

2020

Life in Hampton Roads Survey Press Release #4: Presidential Polling

Social Science Research Center, Old Dominion University

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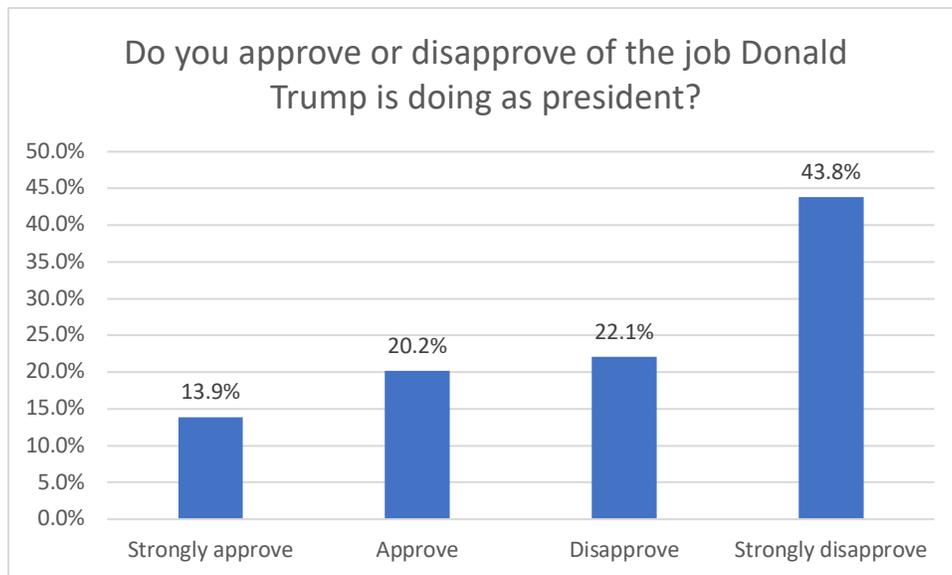
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Life in Hampton Roads Survey - Presidential Polling Results

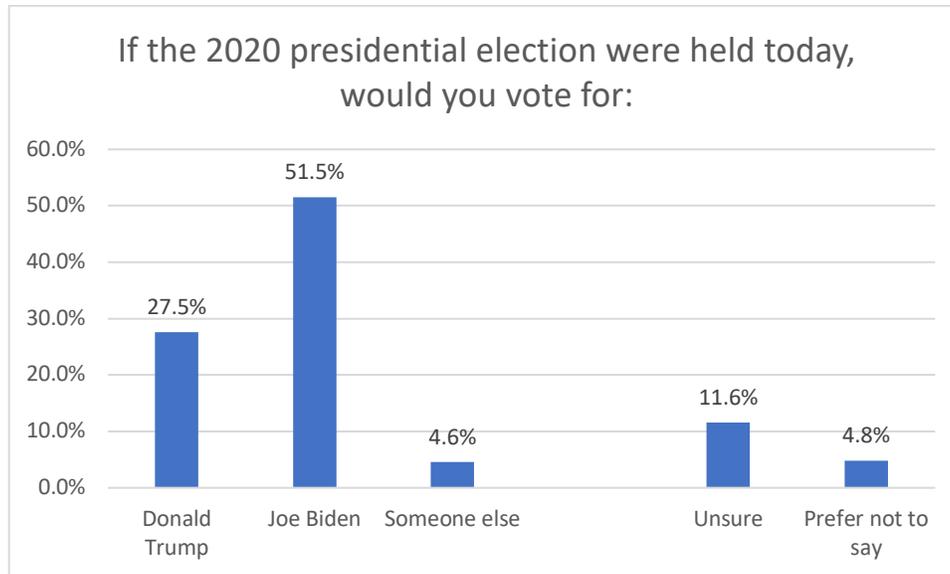
The Social Science Research Center (SSRC) at Old Dominion University recently completed data collection for the 11th annual Life in Hampton Roads (LIHR) survey. The purpose of the survey is to gain insight into residents' perceptions of the quality of life in Hampton Roads and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other topics of local interest such as perceptions of police, employment and other issues. A total of 1,105 online surveys were completed between June 26 and July 13 (during Phase 2 and Phase 3 of Virginia's reopening plan). Of these, 1,100 were from residents of the seven Hampton Roads cities included in the Life in Hampton Roads survey and constituted the final dataset.

It is important to note that the methodology this year differs from previous Life in Hampton Roads surveys. For several reasons, including COVID-19 social distancing guidelines and telework directives, we moved from a telephone survey to a web-based design using two panels of respondents. This change limits to some degree the ability to compare this year's results with those from previous years or to as confidently generalize the results to the Hampton Roads population as a whole. Nonetheless, we note that an increasing number of surveys have moved online in recent years, and that in many instances useful data has been developed despite the challenges of online survey research. For more detailed information on the methodological changes and potential impacts please see the methodology section in the pending full report, or please contact the SSRC directly.

