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Majorities of California voters hold strong, negative views of Donald Trump and support his conviction in the Senate.

While most GOP voters stand behind him, cracks appear within the ranks when asked whether Trump should run again for President in 2024.

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*
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As his impeachment trial begins in the U.S. Senate, Donald Trump continues to engender strong and mostly unfavorable feelings among California voters. The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds that twice as many Californians hold negative (64%) than positive (32%) views of the former President. Opinions on both sides are strongly held, as nearly all of those offering unfavorable opinions of Trump say they are strongly unfavorable and most of those viewing him positively express strongly favorable views of the former President.

Similar results are observed when Californians are asked what action the Senate should take in its impeachment trial of Trump. Among the overall electorate, 63% support the Senate convicting Trump, 57% of whom are strongly supportive. Opinions are just as strongly felt among the 32% of voters opposed to the Trump's conviction, with 28% strongly opposed.

Most of these differences in perspective are directly tied to the partisanship of voters, as 92% of registered Democrats support Trump's conviction in the Senate compared to just 11% among the state's Republicans.

In addition to believing Trump was a major factor contributing to the storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6, most Californians cite a number of other factors as contributing to the event. These include social media platforms, the polarization of U.S. politics, disinformation about the presidential election, Republican officials claiming the election was stolen from Trump, and individuals and groups who support white nationalism.

While California Republicans largely stand behind the former President in the Senate impeachment trial and do not believe Trump was a major contributor to the Capitol takeover, the idea of Trump running for president again in 2024 creates a significant divide within the GOP's ranks. Support for a possible Trump bid for the GOP nomination in 2024 is very strong among the majority of Party members who identify themselves more as Trump supporters than

supporters of the Republican Party, or who say they are supporters of both Trump and the Party. Yet, among the one in three Republicans who say they identify more with the Party than with Trump, far fewer (41%) are inclined to back a Trump election bid in 2024.

Observed IGS Co-Director Eric Schickler, “These results suggest that Trump continues to have a strong base of support within the Party, even if he does not stay involved as a potential candidate. But they also indicate an appetite, among at least some Republicans, for a shift in direction moving forward.”

Large majority holds strong and highly negative views of Trump

As was true throughout most of his presidency, Californians’ views of former President Trump remain largely negative. In the latest survey twice as many voters here say their opinion of Trump is unfavorable overall (64%) than hold a favorable view (32%). Opinions among both groups are strongly held, with nearly all of those holding negative views of the former President feeling this way strongly, while most of those who view Trump positively hold strongly positive opinions of him.

Most of these differences are partisan-based. Among the state’s Democrats, 85% view him negatively, nearly all of whom (82%) report strongly negative opinions. By contrast, three in four of the state’s Republican voters (74%) have a favorable opinion of Trump, with 48% feeling this way strongly. The views of No Party Preference voters largely mirror those of the overall electorate.

Table 1
Overall voter opinions of former President Donald Trump
(among California registered voters)

	Total registered voters	Democrats	Republicans	No Party Preference
	%	%	%	%
<u>Favorable</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>29</u>
Strongly	19	6	48	14
Somewhat	13	4	36	15
<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>64</u>
Somewhat	7	3	10	9
Strongly	57	82	12	55
No opinion	4	5	4	7

Two-to-one majority supports Senate conviction of Trump in its impeachment trial

When Californians are asked their opinions about what action the Senate should take in its impeachment trial of former President Trump, by a two-to-one margin most voters here favor conviction. Statewide, 63% of the electorate supports the Senate voting to convict Trump, with 57% saying they feel strongly about this. Sentiments are just as strongly held among voters opposed to Trump’s conviction. Of the 32% of Californians opposed to Senate conviction of the former President, 28% feel this way strongly.

Partisan differences of opinion about the Senate trial dominate. Among the state’s Democrats 92% favor conviction, with 86% feeling strongly about this. Conversely, 86% of the state’s Republicans oppose Trump’s conviction in the Senate, 80% of whom hold this view strongly. The views of No Party Preference voters once again mirror those of the overall electorate, with 63% favoring conviction and 29% opposed.

