

US Presidential Approval Ratings

A Statistical Analysis of the Polling Era

56.1%

Historical Mean
(Yr 1)

n=12 elected presidents

~44%

Trump II
First Year

2nd lowest ever recorded

**11th /
12**

Trump II
Ranking

Among elected presidents

>80 pp

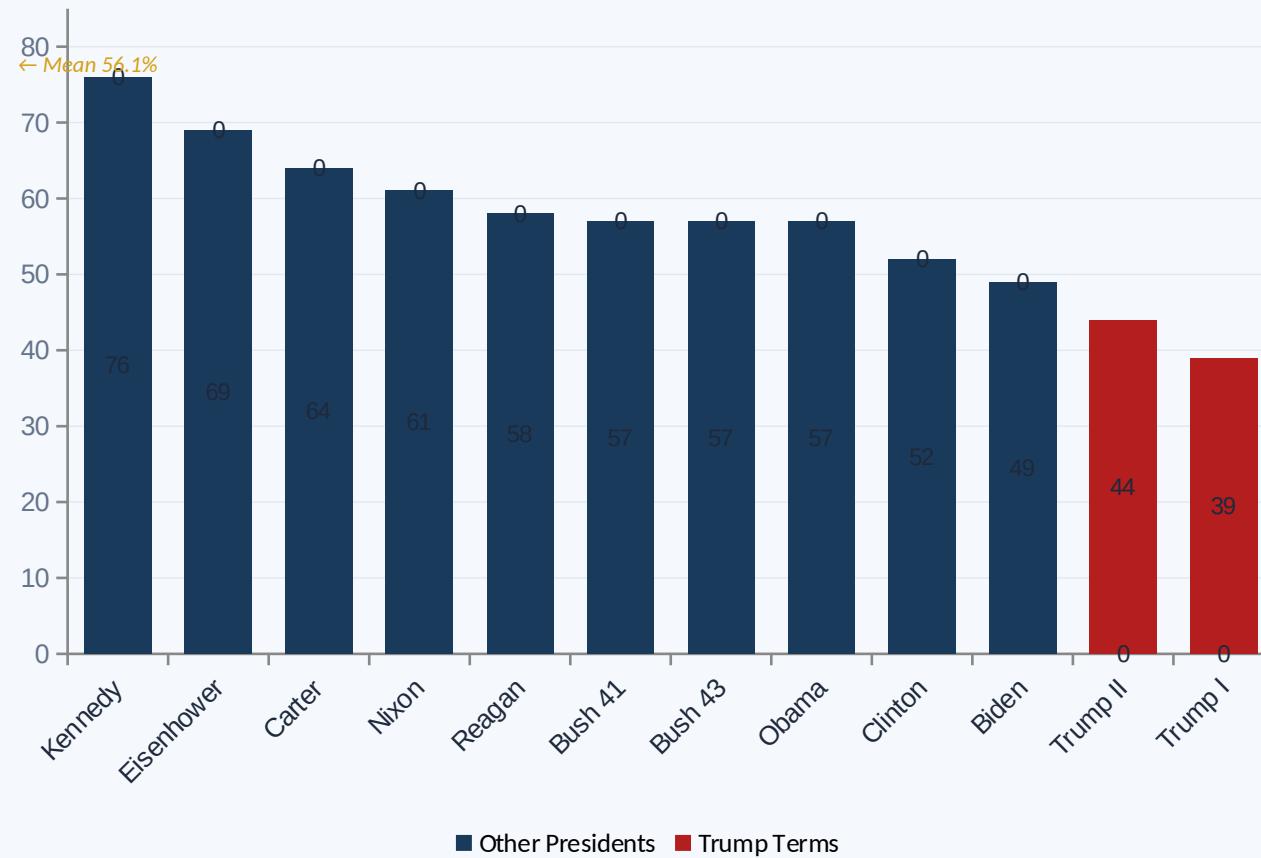
Partisan Gap

Highest in polling history

Sources: Gallup | American Presidency Project (UCSB) | FiveThirtyEight / Silver Bulletin | Decision Desk HQ | Brookings Institution | February 2026

Note: Gallup ceased presidential approval tracking on 11 February 2026.

First-Year Approval Ratings: All Elected Presidents



Key Statistics

Historical Mean

56.1%

Median

57%

Std Deviation

9.9 pp

Trump II (Yr 1)

~44%

Trump I (Yr 1)

