

AJC 2017 SURVEY OF AMERICAN JEWISH OPINION ON U.S., GLOBAL ISSUES

September 13, 2017 – New York – AJC’s Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion indicates widespread dissatisfaction with President Trump’s performance in office, and a significant rise in American Jewish fears of rising anti-Semitism. The 2017 survey is the latest in the global Jewish advocacy organization’s annual reports on the views of American Jews about key issues.

“For many years, our surveys have provided insights into the thinking of American Jews on a range of critical issues of concern to our community,” said AJC CEO David Harris. “Particularly striking in our new survey is the fact that attitudes towards the president, both pro and con, have remained largely static since Election Day, and within the Jewish community the discrepancy between the Orthodox and other Jewish denominations on most questions is pronounced.”

Asked whom they voted for in the 2016 presidential election, 64% replied Hillary Clinton and 18% Donald Trump. In the responses to questions about the new president’s performance in office, it was clear that relatively few minds have changed since Election Day.

Just 21% of the sample has a favorable opinion of the job President Trump has been doing, while 77% has an unfavorable view. The president does only slightly better on questions about how he is handling specific policy areas, but disapproval still outpaces approval by roughly a three-to-one ratio:

- Immigration—23% approve and 76% disapprove
- Iran nuclear issue—26% approve and 67% disapprove
- National Security—27% approve and 73% disapprove
- NATO and the Transatlantic Alliance—25% approve and 72% disapprove
- Race Relations—21% approve and 78% disapprove
- Terrorism—30% approve and 69% disapprove
- U.S.-Russia Relations—23% approve and 75% disapprove

There is a marked division of views between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews on President Trump’s performance.

Those who identify as Orthodox were the most supportive of Trump on Election Day and continue to give him high marks. Fifty-four percent of the Orthodox say they voted for Trump, compared to 24% of Conservative, 10% of Reform, 8% of Reconstructionist, and 14% of respondents who identify themselves as “Just Jewish.”

Conversely, Clinton garnered 13% of the Orthodox vote, 60% of Conservative, 78% of Reform, and 89% of Reconstructionist.

On President Trump’s performance to date, 71% of Orthodox respondents, 25% of Conservative, 11% of Reform, 8% of Reconstructionist, and 17% of Just Jewish view it favorably, while 27% of Orthodox, 73% of Conservative, 88% of Reform, 92% of Reconstructionist, and 81% of Just Jewish view his performance unfavorably.

President Trump does best on the question about how he is handling U.S.-Israel relations, though even here the “disapprove” responses lead “approve” by 54% to 41%. In 2015, when the survey asked the same question about President Obama, responses were evenly divided, 49%-49%.

On U.S.-Israel relations, the denominational breakdown of those approving President Trump’s performance is 78% of Orthodox, 50% of Conservative, 31% of Reform, 8% of Reconstructionist, and 37% of Just Jewish. Disapproving are 22% of Orthodox, 46% of Conservative, 62% of Reform, 84% of Reconstructionist, and 56% of Just Jewish.

The survey recorded a significant jump in the number of those who view anti-Semitism as a problem in America. While in 2016, 73% considered it a problem and only 21% viewed it as “very serious,” in 2017 84% say it is a problem, and 41% consider it a “very serious” problem. Similarly, the percentage considering anti-Semitism on the college campus a problem rose from 56% in 2016 to 69% this year, and the number believing it to be a “very serious” problem went from 23% to 29%.

Regarding anti-Semitism in Europe, 54% consider it a very serious problem and 32% somewhat of a problem, while 8 percent don’t see it as a problem. An overwhelming majority, 78%, consider anti-Semitism in the Arab world a very serious problem, 17% somewhat of a problem, and only 2 percent as not a problem.

On the peace process, 55% favor the establishment of a Palestinian state and 40% oppose it. In the 2015 AJC survey, the last time this question was asked, 52 percent favored it and 46 percent opposed.

A decisive majority of the sample, 80 percent, think the U.S. should play a role in solving international problems, with 24% saying it should play the “leading” role and 56% “a major role, but not the leading role.” “A minor role” for the U.S. is supported by 13% and 5% prefer no role at all. Republicans and Democrats hold similar views on this question, with 26% of Republicans and 24% of Democrats favoring “the leading role,” 56% of Republicans and 59% of Democrats favoring “a major role, but not the leading role,” and 17 percent of Republicans and 16 percent of Democrats favoring a minor or no role.

A clear majority of respondents, 57%, consider North Korea the nation that poses the single greatest danger to the U.S., followed by Russia (22%), Iran (16%), and China (10%). However, the Orthodox respondents differ, 60% of them identifying Iran as the greatest danger and only 28% citing North Korea.

Among the other issues covered by the survey are moving the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the degree of importance respondents place upon being Jewish, and Jewish religious pluralism in Israel.

AJC’s 2017 Survey of American Jewish Opinion, conducted by the research company SSRS, is based on telephone interviews carried out August 10-28 with a national sample of 1,000 Jews over age 18. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.71%.

The full [2017 survey](#) and [previous](#) AJC surveys are available at www.ajc.org.