

# UC Berkeley

## IGS Poll

### Title

Release #2017-19: Voter disapproval of President Trump in California is both broad and deep

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6180b2zj>

### Author

DiCamillo, Mark

### Publication Date

2017-12-20



Jack Citrin Center for Public Opinion Research  
Institute of Governmental Studies  
124-126 Moses Hall  
University of California  
Berkeley, CA 94720  
Tel: 510-642- 6835  
Email: igs@berkeley.edu

Release #2017-19

For Publication: Wednesday, December 20, 2017

## ***Voter disapproval of President Trump in California is both broad and deep***

By Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*  
(o) 510-642-6835 (c) 415-602-5594

As President Donald Trump nears the end of his first year in office, he continues to engender a very negative reaction from California voters. The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds 66% of the state's registered voters disapproving of Trump's performance in office, up from 57% and 61% in earlier surveys. In addition, of those disapproving 57% do so strongly. Just 30% approve. Trump's current job appraisals now compare with some of lowest ratings ever given by Californians to a sitting president over the past fifty years.

The most striking characteristic of voter views of Trump relates to the hugely divergent views held by voters of different political parties and ideological perspectives. Nearly all registered Democrats (93%) disapprove of Trump's performance, whereas among Republicans 73% approve. Similarly, while greater than nine in ten of the state's political liberals disapprove of the President, about eight in ten Californians (79%) who consider themselves very conservative in politics approve of the job Trump is doing.

Californians who approve of Trump's performance say they do so mainly because they support his policies rather than out of any great personal affection for him or his way of governing. By contrast, Californians who disapprove say they do so because they both disapprove of his policies and don't like his governing style.

The poll also finds that Californians' views of the overall direction of the country mirror those given the President. Statewide, 64% offer a negative assessment, believing the U.S is off on the wrong track, while just 30% saying the country is moving in the right direction.

These findings come from the latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed December 7-16 by telephone among 1,000 registered voters statewide in English and Spanish.

**Californians’ disapproval of Trump’s performance as President is both broad and deep**

In the current survey two thirds of the state’s registered voters (66%) now say they disapprove of the job Trump is doing, up from 57% and 61% reporting this earlier this year. In addition, of those disapproving of the President’s overall performance in the current poll, the large majority (57%) reports disapproving strongly.

**Table 1**  
**Trend of job performance rating of President Donald Trump**  
**(among California registered voters)**

	December	May	March
	%	%	%
<b>Approve (net)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>39</b>
Strongly	18	NA	NA
Somewhat	12	NA	N/A
<b>Disapprove (net)</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>61</b>
Somewhat	9	NA	NA
Strongly	57	NA	NA
No opinion	4	15	NA

NA: Not asked

Trump’s greater than two-to-one negative job appraisals in California are extremely low by historical standards, and compare to some of the lowest job ratings ever given a sitting President in this state over the past fifty years.

**Table 2**  
**How Donald Trump’s current job ratings compare to the lowest job ratings given**  
**by Californians to past U.S. Presidents**

Lowest job rating in office	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
	%	%	%
<b>Donald Trump (December 2017)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>4</b>
Barack Obama (September 2011)	46	44	10
George W. Bush (July 2008)	24	71	5
Bill Clinton (August 1993)	45	52	3
George H. W. Bush (July 1992)	37	62	1
Ronald Reagan (March 1982)	53	47	*
Jimmy Carter (July 1980)	33	66	1
Gerald Ford (November 1975)	47	51	2
Richard Nixon (August 1974)	24	70	6

NOTE: Comparisons with past U.S. presidents are based on statewide surveys conducted by The Field Poll by Field Research Corporation, as reported in Release #2542, published July 12, 2016 for President Barack Obama, and in Release #2279, published July 19, 2008, for other past Presidents.

### **Huge partisan and ideological divide in voter opinions of Trump's performance**

The most striking characteristic of voter appraisals of Trump's job performance rating relates to the hugely differing views of the President by the state's Democrats and Republicans, and its conservatives and liberals.

Among Democrats and political liberals, greater than nine in ten voters disapprove, while hardly any approve. By contrast, among the state's registered Republican voters, 73% approve, as do 79% of voters who identify themselves as very conservative in politics.

The extremely partisan and ideologically based opinions that voters have of the President manifest itself across other major segments of the electorate. For example, disapproval of the President is greatest among the state's traditional Democratic constituencies, including the state's African Americans, Latinos, voters living along the coast, especially those in San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles County, women and voters under the age of 40.

