

MARIST POLL™

The March for Gun Control: Will It Make a Difference?

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This Marist Poll Reports:

Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to participate in tomorrow's March For Our Lives in Washington, D.C. to end gun violence and mass shootings in the United States. With additional marches planned across the country, do Americans think these demonstrations will help their cause?

More than one in three U.S. residents (36%) say the march will help the effort to end gun violence, and only 7% think it will hurt the cause. A majority though (52%) believe the march will make no difference, and 5% are unsure.

60% of Democrats say the march will help in the fight to curb gun violence. Although 56% of independents think it will make little difference, among those who think it will have an impact, 34% think it will help and only 7% think it will hurt. 65% of Republicans do not think the march will make a difference.

A majority of Americans (54%) say it is more important to control gun violence in the nation than to protect gun rights including 34% of gun owners. 39% of people nationally believe it's more important to protect gun rights, and 7% are unsure. These findings are similar to those reported in a December 2017 Marist Poll.

President Trump's approval rating among Americans is 40%, comparable to the 42% he received in Marist's survey conducted earlier this month. 51% currently disapprove, and 9% are unsure.

The proportion of Americans who strongly disapprove of how Trump is doing in office (38%) continues to outnumber the proportion who strongly approve (22%).

More than eight in ten Democrats (85%) disapprove of how the president is doing his job, and a similar 87% of Republicans approve. Among independents, 38% approve, down from 43% previously, and 53% disapprove, up from 48%.

President Trump retains the support of his base – 89% of those who say they voted for him in 2016, 54% of white residents without a college education, and 67% of white Evangelical Christians approve of the job he is doing. There has been little change among these groups since earlier this month. The only other group among whom Trump breaks fifty percent is Americans who reside in rural parts of the country (51%).

36% of Americans have a favorable opinion of President Trump. 55% have an unfavorable perception of the president, and 9% are unsure. These proportions are similar to those he received in early February.

President Trump's standing is in the context of a persistently pessimistic American populous. 57% of Americans, identical to 57% in a Marist Poll conducted in February, perceive the nation to be moving in the wrong direction. 34% say it is moving in the right one. Previously, 37% of residents thought the nation was on the right track. Nine percent are currently unsure.

Turning to the generic ballot for this year's midterm congressional elections, the Democrats (44%) have a 5-point advantage over the Republicans (39%) among registered voters nationally. Six percent support neither party's candidate, and 12% are undecided. When Marist last asked this question in late February, the Democrats (46%) were ahead of the Republicans (39%) by 7 points.

A clear partisan divide exists with most Republicans (90%) and Democrats (89%) supporting their respective party's candidate. Among independents, there is little consensus, the Democratic candidate receives 37% to 33% for the Republican. Nine percent support neither party's candidate, and a notable 22% of independents are undecided.

"There's no surprise that Democrats and Republicans are in line with their respective parties," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "What's driving the Democratic advantage is small city and suburban women who are a net plus 19 more likely to vote for the Democrat than the Republican in their district."

A prominent gender gap exists in the suburbs and small cities. 52% of women who live in a small city or in the suburbs support the Democratic candidate in their district. 42% of men in these regions say the same. Of note, the proportion of small city or suburban men who back the Republican in their district is 40%, down from 48% late last month.

Nearly half of Americans (48%) perceive Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election to be fair. 26% think the probe is unfair, and 27% are unsure. Earlier this month, 51% reported the investigation was fair, 26% said it was not, and 23% were unsure.

Nearly seven in ten Americans (69%) also think Mueller should be allowed to finish his investigation, similar to the 70% who had this opinion in early February. 12% think he should be fired, down from 16% previously. 19% are unsure. Regardless of demographic group, including Republicans, at a least a majority believe Mueller should be allowed to conclude his investigation.

“Although nearly half of Americans don’t have an opinion of Mueller, people think the investigation is fair” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “If President Trump moves to remove the special counsel, he would only be fueling his Democratic and independent opponents, but this would also be a concern to his core followers – strong Republicans, those who voted for the president in 2016, white Americans without a college education, and white evangelicals.”

33% of Americans, unchanged from early February, have a favorable view of Robert Mueller. However, the proportion of those with an unfavorable view of him is down from 27% to 20%. More Americans, 24% up from 18% are unsure how to rate him, and a similar number from last time (22%) have never heard of him (23%).