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**Partisanship colors voter opinions of the way the media cover the news;
Republicans trust media less, feel its coverage of the President is too critical,
and are less able to discern whether political news reports are reliable.**

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Republicans and Democrats in California live in alternate universes when asked about their views about the way the media in this country cover the news. A new statewide *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds that nearly eight in ten GOP voters have little or no trust in the media and feel its coverage of the Trump presidency to date has been too critical. Nearly half of Republicans also say they have difficulty determining whether political news reports are reliable.

By contrast, large majorities of the state's Democrats report having a great deal or a fair amount of trust in the way the media report the news, feel its coverage of the Trump presidency has not been critical enough and express confidence in their ability to determine whether a political news report is reliable.

When the views of all voters are examined, the overall California electorate hold mixed opinions about the media. For example, when asked about their trust in the way the media cover the news, slightly more than half (55%) report having a great deal or a fair amount of trust, while 45% have not very much or no trust at all in it.

Nevertheless, these mixed assessments are more upbeat than the views of the overall American public. According to a *Gallup Poll* conducted last fall, just one in three Americans (32%) reported having a great deal or a fair amount of trust, while over two thirds (68%) had little or no trust in the way the media report the news.

Views about the news media are also strongly correlated with their voting preferences in the 2016 presidential election. Greater than eight in ten (82%) of Californians supporting Donald Trump last year say they have little or no trust in the way the media report the news. This

contrasts sharply with the views of Hillary Clinton supporters, 77% of whom say they have a great deal or a fair amount of trust in media reports.

Table 1
Trust and confidence that California voters have in the way media report the news

	Great deal %	Fair amount %	Not very much %	None at all %
Total California voters	16	39	30	15
U.S. public*	8	24	41	27
Party registration				
Democrats	25	50	19	6
Republicans	6	15	45	34
No Party Preference/other	10	42	34	14
2016 Presidential vote				
Clinton	25	52	19	4
Trump	5	13	44	38
Did not vote/other	4	36	48	12

(* National poll results based on a Gallup Poll conducted a September 7-11, 2016 among a random sample of 1,020 U.S. adults.)

Perceived fairness of media reports about President Trump are divided and highly partisan

When asked about the fairness of the news media’s reporting of the Trump presidency during its first 100 days, 38% of voters overall say think the media’s coverage of the president has been too critical, while 43% take an opposite view and believe it has not been critical enough. Just 19% feel that the media’s coverage of the President has been generally fair.

Greater than eight in ten Republicans (84%) feel the media the media have been too critical in their news reporting of Trump. The state’s registered Democrat hold contrary opinions, with nearly two thirds (62%) believing the media have not been critical enough in their news reports about the new president.

The lines are even more sharply drawn when comparing voters supporting Clinton’s presidential candidacy last year to those who voted for Trump. Among Trump supporters, nearly all (91%) feel the media’s coverage of the president has been too critical, while among Clinton supporters two thirds (66%) feel the media have not been critical enough.

Table 2
How California voters perceive the fairness of media news stories about Donald Trump since he has been president

	Too critical %	Generally fair %	Not critical enough %
Total California voters	38	19	43
Party registration			
Democrats	15	23	62
Republicans	84	6	10
No Party Preference/other	32	25	43
2016 Presidential vote			
Clinton	9	25	66
Trump	91	5	4
Did not vote/other	42	20	38

Republicans much less confident than Democrats in their ability to determine the reliability of political news stories

The poll also asked voters how well they thought they could determine whether political news reports in the media are newsworthy and reliable. The opinions of the overall electorate are again divided and highly partisan.

Statewide, three in ten voters (30%) feel they can judge whether political news reports are reliable “very well”. But, nearly as many (25%) report having difficulty in making these assessments and say they can do this “not very well.” Another 45% say they could make these judgements “somewhat well.”

Republicans are much less confident than Democrats in thinking they can judge the reliability of political news reports in the media. Just 17% of Republicans feel they can discern “very well,” while nearly three times as many (48%) say they can do this “not very well.” The reverse is true among the state’s registered Democrats, with 37% saying they can determine the reliability of media news “very well” and just 11% are unable to do this well.

Among voters casting their ballots for Trump, 50% feel they cannot easily determine whether political news reports are reliable, while just 16% say that can do this very well. Among Clinton supporters, just 9% say they cannot easily determine the accuracy of political news reports in the media, while 40% feel they can do this very well.

Table 3
How well California voters think they can determine whether news about public affairs or politics in the media is newsworthy and reliable

	Very well %	Somewhat well %	Not very well %
Total California voters	30	45	25
Party registration			
Democrats	37	52	11
Republicans	17	35	48
No Party Preference/other	29	46	25
2016 Presidential vote			
Clinton	40	51	9
Trump	16	34	50
Did not vote/other	18	49	33

These results, along with many other reports from the latest *Berkeley IGS Poll*, testify to the depth and scope of political polarization in the state, with virtually every response about political leaders, policies and institutions dictated primarily by a voter’s party affiliation.

About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a survey of 1,000 California registered voters conducted by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at UC, Berkeley. The *Berkeley IGS Poll* was administered online by YouGov March 13-20, 2017 in English and Spanish. According to YouGov, results from the overall sample have a margin of error of +/-3.6%.

YouGov administered the survey by inviting California registered voters who are included among its online panel of over 1.5 million Americans to participate in the poll. Panelists were recruited using a variety of methods, including telephone-to-web and mail-to-web recruitment, partner-sponsored solicitations, web-based advertising and email campaigns, as well as through telephone and mail surveys. Eligible voters were chosen to participate in the poll using a proprietary sampling technology frame that establishes interlocking demographic and regional targets, so that the characteristics of those polled approximate the profile of the state's overall registered voter population. After survey administration, YouGov also applied statistical weights to align the sample to demographic and regional characteristics of the state's registered voter population.

IGS was responsible for the development and translation into Spanish of all questions included in the survey. The results in this report are based on answers given by California voters to the following questions:

In general, how much trust and confidence do you have in the mass media, such as newspapers, TV, radio and the Internet, when it comes to reporting the news fully, accurately and fairly?

When you see, hear or read news about public affairs or politics in the mass media, how well do you feel you can determine whether the information is newsworthy and reliable?

From the news stories about Donald Trump that you have read or seen since he became president, do you think the news media have been too critical of Trump, not critical enough, or have they been generally fair in their treatment of 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 (UC) system's flagship Berkeley campus, it is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. For a complete listing of all poll stories issued by the Berkeley IGS Poll during 2017, go to <https://igs.berkeley.edu/news/berkeley-igs-poll-results>.