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Despite all the recent tumult surrounding the President, Trump's job ratings remain unchanged in California

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*
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President Donald Trump has been at the center of many important, and even historic, events—both domestically and internationally—in recent weeks. The ongoing impeachment battle now taking place in the Congress, his approval of a new trade agreement with Mexico and Canada, and the airstrike he ordered to kill Iranian General Qassem Soleimani have dominated the news over the past two months. Yet, over this period California voter views of Trump have remained remarkably stable and continue to show voters' deep antipathy with the President.

According to the latest Berkeley IGS Poll two in three registered voters in this state (67%) disapprove of the overall job Trump is doing as President, while a third (33%) approve, with opinions strongly held on both sides. These assessments are statistically unchanged from those California voters gave to the President two months ago, or even two years ago.

California voters offer very similar assessments when asked about the President's handling of the nation's foreign policy following his recent actions against Iran. Statewide, 67% of voters disapprove of his performance in this area, while 32% approve. These ratings are also statistically equivalent to a *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed two months earlier on the subject.

These findings come from the latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed online in English and Spanish among a representative sample of 6,845 California registered voters January 15-21, 2020.

Table 1
Trend of the job performance of President Donald Trump is doing
(among California registered voters)

	January 2020 %	November 2019 %	September 2019 %	June 2019 %	April 2018 %	December 2017 %
Approve	33	32	31	33	31	30
Strongly	22	20	19	21	18	18
Somewhat	11	12	12	12	13	12
Disapprove	67	68	69	67	67	66
Somewhat	10	10	11	10	8	9
Strongly	57	58	58	57	59	57

Differences between the sum of each survey's percentages and 100% equal proportion with no opinion.

Views of the President's performance remain highly partisan and tied to the political ideologies of voters

The poll also examined the President's overall job performance across a wide range of demographic and political subgroups of the state's electorate.

By far the largest correlates with assessments of the President relate to the party registration and the political ideology of voters. Nearly all registered Democrats (95%) disapprove of the job Trump is doing, with 86% disapproving strongly. By contrast, nine in ten of the state's registered Republicans (90%) approve of the job the President is doing overall, 66% of whom approve strongly.

The same pattern is evident when examining voters' self-described political ideology. Ninety-eight percent of voters who describe themselves as very liberal in politics disapprove of the President's performance, virtually all of whom (96%) disapprove strongly. Conversely, 86% of voters who describe themselves as very conservative in politics approve of the President's performance, with 77% approving strongly.

When Trump's job marks are examined across major regions of the state, the President receives his poorest assessments among voters in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area (79% disapproval) and Los Angeles County (73%). Views of Trump performance as President are more divided among voters in the Central Valley and the Inland Empire, although, even in these two regions, more voters disapprove than approve of the job Trump is doing.

Large majorities of Californians across all age, gender and racial lines disapprove of Trump's performance, with women, younger voters and ethnic voters holding the most negative views.

Table 2
President Trump's current job approval rating across major subgroups of the California registered voter population

	Strongly approve %	Approve somewhat %	Disapprove somewhat %	Disapprove strongly %
Total likely voters	22	11	10	57
Party registration				
Democrats	2	3	9	86
Republicans	66	24	4	6
No party preference/other	15	14	14	57
Political ideology				
Very conservative	77	9	3	11
Somewhat conservative	48	28	7	17
Moderate	14	16	18	52
Somewhat liberal	2	1	7	90
Very liberal	2	*	2	96
Region				
Los Angeles County	15	12	9	64
South Coast	23	15	10	52
Inland Empire	34	9	10	47
Other Southern California	21	16	8	55
Central Valley	32	12	12	44
San Francisco Bay Area	14	7	8	71
Other Northern California	25	15	6	54
Gender				
Male	25	14	9	52
Female	19	9	10	62
Age				
18-29	10	13	17	60
30-39	14	11	11	64
40-49	17	15	12	56
50-64	29	14	7	50
65 or older	30	8	4	58
Race/ethnicity				
White non-Hispanic	27	11	6	56
Latino	13	12	14	61
Asian American	15	9	17	59
African American	14	10	11	65

* Less than 1/2 of 1%

Views of Trump’s handling of the nation’s foreign policy and the economy are also negative and viewed largely through a partisan prism

The latest poll also repeated two questions posed by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* two months ago, asking Californians to assess the job the President was doing in handling the nation’s foreign policy and its economy. And here too, voter opinions of the President have remained remarkably stable.

With regard to foreign policy, more than twice as many California voters (67%) say they disapprove of the job the President is doing in this area, as approve (32%). These assessments are very similar to what was observed two months ago, prior to the U.S.-led airstrike that killed Soleimani, which dramatically heightened tensions between the U.S. and Iran.

Trump’s job rating in handling the nation’s economy are only slightly less negative. Six in ten voters (60%) say they disapprove of the job he is doing in this area, while 39% approve. These ratings are also similar to voter assessments of the President’s handling of the economy two months ago, when 62% rated him negatively and 38% gave a positive appraisal.

