

OCTOBER 2005

## Beyond Red & Blue: Political Typologies Indicate The Many Shades of Washington Voters

Despite the seductive shorthand of "Red and Blue America," it is clear that American politics has more than two shades. A state can get colored red or blue on the basis of a few thousand votes one way or the other in a single election - the race for President. Even in the Presidential race, however, a national map of counties rather than states, shaded by vote *margin* instead of simple majority, looks more purple than red and blue. [<http://www.princeton.edu/~rvdb/JAVA/election2004>].

Here in Washington, a state famed for its independence and Independents, the "Cascade Curtain" is our shorthand for the political divide: Conservative Eastern Washington, Liberal Western Washington and the Soviet of Seattle. Observers of state politics know that these labels are too simplistic to describe a state that once simultaneously elected Liberal Republican Dan Evans, NeoCon Democrat Scoop Jackson and New Deal Democrat Warren Magnuson; carried for both Ronald Reagan and Michael Dukakis; and could not really decide between Christine Gregoire and Dino Rossi.

Starting in 1994, *The Elway Poll* has probed beyond the Republican-Democrat, Liberal-Conservative dichotomies with two rough typologies, one domestic and one for foreign policy. This month we are presenting a more detailed look at the state's electorate by replicating the national typology developed by the Pew Center for the People and the Press, which slices the electorate into eight categories by combining answers to 24 pairs of competing values questions. The categories are described by their "core values" on page 2. The questions from which the typology is created appear on page 4.

The typology distinguishes three categories each of Republicans and Democrats, plus two categories of Independents. In addition to illuminating differences between Washington state and the country at large, the results of this survey go a long way toward breaking down political stereotypes and revealing the tensions within each of the two major parties here. These findings are detailed on page 3.

The data confirm the "blue tint" to recent Washington politics. Democrat types outnumber Republican types here by 20 points, compared to 10 points nationally. There are both more people in the Democrat types and fewer in the Republican types here than nationally.

When survey respondents were asked whether they consider themselves to be Republicans, Democrats or Independents, the results were in line with historical trends here: 32% Democrats, 26% Republicans and 42% Independent or no preference. When pushed, the Independents "leaned" toward the Democrats by more than 2:1. The typology indicates why: more than half of the self-described Independents are either Liberals or Upbeats, who think government does a better job than people give it credit for and immigrants strengthen the country.

Generally speaking, Washington Democrats are more homogeneous than their Republican counterparts: not a single self-described Democrat showed up in any of the "red" categories and only 3 were even classified in the Independent categories. There were internal tensions among Democrats around questions of morality and the military.

Republicans were divided by attitudes toward business and religion. Some 27% of the self-described Republicans ended up outside the "red" categories: 18% were classified as Upbeats and 8% as Disaffecteds.

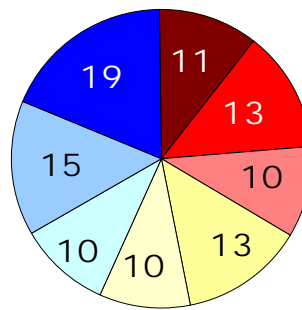
Compared to the national findings, Washington state is portrayed as more liberal, more upbeat, and less socially and governmentally conservative. Washington state has:

- 3 Liberals for every 2 nationally;
- 3 Upbeats for every 2 nationally;
- 3 Pro-Government Conservatives for every 5 nationally;
- 5 Social Conservatives for every 6.5 nationally.



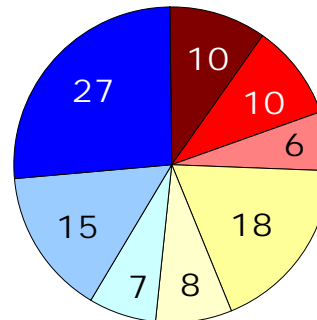
### POLITICAL TYPOLOGIES

NATIONAL PEW CENTER



- Enterprisers
- Social Conservatives
- Pro-Govt Conservatives
- Upbeats
- Disaffecteds
- Disadvantaged Democrats
- Conservative Democrats
- Liberals

WASHINGTON STATE ELWAY POLL



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# Sample Profile

Telephone interviews were conducted with 514 registered Washington state voters on October 22-31, 2005. The overall margin of sampling error is ±5%. That is, in theory, had this same survey been conducted 100 times, in 95 of those times the results would be within ±5% of the results reported here. The raw data were weighted by county to reflect the state's population.

