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| **Elon University Poll**

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- [Chart and data for this survey](#) (PDF)
- [Survey topline](#) (PDF)

North Carolinians say the economy, inflation and the job market have gotten worse since Trump took office

An Elon University Poll finds President Donald Trump's approval rating in the state has fallen since last March.

In a new survey conducted by the Elon University Poll, 49% of North Carolinians said the national economy has worsened, 53% said inflation has worsened and 50% said the job market has worsened since President Trump took office, with only 27% saying the national economy has improved.

The survey of 800 North Carolina adults was conducted from Sept. 23 to Oct. 1, 2025, just as the federal government shutdown was about to begin.

When asked to assign a letter grade to the national economy, 76% gave a grade of "C," "D" or "F." Similarly, 70% gave a "C" or lower grade to the North Carolina economy.

Commenting on their own financial situation, 46% said they have felt a negative impact from the Trump administration's import tariffs, while only 14% said the impact has been positive. Overall, 44% said they are less confident in their financial situation compared to a year ago, with 23% saying they are more confident.

North Carolina has experienced major reductions in federal spending, the number of federal employees and the elimination of research grants. As a result, 48% said there has been a negative impact on the state's economy, with 25% saying the impact has been positive.

Assessing Trump's job performance

Between March and September 2025, the gap between approval and disapproval of Trump's job performance widened significantly. In an Elon University poll of North Carolinians last March, 42% approved of the way he was handling his job while 45% disapproved—a gap of just 3 percentage points. By September, approval had fallen to 39% and disapproval had climbed to 50%, expanding the gap to 11 points. This growing divide indicates a noticeable shift toward greater public dissatisfaction with the president's performance over the past six months.

“North Carolinians' economic concerns have heightened since President Trump took office,” said Jason Husser, director of the Elon University Poll. “What we're seeing is a public that's feeling squeezed by inflation, by tariffs and by uncertainty. When three out of four residents give the national economy a C or worse, it's more than simple partisan reaction, it's signal of real economic anxiety.”

In contrast, Democratic Gov. Josh Stein receives a 42% approval rating, with 24% disapproving of his job performance. That compares with a negative view of the North Carolina General Assembly; 35% disapprove of state lawmakers' job performance, versus 24% who approve.

The U.S. Congress gets the worst approval rating, with 56% disapproving of the job Congress is doing, compared with 21% who approve.

Election outlooks

North Carolinians express low interest in the Nov. 4 municipal elections in the state. Just 12% said they are paying a great deal of attention to races for offices like mayor and city council, with 27% saying they are paying only a little attention and 26% saying they are paying no attention at all to the races.

Looking ahead to next year's mid-term elections, North Carolinians are evenly split on which party they want to control the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives.

In the 2026 race for the open U.S. Senate seat in North Carolina, former Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper holds a wide margin in name recognition over Michael Whatley, who recently served as chair of the Republican National Committee and was formerly chair of the North Carolina Republican Party.

Whatley is a North Carolina native who worked in President George W. Bush's administration and campaigned for Trump in North Carolina in 2016. In this survey more than year before the election, 48% said they have heard nothing at all about Whatley and 26% said they have heard only a little.

Seventy-five percent of North Carolinians have heard a great deal or something about Roy Cooper, who served two terms as North Carolina governor and 16 years as attorney general.

“Michael Whatley faces a steep uphill climb in name recognition in the year between now and Election 2026,” Husser said Jason Husser. “Even after serving in high-profile national and state party roles, almost three-quarters of North Carolinians say they’ve heard of him only a little or not at all. That’s a tough starting point for any major race, especially one in a swing state with an opponent who has an enormous visibility.”

Healthcare concerns

With the federal government shutdown hinging on difficult issues related to potential cuts in healthcare coverage, a large majority (63%) of North Carolinians said they are very or somewhat concerned that it may become harder for them to get the care they need. [According to Medicaid.gov](#), more than 2.5 million North Carolinians are enrolled in Medicaid and nearly 350,000 are enrolled in the Children’s Health Insurance Programs (CHIP). This represents about 26% of the state’s population of [just over 11 million](#).

If the federal government cuts funding for Medicaid, 43% said North Carolina should increase its healthcare spending and 22% said the state should maintain its current healthcare spending.

Regarding current controversies over vaccinations, a majority (59%) expressed little or no concerns about getting access to the vaccines they want to receive. Democrats were most concerned about vaccine access (65%), while only 20% of Republicans expressed concerns.

Thinking back on the pandemic, 58% said North Carolina’s rules and restrictions related to the coronavirus were “about right,” with 30% saying the state was too restrictive and 12% saying the state was not restrictive enough.

Poll Methodology

Access the poll topline and methodology at: www.elon.edu/elonpoll. The survey was developed by the Elon University Poll and fielded by the international marketing and polling firm [YouGov](#) as an online, web-based survey, self-administered with online panels. Between September 23 and October 1, YouGov interviewed 907 North Carolina adults aged 18 and older. These respondents were then matched down to a sample of 800 to produce the final dataset.

Throughout this report, the analysis of partisan differences compares the views of Republicans plus those who lean Republican in their voting preference with Democrats plus those who lean Democratic. The margin of error for this poll (adjusted for weights) is +/-4.24%.

About the Elon University Poll

Established in 2000, the Elon University Poll conducts national and North Carolina surveys on issues of importance to voters and residents. Information from these polls is shared with media, citizens and public officials to facilitate informed public policy making through the better understanding of citizens' opinions and attitudes. The poll is fully funded by Elon University and operates as the neutral, non-biased information resource.

The Elon University Poll is a charter member of the [Transparency Initiative](#), a program created by the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) in 2014 to educate polling firms on ways to better share how they collect and interpret their information. The Elon Poll's voluntary participation in this initiative signifies a willingness to clearly state in its reports how questions were asked, in what order, who funded the poll and then conducted it, and a definition of the population under study, among other details.