

Poll: More Residents Approve of Johnson's Job Performance as Mayor of Sacramento;
Additional support needed to pass the strong mayor proposal

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On November 4, 2008, Kevin Johnson was elected as Mayor of Sacramento with 57 percent of the votes¹. Since the election, Mayor Johnson has proposed creating a strong mayor structure. If an election were held today, would residents vote yes or no to amend the city charter to make him a strong mayor with the power to appoint department heads, propose the city budget, and veto city council decisions? How many city residents approve of Johnson's job performance as Mayor of Sacramento? How many people feel confident in his ability to be a good mayor?

According to a random survey of 424 residents in the City of Sacramento, more residents feel confident that Johnson will be a good mayor (41% confident vs. 27% not confident) even though about one third (32%) are undecided. Moreover, 46 percent approve of the way he is performing his job as Mayor of Sacramento, 22 percent disapprove, and 32 percent don't know. Excluding those who don't know whether or not they approve, more than two-thirds (68%) approve of his job performance whereas only about one-third (32%) disapprove. Mayor Johnson also enjoys more support (46% approve) from residents than does the city council (31%).

If an election were held during the time of our interviews between February 14 and March 4, 2009, 29 percent of city residents would vote to change the city charter to give Johnson the power to appoint department heads, propose the city budget, and veto city council decisions, while 36 percent would vote to oppose it. However, more than one-third (35%) have not yet decided on their position with respect to the strong mayor proposal. This is especially the case for those aged 65 or above (49%), the working or lower classes (45%), those with a high school or less education (45%), those with a household income of \$30,000 or less (44%), and non-homeowners (44%).

Residents' perception of Johnson's job performance as Mayor of Sacramento and their confidence in his ability to be a good mayor significantly affect how they would vote on the strong mayor measure. Eighty-one percent of the residents who disapprove of how Johnson handles his job and 75 percent of those who have no confidence in his ability to be a good mayor oppose the proposal. In sharp contrast, more than half of those who have confidence in him (55%) and who approve of his job performance (51%) are willing to give him the extra power.

¹ The County of Sacramento Voter Registration and Elections Department. November 26, 2008. *The 2008 General Election Results, Sacramento County, November 4, 2008*. Retrieved on March 17, 2009 from http://www.elections.saccounty.net/coswcms/groups/public/@wcm/@pub/@vre/documents/webcontent/sac_018061.pdf

A majority (51%) of area residents would approve of restricting elected officials to two terms as Mayor and two terms on the city council if an election were held during the time of our interviews between February 14 and March 4, 2009. The remaining residents (49%) are divided: 25 percent would vote no and 24 percent claim they have not yet made up their mind.

What follows are more detailed results from the city survey, a part of *The 2009 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*, conducted from February 14 to March 4, 2009, by the Institute for Social Research (ISR), California State University, Sacramento.

Johnson earns 45 percent job performance approval as Mayor of Sacramento

When residents in the City of Sacramento were interviewed, 46 percent approved of the way Johnson was handling his job, 22 percent disapproved, and 32 percent had yet to form an opinion on his job performance. Residents from non-White and non-Hispanic racial backgrounds (57% approve), those with some college education (51% approve), and those making \$30,000 to \$75,000 a year (50% approve) are more likely to rate his job performance positively. Residents who own their homes free and clear (36% disapprove) and those with household incomes of \$75,000 or more (33%) are more likely to disapprove of his job performance.

Johnson (46%) enjoys a higher approval rating than the city council (31%). In fact, approval for the city council is split: 31 percent approve of the council's job performance and 31 percent disapprove with 38 percent undecided.

Excluding those who responded that they don't know, Mayor Johnson's job approval rate is two to one: 68 percent approve and 32 percent disapprove. This pattern holds true for many different demographic groups. Almost two-thirds of residents, regardless of race and educational background, are positive about his job performance. Even the majority of residents with household incomes of \$75,000 or more (58%) and those who own their homes free and clear (55%) approve of his job performance as Mayor of Sacramento.

