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Trump's job approval with California voters hits a new low

- Most of the recent decline comes from his Republican and conservative base –*
- Seven in ten Californians oppose the President's decision to go to war with Iran -*

by Mark DiCamillo,
Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*

Just 27% of California voters approve of the job Donald Trump is doing as president, while 72% disapprove. This huge 45-point deficit in voter approval is the widest on record both for the President's current term and for his previous term. In addition, a majority of those polled (64%) say they disapprove strongly of the President's performance, while just 14% approve strongly.

The state's Democratic voters and its Republicans remain miles apart in their evaluations of President Trump. Nearly all Democrats (96%) disapprove of the job he is doing, and just 3% approve. By contrast 76% of the state's Republicans approve, while 22% disapprove.

But most of the recent decline in Trump's approval is coming from within his GOP base. For example, the level of Republican approval of the President has declined 7 percentage points since the poll's last measure completed about one year ago in August 2025. In addition, the proportion of Republicans who strongly approve declined from 57% last year to 44% at present. Similar declines are seen among the state's conservative voters. By contrast, there has been relatively little change in the very dismal ratings given the President by the state's Democrats and liberal voters, nearly all of whom continue to downrate Trump's performance.

Large majorities of voters oppose the President's decision to go to war in Iran and believe the President's immigration policies are negatively affecting the California economy. Seven in ten voters (70%) now say they disapprove of the President's decision to go to war with Iran, while just 27% approve. Similarly, when asked whether Trump's immigration policies are helping or hurting the state's economy and local businesses, more Californians believe it is hurting rather than helping by nearly three to one.

IGS co-Director G. Cristina Mora notes, "The results reflect broader national trends in public opinion. Everyday voters are grappling with high costs as they try to make sense of new Trumpian policies and actions —immigrant detention, war, tariffs — that they feel are further exacerbating economic difficulties. This level of presidential disapproval heading into the midterms likely means bad news for Republicans and helps explain many of the attacks on voting, including mail-in voting, that we continue to see from the administration."

Summary of President Trump's job performance ratings in California over time

The *Berkeley IGS Poll* conducted eight large-scale statewide polls measuring California voter opinions of President Trump during his first term as president and the latest poll represents the third survey conducted during his second term.

A review of the results from these polls shows that large majorities of Californians, on the order of two in three or more, have consistently disapproved of Trump's performance as president, while only a third or less have approved. The latest poll's findings registering just 27% of the state's voters approving and 72% disapproving are the lowest ratings ever given to the President.

In addition, the current poll's finding that just 14% strongly approve of the President's performance is also the lowest on record, while also the 64% who report disapproving strongly is a new high.

<i>Table 1</i>						
Trend of Donald Trump's job performance ratings						
in both his first and second terms as President						
(among California registered voters)						
	Approve %	<i>Approve strongly</i> %	<i>Approve somewhat</i> %	Disapprove %	<i>Disapprove somewhat</i> %	<i>Disapprove strongly</i> %
<u><i>Current term</i></u>						
September 2026	27	14	13	72	7	64
August 2025	29	18	11	69	7	62
April 2025	30	15	15	68	9	59
<u><i>First term</i></u>						
September 2020	30	20	10	70	8	62
Late July 2020	29	18	11	71	8	63
January 2020	33	22	11	67	10	57
November 2019	32	20	12	68	10	58
September 2019	31	19	12	69	11	58
June 2019	33	21	12	67	10	57
April 2018	31	18	13	67	8	59
December 2017	30	18	12	66	9	57

Note: In this and succeeding tables differences between the sum of each row's percentages and 100% equal the proportion with no opinion.

Most of the decline in Trump's latest job ratings is coming from within his GOP base

Table 2 below compares the President's current approval ratings to those he received from the state's registered voters about a year ago across major subgroups of the electorate. What this comparison shows is that the recent decline in Trump's job approval ratings is coming largely from within his own GOP base rather than from the state's Democrats.

For example, while a large majority of GOP voters (76%) continues to approve of the job Trump is doing as president, this proportion has declined 7 points since the poll's last measurement in August 2025. In addition, the proportion of Republicans who strongly approve of Trump (44%) has declined 13 points since last year. Similar declines are observed among the state's conservative voters over this period. By contrast, there has been relatively little change in the very dismal ratings given the President by the state's Democrats and liberal voters, nearly all of whom continue to disapprove of the President's performance.

The latest poll also shows that large majorities of voters across all regions of the state downrate the President's performance. Voters in Los Angeles County and the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area offer the lowest evaluations of Trump but majorities across all other regions disapprove. In addition, while large majorities of voters across all major demographic subgroups of the electorate disapprove of the President's performance, younger voters, women and voters of color are the segments most likely to downrate him.

