



**UC Irvine**  
School of Social Ecology

# UCI-OC POLL

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**2025**

JANUARY 16



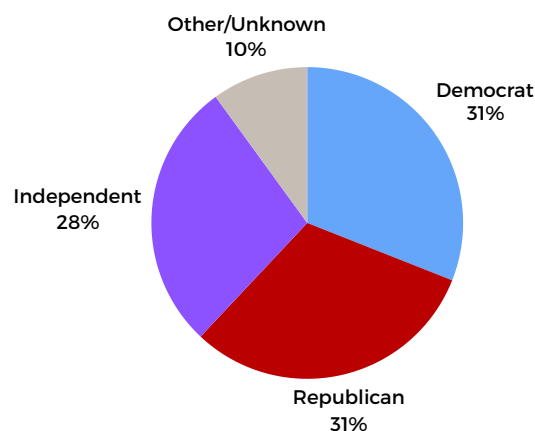
# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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As a new presidential administration takes control in Washington, DC, and as California’s governor reaches the last two years of his term, there are multiple policy and political challenges to be addressed and opportunities to be mined. Nowhere is this more vivid than in Orange County, one of the few truly “purple” counties in America.

At this moment of political change and opportunity, UC Irvine’s School of Social Ecology recently surveyed Orange County residents about their political attitudes, policy concerns, and preferences. The results from the UCI-OC Poll showcase Orange County as a bellwether for larger political dynamics afoot across the country. Although residents are pessimistic about the state and nation and view the incoming President and Governor negatively, there are opportunities for elected leaders to address their concerns and, in turn, build support and recognition.

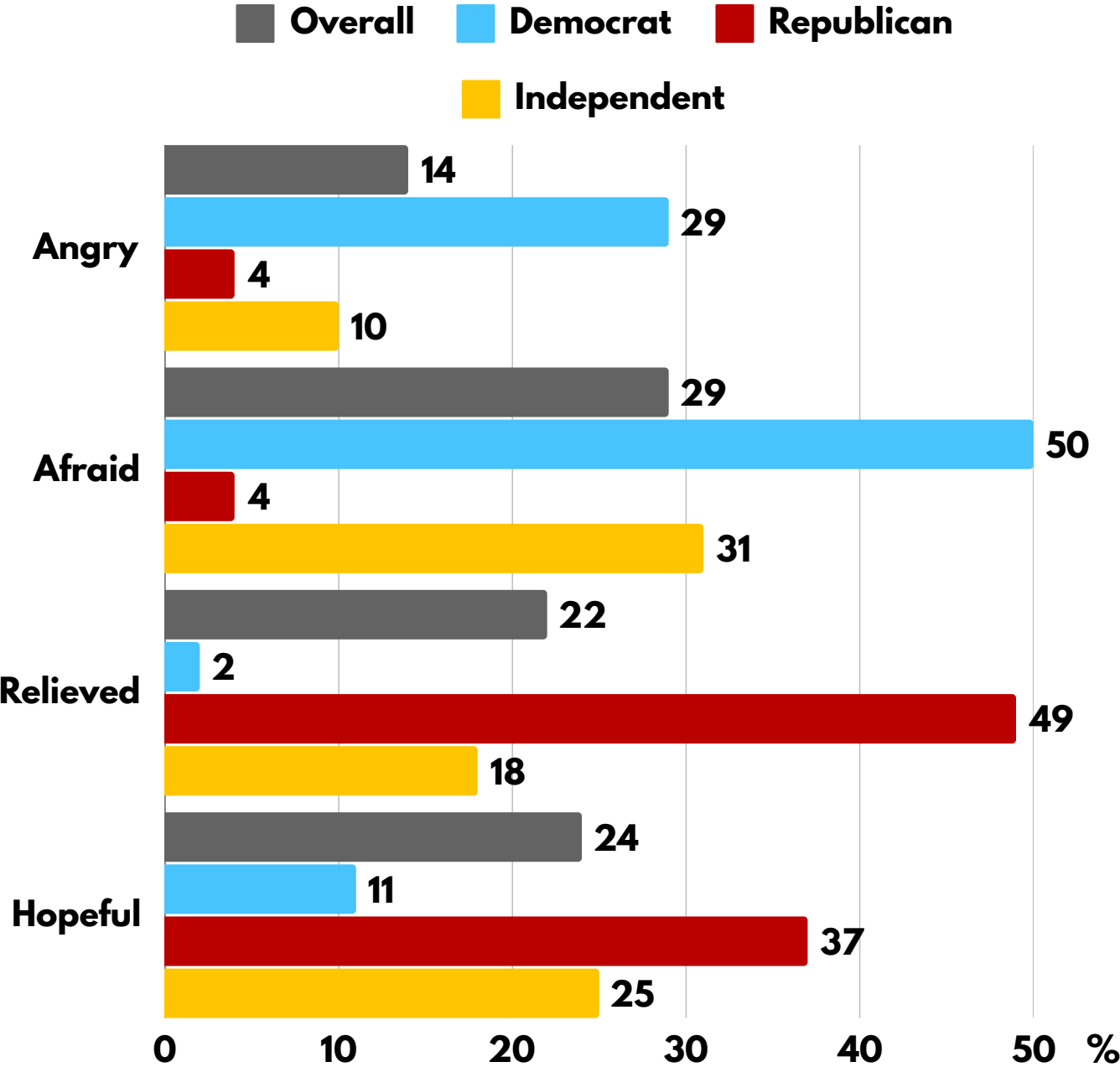
## Orange County is Very Much a “Purple” County