However, many residents (32%) have yet to form an opinion about his job performance since Johnson has been in office for only three months. This is especially the case for Hispanic residents (43%), those with a high school or less education (44%), those with household incomes of \$30,000 or less a year (44%), and non-homeowners (43%).

“Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way that Kevin Johnson is handling his job as Mayor of Sacramento?”

	All the City Residents
Approve	46%
Disapprove	22
Don't know	32

Comparison among Hispanics, Whites, and Other Residents

	Hispanic/Latino	Whites	Other Racial Groups
Approve	38%	45%	57%
Disapprove	19	24	16
Don't know	43	31	27

Comparison among People with Different Education Level

	High School or Less	Some College	College Education
Approve	39%	51%	47%
Disapprove	17	20	26
Don't know	44	29	27

Comparison among People with Different Income Level

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 and Less Than \$75,000	\$75,000 or More
Approve	39%	50%	45%
Disapprove	17	19	33
Don't know	44	31	22

Comparison between Home-owners and Non-homeowners

	Non-homeowners	Own Home with Mortgage	Own Home Free and Clear
Approve	45%	46%	44%
Disapprove	12	26	36
Don't know	43	28	20

Comparison between Mayor Johnson and the City Council

	Mayor Johnson	The City Council
Approve	46%	31%
Disapprove	22	31
Don't know	32	38

Comparison between Mayor Johnson's Job Approval With and Without "Don't Know"

	All the Residents (With "Don't Know")	All the Residents with Opinions (Without "Don't Know")
Approve	46%	68%
Disapprove	22	32
Don't know	32	0

Comparison among Hispanics, Whites, and Other Residents Excluding the “Don’t Know”

	Hispanic/Latino	Whites	Other Racial Groups
Approve	65%	67%	79%
Disapprove	35	33	21
Don’t Know	0	0	0

Comparison among People with Different Education Level Excluding the “Don’t Know”

	High School or Less	Some College	College Education
Approve	69%	72%	64%
Disapprove	31	28	36
Don’t Know	0	0	0

Comparison among People with Different Income Level Excluding the “Don’t Know”

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 and Less Than \$75,000	\$75,000 or More
Approve	70%	73%	58%
Disapprove	30	27	42
Don’t know	0	0	0

Comparison between Home-owners and Non-homeowners Excluding the “Don’t Know”

	Non-homeowners	Own Home with Mortgages	Own Home Free and Clean
Approve	79%	65%	55%
Disapprove	21	35	45
Don’t know	0	0	0

Comparison between Mayor Johnson and the City Council Excluding the “Don’t Know”

	Mayor Johnson	The City Council
Approve	68%	50%
Disapprove	32	50
Don’t Know	0	0

Forty-one percent feel confident that Johnson will be a good mayor

Forty one percent of city residents are confident in Johnson’s ability to be a good mayor, 27 percent lack confidence, and 32 percent are unsure. Those with some college education are the most likely to feel confident of his ability to be a good mayor (47%), while those residents with high school or less education are the most likely to claim they don’t know if they are confident or not (44%).

“Are you confident or not confident in Kevin Johnson’s ability to be a good Mayor?”

Residents in Sacramento City	
Confident	41%
Not Confident	27
Don’t Know	32

Comparison among Hispanics, Whites, and Other Residents

	High School or Less	Some College	College Education
Confident	37%	47%	40%
Not Confident	19	28	30
Don’t Know	44	25	30

More support needed to pass the strong mayor proposal

When asked whether they would vote yes or no to amend the city charter to make Johnson a strong mayor with the power to appoint department heads, to propose the city budget, and to veto city council decisions, only 29 percent of Sacramento residents responded affirmatively. The rest are divided: 36 percent would vote no and 35 percent don’t know how they would vote on the issue.

