

New Poll Alert: Amid Mixed Approval Ratings, Chicago's Mayor Brandon Johnson has Abundant Messaging Opportunities

New Survey shows Mayor Brandon Johnson has mixed approval ratings, but tremendous opportunity for growth

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, June 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A newly released poll

“

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Dr. Alvin Tillery

conducted by the 2040 Strategy Group offers a nuanced view of Mayor Brandon Johnson’s standing with Chicago voters at the midpoint of his first term. The survey of 855 Chicago residents, fielded between May 27 and June 4, 2025, reveals a city grappling with uncertainty, disappointment, and opportunity as it evaluates its progressive mayor amid ongoing national political turmoil.

“This moment is defined by widespread frustration with the political establishment,” said Dr. Alvin B. Tillery, Co-Founder and CEO of the 2040 Strategy Group. “Yet, our

data show that Mayor Johnson has multiple avenues for reconnecting with his coalition, especially if he leans into a clear defense of multiracial democracy and economic justice in the face of national threats.”

Overall Approval and Key Demographic Trends:

The topline numbers suggest that Mayor Johnson faces real challenges and potential for growth. Twenty-six percent (26%) of respondents said they approve of his job, while 38% disapprove. Notably, 36% of Chicagoans expressed “mixed views,” indicating a large bloc of persuadable voters. The polling shows deep variation across demographic lines:

- Black voters: 30% approve, 28% disapprove, 43% mixed
- Latino voters: 23% approve, 39% disapprove, 37% mixed
- White voters: 33% approve, 39% disapprove, 28% mixed
- Millennials (age 27–43): 41% approve, 28% disapprove, 31% mixed
- Boomers (age 60+): 19% approve, 47% disapprove, 34% mixed

- Women: 19% approve, 37% disapprove, 44% mixed
- Men: 35% approve, 39% disapprove, 26% mixed

Johnson's core support remains most robust among voters who backed him early: 52% of those who voted for him in the first round of the 2023 election still approve of his performance. Among 2023 non-voters, however, approval drops to 15%.

Issue-Based Performance: Strength in Civil Rights, Weakness in Budgeting and Schools:

Chicagoans were also asked to rate the Mayor's performance across several issues. Johnson received his strongest marks for defending racial equity (39% approval) and resisting attacks by the Trump administration on cities and civil rights (44% approval). By contrast, public approval lags significantly on more local policy issues like the budget (24% approval) and public schools (27% approval).

Institutional Ratings and Political Context:

Beyond the mayor himself, the survey assessed public perception of city agencies and other political leaders. Respondents gave "C" grades across the board to city institutions like the Chicago Police Department (CPD), Chicago Public Schools (CPS), and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). CPS received slightly worse marks, with a C-average.

Governor J.B. Pritzker emerged as the most favorably viewed among political figures, with a 62% favorability rating. Mayor Johnson was viewed favorably by 32% of respondents, a 6-point jump from his job approval score, suggesting room for growth with the proper narrative framing.

Messaging Tests Show Pathways to Boost Support:

Perhaps most striking in the survey were the results of the messaging tests. Participants were randomly assigned to receive one of four messages about Mayor Johnson's leadership:

1. A focus on his commitment to improving Chicago's public schools;
2. A message highlighting improvements to public safety and safety equity;
3. A defense of civil rights, DEI, and nondiscrimination law in opposition to federal rollback efforts;
4. A statement about protecting immigrants and maintaining Chicago as a welcoming city.

All four messages increased Johnson's approval ratings with those who received them—by at least 22% relative to their baseline approval levels. The most substantial gains came from public safety and education messages, but civil rights and immigration messages also drove significant movement, especially within key subgroups.

Re-Election Scenarios: Voters Divided, But Movable:

When asked whether they would vote for Mayor Johnson in 2027, voters were roughly split between yes, no, and unsure. While the messaging treatments moderately affected overall vote intention, the underlying data show that targeted messages can drive meaningful change within demographic subgroups, especially among younger voters and previous supporters.

A Moment of Opportunity:

The report concludes that while Mayor Johnson faces a skeptical electorate, the political climate presents real opportunities for renewal. As the national government continues efforts to dismantle civil rights protections and DEI initiatives, Chicago's mayor may find fertile ground in reasserting the city's values of inclusion, equity, and multiracial democracy.

About the Survey:

This poll was conducted by the 2040 Strategy Group using a proprietary internet panel maintained by Bovitz, Inc. The survey included 855 respondents and was fielded between May 27 and June 4, 2025. Results were weighted to reflect the city's population by age, gender, race, income, and education. The margin of error is ± 3 percentage points for the full sample.

Alvin Tillery

2040 Strategy Group

alvin.tillery@2040strategygroup.com

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