UC Berkeley
IGS Poll

Title
Release #2019-07: Californians Appear Even Less Inclined to Support Trump Next Year than in 2016 When He Lost the State by 30 Points

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3bx7c4tf

Author
DiCamillo, Mark

Publication Date
2019-09-26

Release #2019-07   Thursday, September 26, 2019

Californians Appear Even Less Inclined to Support Trump Next Year than in 2016 When He Lost the State by 30 Points

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*
(c) 415-602-5594

California has never been a Donald Trump stronghold and the results of the latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* suggest that his standing with voters in this state may be moving even lower.

When asked if they are intending to vote to re-elect Trump next year, just 29% of the state's likely voters say they are inclined to do so, while 67% are not.   This 38-percentage point deficit is eight 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.

The poll finds slippage in the proportion of Californians inclined to re-elect the President's among segments of Trump's political base when compared to the last *Berkeley IGS Poll* in June. This includes a six-point decline in vote support among evangelical Christians, a five-point decline among voters who are very conservative in politics, and another a five-point decline among white non-Hispanics.

When Republicans likely to vote in the state's March presidential primary are asked their opinions about having other Republican candidates challenge Trump in next year's GOP primaries, 60% say this would be a bad thing, but 40% believe it would be a good thing. Younger Republicans under the age of 40 are the voter segment most likely to favor having other Republicans challenge the President next year, with 62% feeling this would be a good thing.

The poll also finds 69% of the state's registered voters disapproving of the job Trump is doing as President, a record high. Just 31% of Californians approve of the President's performance. The current poll also finds Californians to be more negative about the overall direction of the country than they were in March 2017, at the beginning of Trump's tenure as President.

These are the findings from a *Berkeley IGS Poll* conducted online among a statewide random sample of 4,527 registered voters in English and Spanish September 13 - 18.

<u>Two in three likely voters in California not inclined to re-elect the President</u>

If the stated intentions of Californians likely to vote in the November 2020 presidential election are any indication, the President may be in for an even more dismal showing in next year's presidential election than he suffered in this state in 2016.

When likely voters in the latest poll are asked whether they are inclined or not inclined to vote to re-elect Trump in the November 2020 general election, just 29% of Californians say they are, while 67% are not. Another 4% give a qualified response.

The poll's current 38-percentage point disinclination to re-elect the President is eight percentage points greater than the 30-point election defeat Trump suffered in California in the November 2016 election. That showing was the poorest performance of any Republican presidential candidate in this state since the Civil War.

When compared to the last *Berkeley IGS Poll* in June, the latest poll finds slippage in voter inclinations to re-elect the President among particular segments of the President's political base.

For example, there has been a six-point decline in the proportion of likely voters inclined to re-elect Trump among evangelical Christians from 58% in to 52%, a five-point decline among voters who identify themselves as very conservative in politics from 89% to 84%, and another five point decline among the state's white non-Hispanics from 37% to 32%.

Table 1
Comparing California voters' inclination to re-elect the President now vs. three months ago overall and across major voter subgroups
(among likely voters in the 2020 November general election)

	September 2019		June 2019	
	Would re-elect %	Would not %	Would re-elect %	Would not %
Total likely voters	**29**	**67**	31	66
Party registration				
Democrats	2	96	3	97
Republicans	83	13	85	11
No party preference/other	24	71	25	70
Political ideology				
Very conservative	84	14	89	8
Somewhat conservative	73	22	75	20
Moderate	26	66	26	70
Somewhat liberal	1	98	2	97
Very liberal	1	99	-	100
Region				
Los Angeles County	22	74	23	75
San Diego/Orange counties	37	60	39	59
Other Southern California	36	59	39	57
Central Valley	37	59	41	56
San Francisco Bay Area	19	77	21	77
Other Northern California	30	66	37	59
Gender				
Male	33	63	33	64
Female	25	71	28	69
Age				
18-29	16	80	17	79
30-39	19	77	24	72
40-49	32	63	32	66
50-64	31	65	39	59
65 or older	36	61	32	65
Race/ethnicity				
White non-Hispanic	32	65	37	61
Latino	20	74	19	79
Asian American	23	73	18	75
African American	18	81	16	83
Evangelical Christian				
Yes	52	43	58	39
No	23	73	24	74

Differences between 100% and the sum of each poll's percentages equal proportions giving a qualified response.

