background checks	70%	87%	54%	65%
Oppose background checks	24%	8%	40%	24%
Not sure	6%	5%	5%	10%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Dean Heller's vote				
More likely	25%	16%	36%	21%
Less likely	46%	64%	27%	48%
No difference	27%	18%	33%	30%
Not sure	2%	2%	3%	1%

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African American	Other
Dean Heller					
Approve	44%	52%	47%	20%	36%
Disapprove	41%	16%	41%	64%	45%
Not sure	15%	32%	11%	16%	19%

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African American	Other
Background checks					
Support background checks	70%	68%	68%	88%	54%
Oppose background checks	24%	30%	27%	-	36%
Not sure	6%	2%	6%	12%	9%





Crosstabs

	Base	Race			
		Hispanic	White	African American	Other
Dean Heller's vote					
More likely	25%	22%	28%	9%	30%
Less likely	46%	36%	45%	64%	47%
No difference	27%	35%	26%	25%	19%
Not sure	2%	7%	1%	2%	3%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Dean Heller					
Approve	44%	36%	52%	43%	41%
Disapprove	41%	43%	33%	45%	42%
Not sure	15%	21%	15%	13%	17%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Background checks					
Support background checks	70%	79%	72%	63%	72%
Oppose background checks	24%	14%	23%	31%	19%
Not sure	6%	7%	4%	6%	8%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Dean Heller's vote					
More likely	25%	14%	23%	32%	21%
Less likely	46%	50%	42%	47%	47%
No difference	27%	36%	33%	19%	28%
Not sure	2%	-	2%	2%	4%

