

Field Poll: Obama support still strong in state

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California remains a reservoir of goodwill for President Barack Obama, a president struggling to reverse sagging approval ratings nationwide more than a year into his second term, according to a new Field Poll.

Fifty-three percent of California voters support Obama, with 41 percent disapproving, the poll released Monday found. That is almost the reverse of the average of nationwide polls, which show 43 percent of voters approving of the Democratic president and 53 percent disapproving.

In California, which Obama carried with 60 percent of the vote in 2012, four out of five registered Democrats back the president, along with almost one-half of independents. Two-thirds of Latinos and 84 percent of African American voters also support Obama, according to the survey. And while 80 percent of Republicans oppose the Democrat, they make up only 29 percent of the California electorate.

“That’s what keeps it so high in California. There just aren’t that many opposition party registrants,” Field Poll director Mark DiCamillo said. “It’s a Democratic-dominant state.”

Obama’s approval rating among California voters is almost unchanged from December, when 51 percent of voters approved of the president’s job performance and 43 percent disapproved. Both job-performance numbers are much lower than Obama’s second-term high of 62 percent in February 2013.

Voters are almost evenly divided on how the president is handling the economy, 48 percent to 47 percent. On foreign policy, 49 percent approve of Obama’s job performance and 44 percent disapprove.

Obama’s strongest support is among voters in coastal counties, 56 percent to 39 percent, while voters’ opinion of Obama is almost evenly divided among voters in inland counties.

Obama's approval rating partway into his sixth year in the White House ranks near the middle of his two-term predecessors' at equivalent points in office. Then-President Ronald Reagan had a 73 percent approval rating in March 1986 and then-President Bill Clinton had a 62 percent approval rating in April 1998.

At the other extreme, then-President Richard Nixon had a 33 percent approval rating in April 1974 and then-President George W. Bush had an approval rating of 32 percent in April 2006.

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