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Americans Believe Economy is Strong, But How's the President Doing? 2020 for the Democrats: On Track or Out of Touch? For Immediate Release

Contact: Lee M. Miringoff
Barbara L. Carvalho
Mary E. Griffith
Marist College
845.575.5050

This NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll Reports:

Many Americans perceive the national economy to be strong and consider themselves to be reaping the benefits of it. However, those impressions do not translate into an improved re-election standing for President Donald Trump.

President Trump's job approval rating has inched up to its highest point since taking office (44%), due mainly to a boost from independents (42% from 35% in June). However, with 52% of Americans reporting they disapprove of how Trump is doing his job, his overall approval rating remains upside down. When last reported in June, 41% approved, and 49% disapproved. The president previously achieved his highest job score (43%) in mid-February.

Of note, 29% of Americans who approve of how Trump is performing in office, strongly do so. 41% of those who disapprove strongly hold this opinion.

The president has not convinced voters, including those all-important independents, that candidate Trump is worthy of a second term. 39% of voters nationally report they will definitely vote *for* President Trump in 2020, but a majority (53%) say they will definitely vote *against* him. This is little changed from last month's findings.

About one in three independent voters (33%), an increase from 24%, say they will definitely vote for the president. A majority (54%), comparable to 55% previously, say they will vote against him. Independent voters are less unsure, 13% from 21% last month.

Although President Trump receives a lackluster reelection score, Americans think the economy is strong and approve of how he is handling it. Majorities of Americans (53%) and registered voters (52%) approve of how President Donald Trump is handling the U.S. economy, including 52% of independents. When this question was last reported in February 2017, voters nationally divided about Trump's handling of the economy. 45% approved, and 43% disapproved. 48% of independents approved of his approach to the economy at that time.

Nearly two in three Americans (65%), including 62% of independents, say the economy is actually working well for them personally. Republicans (93%) overwhelmingly have this opinion while Democrats divide. 46% of Democrats think the economy is benefitting them, and 50% do not.

The president fares less well in the area of foreign policy. Although slightly more Americans give him a thumbs up than did just two years ago, only 42% of Americans and registered voters approve of his job performance on the international stage. 53% disapprove. When last reported in April 2017, 40% of registered voters approved of how Trump handled foreign policy, and 49% disapproved.

Americans divide about whether the policies put forth by the Democratic candidates running for president will generally move the nation in the wrong direction (46%) or the right one (43%). Of note, a plurality of independents (48%) think the Democrats' policy proposals would generally move the nation in the wrong direction. But, on an issue-by-issue basis, there are many areas where a majority of independents agree with the Democrats' positions.

"Independents are generally satisfied with the economy and how President Trump is handling it, but many still remain unconvinced about giving him another term in office," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "On the other hand, independents are also not persuaded that the current field of Democrats holds the answer for the country's future."

Here is where Americans line up on a host of issues the Democratic candidates are discussing on the campaign trail:

Gun Policy:

Americans support so-called common sense gun policies, especially requiring background checks for gun purchases at gun shows or other private sales. In fact, requiring background checks is overwhelmingly thought to be a good idea (89%) and receives widespread bipartisan support.

Partisan consensus, though, is lacking on the issue of banning the sale of semi-automatic assault guns such as the AK-47 or AR-15. A majority of Americans (57%) believe the assault

gun ban is a good policy initiative. This is bolstered by 83% of Democrats and 55% of independents. 29% of Republicans have this view.

DPROPIDI-J. Marist Poll National Tables

		National Adults		
		Do you think that each of the following is a good idea or a bad idea.		
		Good idea	Bad idea	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
Background checks for gun purchases at gun shows or other private sales		89%	9%	2%
Party	Democrat	96%	4%	1%
Identification [^]	Republican	84%	14%	2%
	Independent	89%	10%	1%
A ban on the sale of semi-automatic assault guns such as the AK-47 or the AR-15		57%	41%	2%
Party	Democrat	83%	17%	0%
Identification [^]	Republican	29%	67%	4%
	Independent	55%	43%	2%

Marist Poll National Adults

Health Policy:

Americans (70%) favor Medicare for all who want it, that is, a choice between a national health insurance program or their own private insurance. Democrats (90%) and independents (70%) align on this question, and even 46% of Republicans consider it a good idea.

Americans also consider it a good idea for the government to regulate prescription drug prices (67%). At least a majority of Republicans (52%), independents (65%), and Democrats (80%) favor regulating prescription drug prices.