Confidence in Johnson has a great deal of influence on how residents would vote for the strong mayor proposal. Those who have confidence in Johnson (55% yes) are much more likely than those who have no confidence (10% yes) or those who don’t know (11% yes) to approve of giving him the extra power. In sharp contrast, those who have no confidence (75% no) are much more likely to oppose the strong mayor proposal than those who have the confidence (17% no) or those who don’t know their confidence level (33% no). Moreover, the overwhelming majority of those who don’t know whether they have the confidence or not are also unsure whether they would vote yes or no on the strong mayor proposal (59% don’t know), compared to those who are confident (28% don’t know) and those who are not confident (15% don’t).

Approval of his job performance as Mayor of Sacramento also has a significant impact on how residents would vote for the strong mayor proposal. Those who approve of his job performance (51% yes) are much more likely to give Johnson the extra power than those who disapprove (7% yes) or those who are unsure (13% yes). However, 81 percent of those residents who disapprove of how he handles his job as Mayor of Sacramento would oppose his strong mayor proposal, compared to only 19 percent of those who approve of his job performance and 31 percent of those who are undecided. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of those who don’t know whether Johnson has or has not done a good job are much less likely to be certain whether they would vote yes or no on the strong mayor proposal (59% don’t know), compared to those who approve (30% don’t know) and those who disapprove (12% don’t know).

However, more than one-third of Sacramento residents remain undecided on the strong mayor proposal. More than forty percent of those 65 or above (49%), those from working or lower

classes (45%), those with a high school or less education (45%), those with a household income of \$30,000 or less a year (44%), and non-homeowners (44%) remain undecided on this issue. Moreover, 30 percent or more of young residents (37% of those 40 years old or younger), those with some college education (36%), those from the middle class (30%), and those with a household income of \$30,000 and \$75,000 (32%) are undecided on how they would vote on the proposal.

“If an election were held today, would you vote yes or no to amend the city charter to make Kevin Johnson a “Strong Mayor” with the power to appoint department heads, propose the city budget, and veto city council decisions?”

	Sacramento City
Yes	29%
No	36
Don't Know/Depends	35

Comparison among People with Different Confidence Level in Kevin Johnson

	Confident	Not Confident	Don't Know
Yes	55%	10%	11%
No	17	75	30
Don't Know/Depends	28	15	59

Comparison among People with Different Approval Level in Kevin Johnson

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't Know
Yes	51%	7%	13%
No	19	81	31
Don't Know/Depends	30	12	56

Comparison among People with Different Age

	40 and Younger	41 to 64	65 and Over
Yes	25%	36%	14%
No	38	35	37
Don't Know/Depends	37	29	49

Comparison among People with Different Socioeconomic Status

	Upper Class/ Upper Middle Class	Middle Class	Working Class/ Lower class
Yes	32%	31%	27%
No	46	39	28
Don't Know/Depends	22	30	45

Comparison among People with Different Education Level

	High School or Less	Some College	College Education
Yes	28%	30%	32%
No	27	34	42
Don't Know/Depends	45	36	26

Comparison among People with Different Income Level

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 and Less Than &75,000	\$75,000 or More
Yes	29%	31%	29%
No	27	37	47
Don't Know/Depends	44	32	24

Comparison between Home-owners and Non-homeowners

	Non-homeowners	Own Home with Mortgages	Own Home Free and Clear
Yes	26%	33%	21%
No	30	39	43
Don't Know/Depends	44	28	36

Majority support the mayoral and city council term limits

Between February 14 and March 4, 2009, Sacramento residents were asked whether they would vote yes or no to restrict elected officials to two terms as Mayor and two terms on the city council. Their responses are clear: 51 percent would vote yes to institute term limits for the mayor and for council members. The remaining residents are divided: 25 percent would vote no and 24 percent don't know how they would vote on the proposal.

The term limit proposal enjoys the most support from those who own their home free and clear (64%), those with a household income of \$75,000 or more (64%), those with some college education (59%), those people who are between 40 and 64 years of age (59%), white residents (57%), and the upper and upper middle class residents (57%).