Orange County is one of only three truly purple jurisdictions among the nation’s 25 most populous counties. In the UCI-OC Poll, residents were evenly split between Democrats and Republicans, with self-described Independents (those not affiliating with a major party) comprising a plurality of OC voters.

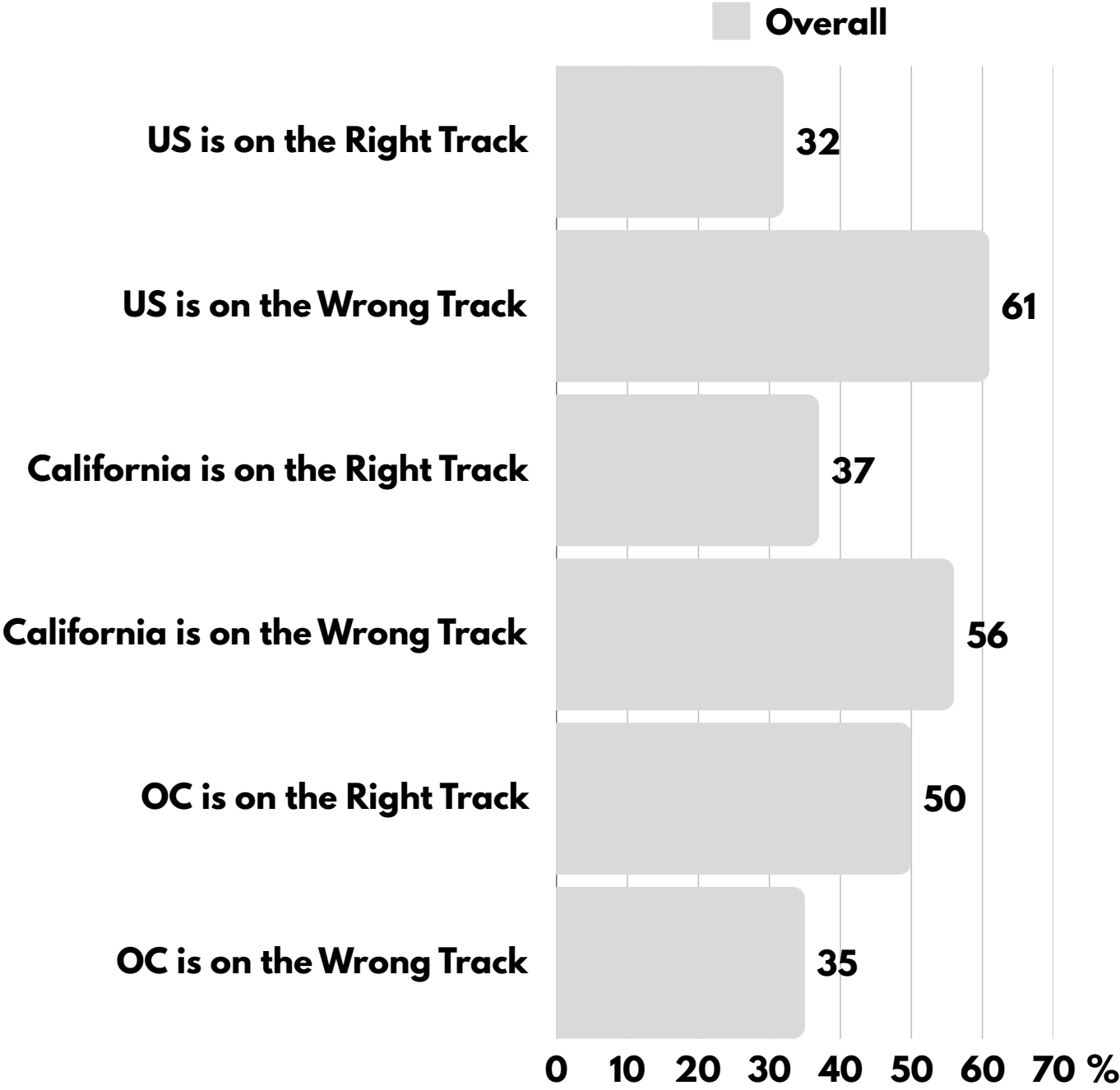
# The 2024 Election has left Orange County Residents Split

Although a small percentage of OC residents is angry from the election, residents are more afraid than relieved or hopeful from the results. Republicans are 24 times more likely than Democrats and almost 2.7 times more likely than Independents to be relieved from the election. Republicans are also three times more likely than Democrats and 30 percent more likely than Independents to be hopeful from the results.



