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### Title

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### Author

DiCamillo, Mark

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Institute of Governmental Studies  
102 Philosophy Hall, #2370  
University of California  
Berkeley, CA 94720-2370  
Tel: 510-642-1473  
Email: igs@berkeley.edu

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***President Trump's initial job approval ratings during his second term are at historically low level in California.***

by Mark DiCamillo  
Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*

The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* of California registered voters finds President Donald Trump's job approval rating at historically low levels. Just 30% of the voters polled say they approve of Trump's performance, while 68% disapprove.

The poll finds voters across this state are highly critical of the changes the President has been making to the way the federal government operates, with 63% opposing them, 52% strongly. Californians also say they oppose the changes that the President has been making to the U.S.'s foreign policies and its relationships with other countries by a similar 66% to 31% margin, 56% of whom are strongly opposed.

A similar large majority (65%) feel Trump's frequent use of executive orders to enforce the changes he is making to the nation's laws exceeds his constitutional authority as president, while just 27% believe his actions are generally within his constitutional authority. In addition, 60% are not confident that the judicial system can serve as a check against the president should he overstep his constitutional authorities, while just 34% are confident.

Opinions on each of these matters are highly partisan, with Democrats offering very negative appraisals of the President's performance in office, express greater misgivings about the impact of the changes that Trump is making to the nation's domestic and foreign policies and strongly oppose his use of executive orders to change the nation's laws. By contrast, large majorities of Republicans are supportive of these actions.

These findings come from a statewide sample of 6,201 registered voters in California conducted online by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* April 21-28, 2025, in English and Spanish.

IGS co-director Eric Schickler observed, "Approval of President Trump's performance in California is now well below the 38% vote share he obtained here in the 2024 election, suggesting that the gains he made in the last election have not translated into broader support for his policies among the state's electorate. And as such they do not do much to further Republican hopes that last November was the start of a broader rebound for the party in the state."

**Californians’ initial job ratings of President Trump’s second term in office are at historically low levels**

Just 30% of registered voters in California say they currently approve of the job Trump is doing as President, while more than two-thirds (68%) disapprove.

The survey is the first appraisal that the *Berkeley IGS Poll* has made of President Trump’s second term job performance. When compared to the initial job ratings that Californians have given other recent presidents, Trump’s current job approval score is the lowest given to any of the U.S. presidents measured since 1974 and are lower than the highly negative initial assessments they gave to Trump during his first term, when 39% initially approved and 61% disapproved of the job he was doing in March 2017.

Opinions are highly partisan, with 92% of Democrats disapproving and just 6% approving, while among Republicans 75% approve and 24% disapprove. When examining other demographic and political subgroups of the state’s electorate, Trump receives extremely low job approval marks from self-described political liberals, and comparatively low ratings among the state’s more independent No Party Preference voters, those under age 30, voters who are single and have never married, Black voters and voters living in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

When Californians are also asked how they think Trump’s second term as President will compare to his first, six in ten (61%) believe it will be worse, while just 25% think it will be better.

**Table 1**  
**President Trump’s current 2<sup>nd</sup> term job ratings compared to the initial ratings of other U.S. Presidents, including those given Trump in his first term (among California registered voters)**

	Approve %	Disapprove %	No opinion %
<b>Donald Trump (R) -Late April 2025</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>2</b>
Joe Biden (D) – Late April 2021	62	34	4
Donald Trump (R) – March 2017	39	61	*
Barack Obama (D) – March 2009	65	21	14
George W. Bush (R) – May 2001	42	44	14
Bill Clinton (D) – May 1993	50	46	4
George H. W. Bush – April 1989	61	30	9
Ronald Reagan (R) – April 1981	74	18	8
Jimmy Carter (D) – March 1977	68	20	12
Gerald Ford (R) – October 1974	55	36	9
<b>Party registration (Late April 2025)</b>			
Democrats	6	92	2
Republicans	75	24	1
No Party preference/others	28	67	5

*Note: The job performance ratings for Presidents Trump and Biden come from statewide surveys by the Berkeley IGS Poll, while the ratings of earlier presidents are from statewide surveys conducted by The Field Poll between 1974 and 2009, as reported in Release #2298, published March 4, 2009 by Field Research Corporation.*

*(R) demotes Republican, while (D) denotes Democrat.*

**Californians highly critical of the changes President Trump has been making to the federal government and to the nation’s foreign policies**

During his first 100 days in office President Trump has made major changes to both the way the federal government operates and to the U.S.’s foreign policies and its relationships with other countries. And when asked about these changes Californians are highly critical.