While most Republicans feel it would be a bad thing for other GOP candidates to challenge Trump in next year's primaries, 40% think it would be a good thing

Six in ten of the state's likely GOP primary voters (60%) say it would be a bad thing for other Republicans to run against President Trump in next year's GOP primaries.

However, a significant minority of likely Republican primary voters (40%) feel an intra-party challenge would be a good thing. Most likely to feel this way are Republican voters under age 40, 62% of whom think it would be a good thing for other GOP candidates to square off against Trump in the primaries.

The segments most likely to believe it would be bad for other Republicans to challenge the President are GOP voters who are very conservative (69%), seniors age 65 or older (67%) and evangelical Christians (66%).

Table 2
Would it be a good thing or bad thing for other Republicans to challenge Trump in next year's GOP primary (among Republicans likely to vote in the primary)

	Bad thing %	Good thing %
Total California voters	**60**	**40**
Political ideology		
Very conservative	69	31
Somewhat conservative	57	42
Moderate/liberal	54	46
Evangelical Christian		
Yes	66	34
No	58	42
Age		
18-39	38	62
40-64	62	38
65 or older	67	33
Gender		
Male	60	40
Female	60	39
Race/ethnicity		
White non-Hispanic	61	39
Ethnic	55	45
Education		
Not a college graduate	63	37
College graduate	58	42
Post graduate work	49	49

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

Record high proportion of Californians disapprove of Trump's job performance

Since Trump became President in 2017 large majorities of California voters have consistently given him very negative job performance marks. The latest poll finds the proportion disapproving reaching a record high (69%), while just 31% approve. In addition, among those offering a negative assessment, the vast majority strongly disapprove.

Table 3
Trend of the job performance of President Donald Trump is doing
(among California registered voters)

	September 2019 %	June 2019 %	April 2018 %	December 2017 %	May 2017 %
Approve	<u>**31**</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>28</u>
Strongly	**19**	21	18	18	NA
Somewhat	**12**	12	13	12	NA
Disapprove	<u>**69**</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>57</u>
Somewhat	**11**	10	8	9	NA
Strongly	**58**	57	59	57	NA
No opinion	**-**	-	2	4	15

NA: category not asked

Partisanship dominates assessments of the President's performance

Voter appraisals of Trump have consistently been characterized by very high levels of partisanship both here in California and across the country. This extreme partisanship is again evident in the latest poll. Nearly all of the Democrats polled (95%) say they disapprove of Trump's performance, while among Republicans 81% approve.

No Party Preference voters, who now account for more than a quarter of the state's electorate, are more in line with the views of Democratic voters than Republicans, with 72% disapproving and just 28% approving of the President's performance.

Opinions of the job Trump is doing are also strongly related to a voter's self-described political ideology. Virtually all liberals disapprove of the job Trump is doing, while conservatives, especially those identifying as very conservative, overwhelmingly approve of the President's performance. Political moderates offer a more than two-to-one negative appraisal.

There are also differences in views about the President's performance between voters who are evangelical Christians and those who are not. While a majority of the state's evangelicals (55%) approve of the job the President is doing, just 25% among those who do not consider themselves evangelical Christians approve of Trump.

In a regional basis, opinions of the President's performance are most negative among voters in the San Francisco Bay Area (78% disapproval) and in Los Angeles County (74%). Trump's job ratings are also extremely low among voters under age 30 and among African Americans.