# Residents are Disappointed with the Direction of the United States and California, but they Feel More Confident about Orange County

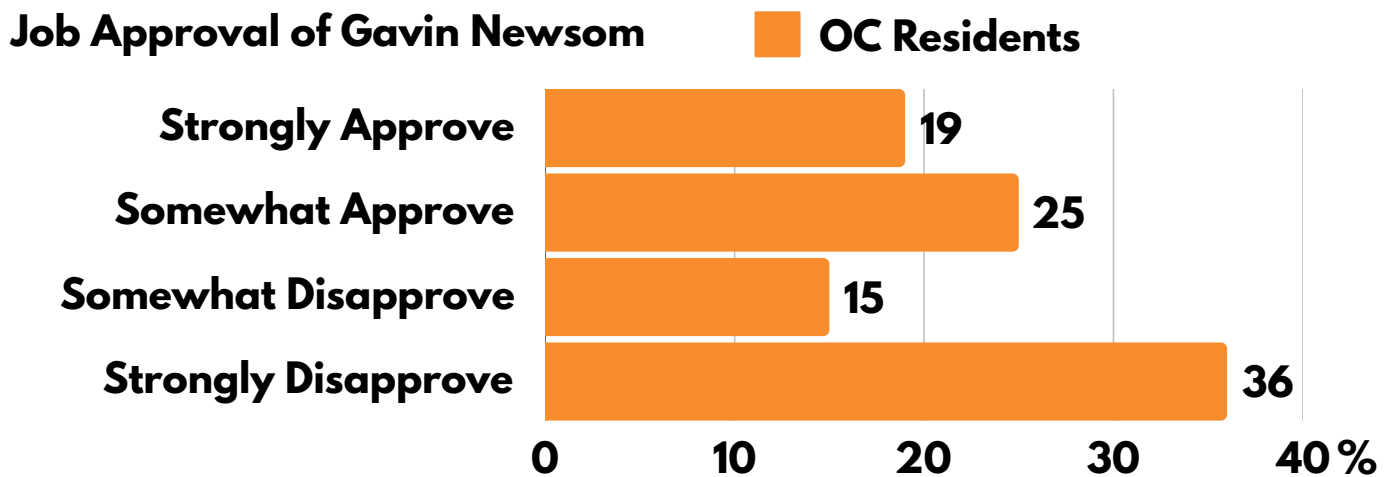
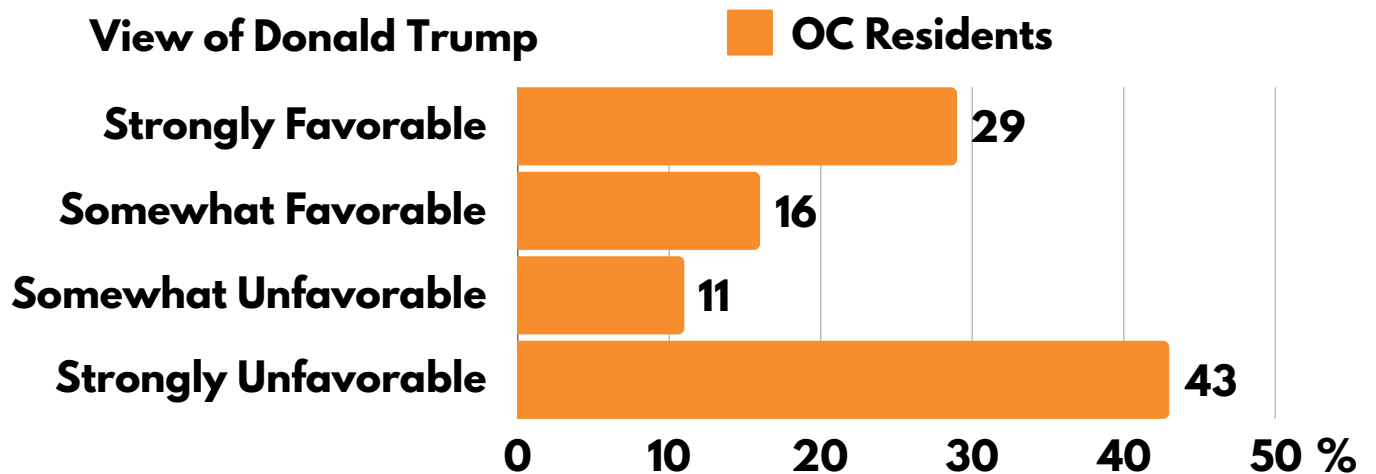
By almost 2-to-1, Orange County residents believe the U.S. is on the wrong track, and a majority believes California is headed in the wrong direction, too. By contrast, there is much more optimism and satisfaction with Orange County.



