

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – With the country’s midterm national elections less than a week ago, President Donald Trump’s approval rating registers at 44% among South Carolina residents, according to the latest Winthrop Poll of a representative sample of SC adults (note: this is a general population poll not a likely voter poll and results may not be used to make inferences about any election).

Among respondents who lean as Republican, Trump has an 83% approval rate, which continues to climb in what is one of the reddest states in the country. The 45th president has a disapproval rating of half of Palmetto State citizens.

Trump’s approval rating among adults in South Carolina has remained in the mid-40 percent over his two years in office.

SEE BELOW FOR FULL LIST OF QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

According to Winthrop Poll director and political scientist, Scott Huffmon, “Trump’s approval in South Carolina continues to be higher than his overall national approval ratings. Currently, his approval in SC is 4 points higher than his national approval rating of forty percent (according to Gallup). SC Republicans continue to offer their full-throated support of the president.”

NATIONAL PROBLEMS, THE ECONOMY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Winthrop Poll found that a slight majority of respondents think our country is headed in the wrong direction, but that South Carolina is on the right track.

In this poll and in the April Winthrop Poll, S.C. residents said the most important problems facing our country are immigration, followed by racism, and politicians/government. Those surveyed said the most important issues facing the Palmetto State are, and these same issues keep cropping up: education, roads/bridges/infrastructure, and jobs or unemployment. With this poll, the economy also was in the mix.

Poll respondents were asked if women who complain about sexual harassment cause more problems than they solve, and nearly half strongly disagreed. Nearly 2 out of 3 respondents strongly disagreed that sexual harassment in the workplace is no longer a problem in the U.S. Nearly ¾ strongly or somewhat agreed that most women who come forward about sexual harassment are telling the truth. Nearly 80 percent say that innocent men have to be extra careful in order not to be accused of sexual harassment.

Concerning the economy, nearly three fourths of South Carolina residents said our country’s economy is very good or fairly good, while the same number of respondents think the condition of the state’s economy is either very or fairly good. With the stock market rallying this year and unemployment low, a large majority described their own financial situation as good or excellent and getting better.

With memories of Hurricanes Florence and Michael still fresh from this fall, nearly half those polled said climate change is happening, and the cause is equally shared between humans and nature. Some 28 percent said humans are the primary cause. Huffmon noted, “Many polls force respondents into a single all-or-nothing question on climate change before they are offered the ability to choose a more nuanced response. In this question, respondents can easily choose an option that climate change is not real. However, when presented with the ability to flatly deny climate change or acknowledge it but assign causal blame to either man or mother nature, we see fewer flatly denying that climate change is happening. The greatest divide is whether respondents feel climate change is natural or man-made, not whether it is occurring or not.”

CONGRESS, BRETT KAVANAUGH, SC GOVERNOR HENRY MCMASTER AND OTHERS

S.C. residents give Congress a dismal disapproval rating of 69%. But U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, who took a lead role in the Senate in the approval of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, was rewarded for going on the attack to help Trump’s candidate. That vocal support helped win Graham nods from the GOP where 3/4s of respondents who lean GOP and supported Kavanaugh said they approved of Graham. His ratings in the past have been more tepid. According to Huffmon, “Graham’s new persona as tireless, and occasionally aggressive, cheerleader for the president and his agenda resonates well with the Republican base in South Carolina. Whereas those who identify with the GOP in South Carolina have waxed, and – more frequently in recent times – waned in their support for Graham, his vigorous defense of Judge Kavanaugh and vocal support for President Trump had returned him to the good graces of his party.”

Meanwhile, half of Winthrop Poll respondents said they approved of Kavanaugh's nomination and only slightly fewer say their opinion of him was very or somewhat favorable. Huffmon noted, "When it comes to sexual harassment, Kavanaugh supporters are less likely to agree that most women who report harassment are telling the truth and more likely to agree that men must be extra careful to avoid false accusations."

Approval ratings for the state's junior senator, U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, remain high with the Republican base. He has a 76% approval rating among those who identify as Republicans. Scott's popularity among the general public remains high as well, with 55% reporting approval of the job he is doing.

South Carolina will elect its governor on Nov. 6. The support for incumbent S.C. Governor Henry McMaster has climbed to 51% from the spring when it was in the mid-40 percent range. His disapproval ratings remain at 29%, with 18% not sure. Elected as the lieutenant governor in 2014, McMaster took over as governor after Trump tapped S.C. Governor Nikki Haley to be the United Nations ambassador.

Poll Director Huffmon said that the Winthrop Poll data should not be used to make predictions about the governor's race because poll callers talked to a representative sample of all South Carolina adults who may or may not even be registered, much less "Likely Voters."