Table 2
In the U.S. Senate’s impeachment trial of Donald Trump, do you favor or oppose the Senate voting to convict Trump and disqualifying him from holding elective office (among California registered voters)

	Total registered voters	Democrats	Republicans	No Party Preference
	%	%	%	%
<u>Favor</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>92</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>63</u>
Strongly	57	86	8	53
Somewhat	6	6	3	10
<u>Oppose</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>29</u>
Somewhat	4	2	6	7
Strongly	28	3	80	22
No opinion	5	3	3	8

In addition to faulting Trump, Californians believe a number of other factors contributed to the storming of the Capitol

While most Californians (67%) believe then-President Trump was a major factor contributing to the storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6, majorities also cite a number of other factors as contributing to the event. For example, 78% of voters single out social media platforms as a major factor, 77% blame the polarization of U.S. politics, and 75% fault the spreading of disinformation about the presidential election.

Two in three voters (67%) also say that Republican elected officials who claimed that the election was stolen from Trump were major contributors, while 65% feel individuals and groups supporting white nationalism also were to blame. A 54% majority even points to the mainstream news media as a major factor leading up to the event.

The view that social media platforms and the polarization of American politics were major contributors to the events in Washington on January 6 is bipartisan. By contrast, there are huge differences between Democratic and Republican voters when asked whether they believe then-President Donald Trump was a major factor contributing to the event, with nearly all Democrats (93%) saying this compared to just 19% among the state’s Republicans.

There are also wide partisan differences when asked about the culpability of Republican elected officials who claimed the election was stolen from Trump, and whether individuals and groups supporting white nationalism were to major factors in the riot. In both cases Republican voters are far less likely than Democrats to feel they were major contributors to these events. On the other hand, GOP voters are much more inclined than Democrats to cite the mainstream

news media as a major contributor, with more Republicans in fact blaming the mainstream news media than any other single factor.

Table 3
“Major factors” that Californians believe contributed to
the storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6
(among California registered voters)

	Total registered voters	Democrats	Republicans	No Party Preference
	%	%	%	%
Social media platforms	78	80	77	77
Polarization of U.S. politics	77	78	73	78
Disinformation about the presidential election	75	86	55	73
President Donald Trump	67	93	19	70
Republican elected officials claiming the election was stolen from Donald Trump	67	88	28	66
Individuals and groups who support white nationalism	65	87	23	67
The mainstream news media	54	38	83	55
Incoming President Joe Biden	28	19	47	26

Two-thirds of the state’s Republicans would back a Trump re-election bid in 2024, but cracks appear within the GOP ranks

Trump’s standing with California Republicans is such that two in three (65%) say they would be inclined to back him should he decide to seek the Republican presidential nomination again in 2024. This includes 49% who say they would be strongly inclined to do so. About one in four Republicans (23%) say they would not be inclined to back the former President again in 2024. Another 12% are undecided.

The poll attempted to subdivide the overall GOP electorate into segments based on their identification with the Republican Party and their identification with Trump himself. In this setting, 24% of the state’s GOP voters said they personally identify more with Trump than with the Republican Party, 33% see themselves more as a supporter of the Party than Trump, while 31% say they identify with both Trump and the Party. Another 12% say neither or have no opinion.

This typology uncovers a deep split in GOP voter preferences toward a possible Trump re-election bid in 2024. Virtually all Republicans who identify more with Trump than the Party (“Trump identifiers”) and nearly nine in ten of those who identify with both Trump and the Party would be inclined to support the former president as the GOP presidential standard bearer in 2024. By contrast, among Republicans who identify with the Party more than Trump (“Party identifiers”), just 41% say they would back his candidacy for their Party’s nomination in 2024.