In both cases, opinions are closely tied to voters’ party registration and political ideology, with similar large majorities of Democrats and liberals disapproving of Trump in both areas, and large majorities of Republicans and conservatives approving of the President’s performance in these areas.

Table 3
Comparing California registered voter appraisals of the job President Trump is doing
in handling the nation’s foreign policy and the economy – now vs. two months ago

	January 2020		November 2019	
	Approve %	Disapprove %	Approve %	Disapprove %
<u>Foreign policy</u>				
Total registered voters	32	67	31	69
Party registration				
Democrats	5	95	4	94
Republicans	85	14	86	14
No party preference/other	29	70	28	72
Political ideology				
Conservative	80	19	78	22
Moderate	24	76	21	79
Liberal	3	96	3	97
<u>The economy</u>				
Total registered voters	39	60	38	62
Party registration				
Democrats	12	87	10	90
Republicans	93	6	92	8
No party preference/other	39	61	37	63
Political ideology				
Conservative	83	16	84	16
Moderate	44	54	35	65
Liberal	7	93	7	93

Differences between the sum of each survey’s percentages and 100% equal proportion with no opinion.

Two in three Californians likely to vote in the general election remain disinclined to re-elect the President

The poll also updated previous measures assessing whether or not likely voters in the November 2020 general election are inclined or disinclined to support Trump’s re-election. The results again show remarkable stability, with about two in three voters (66%) disinclined to back the President’s election for another four years, similar to 67% of likely voters who said this two months ago.

Opinions are strongly held, with large majorities of those inclined or disinclined to back Trump’s re-election holding strongly to their positions.

The current 34-percentage point difference between the proportions disinclined to re-elect the President versus those inclined to do so is four percentage points greater than the historic 30-point defeat that Trump suffered at the hands of Democrat Hillary Clinton in California in the 2016 presidential election.

Table 4
Trend of voter inclinations to re-elect Donald Trump as President
(among Californians likely to vote in the November 2020 general election)

	January 2020 %	November 2019 %	September 2019 %	June 2019 %
Inclined to re-elect	<u>32</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>31</u>
Strongly	28	25	25	26
Somewhat	4	5	4	5
Not inclined to re-elect	<u>66</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>66</u>
Somewhat	2	3	2	3
Strongly	64	64	65	63
Depends	2	3	4	3

About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. The poll was administered online in English and Spanish January 15-21, 2020 among 6,845 registered voters statewide, of whom 5,170 were considered likely voters in the November 2020 general election. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize voter fatigue, the overall sample was divided into two random subsamples on the questions relating to the President’s handling of the economy and foreign policy.

The survey was administered by distributing email invitations to stratified random samples of the state’s registered voters. Once the survey questionnaire and email invitations had been finalized, they were translated into Spanish. Each email invited voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by the University and provided a link to the IGS website where the survey was housed. Reminder emails were distributed to non-responding voters and an opt out link was provided for voters not wishing to receive further email invitations.

Samples of registered voters with email addresses were provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc., derived from information contained on the state’s official voter registration rolls. Prior to the distribution of emails, the overall sample was stratified by age and gender in an attempt to obtain a proper balance of survey respondents across major segments of the registered voter population.

To protect the anonymity of survey respondents, voters’ email addresses and all other personally identifiable information derived from the original voter listing were purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. In addition, post-stratification weights were applied to align the sample of registered voters responding to the survey to population characteristics of the state’s overall

registered voter population. Likely voters were identified based on a voter's stated intention to vote in the November general election and factoring in their history of voting in past elections.

The sampling error associated with the results from the survey are difficult to calculate precisely due to the effects of sample stratification and the post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that the results from the overall sample of registered voters and from the sample of likely voters in the November 2020 general election are subject to an approximate sampling error of approximately +/- 2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while questions asked based on each of the statewide random subsamples are subject to an approximate sampling error of +/- 2.5 percentage points.

Detailed tabulations reporting the results to each question included in this report can be found at the *Berkeley IGS Poll* website at <https://igs.berkeley.edu/igs-poll/berkeley-igs-poll>.

Questions Asked

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF 3,381 REGISTERED VOTERS STATEWIDE) Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling the nation's economy?

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF 3,464 REGISTERED VOTERS STATEWIDE) Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling foreign policy?

(ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS IN THE NOVEMBER 2020 GENERAL ELECTION) If Donald Trump is the Republican candidate for president and the November general election for president were being held today, how likely would you be to vote to re-elect him?

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 system's flagship Berkeley campus, IGS is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. IGS's acting co-directors are Professor Eric Schickler and Associate Professor Cristina Mora.

IGS conducts periodic surveys of public opinion in California on matters of politics and public policy through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*. The poll, which is disseminated widely, seeks to provide a broad measure of contemporary public opinion, and to generate data for subsequent scholarly analysis. The director of the *Berkeley IGS Poll* is Mark DiCamillo. For a complete listing of stories issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* go to <https://igs.berkeley.edu/igs-poll/berkeley-igs-poll>.