By a nearly two-to-one margin (63% to 33%), more voters in this state oppose than support the changes the President has been making to the way the federal government operates, with 52% strongly opposing these changes. And, by an even wider margin (66% to 31%), Californians oppose the changes that the President has been making to the U.S.’s foreign policies and its relationships to other countries, 56% of whom are strongly opposed.

Opinions on both matters are again highly partisan. Among the state’s Democrats 89% oppose the changes to the way the federal government operates and 91% oppose the President’s modifications to the nation’s foreign policies, nearly all of whom are strongly opposed. By contrast, California Republicans are highly supportive of these changes, with 79% endorsing the changes he is making to the way the federal government operates (62% strongly), and 76% backing his changes to the nation’s foreign policies (50% strongly).

*Table 2*

**Opinions of the changes President Trump has been making to the way the federal government operates and to U.S.’s foreign policies and its relationships with other countries (among California registered voters)**

	Total registered voters %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No Party Pref./others %
<b>Changes made to the way the federal government operates</b>				
Support	<b>33</b>	8	79	31
Support strongly	22	3	62	17
Support somewhat	11	5	17	14
Oppose	<b>63</b>	89	18	60
Oppose somewhat	11	11	7	13
Oppose strongly	52	78	11	47
No opinion	4	3	3	9
<b>Changes made to the U.S.’s foreign policies and its relationships with other countries</b>				
Support	<b>31</b>	7	76	28
Support strongly	17	2	50	12
Support somewhat	14	5	26	16
Oppose	<b>66</b>	91	22	65
Oppose somewhat	10	10	10	11
Oppose strongly	56	81	12	54
No opinion	3	2	2	7

**A large majority of Californians feels Trump’s actions in changing the nation’s laws through executive orders exceeds his constitutional authority as president**

Two in three California voters (65%) believe that President Trump’s frequent use of executive orders to enforce the changes he is proposing to make to the nation’s laws goes beyond his constitutional authority as president. This compares to 27% who feel his actions are generally within his constitutional authority.

The poll also finds that 60% of the state’s voters do not have confidence in the nation’s judicial system to serve as a check against the president should he overstep his constitutional authority, while just 34% express confidence in the judicial system’s ability to do this.

Opinions about both matters are again highly partisan. Nine in ten of the state’s Democrats (89%) believe Trump’s use of frequent executive orders exceeds his constitutional authority as president, while 69% of Republicans feel his actions are within his authority.

In addition, by a 73% to 25% margin, California Democrats are not confident that the nation’s judicial system will serve as an effective check against the president should he overstep his constitutional authority. By contrast, Republicans expressed confidence in the judicial system to do so, 53% to 37%.

*Table 3*

**Voter views of whether President Trump’s use of executive orders to enforce changes to the nation’s laws is within his constitutional authority and confidence in the nation’s judicial system to serve as a check against the president overstepping his constitutional authorities**

	<b>Total registered voters %</b>	<b>Democ rats %</b>	<b>Repub-licans %</b>	<b>No Party Pref./others %</b>
<b>Is President Trump’s use of executive orders to enforce the changes he proposed to make to the nation’s laws within his constitutional authority as president</b>				
Exceeds his constitutional authority	<b>65</b>	89	24	63
Within his constitutional authority	<b>27</b>	6	69	22
No opinion	<b>8</b>	5	7	15
<b>Confidence in the nation’s judicial system to serve as a check against Trump overstepping his constitutional authorities as president</b>				
Confident	<b>34</b>	<u>25</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>32</u>
Very confident	<b>13</b>	6	27	11
Support confident	<b>21</b>	19	26	21
Not confident	<b>60</b>	<u>73</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>60</u>
Not too confident	<b>34</b>	40	23	33
Not at all confident	<b>26</b>	33	14	27
No opinion	<b>6</b>	2	10	8