## Trump and Newsom may have Difficulty Marshalling Public Support

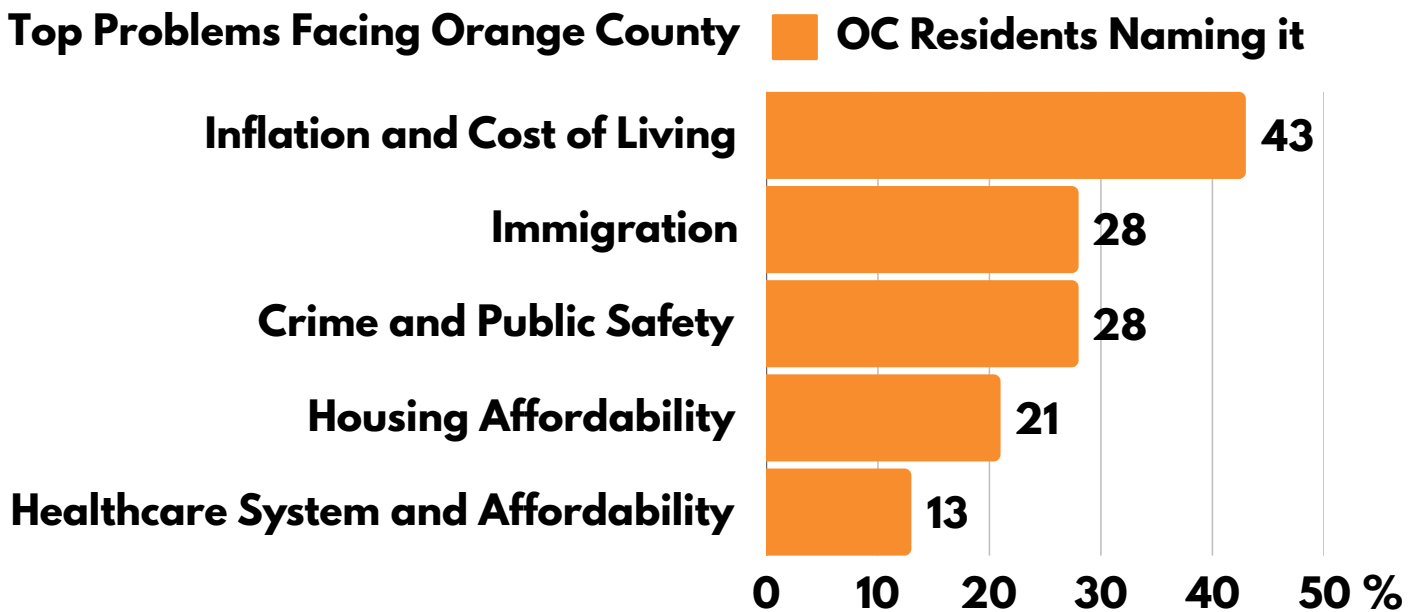
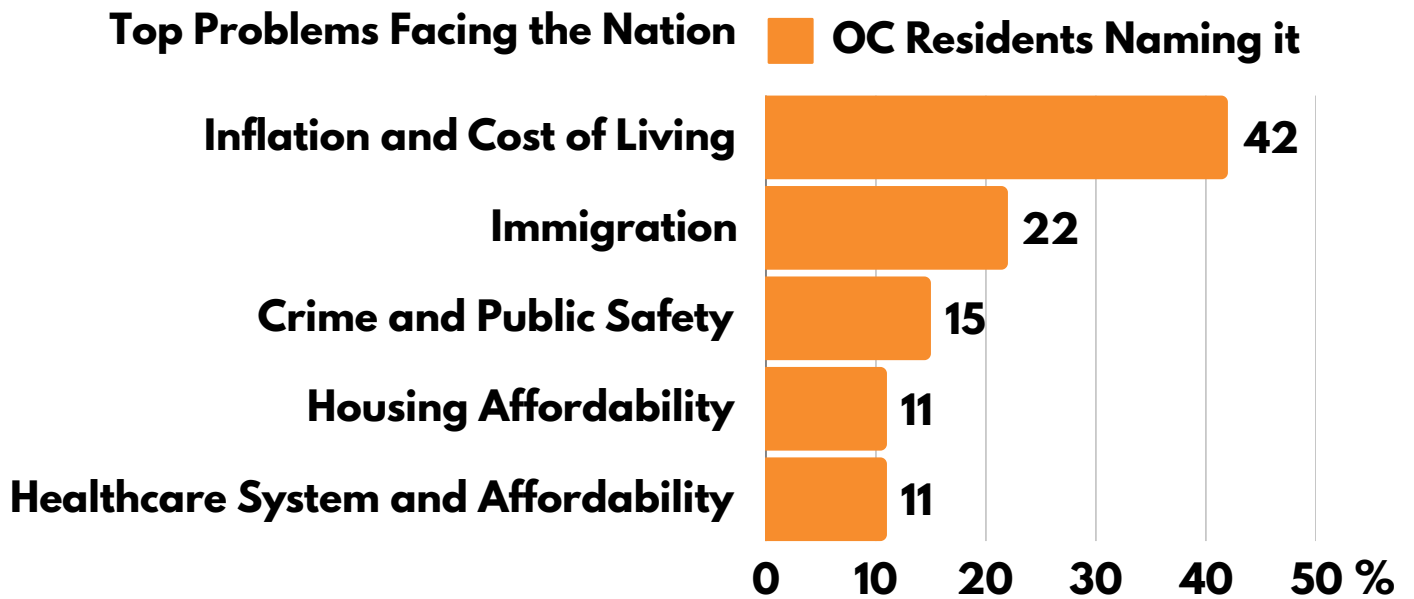
Donald Trump starts off his second term with a net-negative image among Orange County residents. Fifty-four percent of respondents view him unfavorably, 43 percent of whom feel this strongly.