A slim majority of Americans (51%) assert that repealing Obamacare is a bad idea. 44% believe it is a good idea. Not surprisingly, Democrats and Republicans are on opposite sides of the political debate. Independents divide. 49% say a repeal is a bad idea. 45% report it is a good one.

A majority of Americans (54%) do not think enacting “Medicare for All” as the nation’s sole health care program is a good idea. Republicans (83%) and independents (55%) are more likely than Democrats to have a negative opinion of this proposal. While 64% of Democrats think “Medicare for All” is a good idea, even 31% of Democrats say it is a bad one.

The proposal to have a national health insurance program for immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally is also out of step with the majority of public opinion. 62% of Americans, including 93% of Republicans and 67% of independents, say such a program is a bad idea. 33% of Americans, including 60% of Democrats consider it to be a good one.

DPROPIDA-E. Marist Poll National Tables

		National Adults		
		Do you think that each of the following is a good idea or a bad idea:		
		Good idea	Bad idea	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
Medicare for all that want it, that is allow all Americans to choose between a national health insurance program or their own private health insurance		70%	25%	5%
Party Identification^	Democrat	90%	8%	2%
	Republican	46%	48%	6%
	Independent	70%	25%	6%
Government regulation of prescription drug prices		67%	28%	5%
Party Identification^	Democrat	80%	16%	4%
	Republican	52%	40%	8%
	Independent	65%	31%	4%
Repealing Obamacare		44%	51%	5%
Party Identification^	Democrat	18%	78%	4%
	Republican	78%	18%	4%
	Independent	45%	49%	6%
Medicare for all, that is a national health insurance program for all Americans that replaces private health insurance		41%	54%	5%
Party Identification^	Democrat	64%	31%	5%
	Republican	14%	83%	4%
	Independent	39%	55%	6%
A national health insurance program available for immigrants who are in the US illegally		33%	62%	5%
Party Identification^	Democrat	60%	32%	8%
	Republican	6%	93%	1%
	Independent	27%	67%	6%

Marist Poll National Adults

Immigration Policy:

Nearly two in three Americans (64%) think it is a good idea to provide a pathway to citizenship for immigrants who are in the United States illegally. Democrats (84%), independents (67%), and even 35% of Republicans favor a pathway to citizenship.

But, far fewer Americans (27%) consider it a good idea to decriminalize illegal border crossings. Republicans (87%) and independents (68%) think it's a bad idea to decriminalize illegal border crossing. Even Democrats divide. 45% consider it a good idea while 47% think it is a bad one.

DPROPIDL-M. Marist Poll National Tables

		National Adults		
		Do you think that each of the following is a good idea or a bad idea:		
		Good idea	Bad idea	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
A pathway to citizenship for immigrants who are in the US illegally		64%	32%	4%
Party Identification^	Democrat	84%	12%	4%
	Republican	35%	61%	4%
	Independent	67%	29%	4%
Decriminalizing illegal border crossings		27%	66%	7%
Party Identification^	Democrat	45%	47%	8%
	Republican	10%	87%	3%
	Independent	24%	68%	8%

Marist Poll National Adults

Environmental Policy:

More than six in ten Americans (63%) consider a Green New Deal to address climate change by investing government money in green jobs and infrastructure to be a good idea. At least half of Americans think rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement (53%) and a tax on emissions of carbon-based fuels (50%) are sound policy initiatives.

Most Democrats and majorities of independents buoy these opinions. About two in three Republicans consider these environmental proposals to miss the mark.

DPROP1DF-H. Marist Poll National Tables

		National Adults		
		Do you think that each of the following is a good idea or a bad idea:		
		Good idea	Bad idea	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
A Green New Deal to address climate change by investing government money in green jobs and energy efficient infrastructure		63%	32%	5%
Party Identification^	Democrat	86%	8%	6%
	Republican	26%	67%	7%
	Independent	64%	32%	4%
Having the United States rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement		53%	31%	17%
Party Identification^	Democrat	81%	7%	11%
	Republican	18%	64%	18%
	Independent	53%	28%	19%
A tax on emissions of carbon based fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas		50%	44%	6%
Party Identification^	Democrat	71%	23%	5%
	Republican	26%	68%	6%
	Independent	51%	42%	7%

Marist Poll National Adults

Economic Policy:

Bolstered by Democrats (88%) and independents (61%), more than six in ten Americans (62%) perceive implementing a wealth tax which imposes a higher tax rate on income exceeding one million dollars to be a positive idea.

A majority of Americans (56%), including 84% of Democrats and a majority of independents (52%), also consider a national minimum wage of \$15 an hour to be a good idea.