Confidence in Johnson has very little influence on how respondents would vote for the term limit proposal: 54 percent who are confident and 60 percent who are not confident would vote to support term limits. Approval of Johnson's job performance doesn't affect how city residents would vote for the term limit proposal, either: 57 percent who approve of his job performance and 56 percent who disapprove would vote to limit the terms of the mayor and the city council members to two terms.

“If an election were held today, would you vote yes or no to restrict elected officials two terms as Mayor and two terms on the City Council

	Sacramento City
Yes	51%
No	25
Don't know/Depends	24

Comparison between Home-owners and Non-homeowners

	Non-homeowners	Own Home with Mortgages	Own Home Free and Clean
Yes	43%	52%	64%
No	24	27	19
Don't Know/Depends	33	21	17

Comparison among People with Different Income Level

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 and Less Than &75,000	\$75,000 or More
Yes	40%	50%	64%
No	24	28	23
Don't Know/Depends	36	22	13

Comparison among People with Different Education Level

	High School or Less	Some College	College Education
Yes	41%	59%	50%
No	24	19	31
Don't Know/Depends	35	22	19

Comparison among Hispanics, Whites, and Other Residents

	Hispanic/Latino	Whites	Other Racial Groups
Yes	44%	59%	37%
No	21	26	25
Don't Know/Depends	35	15	38

Comparison among People with Different Age

	40 and Younger	41 to 64	64 and Over
Yes	42%	57%	49%
No	23	26	26
Don't Know/Depends	35	17	25

Comparison among People with Different Socioeconomic Status

	Upper Class/ Upper Middle Class	Middle Class	Working Class/ Lower class
Yes	57%	54%	46%
No	24	28	22
Don't Know/Depends	19	18	32

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters
Yes	51%	69%	52%
No	28	24	24
Don't Know/Depends	21	7	24

Comparison among people with Different Confidence Level in Kevin Johnson

	Confident	Not Confident	Don't Know
Yes	54%	60%	38%
No	26	30	19
Don't Know/Depends	20	10	43

Comparison among People with Different Approval Level in Kevin Johnson

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't Know
Yes	57%	56%	38%
No	26	32	20
Don't Know/Depends	17	12	42

Survey methods

The above results are based on part of our eighth annual survey, *The 2009 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*. This project is a computer-assisted telephone interview of 1,353 adult residents age 18 and older from randomly selected households in the Sacramento region, which includes Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, and El Dorado counties. The objective of this project is to assess the perception of the quality of life and public opinion in the Sacramento region on a wide range of important local and national issues.

More than 40 students conducted phone interviews in English and Spanish from February 14 to March 4, 2009, at the Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. The sample is quite representative of the four counties in the Sacramento region when compared with the 2007 U.S. Census estimates (9.4% in the Census vs. 9.3% in the sample in Yolo County; 8.4% in the Census vs. 10.7% in the sample in El Dorado County, 16% in the Census vs. 15.3% in the sample in Placer County, and 66.3% residents in the Census vs. 64.7% in the sample in Sacramento County). The small differences may reflect the changes in the population of the

region. The margin of error for the survey in the region is approximately ± 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. The error for the City of Sacramento and group comparison would be higher than ± 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

This survey has compared the Sacramento regional findings with those from other California regions, as well as those from the state and the nation. Data cited regarding the state and other California regions often comes from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Surveys. Nationwide data often comes from Gallup polls. The College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies (SSIS), the Department of Sociology, and the Office of Public Affairs sponsored this project.

This research is directed by Amy Liu, Ph.D., Department of Sociology and Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. Dr. Liu is an expert in public opinion polls, and has conducted over 20 surveys in the past ten years, including:

- 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2008 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region (above you note this is the eighth annual survey...but there are only six years listed here)
- Survey of Iowa Business about Eldercare and Eldercare Needs
- Story County Conservation Board Survey
- Grundy County Youth Needs Assessment

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Appendix I: The 2009 Annual Survey Research Team Members and Sponsors

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