At the same time, California Governor Gavin Newsom is viewed unfavorably by 51 percent of OC residents. Negative attitudes toward national and state chief executives do not bode well for their ability to rally residents in support of new measures. This is a pessimistic time, with a doubtful voter base in Orange County.



## Convergence of Concerns about the Country and County

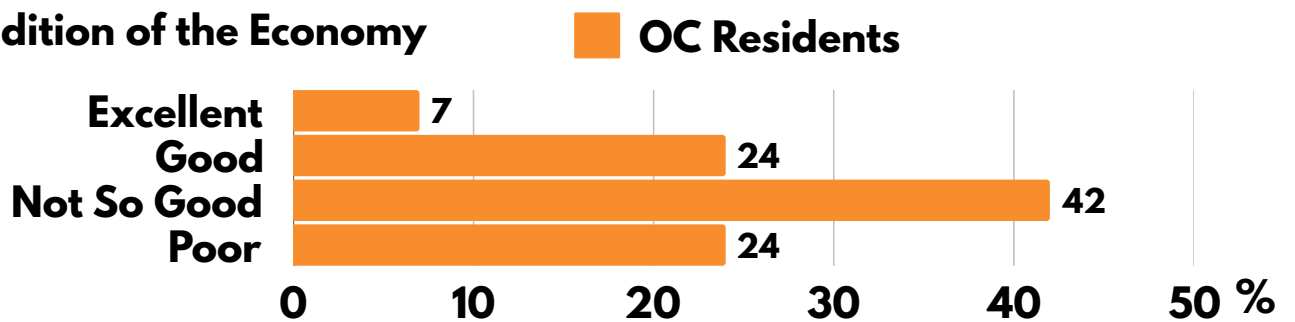
When asked to name the top problems facing the country and county, Orange County residents identify many of the same issues. By wide margins, inflation and cost of living top residents' concerns. Housing affordability, crime, and immigration also make both lists.



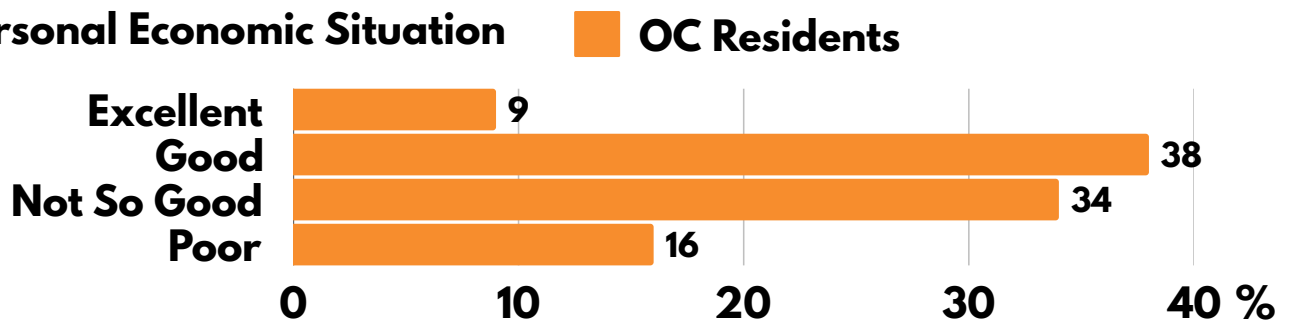
## Grave Dissatisfaction with the Economy

It is not just that economic problems top residents' lists of concerns, they are also gravely concerned about the economy. Notwithstanding the hot stock market and low unemployment, two-thirds of OC residents believe the nation's economy is not doing well. Only 20 percent of residents say their own economic situation is better today than it was four years ago, and half of residents believe they are not doing well economically. These results are common across demographic categories (e.g., race, gender, and age).