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>REGION</b>                               |     |
| Seattle .....                               | 11% |
| King County (non-Seattle) .....             | 20% |
| Pierce + Kitsap .....                       | 16% |
| North Sound (Snohomish to Whatcom) .....    | 17% |
| Western Washington (Clallam to Clark) ..... | 16% |
| Eastern Washington .....                    | 20% |
| <b>GENDER</b>                               |     |
| Male .....                                  | 47% |
| Female .....                                | 53% |
| <b>AGE</b>                                  |     |
| 18-35 .....                                 | 8%  |
| 36-50 .....                                 | 24% |
| 51-64 .....                                 | 34% |
| 65+ .....                                   | 33% |
| <b>PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>                 |     |
| Democrat .....                              | 32% |
| Republican .....                            | 26% |
| Independent .....                           | 42% |
| <b>COMMUNITY</b>                            |     |
| Urban .....                                 | 62% |
| Suburban .....                              | 14% |
| Large Town .....                            | 6%  |
| Rural .....                                 | 17% |
| <b>EMPLOYMENT</b>                           |     |
| Self-Employed .....                         | 13% |
| Private Sector .....                        | 25% |
| Public Sector .....                         | 15% |
| Not Working .....                           | 4%  |
| Retired .....                               | 41% |
| <b>UNION MEMBER</b> .....                   |     |
| 25%   |     |
| <b>INCOME</b>                               |     |
| \$25,000 or less .....                      | 13% |
| \$25 to \$50,000 .....                      | 29% |
| \$50 to \$75,000 .....                      | 24% |
| Over \$75,000 .....                         | 19% |
| No Answer .....                             | 16% |

# The Elway Poll

The Elway Poll is an independent, non-partisan analysis of public opinion in Washington and the Northwest available exclusively to subscribers.

**SUBSCRIPTION:** An annual subscription is \$525 (plus sales tax). Two years for \$900, a savings of \$150.

**PROPRIETARY QUESTIONS:** Each month, space is reserved in the questionnaire to allow subscribers to ask proprietary questions. The fee for proprietary questions is \$500 per question. You will receive the results of your question(s) with full crosstabulations within three days.

**CROSSTABS:** A full set of cross-tabulation tables for any month's survey is available for \$100.

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## POLITICAL TYPES: CORE BELIEFS

The eight voter types were derived from a cluster analysis of 24 pairs of competing beliefs and opinions. The points below indicate the "core beliefs" of each type – the combination of opinions that distinguish that type from the others.

### Enterprisers

- Most corporations make a fair and reasonable amount of profit
- Stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too many jobs and hurt the economy
- Using overwhelming military force is the best way to defeat terrorism around the world
- Poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return

### Social Conservatives

- Homosexuality is a way of life that should be discouraged by society
- The growing number of newcomers from other countries threatens traditional American customs and values
- Poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return
- Business corporations make too much profit

### Pro-Government Conservatives

- Books that contain dangerous ideas should be banned from public school libraries
- Religion is a very important part of my life
- The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt
- Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public
- We should all be willing to fight for our country, whether it is right or wrong

### Upbeats

- Government often does a better job than people give it credit for
- Most elected officials care what people like me think
- Most corporations make a fair and reasonable profit
- Immigrants strengthen our country

### Disaffecteds

- Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care
- Government is always wasteful and inefficient
- Most elected officials don't care what people like me think
- Hard work and determination are no guarantee of success for most people