**Table 3**  
**Overall job performance rating of President Donald Trump – December 2017**  
**(among California registered voters)**

	Approve %	Disapprove %	No opinion %
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>4</b>
Party registration			
Democrats	5	93	2
Republicans	73	23	4
No party preference/other	30	64	6
Political ideology			
Very conservative*	79	17	4
Somewhat conservative	59	38	3
Moderate	23	72	5
Somewhat liberal	3	93	4
Very liberal	2	97	1
Area			
Coastal counties	24	72	4
Inland counties	44	54	2
Region			
Los Angeles County	19	74	7
South Coast	37	57	6
Other Southern California	48	51	1
Central Valley	37	60	3
San Francisco Bay Area	16	83	1
Other Northern California*	42	56	2
Gender			
Male	37	59	4
Female	24	73	3
Age			
18-29	18	77	5
30-39	19	77	4
40-49	34	65	1
50-64	36	60	4
65 or older	37	60	3
Race/ethnicity			
White non-Hispanic	36	63	1
Latino	21	70	9
African American*	6	93	1
Asian American/other	32	63	5

\* *small sample base*

**Reasons for approving or disapproving of Trump’s performance**

Among voters who approve of Trump’s performance in office, most say they do so because they support his policies rather than out of any great personal affection for him or his way of governing. Of the 30% who approve of his performance, about two in three (19%) say they do so because they support his policies. This compares to just 4% who say they approve because they like Trump and his way of governing, while 7% offer both as a reason.

Republicans, who constitute by far the largest segment of voters approving of Trump’s performance, are particularly likely to say they approve because they support his policies (51%) rather than because they like him or his way of governing (8%).

**Table 4**  
**Reasons for approving Trump’s job performance**  
**(among California voters who approve)**

	Total registered voters %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No party preference/ other %
Approve (net)	<u>30</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>30</u>
Support his policies	19	3	51	16
Like him/his way of governing	4	1	8	7
Both	7	1	14	7

Among voters who disapprove of the President’s performance, most do so because they both disapprove of Trump’s policies and his temperament and way of governing. This is particularly true among the state’s Democratic voters.

**Table 5**  
**Reasons for disapproving Trump’s job performance**  
**(among California voters who disapprove)**

	Total registered voters %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No party preference/ other %
Disapprove (net)	<u>66</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>64</u>
Oppose his policies	6	9	2	6
Dislike his temperament/ his way of governing	19	23	11	18
Both	41	61	10	40

**Californians’ view about the direction of the country mirror those of the President**

California voters offer a similarly negative assessment of the overall direction of the country. Statewide, 64% of voters believe the country is off on the wrong track, while just 31% feel it is moving in the right direction.

**Table 6**  
**Trend of opinions of the overall direction of the country**  
**(among California registered voters)**

	December 2017 %	March 2017 %
Right direction	31	36
Wrong track	64	64
No opinion	5	NA

\* NA: Not asked

## About the Survey

The findings in this report come from a survey completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies, at the University of California, Berkeley among 1,000 registered voters throughout California December 7-16, 2017. The survey was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish using live interviewers. Voters were randomly sampled from listings of registered voters derived from the state's official registered voter rolls. Up to four attempts were made to reach and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period.

Interviews were administered by professionally trained and supervised interviewers calling from Davis Research's central location call center in Calabasas (Los Angeles County), California. Interviewing was completed on either a voter's cell phone or a household landline phone depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file. In this survey 688 interviews were completed with voters on their cell phone, while 312 were completed with voters on a landline phone. After the completion of interviewing, results from the overall registered voter sample were weighted to known demographic, regional and political parameters of the state's registered voter population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to the results of any probability-based survey depend on sample size and the percentage distributions being examined. The maximum sampling error for results from the overall registered voter sample is +/- 3.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Results based on subgroups of the registered voter population are subject to larger margins of sampling error.

### Questions Asked

Thinking about the country overall, do you think things in the U.S. are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things are generally on the wrong track?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President? **(IF APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE, ASK)** Do you (approve) (disapprove) strongly or somewhat?

**(IF APPROVE)** Do you approve mostly because you support Trump's policies or mostly because you like him and his way of governing?

**(IF DISAPPROVE)** Do you disapprove mostly because you oppose Trump's policies or mostly because of his temperament and way of governing?

### About the Institute of Governmental Studies

The Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) is an interdisciplinary organized research unit that pursues a vigorous program of research, education, publication and public service. A component of the University of California (UC) system's flagship Berkeley campus, it is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. IGS conducts periodic surveys of California public opinion on matters of politics, public policy and public issues through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*, housed within its newly established Citrin Center for Public Opinion Research. For a complete listing of stories issued by the poll go to <https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.