

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA — After his first year in office, **President Donald Trump's approval rating** among S.C. residents remains at 42%, a bit higher than his current national approval rating, but his disapproval rate has climbed to 50%, according to the latest [Winthrop Poll](#).

The 45th president has strong support within his own party with 81% of residents who identify as Republican backing the nation's leader. Last spring, Trump's disapproval rating was at 47% among Palmetto State citizens.

Trump's support is much higher than that of **Congress**. Only 11% of South Carolina residents approve of the way Congress is handling its job.

As a part of **Winthrop University's re-branding effort**, The Winthrop Poll has a new logo. Please note the change and include the new artwork in your stories.

## **ECONOMY AND STATE GOVERNMENT**

Nearly 61% of Winthrop Poll respondents said our country is headed in the wrong direction. Yet three-fourths of South Carolina residents said our country's economy is very good or fairly good, and a majority said it is getting better.

Nearly half think South Carolina is moving in a positive direction, while 73% think the condition of the state's economy is either very or fairly good. Nearly 61% described their own financial situation as good or excellent.

S.C. residents said the **most important problems facing our country** are, in descending order: gun control, politicians/government, followed by moral values, racism and immigration. The **Stoneman Douglas High School shooting** in Florida where 17 students and others were fatally shot, occurred a few days before the Winthrop Poll started.

Poll respondents said the **most important issues facing the Palmetto State** are: roads/bridges/infrastructure, education, jobs or unemployment, racism and gun control.

## **SC GOVERNOR HENRY MCMASTER AND OTHERS**

**S.C. Governor Henry McMaster's approval rating** in South Carolina has stayed steady at 47%. However, his disapproval rating and those who aren't sure of him both stand at 25%. Poll Director, [Scott Huffmon](#), said McMaster, who is running for governor this year, has not put his mark on the office and has not successfully branded himself similar to how S.C. Governor Nikki Haley referred to herself as the "Jobs Governor." Elected as the lieutenant governor in 2014, McMaster took over as governor last year after Trump tapped Haley to be the United Nations ambassador.

According to Huffmon, "Governor McMaster's approval numbers are nearly double his disapproval numbers, so he is definitely ~above water.' But having one quarter of respondents not feeling they can evaluate his performance means he must get out in front of the average resident and put his stamp on the office. While general population results such as these cannot be used to predict electoral outcomes

like a poll of likely voters could, we can say that the governor needs to make sure his message and performance are seen by more South Carolinians before November."

The **S.C. General Assembly** got an approval nod from 42% of those polled, while 35% disapprove of the job they're doing. Fewer residents approve of the job by **U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham**, who had an even approval and disapproval rating last spring. Now Graham has a 38% approval rating and a 48% disapproval rating. His approval among Republicans, and those who lean Republican, stands at 41%, his disapproval at 51%.

The state's junior senator, **U.S. Sen. Tim Scott**, is much more highly rated among the Republican base but has lost some support. He has a strong 75% approval rating among the GOP (including ~Leaners'). Scott's popularity among the general public is at 53%.

## **DEATH PENALTY AND REDISTRICTING**

Nearly two-thirds of respondents said they supported the **death penalty**, even after hearing that research has shown that the cost of housing death row inmates and prosecuting death penalty cases is significantly higher than housing and prosecuting cases that result in life in prison. A little more than half of those polled agreed that the death penalty is not applied fairly in this country.

When it comes to **redistricting**, nearly 70% of those surveyed said they would support the creation of a bi-partisan independent commission to draw the electoral district lines for different government bodies. After each U.S. Census, the lines for each electoral district for the S.C. Senate, S.C. House and the Congressional districts must be redrawn to take into account changing population numbers and to ensure that districts have roughly the same number of people.

## **ETHICS, DRILLING, DREAMERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

An overwhelming number of Winthrop Poll respondents (84%) said they would support requiring members of the state legislature to disclose the *source* of their income. Current ethic laws in South Carolina require members of the S.C. Legislature to only report their income.

Half of those polled oppose the **drilling for oil** off the South Carolina coast. More than twice as many Democrats oppose the drilling as Republicans, while more than half of respondents from coastal counties oppose the idea.

Nearly all respondents who identify as Democrat (94%) said those protected by **DACA**, known as Dreamers and were brought illegally to this country as children, should stay here with a pathway to citizenship. For Republicans, 66% said the Dreamers should stay, while 22% said they should be deported.

Three-fourths of Winthrop Poll respondents said **climate change** — the idea that the world's average temperature is increasing and may be increasing more in the future - is happening regardless of their political party. This mirrors national trends. Nearly 40% of those who lean Republican said it is not taking

place.

## **METHODOLOGY**

For this latest **Winthrop Poll**, callers surveyed 976 South Carolina residents by landline and cell phones between Feb. 17-25. Results which use all respondents have a margin of error of approximately +/- 3.2% at the 95% confidence level. Subgroups have higher margins of error. Margins of error are based on weighted sample size.

## **POLL FUNDING AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

The Winthrop Poll is paid for by Winthrop University with additional support from [The West Forum on Politics and Policy](#) at Winthrop University. For additional information, or to set up an interview with Poll Director, **Scott Huffmon**, please contact **Judy Longshaw** at [longshawj@winthrop.edu](mailto:longshawj@winthrop.edu) or 803/323-2404 (office) or 803/984-0586 (cell).