

Floridians Doubt Trump Policy Changes will Help Cuban People

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Floridians support former U.S. President Barack Obama's decision to normalize relations with Cuba over U.S. President Donald Trump's recent decision to restrict those relations, according to a statewide survey by the Florida Atlantic University Business and Economics Polling Initiative (FAU BEPI).

Overall, 47 percent of Floridians support Obama's Cuba policy, while Trump's policy changes announced on June 16 in Miami garnered 34 percent support. However, Trump's policy changes did receive a plurality of support. The Trump administration's plans to prohibit commerce with Cuban businesses owned by the military and intelligence services won support from 43 percent of respondents, while 25 percent opposed and 33 percent said they were not sure.

Trump's approval rating among respondents dropped one percentage point from 36 percent in BEPI's March poll to 35 percent in this poll, which was conducted June 16-18, immediately following Trump's announcement. His disapproval rating jumped six points from 38 percent in March to 44 percent in this latest poll. Not surprisingly, Trump's approval rating among Republicans stands at 78 percent, while his disapproval was 79 percent among Democrats.

Trump's new restriction to only allow Americans to visit Cuba as part of a tour group received 44 percent support, while 32 percent opposed and 24 percent were not sure. His decision to retain an American embassy in Havana was most popular, with 61 percent supporting, 13 percent opposing and 15 percent not sure.

While showing support for Trump's announced changes, Floridians were pessimistic the new policies will improve life for the Cuban people. Only 21 percent said the new policies would make life better for Cubans, while 36 percent said they would make life worse, and 43 percent expect no difference.

"Despite support from Floridians for President Trump's Cuba policies, they are pessimistic that they will improve the life of the Cuban people," said Monica Escaleras, Ph.D., director of the BEPI. "Overall, people are more supportive of President Obama's Cuba policy, while President Trump's approval rating in the state continues to drop."

The online survey, which polled 500 Florida residents, was administered through Survey Sampling International (SSI). The survey has a margin of error of +/- 4.3 percentage points. Responses for the entire sample were weighted to reflect the statewide distribution of the Florida population by gender, race/ethnicity, region, education and age according to latest American Community Survey data. The polling results and full cross-tabulations are available at www.business.fau.edu/bepi .