However, only about one in four Americans (26%) think a universal basic income of \$1,000 a month for adults 18 years of age or older is a good idea. About two in three Americans (66%) do not align with this position. Though Republicans (89%) and independents (63%) are more likely than Democrats to disagree with this stance, even a plurality of Democrats (49%) consider it to be a bad idea.

DPROPIDN-P. Marist Poll National Tables

		National Adults		
		Do you think that each of the following is a good idea or a bad idea:		
		Good idea	Bad idea	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
A Wealth Tax, that is a higher tax rate on income above one million dollars		62%	34%	4%
Party Identification^	Democrat	88%	9%	3%
	Republican	32%	63%	5%
	Independent	61%	35%	4%
A national minimum wage of 15 dollars an hour		56%	41%	4%
Party Identification^	Democrat	84%	14%	2%
	Republican	26%	70%	4%
	Independent	52%	43%	5%
A Universal Basic Income of \$1,000 per month for each American 18 or older		26%	66%	8%
Party Identification^	Democrat	42%	49%	9%
	Republican	8%	89%	3%
	Independent	27%	63%	9%

Marist Poll National Adults

Other Issues Driving the Democrats' Debate:

More than six in ten Americans (63%), including 74% of Democrats and 66% of independents, believe legalizing marijuana nationally is a good policy proposal.

A majority of Americans (53%), including 76% of Democrats and 52% of independents, say providing free college tuition at public colleges and universities is a good idea.

Fewer Americans (42%) favor eliminating the Electoral College as part of the presidential election process. Half of Americans, including close to eight in ten Republicans (78%) and almost three in ten Democrats (28%), are not behind such an idea. Independents divide. 48% say it is a bad idea, and 44% say it's a good one. Many Democrats (63%) consider this to be a solid idea.

Only 36% of Americans consider abolishing the death penalty to be a good idea, including 55% of Democrats. However, more than any other demographic group, those who say they are liberal or very liberal (60%) align with the proposal to eliminate the death penalty.

Even fewer Americans (27%) think providing reparations for slavery is a good idea. Here, Republicans (89%) and independents (65%) are among the 62% of Americans who say this is a bad idea. In contrast, a plurality of Democrats (46%) believe this to be a sound policy proposal.

DPROPIDK,Q,R,S,T. Marist Poll National Tables

		National Adults		
		Do you think that each of the following is a good idea or a bad idea:		
		Good idea	Bad idea	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
Legalizing marijuana nationally		63%	32%	5%
Party Identification^	Democrat	74%	22%	4%
	Republican	41%	54%	5%
	Independent	66%	30%	5%
Free college tuition at public colleges or universities		53%	43%	5%
Party Identification^	Democrat	76%	19%	4%
	Republican	19%	76%	5%
	Independent	52%	44%	4%
Getting rid of the electoral college as part of the presidential election process		42%	50%	8%
Party Identification^	Democrat	63%	28%	10%
	Republican	17%	78%	6%
	Independent	44%	48%	8%
Abolishing the death penalty		36%	58%	6%
Party Identification^	Democrat	55%	38%	7%
	Republican	16%	79%	5%
	Independent	33%	63%	4%
Providing reparations for slavery		27%	62%	11%
Party Identification^	Democrat	46%	40%	14%
	Republican	3%	89%	8%
	Independent	23%	65%	12%

Marist Poll National Adults

There are many policy positions on which the Democrats are in step with a majority of Americans including background checks for gun purchases at gun shows and private sales, “Medicare for All” who want it, a pathway to citizenship, a Green New Deal to create jobs and improve infrastructure, and an increase in the national minimum wage to fifteen dollars an hour. However, there are warning signs facing the Democratic field. “Medicare for All” which replaces private insurance, health insurance for illegal immigrants, decriminalizing border crossings, eliminating the death penalty, a universal basic income, and reparations for slavery are some of the issues where the Democrats are out of step.

“The Democratic field needs to tread carefully to energize its base without sacrificing independents who are now siding with them on many issues,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “For independents, they could end up aligning with Donald Trump or supporting the Democratic nominee. It depends on which issues ultimately dominate the campaign.”

On the Democratic side, the primary contest is wide open. Most Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (82%) have not made up their mind about the candidate they will support in the primary. Progressives (20% up from 13% last month) are more likely than moderates (14%) to have locked in their support.

More Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents want a nominee who can defeat Trump (54%) than one who shares their position on most issues (42%). In June, Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents divided. 47% valued the issue positions of a nominee while

46% prioritized electability.