

Poll: Bush support wavers in Utah

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SALT LAKE CITY (AP) - The percentage of Utahns who say President Bush is doing a good job has dropped below 50 percent, according to a poll.

The poll conducted for The Salt Lake Tribune found 47 percent rated Bush's performance as excellent or good, down nine percentage points from January, and 52 percent said it was fair or poor.

Utah is a Republican stronghold where Bush got 72 percent of the vote in 2004.

Mason-Dixon Polling & Research Inc. interviewed 625 likely voters, Oct. 29-31. The survey had an error margin of four percentage points.

On Bush's handling of the war in Iraq, the numbers in Utah have barely budged: 47 percent disapproved, 41 percent approved and 12 percent were undecided. In January, 41 percent approved, 45 percent disapproved and 14 percent were undecided.

The pollsters asked Utahns about the chances for success in Iraq, compared to a year ago. The survey found 21 percent were more optimistic, 35 percent were less optimistic and 41 percent expressed no change.

"That's a striking number," Kirk Jowers, director of the University of Utah's Hinckley Institute of Politics, said of the 21 percent.

"Especially because I think people have adjusted their expectations - and their definition of success - significantly downward at this point," he said.

Jowers believes Iraq is the main reason why Bush's overall approval rating in Utah is below 50 percent. But he also noted that health care, immigration and other issues are hot topics.

--- Information from: The Salt Lake Tribune

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(ABC 4 News)