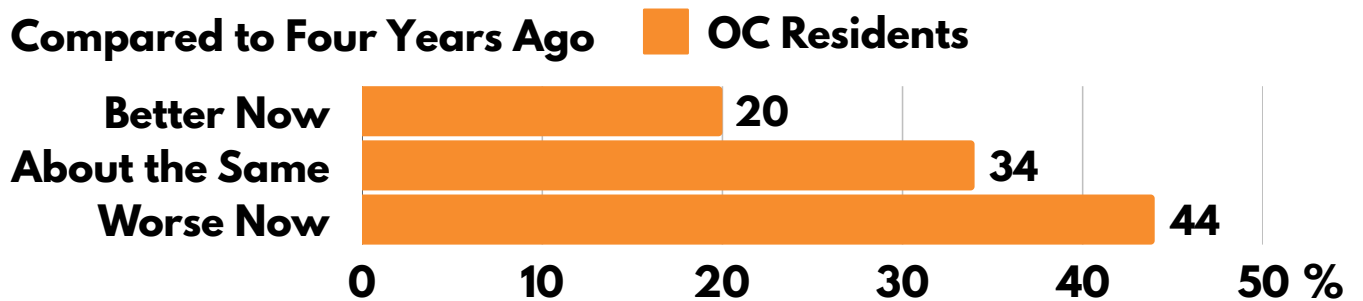
### Condition of the Economy



### Personal Economic Situation

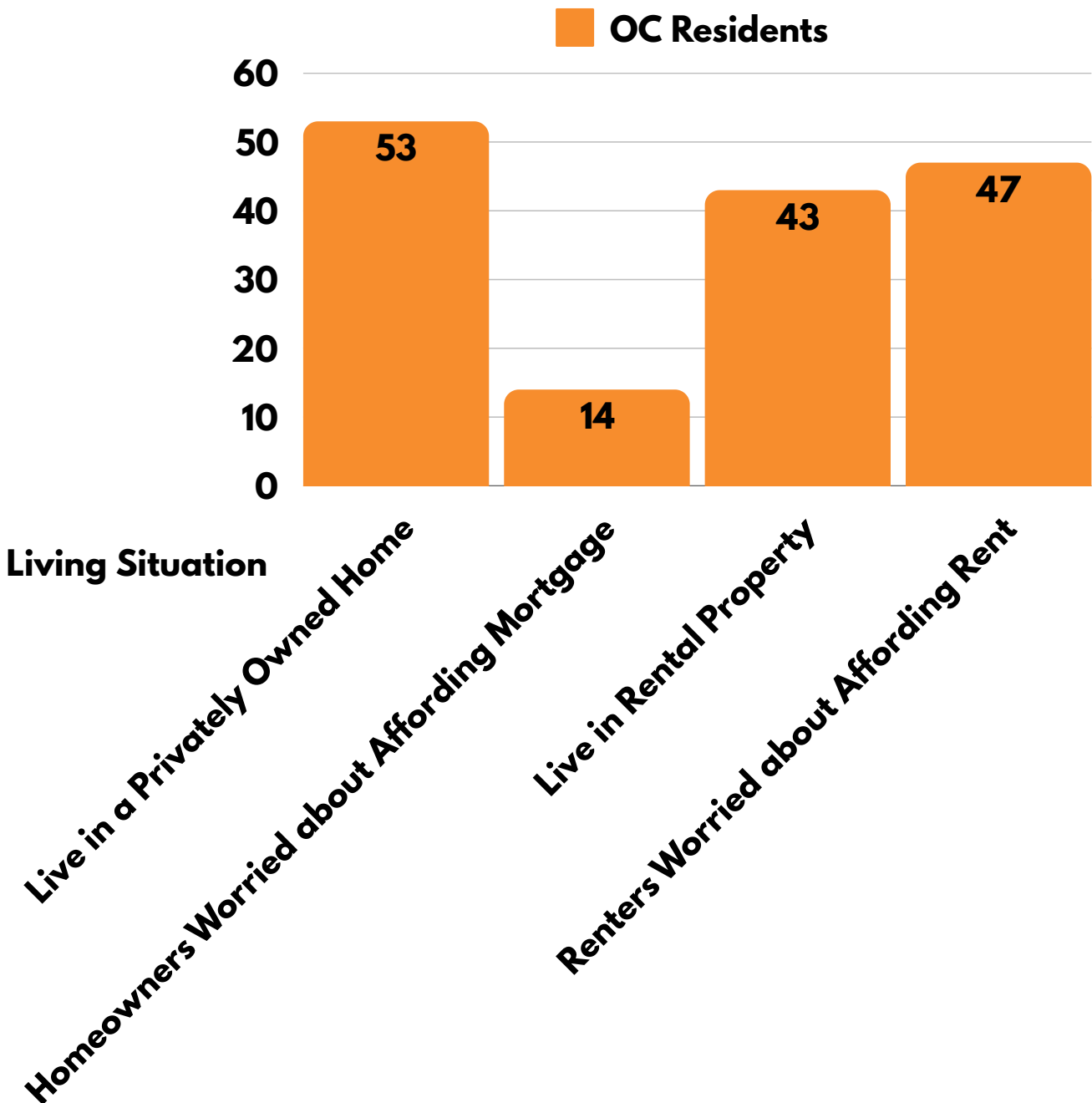


### Personal Economics Compared to Four Years Ago



## Real Worries about Housing Affordability

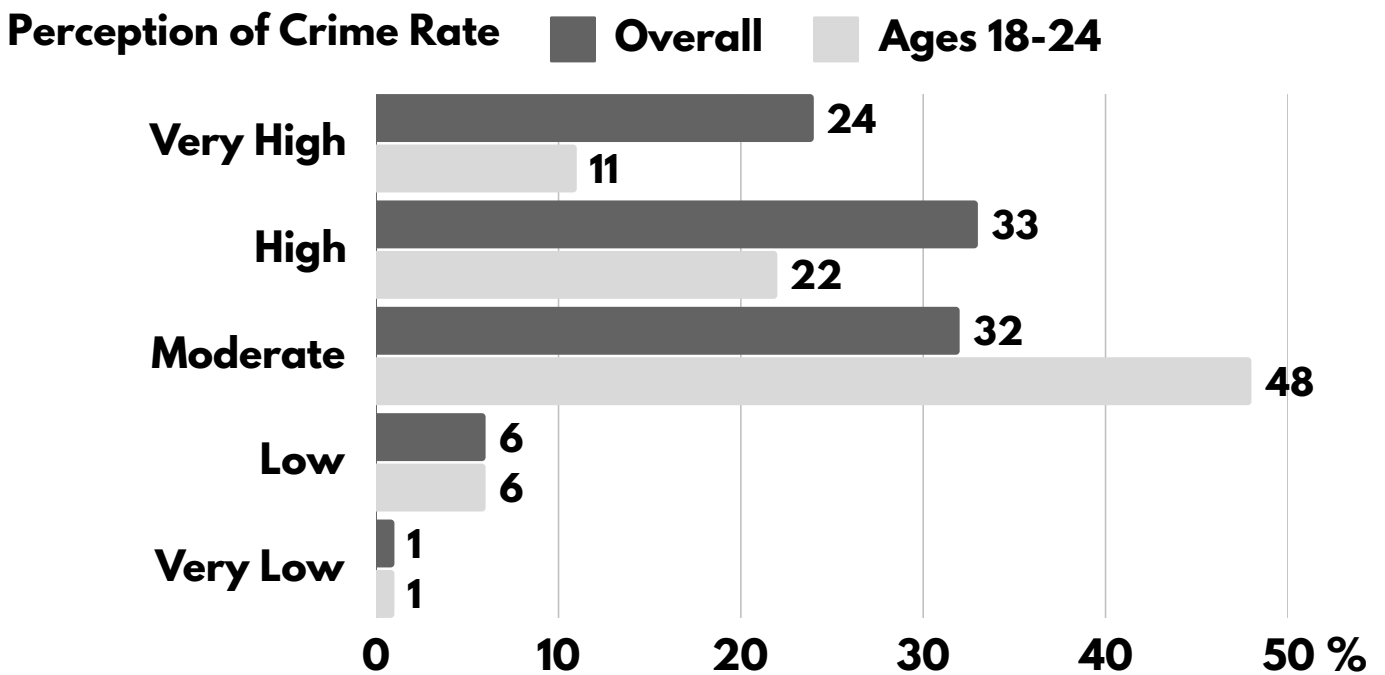
As an example of those economic woes, nearly half the renters in Orange County are concerned about their ability to cover rent. Even one out of seven homeowners is worried about affording their mortgage. Collectively, one-quarter of OC residents is struggling to afford housing.



