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QuickTakes!

Stockton Poll Finds that New Jersey Residents Give Low Marks to Trump Administration So Far

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The Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy polled 704 adult New Jersey residents from March 22 to March 29, 2017, to assess sentiment towards President Donald Trump. According to poll results, Donald Trump in the first two months of his administration has failed to win over New Jersey residents, majorities of whom disapprove of his performance and actions so far.

Only 35 percent of New Jersey adults have a very favorable or somewhat favorable view of the new president, with 56 percent viewing him unfavorably, including 46 percent very unfavorably. Eight percent are unsure. His job performance numbers in the Garden State are even lower, with only 26 percent saying he is doing a good or excellent job as president. Seventy percent think Trump is doing a fair job (24 percent) or is doing poorly (47 percent).

Fifty-four percent think the country is on the wrong track, while 37 percent think the United States is going in the right direction and 14 percent are unsure.

While overall ratings are low for the president, his GOP base in New Jersey still supports him. Two-thirds (66 percent) of Republicans say the country is headed in the right direction. Seventy-seven percent of Republicans have a favorable impression of Trump, and 65 percent say he is doing a good or excellent job. However, Democrats and independents generally give him a “thumbs down.”

Democrat Hillary Clinton won New Jersey in the November election by a margin of 56-41 percent.

“People tend to give a new president the benefit of the doubt when he first takes office, even if they didn’t vote for him,” said Sharon Schulman, executive director of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University. “These are unusually low numbers of support.”

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Both landline and cell phones were called by live interviewers from the Stockton University campus. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.7 percentage points and higher for data subsets.

Respondents across political parties disapprove of the Republican-controlled Congress' handling of one of Trump's signature issues, repeal of the American Care Act, or Obamacare. Only 13 percent think Congress has done a good job, including 2 percent rating it as excellent. A majority (53 percent) rate it as poor, and 29 percent say Congress has done a fair job. The negative ratings cut across party lines. Asked what they would like Trump and Congress to do on Obamacare, 71 percent want to keep the parts of the law that work and fix what doesn't work, while 12 percent say leave the law as is and 14 percent want Obamacare completely repealed.

On another major Trump campaign issue, 56 percent of New Jersey adults oppose the president's ban on travel to the United States from six Muslim-majority countries. Thirty-seven percent support the ban, and 7 percent are unsure.

Regarding intelligence community claims that Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential election, 67 percent say they are someone or very concerned about Russia. Ten percent are somewhat unconcerned, and 22 percent are not concerned at all, including 48 percent of Republicans.

A 62-percent majority thinks it is important that Trump release his tax returns, while 37 percent say it is somewhat unimportant or not important at all. And a similar majority – 61 percent – thinks Trump should stop using Twitter as president. Twenty-four percent think he should continue tweeting, and 8 percent wish he would moderate his statements or use better judgment when tweeting, with 6 percent unsure.

Finally, a majority of 62 percent feels it is more important for members of Congress to compromise in order to address issues than it is to stand firm on principles. Twenty-nine percent think it is more important to stand on principle than to compromise, with 9 percent unsure. The results are similar to the findings of an October 2016 statewide Stockton Poll in which 66 percent wanted Congress to compromise versus 27 percent saying members should stick with their principles.

“This is our second Stockton University Poll in which the public says it wants Congress to work together to resolve issues,” said John Froonjian, a Hughes Center researcher who manages the Polling Institute.

The complete poll results can be found at Stockton.edu/hughescenter.

Methodology

A statewide public opinion poll was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter) at Stockton

University. Live interviewers on the Stockton campus called both landlines and cell phones from March 22-29, 2017. The poll was conducted with 704 adult residents of New Jersey. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.7 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level and is higher for subsets. Data are weighted based on United States Census Bureau demographics for New Jersey.

About the Hughes Center

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter) at Stockton University serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey, and promotes the civic life of New Jersey through engagement, education and research. The center is named for William J. Hughes, whose distinguished career includes service in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ambassador to Panama and as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stockton. The Hughes Center can be found at <https://facebook.com/StocktonHughesCenter> and can be followed on Twitter @hughescenter.