

Polls show plunging popular support for Trump

By Patrick Martin
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A spate of public opinion polls released over the past week shows growing popular hostility towards the Trump administration, particularly in those layers of the population and those regions where his right-wing populist campaign won support during the 2016 election campaign.

The recent polls span a wide range of the official political and media spectrum, including Gallup, several television networks, and polling organizations closely aligned with either the Democratic or Republican Party. All report the same trend: a sharp drop in support for Trump, mainly among lower-income white voters. (Trump's support among minority voters, which was already very low, has declined less dramatically).

Approval of Trump's performance as president fell to new lows in virtually every poll: 32 percent according to *Investor's Business Daily*, 33 percent according to Quinnipiac University, 36 percent in the CBS survey, 37 percent recorded by both the Gallup daily tracking poll and Reuters/IPSOS, and 38 percent according to CNN.

All of these figures are record lows for an American president during his first year in office. Normally it requires a major war, financial collapse, social disaster or scandal to generate such a level of popular disapproval and distrust.

Even the notoriously pro-Republican Rasmussen poll has Trump at 41 percent, compared to a disapproval rate of 57 percent. The same poll shows 26 percent strong approval compared to 49 percent strong disapproval, a 23-point deficit compared to a deficit of zero reported by Rasmussen in February.

Many of the surveys give a more detailed demographic breakdown, as well as state and regional figures, and seek to identify the political issues driving the growing popular hostility to the Trump administration.

Quinnipiac found that among white voters without a college degree, the demographic in which Trump posted

his largest electoral margin, approval of Trump's job performance fell from 53 percent in June to only 40 percent.

Investor's Business Daily noted that Trump "lost significant support across the board, but saw big declines among areas of core support, including Republicans, Midwesterners, middle-income families, white men and the high-school educated." This included a 12-point drop among Republicans.

Among income groups, Trump suffered the biggest losses among those with household incomes between \$30,000 and \$50,000, dropping from 40 percent in early July to 27 percent in early August.

On a state-by-state basis, the Gallup Organization reported, based on interviews with a massive pool of 81,155 adults over the past six months, that Trump's approval rating has fallen below 50 percent in 33 of the 50 states, including 14 states whose electoral votes Trump won last November. The drop in support for Trump was especially pronounced both in northern industrial states such as Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania, and in the southwestern states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Nevada.

The polls found that health care and immigration were among the most important issues fueling hostility towards the Trump administration. CNN found 62 percent disapproval of Trump on health care, 55 percent disapproval on immigration, 61 percent on foreign policy and 54 percent on "helping the middle class." CBS found 59 percent disapproval on health care, 57 percent disapproval on immigration, and 61 percent disapproval of Trump's policy towards North Korea.

The Quinnipiac poll highlighted mass opposition to the Trump administration's efforts to encourage discrimination against gays, lesbians and transgendered people. By 68-27 percent, those polled opposed Trump's proposal to ban transgendered people from the military

(including 55-39 percent opposition among military families). By an 89-8 percent margin those polled said it should be illegal for an employer to discriminate against a worker based on sexual orientation, although the Trump Justice Department has gone into court recently to argue the opposite.

While these polls show massive popular opposition to the Trump administration and its policies, this does not translate into support for the Democratic Party, which has sought to attack the administration from the right by casting Trump as a stooge of Russia and demanding a more aggressive anti-Russian military-diplomatic posture.

The Republican Party had a net negative rating of 42 percent—22 percent favorable, 64 percent unfavorable—an all-time low. But the Democratic Party was also viewed negatively, albeit by a smaller margin, 36 percent favorable versus 48 percent unfavorable.

Similarly, congressional Republicans had a disapproval rate of 80-15 percent for their policies on health care, according to Quinnipiac, and Democrats had a disapproval rate of 59-34 percent on the same issue. Those polled favored a single-payer system in health care, “Medicare for all,” by a margin of 51-38 percent.

The crumbling popular support for Trump has thrown both capitalist parties into crisis, the Democrats no less than the Republicans, and perhaps even more so. Nothing terrifies the Democrats more than the prospect of a mass movement from below directed against the right-wing policies of the Trump administration, because it would threaten the capitalist system as a whole.

This fear of the working class, as much as a desire to curry favor with the military-intelligence apparatus, accounts for the maniacal insistence of the Democrats that the sole issue of any importance in American politics is the alleged Russian intervention in the 2016 presidential election.

This issue was pioneered during the election campaign itself by Hillary Clinton, the Democratic presidential candidate, who sought to overcome her own deep unpopularity, because of her close identification with Wall Street and war, by painting Trump as the favored candidate of Moscow. That appeal failed in the election and the current even more intense anti-Russian campaign is still failing to resonate among working people.

On domestic policies, the Democrats are eager to seek a compromise with Trump, no matter how right-wing the policies advanced by the administration and its congressional Republican allies. The collapse of the Republican efforts to combine repeal of Obamacare with

the dismantling of Medicaid as a social benefit has been followed by repeated Democratic offers to work on a bipartisan basis to make changes in Obamacare to safeguard the profits of the insurance companies.

An even more sinister bipartisan effort is under way in relation to Trump’s proposal for sweeping tax cuts for the wealthy and corporate America. The White House has begun meeting with a group of “centrist”—i.e., right-wing—Democrats to combine tax “reform” with increased infrastructure spending.

The *New York Times* began the media campaign on behalf of such a tax-cutting deal with an editorial Tuesday, “What Real Tax Reform Could Be,” which hailed what it called the “rare bipartisan consensus that closing loopholes in order to lower the top corporate rate of 35 percent would help American businesses compete globally.”

The newspaper endorsed the number one goal of corporate CEOs—allowing corporations to repatriate profits kept abroad to avoid taxation, without paying the full tax due. It declared, “Democrats should give up their opposition to granting corporations a discounted tax rate for the profits they bring home.”

The *Times* also called for imposition of a carbon tax, which, under the versions proposed by Democrats, would operate as a consumption tax, falling most heavily on working-class families who spend much more of their income on gasoline and home heating oil than the wealthy, as well as a Value Added Tax, an even more regressive measure that would serve as a national sales tax.

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