

How Trump and Hanson are damaging their brands

Written by Adrian Beaumont, Honorary Associate, School of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Melbourne

At the start of Donald Trump's term, the [FiveThirtyEight poll aggregate](#) gave him 48% approval, 43% disapproval, for a net approval of +5. More than seven months into Trump's term, his ratings are 37% approve, 57% disapprove, for a net of -20. As [analyst Nate Silver](#) says, overall there has been a clear downward trend in Trump's approval since he took office.

Since 1953, previous US presidents have benefited from large honeymoons in their first days, so Trump started at a much lower base. Yet, according to [analyst Harry Enten](#), Trump's decline at the six-month mark was about average for all presidents since 1953.

The [white working class](#) swung to Trump at the 2016 election, enabling him to win the Electoral College despite losing the popular vote by 2.1 percentage points. Trump appealed to this demographic as an anti-establishment populist who would improve their lives.

Rather than Draining the Swamp, Trump has appointed many people with Wall St backgrounds to senior positions in his administration, while other appointments have been very right-wing Republicans.

During the campaign, Trump promised a large infrastructure program. If Trump had told Congress to pass this program soon after he took office, he would probably have had an early legislative success with some Democratic support. Instead, Trump and Congressional Republicans have been obsessed with attempting to pass a deeply [unpopular repeal of Obamacare](#) which would harm the white working class.

Trump has antagonised Democrats so much that an attempt to pass an infrastructure program would now be opposed by almost all Democrats. As some hard right Republicans would also oppose such a program, it now appears doomed.

Trump's tax cut plan, which is yet to go before Congress, would increase the US deficit by \$US 3.5 trillion and the [top 1% would receive 40% of the benefits](#), according to the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center.

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While Trump's white nationalism appeals to the white working class, his economic policies have very little appeal for them. Had Trump been more centrist on economic matters, such as by implementing an infrastructure program or refusing to support any Obamacare repeal attempt that gutted Medicaid (government health care for the poor), he would have been more likely to hold onto his support.

Trump's chaotic personnel changes, the firing of FBI director James Comey and the Trump Russian connections, also explain some of the drop in Trump's approval. However, many of those who switched from Obama to Trump thought he would protect them economically; instead, his policies would harm them.

FiveThirtyEight's poll [aggregate for the Congressional vote](#) shows Democrats leading Republicans by 10 points. Midterm elections, where all House seats and 1/3 of the Senate are up for election, will occur in November 2018.

Pauline Hanson follows same economic hard right path as Trump

In Australia's Senate, there have been a total of 212 divisions in the current Parliament where Labor and the government have disagreed. In these divisions, the Greens have sided with the government 10% of the time, the Nick Xenophon Team 63% of the time, and One Nation 79% of the time. These statistics do not include abstentions or party splits in the "agrees with government" category.

While One Nation's vote has remained steady at 8-9%, evidence from other countries and the WA state election is that parties associated with Trump slump in the lead-up to an election, then underperform their polls on election day. Labor will campaign against One Nation for siding with the Coalition so often during the approach to the next election. Nick Xenophon could also have questions to answer.

These statistics use the [record of all Senate divisions](#) in the current Parliament. These divisions were analysed with Excel.

ReachTEL 52-48 to Australian Labor

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A [Sky News ReachTEL](#) poll, conducted Wednesday night from a sample of 2830, had Labor leading by 52-48, a one point gain for Labor since July. [Primary votes](#) were 36.7% Labor (up 1.6), 34.5% Coalition (down 2.7), 10.4% One Nation (down 1.3) and 10.3% Greens (up 1.5).

Had last election preferences been used, this poll would have had Labor ahead by a [blowout 54.5-45.5](#) according to the Poll Bludger. Clearly One Nation's preferences are going towards the Coalition at a far greater rate than the 50-50 split at the 2016 election.

Respondent allocated polling from both YouGov and ReachTEL has been consistent in showing a skew to the Coalition when compared with previous election methods. This implies that the actual vote is at least a point closer than Newspoll's figures.

Turnbull was preferred as PM to Shorten by a narrow 51.6-48.4 (54.5-45.5 in July), ReachTEL uses a forced choice for its better PM question, and this tends to give opposition leaders better results than other polls.

By 68-21, voters supported drug testing of people receiving welfare payments, showing the public's disdain for perceived "dole bludgers". By 56-31, voters supported banning the burka in public places, including 44% "strongly support". By 50-39, voters did not think MPs before the High Court should stand down while their cases are resolved. By 46-24, voters would support investing in a missile defence system.

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