### Disadvantaged Democrats

- Hard work and determination are no guarantee of success for most people
- Poor people have hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently
- Most elected officials don't care what people like me think
- Business corporations make too much profit

### Conservative Democrats

- It is necessary to believe in God in order to be moral and have good values
- Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they're willing to work hard
- We should all be willing to fight for our country, whether it is right or wrong
- The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt

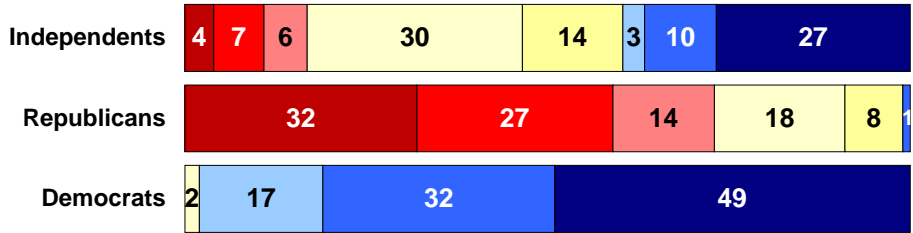
### Liberals

- Relying too much on military force to defeat terrorism creates hatred that leads to more terrorism
- I worry the government is getting too involved in the issue of morality
- Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost
- Poor people have hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently

**DEM'S MORE HOMOGENEOUS THAN REPUB'S**

Although the Democrats tend to be more homogeneous than the Republicans, these findings illuminate tensions within each of the parties: attitudes about the military and corporations in the GOP; attitudes about religion and the military among the Democrats.

Washington's Independents tend to be Upbeat and Liberal.

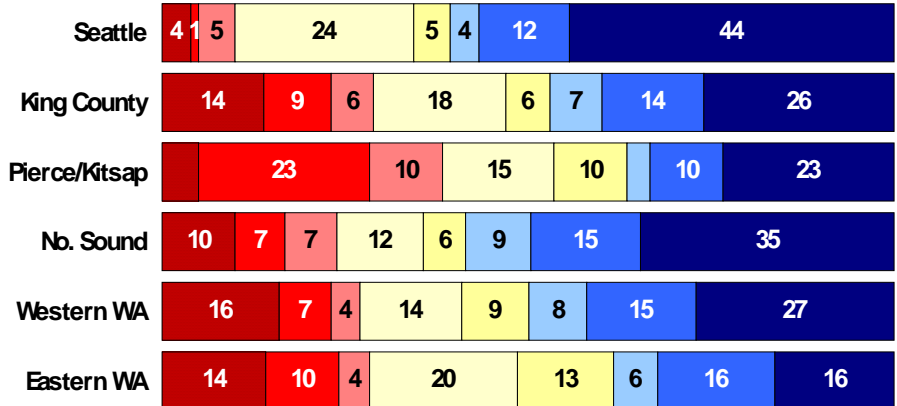


**WHAT CASCADE CURTAIN?**

Much to no ones' surprise, Seattle is the most liberal region of the state. Eastern Washington is the least liberal, but may not be the most conservative- that title goes to Pierce+Kitsap.

Except for Seattle, all regions in Western WA had "red segments" equivalent to Eastern WA - but the Western WA regions each had more "blues" than Eastern WA.

The "509ers" had half as many Social Conservatives as Pierce+Kitsap and slightly more Conservative Democrats than any other region in the state.

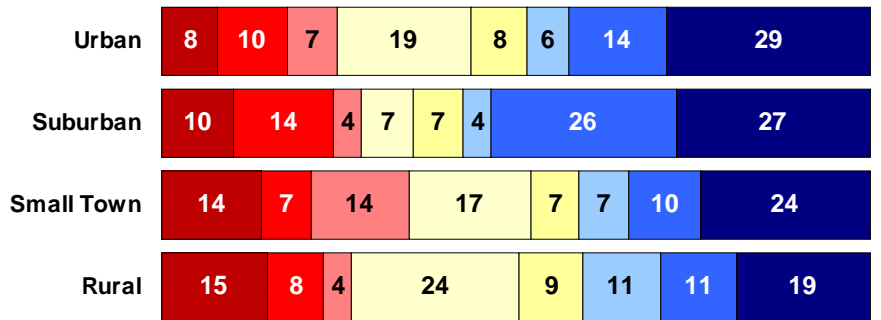


**THE DEMOCRAT-LEANING SUBURBS**

The suburban areas of the state have a definite blue tinge, owing to the large number of Conservative Democrats there.