The S.C. General Assembly got an approval nod from 46% of those polled, while 35% disapprove of the job they're doing.

METHODOLOGY

For this latest Winthrop Poll, callers surveyed 674 residents in South Carolina by landline and cell phones between Oct. 20-28. Results which use all respondents have a margin of error of approximately +/- 3.8% at the 95% confidence level. Subgroups have higher margins of error. Margins of error are based on weighted sample size and account for design effects.

POLL FUNDING AND CONTACT INFORMATION

The Winthrop Poll is funded by Winthrop University with additional support from The West Forum on Politics and Policy. For additional information, or to set up an interview with Poll Director Scott Huffmon, please contact Judy Longshaw at longshawj@winthrop.edu or 803/984-0586 (cell).

Table 1:

	Census	October 2018 Winthrop Poll
Male	47.9412	48.8
Female	52.05879	51.2
18-19	4.0608	4.1
20-29	17.966	18.5
30-39	16.4846	16.7
40-49	17.9802	17.2
50-59	17.7694	18.2
60-69	13.9953	14.2
70-79	7.5244	7.2
80-89	3.5764	3.3
90-99	0.6247	0.7
over 100	0.0184	--
White	68.57	67.6
Black	26.5	26.8
Other	4.93	5.6

Table 2: Do you approve or disapprove of the way **Donald Trump** is handling his job as President of the United States?

	All	GOP (including Leaners)
Approve	44	83
Disapprove	49	12
Not Sure	6	5
Refused	1	0

Table 3: Do you approve or disapprove of the way **Congress** is handling its job?

	All
Approve	19
Disapprove	69
Not Sure	10
Refused	1

Table 4: Do you approve or disapprove of the way **Henry McMaster** is handling his job as Governor of South Carolina?

	All	GOP (including Leaners)
Approve	51	75
Disapprove	29	12
Not Sure	18	12
Refused	3	1

NOTE: this is a General Population poll, NOT a Likely Voter poll. These data may NOT be used to make accurate predictions about an election.

Table 5: Do you approve or disapprove of the way **the South Carolina State Legislature** is handling its job?

	All
Approve	46
Disapprove	35
Not Sure	16
Refused	3

Table 6: Do you approve or disapprove of the way **Lindsey Graham** is handling his job as a United States Senator for South Carolina?

	All	GOP (including Leaners)	Approve of Kavanaugh appointment
Approve	49	72	75
Disapprove	41	20	19
Not Sure	9	7	5
Refused	1	1	1

NOTE: Lindsey Graham's higher than normal numbers appear to be related to his spirited defense of Judge Kavanaugh.

Table 7: Do you approve or disapprove of the way **Tim Scott** is handling his job as a United States Senator for South Carolina?

	All	GOP (including Leaners)
Approve	55	76
Disapprove	25	8
Not Sure	18	14
Refused	2	2

Table 8: Overall, would you say your opinion of Senator Lindsey Graham is favorable or unfavorable?

-Do you feel that way Strongly or Somewhat?

	All	GOP (including Leaners)	Approve of Kavanaugh appointment
Very favorable	23	41	37
Somewhat favorable	28	36	38
Somewhat unfavorable	16	12	10
Very unfavorable	26	8	10
Not Sure	6	3	3
Refused	2	1	1

Table 9: Thinking about the current path that our nation is taking, do you think our country is on the right track or headed in the wrong direction

	All
Right Track	38
Wrong Direction	56
Don't know/ Refused	6

Table 10: Thinking about the current path that the state of South Carolina is taking, do you think South Carolina is on the right track or headed in the wrong direction?

	All
Right Track	51
Wrong Direction	38
Don't Know/ Refused	12

Table 11: What do you think is the most important problem facing the United States of America today?

All Respondents
Immigration 18.0%
Racism 9.3%
Politicians/Government 8.8%
Moral Values 6.7%

Table 12: What do you think is the most important problem facing the state of South Carolina today?

All Respondents
Education 16.3%
Roads/Bridges/Infrastructure 6.1%
Jobs/Unemployment 5.8%
Economy 5.6%

Table 13: Overall, would you say your opinion of Brett Kavanaugh is favorable or unfavorable?

-Do you feel that way Strongly or Somewhat?

	All
Very favorable	33
Somewhat favorable	14
Somewhat unfavorable	11
Very unfavorable	30
Not sure	11
Refused	1

Table 14: Do you approve or disapprove of the appointment of Brett Kavanaugh to the United States Supreme Court?

	All
Approve	50
Disapprove	39
Not sure	9
Refused	1

Table 15: How would you rate the condition of the economy of the country as a whole these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad?

