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Californians hold mixed views of the job Biden is doing as President.

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*
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California voters offer a mixed assessment of the job Joe Biden is doing as President. The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds 50% of the state's voters approving of the President's performance, while 46% disapprove. This represents a slight improvement in voter appraisals from two months ago when 47% approved and 48% disapproved. Yet, this assessment is still much less positive than the ratings Californians gave Biden during his first year in office.

Since the poll's last measure in early February, Biden's overall job ratings appear to have benefitted some from the way he is managing the nation's relations with NATO, with a majority (56%) saying they approve of the President's performance in this area while just 33% disapprove.

Opinions are more divided when asked about the way the President is "dealing with the war in Ukraine" (51% approve vs. 43% disapprove) and "managing relations with Russia" (49% approve vs. 44% disapprove). Yet they are still more positive than negative.

On the other hand, Californians tend to downrate the President's performance on economic matters, with a majority disapproving of Biden's performance in "dealing with inflation" (59% to 34%) and more rating him negatively (50%) than positively (45%) in "managing of the nation's economy."

Partisanship continues to be a major factor in voter assessments of the President in each specific area, with large majorities of Democrats approving of Biden's performance and even larger majorities of Republicans disapproving.

These findings come from the latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* conducted March 29-April 5, 2022 among a random sample of 8,676 registered voters statewide. The poll was administered online in English and Spanish by the University of California, Berkeley's Institute of Governmental Studies.

Observed IGS co-director Eric Schickler, "Our findings suggest not only that the President's support has declined over the past year, it has also softened with fewer voters now strongly approving of Biden's performance and with several traditional Democratic constituencies offering a more tepid evaluation than a year ago."

Appraisals of President Biden’s job performance are mixed

The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds 50% of the state’s registered voters approving of Biden’s performance as President, while slightly fewer (46%) disapprove. This compares to a more divided 47% positive and 48% negative assessment two months ago but is significantly lower than the appraisals Californians gave him during his first year in office.

Table 1
Trend of voter appraisals of the overall job performance of President Joe Biden
(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 %
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

Decline in the President’s approval rating since last year has been broad-based

Views of the President have been and continue to be highly partisan. In the latest poll registered Democrats approve of Biden nearly four to one (76% to 21%). On the other hand, greater than nine in ten Republicans (93%) offer a negative assessment, 83% of whom disapprove strongly. No Party Preference voters are about evenly divided, with 45% approving and 48% disapproving.

A comparison of Biden’s current job ratings to those he received one year ago across major demographic subgroups of the state’s voting population shows significant declines across virtually all major subgroups, with the largest percentage-point declines in the following segments:

- Asian American (-18 percentage points) and Latino voters (-18).
- Younger voters, including both those age 18-29 (-19) and voters 30-39 (-18).

Table 2
Comparing President Biden’s current job ratings to those he received one year ago
across major subgroups of the California registered voter population

	April 2022			April 2021		
	Approve %	Disapprove %	No opinion %	Approve %	Disapprove %	No opinion %
Total registered voters	50	46	4	62	34	4
<u>Party registration</u>						
Democrats	76	21	3	90	7	3
Republicans	7	93	--	11	87	2
No party preference/other	45	48	7	60	34	6
<u>Political ideology</u>						
Strongly conservative	13	87	--	12	86	2
Somewhat conservative	22	76	2	25	73	2
Moderate	51	45	4	64	29	7
Somewhat liberal	77	18	5	92	5	3
Strongly liberal	78	18	4	91	7	2
<u>Region</u>						
Los Angeles County	54	43	3	69	27	4
San Diego County	51	46	3	60	37	3
Orange County	47	48	5	53	43	4
Inland Empire	45	52	3	52	43	5
Central Coast	48	47	5	59	36	5
Central Valley	39	56	5	51	45	4
San Francisco Bay Area	62	36	2	73	24	3
North Coast/Sierras	47	51	2	46	52	2
<u>Gender</u>						
Male	48	50	2	59	38	3
Female	53	43	4	65	31	4
<u>Age</u>						
18-29	43	47	10	62	29	9
30-39	47	50	3	65	31	4
40-49	50	47	3	63	33	4
50-64	51	47	2	60	38	2
65 or older	59	40	1	61	38	1
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>						
White non-Hispanic	50	49	1	56	41	3
Latino	51	42	7	69	25	6
Asian/Pacific Islander	51	43	6	69	25	6
Black	60	38	2	73	22	5