<i>Table 2</i>						
Comparing President Trump's current approval rating to one year ago across major subgroups of the California registered voter population						
	September 2026			August 2025		
	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>Approve</u> <u>Strongly</u> %	<u>Approve</u> %	<u>Disapprove</u> %	<u>Approve</u> <u>Strongly</u> %
Total statewide	27	72	14	29	69	18
Party registration						
Democrats	3	96	1	4	95	2
Republicans	76	22	44	83	16	57
No Party Pref./other	21	76	7	23	74	10
Political ideology						
Strongly conservative	82	16	59	85	14	72
Somewhat conservative	66	33	27	72	26	42
Moderate	22	74	7	26	71	9
Somewhat liberal	3	97	1	2	97	*
Strongly liberal	1	99	1	1	98	1
Region						
Los Angeles County	20	78	10	26	73	15
San Diego County	30	68	12	33	66	21
Orange County	34	65	17	37	61	18
Inland Empire	34	63	17	36	62	23
Central Coast	26	73	14	30	68	19
Sacramento/No. Valley	33	66	17	33	66	20
San Joaquin Valley	37	60	20	40	57	28
San Francisco Bay Area	18	80	9	17	82	10
North Coast/Sierras	39	60	24	43	53	34
Age						
18-29	14	83	4	15	83	4
30-39	21	76	8	27	70	15
40-49	28	70	12	31	68	16
50-64	33	66	18	39	61	27
65 or older	33	66	22	35	64	25
Gender						
Male	30	68	15	34	64	21
Female	24	75	12	25	74	15
Race/ethnicity						
White	31	69	17	32	68	21
Latino	23	74	11	27	71	16
Asian American	23	74	10	25	74	12
Black	14	84	5	21	76	12

Seven in ten Californians disapprove of the President's decision to go to war with Iran

One of the issues that is associated with the President's declining job approval marks relates to Californians' broad-based disapproval of Trump's decision to go to war with Iran. Statewide seven in ten voters (70%) say they disapprove of that decision, while just 27% approve.

Disapproval of Trump's decision to go to war are consistent with the President's overall job performance ratings across major subgroups of the electorate. The same partisan differences are present, as nearly all Democrats disapprove (94%), while three in four Republicans (75%) approve. Similar wide differences are seen between the state's liberal and conservative voters.

The same demographic subgroup variations are also present, with younger voters, women and voters of color expressing greater opposition to the President's decision to go to war with Iran than other subgroups.

<i>Table 3</i>			
Voter reactions to President Trump's decision to go to war with Iran			
<i>(among California registered voters)</i>			
	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
	%	%	%
Total statewide	27	70	3
Party registration			
Democrats	4	94	2
Republicans	75	21	3
No party preference/other	22	75	3
Political ideology			
Strongly conservative	81	17	2
Somewhat conservative	66	31	3
Moderate	24	71	5
Somewhat liberal	3	95	1
Strongly liberal	1	99	1
Age			
18-29	14	81	5
30-39	20	75	4
40-49	28	70	3
50-64	34	64	1
65 or older	35	65	*
Gender			
Male	31	67	2
Female	24	73	3
Race/ethnicity			
White	31	68	1
Latino	24	71	4
Asian American	23	73	4
Black	16	82	2

The President's immigration policies also seen as hurting the state's economy

By a nearly three-to-one margin (70% to 24%), Californians also believe that Trump's immigration policies are having a negative rather than positive impact on the state's economy and local businesses, with the same partisan and demographic variations as observed for voters' overall evaluations of Trump's job performance and his decision to go to war with Iran.

Table 4
**Voter perceptions of the impact that President Trump's immigration policies
are having on California's economy and local businesses**
(among California registered voters)

	Helping	Hurting	No opinion
	%	%	%
Total statewide	24	70	6
Party registration			
Democrats	3	95	2
Republicans	70	20	10
No party preference/other	19	72	9
Political ideology			
Strongly conservative	78	15	7
Somewhat conservative	59	30	10
Moderate	19	72	9
Somewhat liberal	3	95	2
Strongly liberal	1	98	2
Age			
18-29	13	80	7
30-39	22	72	6
40-49	27	66	8
50-64	31	63	6
65 or older	28	68	4
Gender			
Male	29	65	6
Female	20	74	5
Race/ethnicity			
White	28	67	6
Latino	21	74	5
Asian American	20	72	8
Black	20	76	4

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 15-20, 2026, among 6,989 California registered voters. Funding for the poll was provided in part by the *Los Angeles Times*.

Data collection for the poll was completed by distributing email and text message invitations to stratified random samples of the state's registered voters. Each email or text 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. An opt out link was provided for voters not wishing to receive further email invitations.

Samples of the state's registered voters 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 official voter registration rolls. The sample was stratified by age and gender to obtain a proper balance of survey respondents.

To protect the anonymity of respondents, the personally identifiable information of each voter that was listed on their voting record was purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. In addition, after the completion of data collection, post-stratification weights were applied to the survey data file to align the sample of registered voters to population characteristics of the registered voters both statewide and within major regions of the state.

The sampling error associated with the survey results are difficult to calculate precisely because of sample stratification and the post-stratification weighting. It is likely that findings based on the overall registered voter sample are subject to a sampling error of about +/-1.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Question wording

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

U.S. military operations against Iran began six months ago. President Trump said the attack was necessary to ensure that Iran did not develop nuclear weapons and to eliminate the threat it posed to neighboring countries and U.S. interests. Do you approve or disapprove of the president's decision to go to war with Iran?

What impact do you think President Trump's immigration policies are having on California's economy and local businesses?

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