Table 4
Job performance of President Trump across voter subgroups - Sept. 2019
(among California registered voters)

	Approve %	Disapprove %
Total registered voters	**31**	**69**
Party registration		
Democrats	5	95
Republicans	81	19
No party preference/other	28	72
Political ideology		
Very conservative	84	16
Somewhat conservative	70	30
Moderate	31	69
Somewhat liberal	5	95
Very liberal	1	99
Region		
Los Angeles County	26	74
Orange/San Diego counties	39	61
Other Southern California	34	64
Central Valley	36	64
San Francisco Bay Area	22	78
Other Northern California	35	65
Gender		
Male	36	64
Female	26	74
Age		
18-29	18	82
30-39	25	75
40-49	38	62
50-64	33	67
65 or older	38	62
Race/ethnicity		
White non-Hispanic	34	66
Latino	24	76
Asian American	31	69
African American	17	83
Evangelical Christian		
Yes	55	45
No	25	75

Californians more downbeat about the overall direction of the country now than they were at the beginning of the President's term

When asked to assess the overall direction of the country, nearly three in four Californians (72%) believe that things are off on the wrong track, while just 28% feel things in the U.S. they are going in the right direction. This is an even more negative appraisal than the negative view they had about the direction of the nation in March 2017 at the beginning of Trump's tenure as President. At that time 64% felt thing were on the wrong track and 36% felt they were moving in the right direction.

Partisanship again has a huge impact on voter perceptions. Greater than nine in ten of this state's registered Democrats (93%) believe the country is moving in the wrong direction, while just 7% see it heading in the right direction. By contrast, Republicans offer a far more upbeat appraisal, with twice as many (67%) feeling the nation is moving in the right direction as think it is on the wrong track (33%).

Table 5
Voters opinions of the overall direction of the country now vs. March 2017
at the beginning of Donald Trump's tenure as President
(among California registered voters)

	Total registered voters %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No party preference/ other %
September 2019				
Right direction	**28**	**7**	**67**	**25**
Wrong track	**72**	**93**	**33**	**75**
March 2017				
Right direction	36	18	74	32
Wrong track	64	82	26	68

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 off on the wrong track?

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

(IF LIKELY TO VOTE IN MARCH 2020 REPUBLICAN PRIMARY ELECTION) Do you think it would be a good thing or a bad thing if other Republican candidates ran against President Trump for the Republican nomination for President next year?

(IF LIKELY TO VOTE IN 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—definitely vote to re-elect, probably vote to re-elect, probably not vote to re-elect, or definitely not vote to re-elect?

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 13-18, 2019 among 4,527 registered voters statewide. The sample base for findings based on likely voters in the November 2020 general election is 3,945, while the sample base for results based on likely voters in next year's GOP presidential primary is 656.

The survey was administered by distributing email invitations to stratified random samples of the state's registered voters. Once the questionnaire and email invitations had been finalized, they were translated into the Spanish and reviewed for cultural appropriateness. Each email invited voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by IGS and provided a link to the IGS website where the survey was housed. Reminder emails were distributed to non-responding voters over the data collection period. An opt out link was provided at the bottom of each invitation for voters not wishing to participate or not wanting to receive future emails from IGS about the survey.

Samples of registered voters with email addresses were provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc., a leading supplier of registered voter listings. Voters' email addresses were derived from information contained on the state's official voter registration rolls. The overall sample of registered voters with email addresses was stratified in an attempt to obtain a proper balance of survey respondents across major segments of the registered voter population by age, gender and race/ethnicity.

To protect the anonymity of survey respondents, voters' email addresses and all other personally identifiable information were purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. At the conclusion of the data processing phase, post-stratification weights were applied to align the sample to population characteristics of the state's registered voter population. Likely voters were identified based on a voter's stated intention to vote in next year's primary or general election and factoring in their history of voting in past elections.

The sampling error associated with the survey results are difficult to calculate precisely due to the effects of sample stratification and post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that the results from the overall registered voter sample are subject to a sampling error of +/- 2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The approximate sampling error applicable to results from the sample of likely voters in the 2020 general election is +/- 2.5 percentage points, while those based on likely voters in the GOP primary is +/- 4 percentage points.

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

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, IGS is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. The co-directors of the Institute of Governmental Studies 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.