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PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll*

Pessimism in the U.S. Reaches Highest Point In More than a Year

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This PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll Reports:

A heightened sense of dissatisfaction defines the national mood. In fact, the proportion of Americans who believe the nation is moving in the wrong direction, 65%, is at its highest since July of 2016. At that time, 68% of U.S. residents thought the country was off track. Currently, only 27% of Americans think the United States is moving in the right direction. When this question was last reported in August, 62% of residents said the country was on the wrong path, and 33% thought it was on the right one. The current numbers represent a net change of nine points in a negative direction.

Although there has been an increase in the proportion of Americans who say the nation needs a course correction, Democrats, 91%, are more likely than Republicans, 34%, to believe things have gone awry. Among Republicans, nearly six in ten, 59%, think the United States is on the right track down from 66% in the previous poll.

A majority of Americans also remain dissatisfied with the job performance of President Donald Trump. 37% approve of the job he is doing, and a majority, 54%, disapprove. While the president's approval score is little changed from 39% in mid-September, the proportion of Americans who disapprove of his job performance has inched up from 50%. In fact, the proportion of residents who currently say they strongly disapprove of how President Trump is doing his job, 41%, is more than two times the proportion of those who strongly approve, 18%.

"President Trump's approval rating is stuck in the mid to high thirties," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "More than anything these low job performance numbers reflect Trump's ongoing attention to his base, and a failure to reach out to others."

*All references to the survey must be sourced as "PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll"

Fewer Republicans are satisfied with how the president is performing in his post, 81% down from 87%. In fact, the president's disapproval rating among the GOP, 13%, is more than twice what it was in the previous poll, 6%. Not surprisingly, 91% of Democrats, up from 86%, disapprove of the president's job performance. A majority of independents, 53%, say the same.

When it comes to President Trump's prowess on the world stage, nearly six in ten Americans, 58%, do not have much, if any, confidence in President Trump to lead the nation during an international crisis. Included here are a plurality, 39%, who have no confidence at all in Trump to lead in a global crisis and 19% who have little confidence in him to do so. 42% of Americans have a great deal, 21%, or a good amount of confidence, 21%, in Trump to guide the nation through an international emergency.

President Trump's favorable score also remains upside down. 35% of Americans have a positive impression of him while nearly six in ten, 57%, have an unfavorable one. These proportions are little changed from when this question was last reported in August.