

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA — After a first year in office with mixed results - many West Wing staff changes but an economy that continues to thrive - **President Donald Trump's approval rating** has climbed a little in South Carolina to 46%, according to the latest [Winthrop Poll](#).

President Trump's approval rating among adults in South Carolina was 42% in February. Meanwhile, **Congress** struggles with an overwhelming 77% disapproval rating.

The 45th president has a disapproval rating of 47% among Palmetto State citizens. Among respondents who self-identify as Republican, Trump has retained strong support in this red state and has an 80% approval rate.

Here's how South Carolinians describe Trump using these adjectives:

Honest: Of all respondents, 45% said that very or somewhat accurately describes Trump, 38% said the term was a very inaccurate description of Trump and 79% of Democratic identifiers said very inaccurate.

Capable: 58% of all respondents said that is very or somewhat accurate, 42% of Evangelicals (of all races) said that is very accurate, while 29% of all respondents said it was very inaccurate.

Christian: 48% of GOP identifiers said that was somewhat accurate, while 39% of all respondents said it was inaccurate and 77% of Democratic identifiers said it was very inaccurate.

Godly: 47% of all respondents said that is very inaccurate and 36% of Evangelicals said it was very inaccurate. Of the GOP identifiers, 39% said it was somewhat accurate.

Moral: 59% of all respondents said it was somewhat or very inaccurate, while 61% of GOP identifiers said it was either somewhat or very accurate.

Strong: 89% of GOP identifiers said that is somewhat or very accurate, while a fourth of all respondents said it was very inaccurate.

Stands up for people like me: 43% of GOP identifiers and 42% of White Evangelicals said this statement is very accurate. Half of all respondents said it was somewhat or very inaccurate.

According to Winthrop Poll director and political scientist, [Scott Huffmon](#), "Seventy-five percent of White Evangelicals feel that describing Trump as someone who stands up for them is very or somewhat accurate. Nationally, we have seen White Evangelical support for Trump remain at levels usually only seen among strong partisans. The fact that fewer than half of Evangelicals overall would describe Trump as '~Godly' or '~Moral' suggests that his strength with these groups comes not from modeling pious behavior, but from them viewing him as a bulwark against a culture that they feel is increasingly hostile to them."

PROBLEM ISSUES, THE ECONOMY AND STATE GOVERNMENT

S.C. residents said the most important problem facing our country is **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**.

Nearly three fourths of South Carolina residents said **our country's economy** is very good or fairly good,

while 67% think the condition of the state's economy is either very or fairly good. Nearly 59% described their own financial situation as good or excellent.

So, who is responsible for helping those in poverty? A majority of Winthrop Poll respondents — whether they identify as Democrat or toward the GOP - said it should be equally **government** and **religious charities**. Only 19% said it should be primarily government.

According to Huffmon, "While partisanship is a key explanatory factor among those who believe alleviating poverty should be primarily the responsibility of either government or charity, the real story is that majorities across the board see active roles for government and charities, with both expected to lend a hand."

CONGRESS, SC GOVERNOR HENRY MCMASTER AND OTHER POLITICIAN

South Carolina residents consistently do not approve of the way **Congress** is handling its job, with only 14% approving.

The approval rating for **S.C. Governor Henry McMaster**, who is running for election this year, has remained steady around 46%. His disapproval ratings are at 29%, with 19% not sure. Elected as the lieutenant governor in 2014, McMaster took over as governor on Jan. 24 after Trump tapped S.C. Governor Nikki Haley to be the United Nations ambassador.

Huffmon noted, "McMaster remains ~'above water' with regard to approval. Notably more South Carolina residents approve than disapprove. The interesting number remains the one-fifth of residents who are still in the process of making up their mind about the governor. However, this is a general population poll and not an election poll, so we expect to have more people who are disengaged from politics compared to a poll of Likely Voters or even Registered Voters."

The **S.C. General Assembly** got an approval nod from 44% of those polled, while 38% disapprove of the job they're doing.

U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham's approval is nearly evenly split among all South Carolinians. He has a 45% approval rating and a 46% disapproval rating. His approval among Republicans, and those who lean Republican, is around 50%.

Approval ratings for the state's junior senator, **U.S. Sen. Tim Scott**, have dropped but remain high with the Republican base. He has a 77% approval rating among those who identify as Republicans. Scott's popularity among the general public remains high as well, with 57% reporting approval of the job he is doing.

RELIGIOUS VIEWS

Three-fourths of Winthrop Poll respondents said they donated money last year to a church or organized religious organization and that religion is either very or fairly important to their life. Half said they pray

several times a day and that they read scripture at least once a week outside of church.

Ninety percent believe in God or a universal spirit, with 83% saying they are absolutely certain of this belief.

Almost three-fourths believe in Heaven, but only 65% believe in hell. Two thirds think that the Bible is the word of God, while 27% said it is written by men and is not the word of God. Fifty-five percent of those who think it is the word of God said the Bible is to be taken literally, word for word, while 40% said not everything is literal in the Bible.

Fifty-five percent said many religions lead to eternal life, while 35% said their religion is the one, true faith. Fifty-seven percent said their religion preserves traditional beliefs, while 29% said their religion adjusts traditional beliefs.

According to Huffmon, "We tried to mirror the questions used in the national **Pew Religious Landscape Survey** to see how South Carolinians might compare. As one might expect in a state in the heart of the Bible Belt, South Carolinians hold fast to religious faith and practices."

Concerning church and religious organization, almost half said they focus too much on rules. In another question, half said the groups are too concerned with money and power. Almost half said churches are not too involved with politics, while 44% said they are.

"Many South Carolinians appear to worry that churches are becoming too involved in worldly affairs," Huffmon said, "John 15:19 says that Christians are not of this world and Romans 12:2 says that Christians are not to be conformed to this world. More than half of respondents seem to feel that churches are forgetting that message."

More than three-fourths agree that churches and religious organizations protect and strengthen morality in society, while 91% said they bring people and communities together.

Other interesting, miscellaneous takes from the Winthrop Poll:

Half believe all people in the United States have an equal chance to succeed if they work equally, while 44% said they do not.

Sixty percent said homosexuality should be accepted by our society.

Respondents were split 46% each on whether government aid does more harm than good in offering assistance.

Almost 60% said stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost.

Sixty percent said humans have evolved over time, while 33% said they existed in their present form since the beginning of time.

Forty-seven percent of respondents said they own a gun or firearm; 59% of respondents reported that they lived in a household with a gun (owned either by themselves or someone else in the household).

METHODOLOGY

For this latest **Winthrop Poll**, callers surveyed 789 residents in South Carolina by landline and cell phones between April 7-16. Results which use all respondents have a margin of error of approximately +/- 3.5% 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).