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Title

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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2vb0j777>

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Publication Date

2022-10-05



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Release #2022-17

Wednesday, October 5, 2022

***Californians are divided about whether Trump will face criminal charges
but feel he should be if enough evidence is found.***

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California voters are evenly split about whether former President Donald Trump will face criminal charges in connection with the ongoing investigations against him. Statewide 46% of voters think it is likely that Trump will end up being charged, while 49% feel it is not. Yet, if prosecutors find enough evidence to bring charges against the former president, state's voters believe that it would be better for the country to do so by a greater than three to one margin. However, a 63% majority fears that it is likely that there will be increasing acts of political violence if this were to happen.

Opinions about these matters are highly partisan, with Republicans far less likely than Democrats to believe that Trump will face criminal charges or that he should be charged even if evidence of criminal wrongdoing is uncovered. Nevertheless, the investigations appear to be having some impact on the state's Republican voters as fewer now identify themselves as a supporter of the former president than did so eighteen months ago.

The poll also finds that Californians' views of the job President Joe Biden is doing has improved some since the summer, with 52% of voters now approving of his performance overall while 43% disapprove. This is up from a 48% approve, 48% disapprove assessment found by the poll in early August. Most of the improvement is coming from traditional Democratic constituencies rather than from Republicans or independents.

IGS Co-Director G. Cristina Mora notes that "the findings suggest that while most voters support the idea of filing charges against Donald Trump, a significant number are unsure that this would be a likely outcome. This brings up important questions about Californians' trust in the federal government and its capacity, as well as voters' faith in fair investigative outcomes."

Californians evenly divided about whether Trump will face criminal charges

California voters are evenly split when asked how likely they think it is that Trump will face criminal charges in connection with the ongoing investigations against him, with 46% believing this is likely to occur while 49% feel it is not.

Views about the likelihood that Trump will be facing criminal charges are highly partisan, with 61% of Democrats feeling this way compared to just 20% among the state’s Republicans.

Table 1
Voter impressions of the likelihood that Trump will face criminal charges in connection with the ongoing investigations
(among California registered voters)

	Total registered voters	Democrats	Republicans	No Party Preference /other
	%	%	%	%
Likely	46	61	20	43
Very likely	20	28	6	17
Somewhat likely	26	33	14	26
Not likely	49	37	70	51
Not too likely	30	27	31	34
Not at all likely	18	10	39	17
No opinion	5	2	10	6

Broad support for bringing charges against Trump if prosecutors think they have enough evidence

While Californians are divided about whether Trump will end up facing criminal charges from the latest investigations, by a three-to-one margin they feel it would be better for the country to bring charges against the former president if prosecutors believe they have enough evidence to do so.

Democrats are nearly unanimous in taking this position. On the other hand, by a nearly three to one margin Republicans say it would be better for the country not to bring charges against former president Trump even if there is evidence of wrongdoing. Voters not affiliated with either of the two major parties reflect the views of the overall electorate and support bringing charges against Trump if prosecutors have sufficient evidence.

Table 2
If prosecutors believe they have enough evidence to convict Trump of a crime, would it be better for the country to bring charges against the former President or not (among California registered voters)

	Total registered voters %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No Party Preference /other %
Better to bring charges against him	67	91	22	68
Better to not bring charges against him	22	4	59	20
No opinion	11	5	19	12

Many think the Trump investigations increase the likelihood of political violence

By a two-to-one margin (63% to 31%) Californians believe that there will be increasing acts of political violence against the federal government in reaction to the ongoing investigations of former President Trump.

About eight in ten Democrats (79%) feel this way, as do 65% of the state’s No Party Preference voters. By contrast, only about one in three of the state’s Republicans (32%) think increasing political violence is likely to occur due to the investigations.

Table 3
Likelihood of increasing acts of political violence against the federal government in reaction to the ongoing Trump investigations (among California registered voters)

	Total registered voters %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No Party Preference /other %
Likely	63	79	32	65
Very likely	28	36	10	29
Somewhat likely	35	43	22	36
Not likely	31	18	59	30
Not too likely	20	15	30	20
Not at all likely	11	3	29	10
No opinion	6	3	9	5

Decline in Republican voter identification with former President Trump

There has been a small but significant decline in the proportion of California Republicans who identify themselves more as a supporter of former President Donald Trump than as a supporter of the Republican Party. When this question was first posed to California Republicans in an April 2021 *Berkeley IGS Poll* 25% of GOP voters identified more with Trump than the GOP, while 34% identified more with the GOP. Another 29% said they identified with both. In its latest survey, just 16% of registered Republicans now report identifying more with Trump, 40% identify more with the GOP, and 30% say both.

The recent declines in California Republican voter identification with Trump span virtually all demographic subgroups of the party, including Republicans who voted for Trump in 2020, conservatives, males and females, GOP voters of all ages and ethnic groups, and across all major regions of the state.