	All
Very Good	23
Fairly Good	51
Fairly Bad	17
Very Bad	8
Not Sure	2
Refused	--

Table 16: Right now, do you think that economic conditions in the country as a whole are getting better or getting worse?

	All
Getting Better	60
Getting Worse	33
Not Sure	8
Refused	0

Table 17: How would you rate the condition of the economy of South Carolina these days? Is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad?

	All
Very Good	16
Fairly Good	58
Fairly Bad	17
Very Bad	7
Not Sure	3
Refused	--

Table 18: Right now, do you think that economic conditions in South Carolina are getting better or getting worse?

	All
Getting Better	62
Getting Worse	27
Not Sure	10
Refused	1

Table 19: How would you rate your financial situation today? As excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	All
Excellent	12
Good	51
Only Fair	27
Poor	10
Not Sure	0
Refused	0

Table 20: Right now, do you think that your financial situation as a whole is getting better or getting worse?

	All
Getting Better	71
Getting Worse	18
Not Sure	10
Refused	1

Table 21: I am going to read a series of statements, for each one, please tell me whether you Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree

[The order of the questions used for Tables 21 - 24 were randomized by computer for each respondent]

Women who complain about harassment often cause more problems than they solve

Would you say you feel that way strongly or somewhat

	All	Approve of Kavanaugh appointment
Strongly Agree	13	17
Somewhat Agree	13	14
Somewhat Disagree	21	32
Strongly Disagree	48	29
Not Sure	4	6
Don't Know/Refused	2	2

Table 22: Sexual harassment against women in the workplace is no longer a problem in the United States

Would you say you feel that way strongly or somewhat

[Caller: remind respondent of answer set if necessary]

	All	Approve of Kavanaugh appointment
Strongly Agree	4	4
Somewhat Agree	7	13
Somewhat Disagree	24	31
Strongly Disagree	63	48
Not Sure	2	3
Don't Know/Refused	1	1

Table 23: Most women who come forward about sexual harassment are telling the truth

Would you say you feel that way strongly or somewhat

[Caller: remind respondent of answer set if necessary]

	All	Approve of Kavanaugh appointment
Strongly Agree	32	18
Somewhat Agree	41	44
Somewhat Disagree	12	16
Strongly Disagree	8	12
Not Sure	4	5
Don't Know/Refused	3	5

Table 24: Innocent men have to be extra careful these days in order to not be accused of sexual harassment

Would you say you feel that way strongly or somewhat

	All	Approve of Kavanaugh appointment
Strongly Agree	57	68
Somewhat Agree	22	25
Somewhat Disagree	8	5
Strongly Disagree	13	3
Not Sure	0	--
Don't Know/Refused	0	0

Table 25: Do you support or oppose permitting drilling for oil off of the South Carolina coast?

	All
Support	42
Oppose	47
Not Sure	10
Refused	2

Table 26: Recently, you may have noticed that Climate Change has been getting some attention in the news. Climate Change, sometimes called global warming, refers to the idea that the world's *average* temperature has been increasing over the past 150 years, may be increasing more in the future, and that the world's climate may change as a result.

Which of the following comes closest to your opinion:

[CALLER: rotate answers]

- Climate change is happening, but it is primarily a natural process
- Climate change is happening, and humans are the primary cause
- Climate change is happening, and it is an equal combination of humans and a natural process

OR

Climate change is **NOT** really happening

	All	GOP (including Leaners)
Is happening, natural process	20	30
Is happening, humans to blame	28	11
Is happening, equal humans & nature	48	52
Is NOT happening	3	6
Not Sure	2	1
Refused	0	0

The State Exclusives

Table ##: After each U.S. Census, the lines for each electoral district for the South Carolina State Senate and House, as well as the Congressional districts, must be redrawn to reflect the changing population and make sure each district has roughly the same number of people.

Which of the following comes closest to your opinion

[CALLER: rotate]

District lines should be redrawn in a way that is based on joining or splitting areas depending on whether people in that area tend to vote for one party or the other

OR

District lines should be redrawn in a way that is based on whether areas are part of a natural community, no matter what party the people in that area tend to vote for

	All
Vote certain way	11
Natural community	80
Not Sure	7
Refused	2

Table ##: After each U.S. Census, the lines for each electoral district for the South Carolina State Senate and House, as well as the Congressional districts, must be redrawn to reflect the changing population and make sure each district has roughly the same number of people.

Currently, this is done by the members of the South Carolina House and Senate.

Would you support or oppose the creation of an independent commission, with no currently elected officials, to redraw electoral district lines in South Carolina instead of it being done by current members of the South Carolina Legislature?

	All
Support	65
Oppose	24
Not Sure	10
Refused	1