The state's small towns - home to the largest contingent of Pro-Government Conservatives - were the reddest communities.

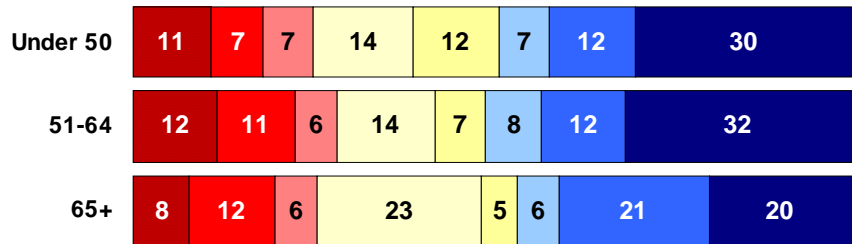
Definitions: Urban = cities with 50,000+ residents ; Suburban = ZIP Codes of rural areas in urban counties; Small Towns = 10-50,000 population; Rural = population under 10,000 and isolated rural areas.



**GENERATION GAP MATTER OF DEGREE**

Voters over 65 were more likely than their juniors to be Upbeats and Conservative Democrats, but otherwise there was no significant generation gap in these findings.

It is worth pointing out that non-voters - who are disproportionately younger - were not included in this sample. Including them could significantly alter this picture.

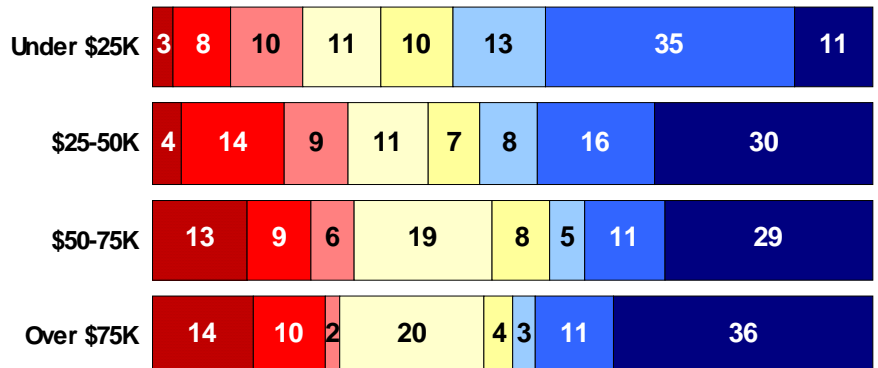


**FOLLOWING THE MONEY DOESN'T LEAD TO GOP**

The highest-income bracket in this sample contained the most Liberals, the most Upbeats and the most Enterprisers. But not the most Republicans.

Interestingly, the lowest-income voters were more likely than any other bracket to be Conservative Democrats.

The highest-income Republicans were more likely to be Enterprisers, while lower-income Republicans were more likely to be Pro-Govt Conservatives.