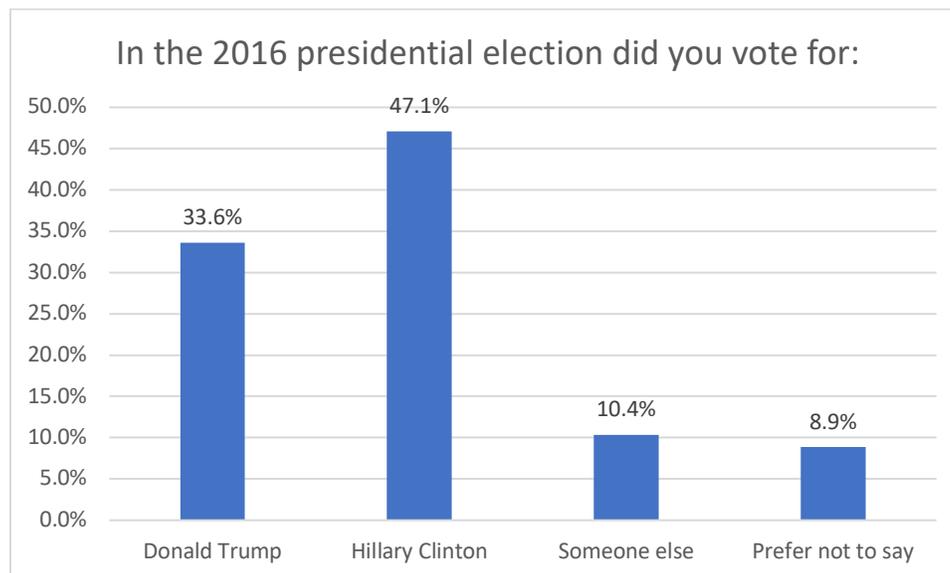
Respondents were asked: "Do you approve or disapprove of the job Donald Trump is doing as president?" Roughly one-third (34.1%) approved, with 13.9% strongly approving. Nearly two-thirds (65.9%) disapproved, with 43.8% disapproving strongly.



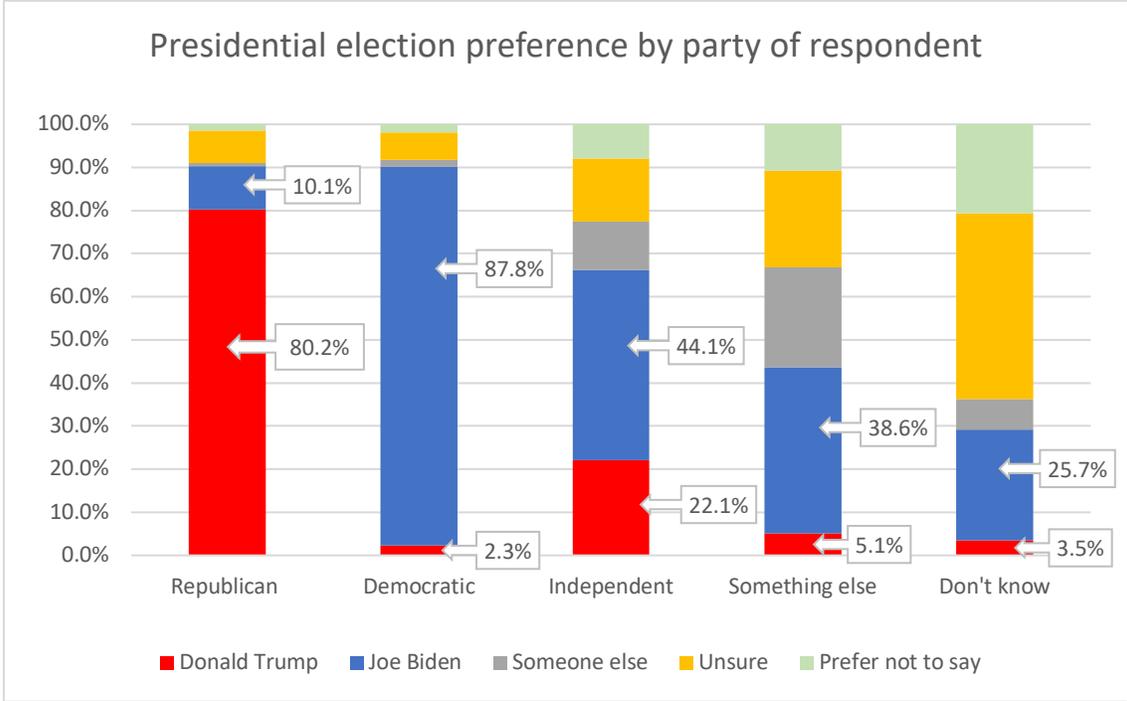
The survey also asked respondents from the seven cities how they would vote if the presidential election were held today. Excluding those who said they would not vote, 51.5% indicated that they would vote for Joe Biden, while 27.5% indicated that they would vote for Trump. Another 21% of respondents indicated that they would support a different candidate, were unsure about who they would support or preferred not to say.



When respondents were asked to recall how they had voted in 2016, a similar pattern of responses emerged among those who voted, but with slightly stronger support for Trump. Among those who said they voted, 47.1% indicated they voted for Hillary Clinton, while 33.6% indicated that they supported Trump.



Among respondents who said that they identified as Republicans, support for Trump was fairly high, with 80.2% indicating that they would vote for him if the election were held today. Among Democrats, 87.8% indicated that they would vote for Biden. Independents and other non-major-party-affiliated respondents leaned toward Biden by at least a two-to-one margin, though many were unsure. Biden also performed substantially better among Republicans (10.1%) compared to Trump among Democrats (2.3%).



A similar pattern emerged when comparing support from 2016 and 2020. More than 90% of respondents who said they voted for Clinton in 2016 indicated that they would vote for Biden in 2020, whereas only 80.2% of respondents who said they voted for Trump in 2016 indicated that they planned to vote for him in 2020.

While any extrapolation from a regional poll to inferences about Virginia statewide election state-of-play is fraught, the overall picture in these results is of a president who is not very popular in Hampton Roads, and indeed a president who appears to be less popular today than he was four years ago with survey respondents.

For more information, please contact:
 Jesse Richman, Ph.D.
 Associate Professor, Political Science & Geography
 Old Dominion University
 757-683-3853
jrichman@odu.edu