Table 4
Inclination of Republicans to support Donald Trump if he were to run again for the GOP Presidential nomination in 2024 – among three segments of the Republican Party (among California registered Republicans)

	Total Republicans	Identifies with . . .		
		Trump more than the Party	The Party more than Trump	Both Trump and the GOP
	%	%	%	%
<u>Inclined</u>	65	95	41	88
Strongly	49	90	20	66
Somewhat	16	5	21	22
<u>Not inclined</u>	23	2	46	4
Somewhat	8	1	17	3
Strongly	15	1	29	1
No opinion	12	3	13	8

Descriptions offered by Californians about Joe Biden’s election as President

Voters in the survey were also offered six possible adjectives to describe their reactions to the election of Joe Biden as President. Most commonly cited by California voters in this setting was “relieved” (31%). Next more frequently chosen were “excited” and “worried,” each selected by 21%. Another 13% said they felt “satisfied,” while 8% described themselves as “angry” and 6% said they were “frustrated.”

Not surprisingly, reactions to Biden’s election as President vary widely by Party. Most Democrats describe themselves as either “relieved” or “excited.” By contrast, the most common description chosen by the state’s Republican voters was “worried.” However, among the segment of GOP voters who are “Trump identifiers,” the most common description expressed about Biden’s election was “angry.”

Table 5
Which best describes how you feel about the election of Joe Biden as President? (among California registered voters)

	Total registered voters				“Trump identifiers”
		Democrats	Republicans	No Party Preference	
	%	%	%	%	%
Relieved	31	43	5	36	--
Excited	21	34	2	15	--
Worried	21	5	48	22	35
Satisfied	13	15	4	16	--
Angry	8	1	25	6	49
Frustrated	6	1	15	5	16

Six in ten Californians think history will judge the Trump presidency as “one of the worst”

California voters were also asked to offer their opinions of how history will ultimately judge the Trump presidency on a five-point scale ranging from “one of the best” to “one of the worst.” In this setting six in ten voters (60%) say they think Trump will be viewed as “one of the worst” presidents and another 9% say “below average.” This compares to just 12% who feel he will be judged as “one of the best” presidents, while another 9% say “above average.” Relatively few (6%) think the Trump presidency will ultimately be judged as “average.”

As with nearly all matters relating to Trump, opinions are highly partisan, with 88% of Democrats saying that the Trump presidency will be viewed as “one of the worst,” compared to just 13% of Republicans. By contrast, six in ten Republicans think history will judge the Trump presidency favorably, with 36% saying it will be viewed as “one of the best” or 24% terming it “above average.”

Table 6
Voter assessments of how history will judge the Trump presidency
(among California registered voters)

	Total registered voters	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>No Party Preference</u>
	%	%	%	%
One of the best	12	1	36	8
Above average	9	1	24	8
Average	6	2	9	9
Below average	9	6	10	14
One of the worst	60	88	13	57
No opinion	4	2	8	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 January 23-29, 2021 among 10,357 California registered voters.

The survey was administered by distributing email invitations to stratified random samples of the state's registered voters. 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 state's official voter registration rolls. Prior to the distribution of emails, the overall sample was stratified by age and gender in an attempt 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 due to the effects 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.

Questions Asked

Which of the following best describes how you personally feel about the election of Joe Biden as President?

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

(IF REGISTERED AS A REPUBLICAN) If Trump were to run for president again in 2024, how inclined would you be to support him as the Republican Party's nominee?

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the following elected officials: Former President Donald Trump?

How do you think history will judge the presidency of Donald Trump overall?

As you know, on January 6 a mob of protesters stormed the U.S. Capitol while Congress was meeting to certify the results of the 2020 presidential election. To what extent do you feel each of the following was a factor in contributing to the eventual storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6? **(SEE RELEASE FOR ITEMS, ORDERING RANDOMIZED)**

Now that the U.S. House of Representatives has voted to impeach President Trump a second time, the matter now goes to the Senate to decide whether or not to convict the President. Do you favor or oppose the U.S. Senate voting to convict President Trump and disqualify him from holding elected office in the future?

Detailed tabulations reporting the results to each question can be found at the *Berkeley IGS Poll* website at <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/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 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 complete listing of stories issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* go to <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.