

# MARIST POLL

## Marist College Institute for Public Opinion

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### **President Trump Legacy May Be as One of the Worst U.S. Presidents**

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#### **This Marist Poll Reports:**

Americans have low expectations for the administration of President Donald Trump. In fact, few U.S. residents think President Trump's tenure will be remembered as a positive one. Nearly six in ten Americans, 58%, believe Mr. Trump will be remembered as either one of the worst presidents in the nation's history, 42%, or a below average leader, 16%. About one in five, 19%, think he will be considered an average president. Just 18% say Trump will be thought of as either an above average president, 11%, or one of the best presidents in U.S. history, 7%.

"Deep into his first year as president, Donald Trump's less than stellar approval rating has lowered expectations about how history will judge him," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "For history to treat him kinder, he will have to up his game."

Not surprisingly, opinions fall along party lines. 88% of Democrats, including 70% who assert Trump will be remembered as one of the worst U.S. presidents, believe the president's legacy will be tarnished. Even among the president's own party, there is an overwhelming assertion that President Trump will not end up on the right side of history. Fewer than half of the GOP, 48%, say President Trump will be remembered as either one of the best, 22%, or as an above average, 26%, president. An additional 31% of Republicans think Trump's legacy will be an average one. Among independents, 60% say President Trump will be recalled as either a below average leader, 18%, or one of the worst presidents to occupy the Oval Office, 42%.

Among those who supported Trump in the 2016 presidential election, 50% think his legacy will be at least above average. Fewer Tea Party supporters, 46%, or those who identify as conservative or very conservative, 41%, think President Trump's tenure will be remembered as above average or one of the best in U.S. history.

President Trump's job approval rating remains upside down. 37% of Americans approve of

his performance in office while 55% disapprove. Trump's approval rating is identical to the 37% score he received when it was last asked. By more than two-to-one, the proportion of Americans who say they strongly disapprove of how the president is doing his job, 43%, outweighs the proportion of those who say they strongly approve, 19%.

The president retains the support of his Republican base. Most Republicans, 82%, comparable to 81% last month, approve of the job the president is doing. 87% of Democrats and a majority of independents, 59%, disapprove.

Among those who identify as conservative or very conservative, President Trump's approval rating is 76%, similar to the 73% he received last time. He also retains the support of white residents without a college education. 48% of these residents, say they approve of how Mr. Trump is performing in his post while 41% disapprove. Previously, 50% approved, and 41% disapproved. Among his 2016 supporters, the president's job approval rating stands at 86%, similar to 89% previously.

President Trump's favorability also remains in negative territory. 36% of Americans, comparable to the 35% score he received in September, have a positive impression of the president. 58% currently have an unfavorable view of him. Last month, Trump's negative score was a similar 57%.

A majority of Americans doubt the propriety of President Trump's dealings with Russian President Vladimir Putin. 55% of Americans think the president has either done something illegal, 22%, or something unethical but not illegal, 33%. Only 35% of Americans say the president has done nothing wrong. 10% are unsure. There has been little change on this question since it was last reported in July.

In addition, six in ten Americans, 60%, question the dealings of President Trump's campaign associates with Putin. Included here are 32% who think Mr. Trump's campaign operatives did something illegal and 28% who believe they did something unethical but not illegal. 30% of residents say President Trump's campaign staffers have done nothing wrong. 11% are unsure. These findings are also consistent with those last released during the summer.

President Trump has not won over the American people by using Twitter to communicate. Nearly seven in ten Americans, 69%, consider his tweeting to be reckless and distracting, and only 21% think it is effective and informative. 10% are unsure. These proportions are little changed from when this question was last reported in August.

Nearly two-thirds of Americans, 65%, say they trust their favorite news source more than they trust President Trump. 26%, though, report they trust the president more than their favorite news source. When this question was last reported in March, 70% of Americans said they had more faith in their news outlet of choice while 23% had more confidence in Mr. Trump.

When it comes to using social media platforms like Facebook or Twitter to post campaign advertisements, nearly two in three Americans, 64%, think these campaign advertisements should be regulated. This includes 17% who think they should be regulated by the companies where they were posted and 47% who believe they should be regulated like other types of media. 27% of U.S. residents do not think these ads should be regulated at all. Regardless of party identification, at least a plurality thinks political advertisements posted on social media should be regulated like other types of media.

More than three in four Americans, 78%, want full disclosure about who paid for political commercials posted to social media platforms. 18% do not think social media platforms should disclose this information, and 4% are unsure.

Americans divide over the degree of confidence they have in the electoral process. 51% of residents have either a great deal, 17%, or a good amount, 34%, of trust that elections are fair. However, 47% have not very much, 30%, or no confidence at all, 17%, that the process is carried out fairly. There has been little change on this question since it was reported in July.

The mass shooting in Las Vegas earlier this month has brought the debate about gun control back into the national spotlight. And, a majority of Americans, 52%, believe it is more important to control gun violence than to protect gun rights. 45% disagree and prioritize protecting gun rights over controlling gun violence. When this question was last reported in April 2013, nearly identical proportions of Americans held these views.

Not surprisingly, more than six in ten gun owners, 63%, and a similar proportion who live in a house with a gun, 59%, say it is more important to protect gun rights. Looking at party, close to eight in ten Democrats, 77%, emphasize controlling gun violence while 78% of Republicans emphasize protecting gun rights. A majority of independents, 54%, believe it is more important to control gun violence.

64% of Americans -- including a plurality of gun owners, 47%, and a majority, 51%, of those who live in a household with a gun -- think laws covering the sale of firearms should be stricter. An additional 27% think they should be kept as they are now. Only 7% believe they should be eased. Again, there has been little change on this question since 2013.

Among Democrats, most, 88%, want tougher laws pertaining to the sale of firearms. A plurality of Republicans, 48%, want the laws to remain unchanged. Of note, more than four in ten Republicans, 42%, think gun laws should be stricter. Two-thirds of independents, 66%, want tighter gun laws.

Pessimism looms about the direction of the United States. 64% of residents nationally believe the nation is moving in the wrong direction while just 30% think it is moving in the right one. The proportion of Americans who consider the United States to be off track is nearly identical to that measured in September, 65%.