	Late September 2022			Late April 2021		
	Republican			Republican		
	Trump %	Party %	Both %	Trump %	Party %	Both %
Total registered Republicans	16	40	30	25	34	29
Trump voter in 2020	17	39	34	28	33	31
<u>Political ideology</u>						
Strongly conservative	22	28	38	34	24	37
Somewhat conservative	13	48	29	22	40	27
Moderate/liberal	13	43	20	15	39	22
<u>Region</u>						
Los Angeles County	19	41	23	24	39	29
San Diego County	13	51	29	26	30	35
Orange County	13	44	33	29	33	28
Inland Empire	14	37	34	27	30	30
Central Coast*	12	38	24	25	38	22
San Joaquin Valley	21	37	32	25	32	31
Sacramento/North Valley	17	39	31	22	35	27
San Francisco Bay Area	14	37	30	20	36	29
North Coast/Sierras*	12	48	35	36	27	26
<u>Gender</u>						
Male	13	39	32	24	34	29
Female	19	41	27	25	34	29
<u>Age</u>						
18-29	11	24	40	17	30	29
30-39	12	42	26	20	34	28
40-49	21	44	20	25	34	30
50-64	22	38	28	28	36	27
65 or older	12	45	33	26	34	31

<u>Race/ethnicity</u>						
White	16	42	30	25	34	30
Latino	17	44	27	20	35	31
All others	15	31	54	25	34	26

*Note: Differences between sum of percentages and 100% in each survey equal proportion of Republicans who answered neither or had no opinion. * Small sample base*

President Biden’s job rating has improved in California from earlier in the year

Throughout most of 2022 California voters have been about evenly divided in their evaluations of the job Biden has been doing as president. However, the latest poll finds voters here offering a more positive assessment, with 52% approving of Biden’s performance overall, while 43% disapprove. This is up from a 48% approve, 48% disapprove rating that California voters gave to Biden in early August.

Table 5
Trend of California voter appraisals of the job Joe Biden is doing as President
(among California registered voters)

	Approve (total) %	<i>Approve strongly</i> %	<i>Approve somewhat</i> %	Disapprove (total) %	<i>Disapprove somewhat</i> %	<i>Disapprove strongly</i> %	No opinion %
Late Sept. 2022	52	18	34	43	12	31	5
August 2022	48	16	32	48	16	32	4
April 2022	50	17	33	46	14	32	4
February 2022	47	17	30	48	14	34	5
July 2021	59	30	29	37	10	27	4
April 2021	62	39	23	34	8	26	4

The recent improvement in the President’s overall job performance rating has come primarily from traditional Democratic constituencies. The poll finds the President’s biggest improvements occurring among registered Democrats, liberals, voters of color and those under age 30.

Table 6
President Biden's current job performance rating – now vs. August 2022
(among California registered voters)

	Late September 2022			August 2022		
	Approve	Disapprove	No	Approve	Disapprove	No
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total registered voters	52	43	5	48	48	4
<u>Party registration</u>						
Democrats	79	16	5	73	23	4
Republicans	7	92	1	7	92	1
No party preference/others	45	47	8	43	51	6
<u>Political ideology</u>						
Strongly conservative	12	87	1	8	91	1
Somewhat conservative	21	78	1	20	78	2
Moderate	50	41	9	46	47	7
Somewhat liberal	83	12	5	74	21	5
Strongly liberal	80	18	2	74	23	3
<u>Age</u>						
18-29	47	40	13	39	51	10
30-39	49	45	6	47	48	5
40-49	52	44	4	45	48	7
50-64	52	46	2	51	48	1
65 or older	58	41	1	56	43	1
<u>Gender</u>						
Male	49	46	5	46	51	3
Female	54	40	6	51	45	4
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>						
White	51	47	2	50	48	2
Latino	53	39	8	47	47	6
Asian/Pacific Islander	54	36	10	48	43	9
Black	58	30	12	53	42	5

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 September 22-27, 2022, among 8,725 California registered voters. Funding for the poll was provided in part by the *Los Angeles Times*.

The *Berkeley IGS Poll* is administered by distributing email invitations to stratified random samples of the state's registered voters. The latest poll also included an oversampling of registered voters in Los Angeles County, administered using the same methods, to enable the poll to examine specific issues of interest to voters in Los Angeles and to the *Times*. After the completion of data collection, the results were weighted to realign the Los Angeles County oversample to its actual share of the statewide registered voter population.

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., a leading supplier of registered voter lists in California and were derived from information contained on the voter registration rolls. Prior to the distribution of emails, the overall sample was stratified by age and gender 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 registered voters.

The sampling error associated with the results from the survey are difficult to calculate precisely because of sample stratification and the post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that findings based on the overall registered voter sample are subject to a sampling error of approximately +/-2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The approximate sampling error for findings based on the sample of registered Republican voters (*unweighted n=1,399*) is +/- 4.0 percentage points.

Question wording

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Joe Biden is handling his job as President?

IF REGISTERED REPUBLICAN: As a registered Republican, do you identify yourself more as a supporter of Donald Trump or more as a supporter of the Republican Party?

As you know, there are a number of investigations taking place with regard to former President Trump. How likely do you think it is that Trump will face criminal charges in connection with one or more of the investigations against him?

If prosecutors determine that enough evidence exists to try to convict Trump of a crime should the government bring charges against him, or would it be better for the country to not bring charges against Trump?

How likely do you think it is that there will be an increasing number of acts of political violence against the federal government in reaction to its investigations of former President Trump?

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 seeks to provide a broad measure of contemporary public opinion and 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://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.