Voter appraisals of President in five specific areas

A majority of voters offer a favorable assessment of the President’s performance in “managing relations with NATO,” with 56% of voters approving and 33% disapproving. Opinions are more divided when asked to appraise the way the President is “dealing with the war in Ukraine” (51% approve vs. 43% disapprove) and “managing relations with Russia” (49% approve vs. 44% disapprove).

On the other hand, assessments of the President are more negative than positive on economic matters, with a majority downrating Biden’s performance in “dealing with inflation” (59% to 34%) and more voters offering a negative (50%) than positive rating (45%) of the way the President is “managing the nation’s economy.”

Partisanship plays a major role in voter assessments in each area, with majorities of Democrats approving of Biden’s performance and even larger majorities of Republicans disapproving.

Table 3
Voter appraisals of the job President Biden is doing in five areas
(among California registered voters)

	Approve %	Disapprove %	No opinion %
<u>Managing relations with NATO</u>			
Total registered voters	<u>56</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>11</u>
Democrat	75	13	12
Republican	24	69	7
No Party Preference/other	52	33	15
<u>Dealing with the war in Ukraine</u>			
Total registered voters	<u>51</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>6</u>
Democrat	71	22	7
Republican	16	80	4
No Party Preference/other	48	45	7
<u>Managing relations with Russia</u>			
Total registered voters	<u>49</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>7</u>
Democrat	71	21	8
Republican	12	84	4
No Party Preference/other	44	47	9
<u>Managing the nation’s economy</u>			
Total registered voters	<u>45</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>5</u>
Democrat	69	25	6
Republican	6	93	1
No Party Preference/other	39	54	7
<u>Dealing with inflation</u>			
Total registered voters	<u>34</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>7</u>
Democrat	54	37	9
Republican	5	95	--

Other findings from the poll

Some other related findings from the poll include these:

- Just one in four Californians (26%) describes the U.S. as generally moving in the right direction while 66% think it is on the wrong track.
- When voters are asked to assess the job that home state Vice President Kamala Harris is doing, 35% say they approve, 45% disapprove and 20% have no opinion.
- In addition, when asked to offer their overall evaluations of the state’s two congressional leaders in Washington, Democratic Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Republican House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, Pelosi’s scores a bit better, with slightly more than four in ten (42%) holding a favorable opinion of the Speaker than they do of McCarthy (28%). Nevertheless, in both cases more voters hold an unfavorable opinion of each (48% in relation to Pelosi and 49% about McCarthy). Just 10% have no opinion of Pelosi, while more than twice as many (23%) are unable to offer an opinion of McCarthy.

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 March 29-April 5, 2022, among 8,676 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 the City of Los Angeles, administered using the same methods, to enable the poll to examine specific issues of interest to voters in that City and to the *Times*. After the completion of data collection, the results were weighted to realign the Los Angeles City sample to its actual share of the statewide 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 sample of registered voters are subject to a sampling error of approximately +/-2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Question wording

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

Do you approve or disapprove of the job President Biden is doing in the following areas?

(See release for areas measured)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Kamala Harris is handling her job as Vice President?

Two Californians, Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Republican House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy are the leaders of their parties in the U.S. House of Representatives. Generally speaking, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of each leader?

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. The director of the *Berkeley IGS Poll* is Mark DiCamillo. For a copy of the detailed tabulations to this report or a listing of past poll reports issued by the poll, please visit <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.