39%

Trump II z-score

-1.22

Percentile rank

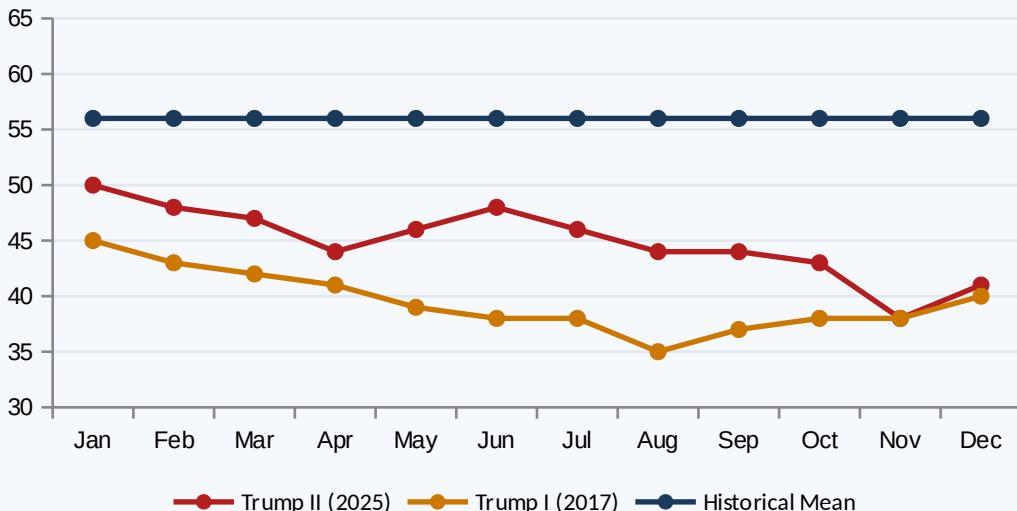
17th

vs. Mean

-12.1 pp

Trump II: Statistical Summary & Key Findings

2025 Monthly Approval Trajectory vs. Trump I



Key Statistical Findings

2nd

Lowest first-year avg of any elected president, above only his own 2017 term (39%)

+5

Points better than Trump I first year — stronger base enthusiasm post-2024 win

-12

Points below historical mean (56.1%) — statistically significant ($t = -4.23, p < 0.01$)

85p
p

Partisan gap: largest ever recorded. Republican 89%, Democrat 3%, Independent ~28%

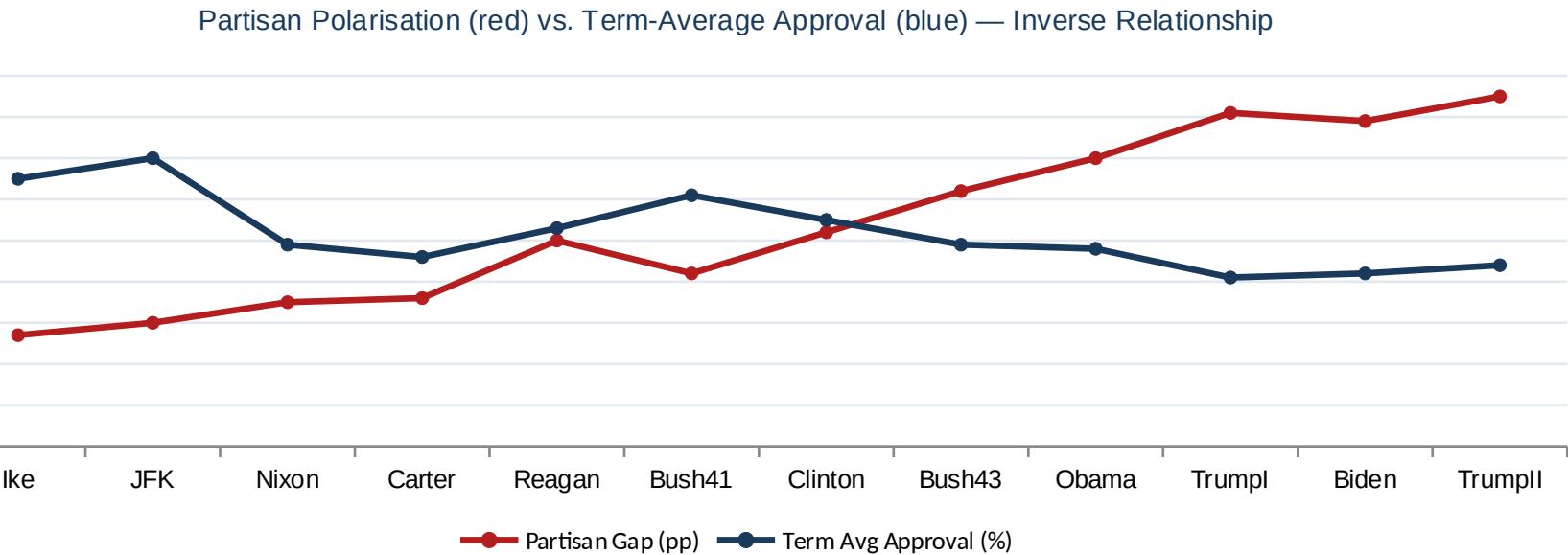
Nov

Worst month: November 2025 (~36-40%) — federal shutdown + economic concerns

STRUCTURAL CONTEXT

Record partisan polarisation structurally constrains aggregate approval. A weighted model (Republican $28\% \times 89\%$ + Democrat $29\% \times 4\%$ + Independent $43\% \times 30\%$) yields ~39-44%, matching observed data — meaning approval is largely determined by party math, not performance alone.

Historical Context: Polarisation & the Approval Ceiling



Inverse Relationship

As polarisation rose from 27pp (Eisenhower) to 85pp (Trump II), term-average approval trended downward — from 65% to the 40s.

Structural Floor & Ceiling

High polarisation creates a ~37% floor (base party + few independents) and ~50% ceiling without cross-party appeal.

Era Comparison Warning

A 50% rating in 1960 reflects broad consensus; a 50% rating today requires near-unanimous party support + strong independents.