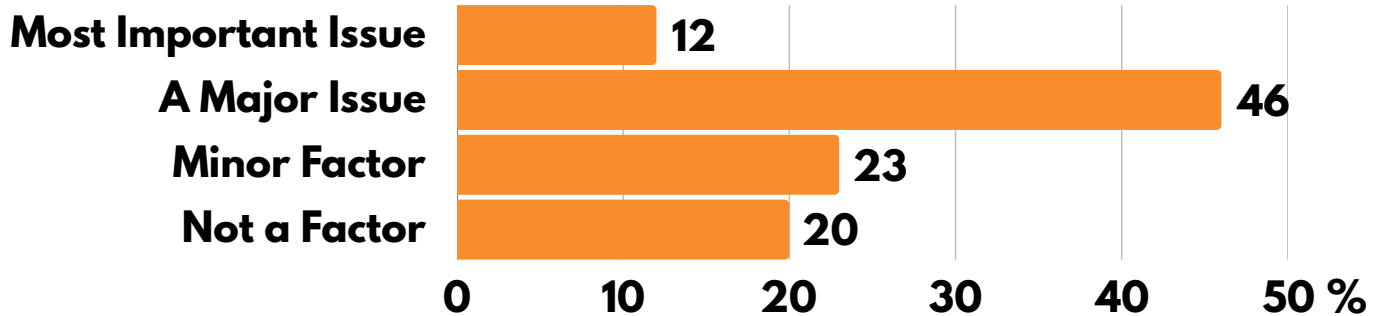


## Crime is seen as High, has been a Major Issue for Voters

Nearly six in 10 OC residents believe that crime is high or very high, and a similar percentage reports that crime was a major, if not the most important, factor in their vote for Congress in 2024. That said, just 12 percent of residents call it the most important issue. There is a generational difference in the perception of crime. Whereas most residents over the age of 25 had a similar view of the crime rate, those aged 18-24 generally thought it lower than others.