**Californians continue to believe the country is heading in the wrong direction; yet the opinions of partisans about this have shifted dramatically**

Nearly seven in ten Californians (68%) feel that overall, the U.S. is on the wrong track, while just 26% think it is moving in the right direction. These results are very similar to those found by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* the last time it asked California voters their opinions about the overall direction of the country in January 2024, when 70% felt the nation was on the wrong track.

Yet, in a clear demonstration of how Californians are so highly partisan, the replies of the state’s Democrats and Republicans to this question have shifted dramatically over the past year. For example, last year Republican voters were nearly unanimous in believing that the country was on the wrong track, with 93% saying this. Yet, since Trump’s election, their opinions have swung completely around in the current poll, with 69% of Republicans now believing the country is heading in the right direction, and just 25% feeling it is on the wrong track. By contrast, Democrats now take a much gloomier view of the nation’s direction than they did a year ago, with 92% believing the country is on the wrong track, while just 5% feel it is moving in the right direction. Last year when President Joe Biden was serving his final year in office, a smaller proportion of the state’s Democrats felt the country was on the wrong track (55%) while 36% thought it was heading in the right direction.

**Table 4**  
**Comparing voter opinions of whether the country is heading in the right direction or off on the wrong track overall and by party (April 2025 vs. January 2024)**

	April 2025			January 2024		
	Right direction %	Wrong track %	No opinion %	Right direction %	Wrong track %	No opinion %
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>7</b>
<b><u>Party registration</u></b>						
Democrats	5	92	3	36	55	9
Republicans	69	25	6	4	93	3
No party pref./other	21	69	10	17	75	8

**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 April 21-28, 2025, among 6,201 Californians registered to vote. Funding for the poll was provided in part by the *Los Angeles Times*.

The poll was conducted by distributing email and text message invitations to stratified random samples of the state’s registered voters. Each email and text message invited voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by the Institute and provided a link to the IGS website where the survey questionnaire was housed. Reminder emails and texts were distributed to non-responding voters and an opt out link was provided for voters not wishing to receive further invitations.

Samples of California registered voters were derived from information contained on the state’s official voter registration rolls and was provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc. (PDI), a leading supplier of registered voter lists. To protect the anonymity of respondents, voters’ email addresses, cell phone numbers and all other personally identifiable information derived from their

voter record were purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. After the completion of data collection, post-stratification weights were applied to the survey data file to align the sample of registered voters surveyed to population characteristics of registered voters statewide and within major regions of the state on a wide range of variables. More information about the survey methods used by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* can be found on the poll's website at <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.

The sampling error associated with the survey results is difficult to calculate precisely because of sample stratification and post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that findings from the overall registered voter sample have a sampling error of about +/-2 points at the 95% confidence level.

### **Question wording**

Do you think things in the United States are headed in the right direction or is the country off on the wrong track?

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

How do you think Donald Trump's second term as President will compare to his first term: it will be better, about the same, it will be worse?

President Trump is making changes to the U.S.'s foreign policies and its relationships with other countries. Do you generally support or oppose the changes that President Trump has been making to the country's foreign policies?

The Trump administration is also attempting to make major changes in the way the federal government operates. Do you generally support or oppose the changes that President Trump has been making to the country's domestic policies?

Do you think that President Trump's use of executive orders to enforce the changes he is proposing to make to the nation's laws are generally within his constitutional authority as president or have his actions gone beyond his constitutional authority as president?

How much confidence do you have in the nation's judicial system to serve as a check against Trump should he overstep his constitutional authorities as president?

### **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 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. Veteran pollster Mark DiCamillo serves as director of the *Berkeley IGS Poll*. For a complete listing of stories issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* go to <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.