## Questionnaire Items Used to Calculate the Typology

|    |  |          |
|----|--|----------|
| 1  | Government is almost always wasteful and inefficient<br>Government often does a better job than people give it credit for  | 47<br>47 |
| 2  | Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest<br>Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good  | 61<br>30 |
| 3  | Poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return<br>Poor people have hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently | 39<br>50 |
| 4  | The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt<br>The government today can't afford to do much more to help the needy  | 47<br>39 |
| 5  | Immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents<br>Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care                                 | 57<br>34 |
| 6  | The best way to ensure peace is through military strength<br>Good diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace  | 32<br>60 |
| 7  | We should all be willing to fight for our country, whether it is right or wrong<br>It's acceptable to refuse to fight in a war you believe is morally wrong  | 39<br>55 |
| 8  | Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they're willing to work hard<br>Hard work and determination are no guarantee of success for most people   | 64<br>34 |
| 9  | Success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside of our control<br>Everyone has it in their own power to succeed  | 22<br>69 |
| 10 | Too much power is concentrated in the hands of a few large companies<br>The largest companies do <u>not</u> have too much power  | 75<br>19 |
| 11 | Business corporations make too much profit<br>Most corporations make a fair and reasonable amount of profit  | 53<br>38 |
| 12 | Elected officials in Washington lose touch with the people pretty quickly<br>Elected officials in Washington try hard to stay in touch with voters back home   | 58<br>33 |
| 13 | Most elected officials care what people like me think<br>Most elected officials don't care what people like me think   | 48<br>45 |
| 14 | This country should do whatever it takes to protect the environment<br>This country has gone too far in its efforts to protect the environment   | 71<br>23 |
| 15 | Stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too many jobs and hurt the economy<br>Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost  | 36<br>55 |
| 16 | Homosexuality is a way of life that should be accepted by society<br>Homosexuality is a way of life that should be discouraged by society  | 55<br>39 |
| 17 | Books that contain dangerous ideas should be banned from public school libraries<br>Public school libraries should be allowed to carry any books they want   | 42<br>54 |
| 18 | Religion is a very important part of my life<br>Religion is not that important to me   | 73<br>25 |
| 19 | I'm generally satisfied with the way things are going for me financially<br>I'm not very satisfied with my financial situation   | 73<br>26 |
| 20 | I often don't have enough money to make ends meet<br>Paying the bills is generally not a problem for me  | 28<br>70 |
| 21 | It is <u>not</u> necessary to believe in God in order to be moral and have good values<br>It <u>is</u> necessary to believe in God in order to be moral and have good values                                       | 57<br>38 |
| 22 | Using overwhelming military force is the best way to defeat terrorism around the world<br>Relying too much on military force to defeat terrorism creates hatred that leads to more terrorism                       | 40<br>51 |
| 23 | The growing number of newcomers from other countries threaten traditional American customs and values<br>The growing number of newcomers from other countries strengthens American society                         | 34<br>57 |
| 24 | The government should do more to protect morality in society<br>I worry the government is getting too involved in the issue of morality  | 35<br>56 |

To facilitate the comparison with the national data, the questions and statistical routines used in this survey were the same as those used in the national study conducted by the Pew Center.

Each respondent was read these 24 pairs of statements and asked to indicate which one "comes closer to your own views — even if neither is exactly right." After they gave their initial answer, they were asked, "do you feel strongly about that, or not?" — resulting in a 5 point scale for each pair (with "no opinion" in the center). The "agree" and "agree strongly" answers are added together here for clarity of presentation.

The 24 items were rotated so that different respondents heard them in a different order. The pairs of statements within each item were also rotated so the same statement did not always come first.

Pew asked questions to determine level of political interest and vote history to define a category called By-standers, who are not included in these data. We simply screened out people who had not voted in the last four elections.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Special thanks to Andrew Kohut, Nilanthy Samaranayake and Michael Dimock at **The Pew Center for The People and The Press.** Their generosity and co-operation made this survey possible.

To see the full national study upon which this survey was based and to test for your own type, visit their website at: <http://people-press.org>

Two additional questions were factored into the typology calculations:

- 1) In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican (26%), Democrat (32%), or Independent (42%)?  
Partisans were asked if they considered themselves to be a "strong" Republican (51%) or Democrat (64%); Independents were asked toward which party they leaned (R=19%, D=43%).
- 2) In general, would you describe your political views as:  
Very Conservative (9%), Conservative (28), Moderate (39), Liberal (17) or Very Liberal (5)?