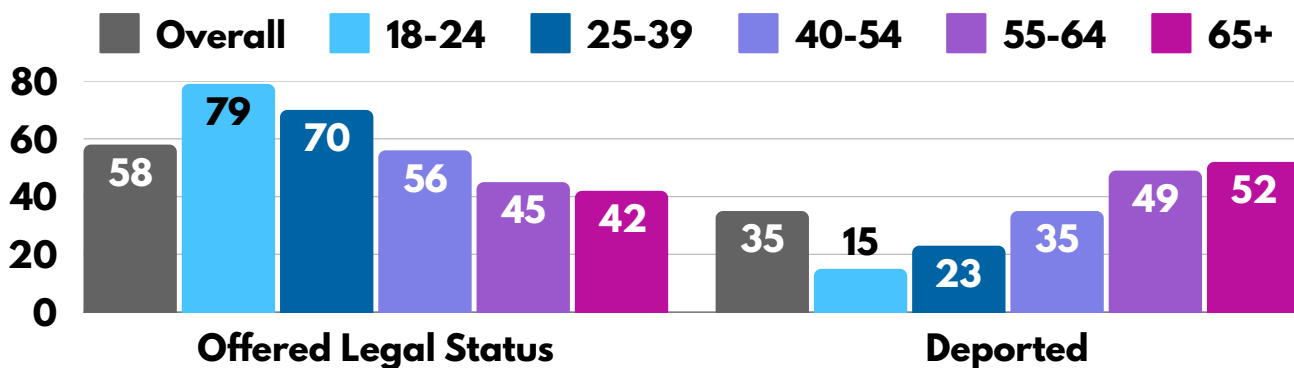
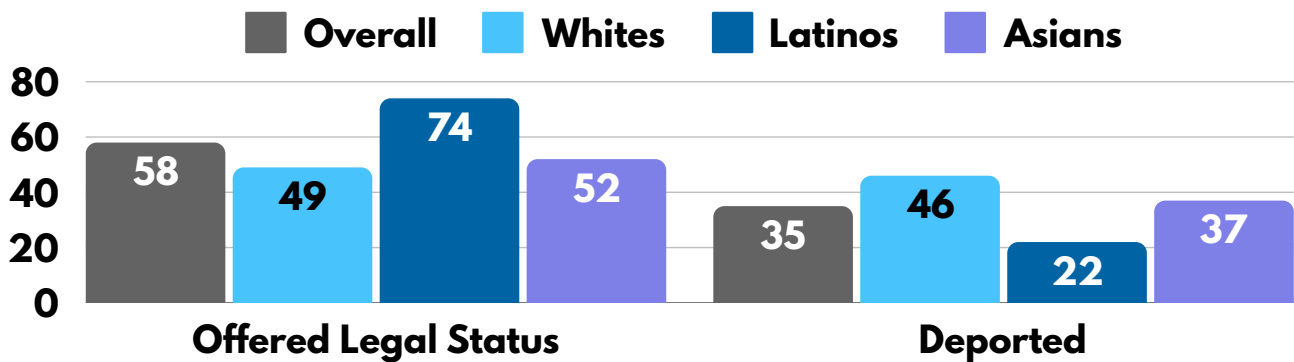
## Importance of Crime in 2024 Congressional Vote



## Immigration is a Potential Achilles Heel for Republicans

President Trump has promised mass deportations of undocumented immigrants, but only one-third of OC residents agrees. By contrast, almost 60 percent of residents would prefer an option for the undocumented to obtain legal status. Significant differences exist between Latino and White residents. Whereas almost half of White respondents support deportation, nearly three-quarters of Latino residents prefer an option for legal status. In an earlier release of the UCI-OC Poll, Latino voters were seen as drifting right in their political choices this past election. Will deportations turn them against President Trump and Republicans? It is certainly a risk for the GOP. There is also a significant generational disparity on this issue. Residents under 40 strongly prefer legal status over deportation, whereas those 55 and older are more supportive of deportation. Immigration and its response may further widen clefts in the electorate and the community.

### Preferred Policy for the Undocumented



## **Methodology**

The UCI OC Poll was produced by UC Irvine's School of Social Ecology in collaboration with TrueDot Inc. The survey was fielded after the 2024 election, reaching a sample of 838 adult respondents currently living in Orange County. The modeled error was 5.5 percent at the 95 percent confidence-level. This study used a hybrid methodology, blending a probability-based sample of records from the Orange County voter file with a non-probability sample of adult respondents from a large online panel. The data were weighted to population parameters derived from recent US Census Bureau demographic data by age, gender, educational attainment, and race and ethnicity. Additionally, the sample was calibrated to the results of the 2024 Presidential Election in Orange County.

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To learn more about the  
UCI-OC Poll, visit the website:

[sites.uci.edu/ocpoll](https://sites.uci.edu/ocpoll)

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