To: Interested Parties
From: Working Families Power / Justice Research Fund
Date: February 2026
Re: Favorability and Job Approval Trends Across Waves

Background

Over the past three waves of research among working-class registered voters, we have tracked President Trump's job approval, issue handling ratings, and party and organizational favorability. Wave 3 (August 2025) captured the early trajectory of Trump's second-term standing. Wave 4 (November 2025) documented a meaningful decline. The February 2026 Messaging Survey provides our first updated measurement in the new year.

Across these waves, the central question has been whether the deterioration observed in late 2025 represents temporary volatility or a structural shift. The February data suggest the latter.

Overall Job Approval: The Decline Has Stabilized, Not Reversed

In each wave, respondents were asked: "Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the job that President Trump is currently doing?"

In Wave 3 (August 2025), Trump's net approval stood at –6%. By Wave 4 (November 2025), his net approval had fallen to –15%, representing a 9-point erosion over three months.

In February 2026, the topline shows:

> 24% strongly approve
> 17% somewhat approve
> 14% somewhat disapprove
> 42% strongly disapprove
> 41% approve / 56% disapprove
> **Net: –15%**

Trump's approval rating in February is identical to November's result. The drop that occurred between August and November has neither worsened nor recovered. It has consolidated.

Issue Handling: Continued Weakness on the Most Salient Economic Concerns

In Wave 4 2025, Trump was already underwater on inflation (–35%) and improving the economy (–22%).

In February, voters were again asked: "How would you rate the job that President Trump is doing handling each of the following issues?"

The February net ratings are:

Inflation & cost of living: –39%
Healthcare: –39%
Housing: –39%
Improving the economy: –31%
Immigration: –27%
Taxes: –26%
Tariffs: –25%
Jobs: –19%

Relative to Wave 4 2025:

Inflation declined modestly from –35% to –39%.
Improving the economy declined from –22% to –31%.
Immigration shifted most sharply, from –5% in November to –27% in February.

Immigration represents the largest issue-level change between waves.

Salience Context: Weak Ratings Correspond to Top Concerns

In February, respondents were asked: "When thinking about voting in future elections, which three issues are most important to you?"

Net Top 3 results:

Inflation & cost of living — 58%
Improving the economy — 47%
Cleaning up government corruption — 46%
Healthcare — 44%
Jobs — 42%
Immigration — 40%

Trump's lowest job ratings correspond directly to these most frequently cited priorities. That alignment was already visible in Wave 4 and persists in February.

Personal and Party Favorability: Broad Structural Negativity

In February, respondents were asked whether they had favorable or unfavorable views of public figures and institutions.

Donald Trump's favorability:

36% favorable
58% unfavorable
Net: –22%

This net unfavorable rating (–22%) is more negative than his job approval (–15%), indicating personal brand weakness that extends beyond performance evaluation.

Major political entities remain net negative:
MAGA Movement: –15%
Democratic Party: –17%
Republican Party: –19%

No major party is net favorable among working-class voters.

Working Families Party: Net Positive Among Those Aware

In the February survey, respondents were asked to rate the Working Families Party.

45% report knowing enough to rate it.
Net favorability stands at +9%.

This contrasts with both major parties, each of which is net negative. While name recognition remains lower than established political brands, the WFP's favorability among those aware remains positive—consistent with findings in prior waves.

Broader Mood Indicators: Economic and Institutional Skepticism

In February, 39% say the country is headed in the right direction, while 54% say it is on the wrong track.

When presented with competing statements about the American Dream, 36% agree it is still alive, while 48% agree it is dead.

This majority pessimism mirrors Trump's issue-level weakness on economic performance and reflects broader dissatisfaction not currently resolved in partisan terms.

Conclusion

Across three waves of data:

- The significant drop in approval occurred between August (–6%) and November (–15%).
- February shows no rebound from that decline.
- Economic issue ratings remain deeply negative.
- Immigration ratings have deteriorated sharply since November.
- Trump's personal favorability (–22%) is weaker than his job rating.

- Both major parties remain net negative.
- The Working Families Party remains net positive among those aware (+9%).

Taken together, the data show a stabilized but structurally negative environment for the President and a broader electorate that remains dissatisfied and economically pessimistic.