

# MARISTPOLL

## Marist College Institute for Public Opinion

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### **Americans: Trump Policies Favor Wealthy** **For Immediate Release: Tuesday, November 14, 2017**

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

A year after voters elected Donald Trump president, Trump continues to struggle to make inroads with Americans beyond his base. Many residents view the president's policies to be uneven. And, both the president's job approval rating and his favorability score remain extremely lopsided. Looking ahead to the 2018 midterm elections, a majority of American voters say they favor the Democratic candidate in their district, and the job approval score of congressional Republicans is at its lowest point in more than a year. Though, congressional Democrats also receive a low mark, they fare better than Republicans. The political discourse and debate occurs amid a persistent sentiment of pessimism in the United States.

58% of Americans consider President Trump's policies to be directed toward the wealthy. 30% believe they are geared toward helping the middle class, and only 3% say the president's policies intend to help the poor.

Americans' perceptions of President Trump's policies have remained steady during his first year in office. When Marist reported a similar question in March, 57% of Americans thought the president's policies mostly favored upper income Americans, and 25% said they mostly favored those who were middle wage earners. Four percent thought they mostly favored lower income residents.

"Although President Trump is out of step with Americans about those who will reap the benefits of his economic policies, his base is satisfied with the direction of his agenda," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "In the coming year, we will find out whether President Trump reaches out to broaden his base, whether perceptions of his policies change, and whether his base retains their allegiance to him."

While 69% of Republicans believe the president's agenda aims to help the middle class, a notable 14% think the goal is to bolster the wealthy. Five percent of the GOP consider Mr. Trump's policies to be directed toward helping the poor. In contrast, Democrats, 92%, overwhelmingly think the president's policies favor the wealthy. Among independents,

nearly six in ten, 59%, agree. An additional 31% of independents say the middle class benefit from the president's agenda.

Among those who supported Trump in the 2016 presidential election, 68% think the president's policies benefit the middle class. Among white residents without a college education, a plurality, 46%, believe the president's policies are more directed toward helping the wealthy.

President Trump's job approval rating remains in the thirties. Among Americans, 39% approve of the job the president is doing in office. 53% disapprove, and 7% are unsure. The president's approval rating is comparable to the 37% score he received in October and matches his highest job approval rating, 39%, which he last received in September.

80% of Republicans, comparable to 82% last month, remain in the president's corner and approve of the job he is doing. 89% of Democrats, little changed from 87% previously, *disapprove*. Among independents, 41% approve of how the president is doing his job compared with 34% who had this view last time.

The proportion of Americans who strongly disapprove of the president's job performance, 40%, is nearly double that of those who strongly approve, 21%. Last time, 43% strongly disapproved, and 19% strongly approved.

President Trump's favorability rating is also upside down. 38% of Americans view him favorably while 56% have an unfavorable opinion of him. In October, similar proportions, 36% to 58%, held these views.

Looking to next year's midterm elections, Democrats have widened their advantage. When asked whether they would vote for the Democrat or Republican in their district, 51% of registered voters say they support the Democratic candidate while 36% say they favor the Republican in their district. Six percent do not back either the Democrat or the Republican, and 8% are unsure. Of note, this survey was conducted during the week of the 2017 November elections.

When this question was last reported in August, 47% said they backed the Democratic candidate in their district, and 40% reported they supported the Republican.

The electorate remains politically polarized. 94% of Democrats say they support their party's candidate while 93% of Republicans say they support the GOP candidate. These proportions are nearly identical to those reported in August. A plurality of independents, 47%, favor the Democratic candidate compared with 32% who support the Republican. In August, 36% of independents backed the Democratic candidate, and the same proportion, 36%, were for the Republican.

The national electorate has further soured on the Republicans in Congress. 23% of voters say they approve of the job congressional Republicans are doing in office, and 68% disapprove. When this question was last reported in June, 28% of voters thought the Republicans in Congress were doing their job well while 61% disapproved. The change has occurred primarily within the ranks of the GOP. 50% of Republicans currently think well of the job the GOP is doing in Congress, down from 62% earlier in the year.

Though opinions of congressional Democrats are not stellar, Democrats in Congress fare better than the Republicans. 33% of voters nationwide, comparable to 30% previously, say they approve of how the congressional Democrats are doing their job. 59% disapprove. This is similar to the 57% who had this view in June.

Americans remain pessimistic about the direction of the nation. 29% of adults nationally think the country is moving in the right direction, and 66% say it is moving in the wrong one. Six percent are unsure. These proportions are similar to those reported in October when 30% said the nation was on course, and 64% thought the United States was off track. Six percent, at that time, were unsure.