

The Gallup Poll

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Only 27% Approve

NIXON'S POPULARITY SLIPS TO NEW

LOW; FIRING OF COX A KEY FACTOR

By George Gallup

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PRINCETON, N.J., Nov. 3---With the public reacting to fast-moving events, President Nixon's popularity has declined to a new low point in the latest nationwide survey. A key factor is Nixon's firing of special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox and the subsequent resignation of Atty. Gen. Elliot Richardson followed by the firing of Deputy Atty. Gen. William Ruckelshaus.

Only about one person in four---27 per cent---in this late October survey approve of the way Nixon is handling his duties as chief executive. In contrast, 60 per cent express disapproval while 13 per cent are undecided in their views. In the previous (early October) poll, 30 per cent approved of Nixon's performance in office.

Interviewing for the current survey was conducted Friday, Oct. 19, through Monday, Oct. 22. Three-quarters of the field work was conducted (SET ITAL) before (END ITAL) news of Cox's firing late Saturday. The results showed Nixon's popularity to be at about the same level as found in the previous poll, with three persons in 10 (31 per cent) expressing approval.

Interviewing conducted (SET ITAL) after (END ITAL) this news, however, showed only about one person in six (17 per cent) expressing approval of Nixon's performance in office.

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The decline in Nixon's popularity rating registered during the weekend tested was accompanied by an uptrend in the percentage of people who felt he should be impeached and compelled to leave the presidency. One-third (33 per cent) favored such a course of action, while 52 per cent were opposed and 15 per cent did not express an opinion.

As in the case of Nixon's popularity rating, there is a sharp difference between the findings based on interviewing conducted (SET ITAL) before (END ITAL) Cox's firing and interviewing conducted (SET ITAL) after (END ITAL) his firing.

Interviewing taken before dismissal showed three in 10 in favor of compelling Nixon to leave office, while interviewing conducted afterwards showed the figure climbing to more than four in 10 (45 per cent).

However, the percentage who favor removing Nixon from office declined to 28 per cent following the announcement he would release the White House tapes, the agreement reached with the Russians to police the Middle East ceasefire, and his press conference on Oct. 26.

Public confidence in the Nixon administration, however, did not correspondingly increase, judging by a nationwide telephone survey conducted immediately after Nixon's press conference.

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POPULARITY RATING DOWN
41 POINTS SINCE JANUARY

The current popularity rating of 27 per cent represents a drop of 41 percentage points in approval from the President's high point of 68 per cent recorded in a survey taken following the Vietnam peace settlement in January. The trend in approval since January has been relentlessly downward except for a slight momentary rise in August, following Nixon's long-awaited speech on Watergate.

The President's current rating is only four points above the lowest presidential popularity rating recorded in more than three decades, which was the 23 per cent approval rating given President Harry S. Truman in late 1951, during a period of widespread pessimism over the Korean war.

Following is the question asked about the incumbent President since the Roosevelt years:

"Do you approve or disapprove of the way Nixon is handling his job as President?"

Here are the national findings, based on the total sample, with the trend since early August:

---Nationwide---

	Approve	Disapprove	No Opinion
Oct. 19-22	27%	60%	13%
Oct. 6-8	30	57	13
Sept. 21-24 ...	32	59	9
Sept. 7-10	35	55	10
Aug. 17-19	38	54	8

Following is the question asked to determine views on removing Nixon from office:

"Do you think President Nixon should be impeached and compelled to leave the presidency, or not?"

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The latest (full sample) results and trend:

SHOULD NIXON BE COMPELLED
TO LEAVE PRESIDENCY?

	Yes	No	No Opinion
Oct. 19-22	33%	52%	15%
Aug. 3-6	26	61	13
July 6-9	24	62	14
June 22-25	19	69	12

ECONOMY ALSO FACTOR
IN DISAPPROVAL VIEWS

Those who disapprove of the President's performance say they distrust the way he has handled the Watergate affair, and also express concern over the state of the economy. A college student whose husband is a postal carrier said this: "The economy is in very bad shape due to his economic phases. Also, I find it hard to believe that any honest person could allow himself to be surrounded by so many dishonest people."

Here is what a 24-year-old operator of an electrical power station had to say: "Mr. Nixon needs to use a more positive and direct approach to government. His game-playing and merry-go-round tactics just prove his own selfish interests."

The wife of a college personnel administrator made this comment: "I disapprove because he has acted hastily, which gives the nation reason to think he is still attempting to cover up the Watergate scandal. He acts only when he is forced to."

The director of a school food business said: "Nixon is placing himself above the law---his credibility is way down in my book."

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A 37-year-old teacher had this to say: "He has isolated himself from the public and has surrounded himself with power-hungry men. He is insensitive to the needs of the public. He is autocratic and responsive only to big business."

Those who approve of Nixon's performance in office cite his personal abilities and experience, as well as his efforts in the field of foreign policy. The 43-year-old wife of a chemical engineer remarked: "Under all of the stress and strain and the bad times, the President is trying to keep the office dignified. He impresses me as a moral man who is the scapegoat for many problems over which he has no control---nor did he create most of them."

A middle-aged homeowner commented: "Nixon's a pragmatist ---he has insight and knowledge of national and international affairs and, in these explosive times, handles them well."

The 46-year-old wife of a clerk in a coal mining company said: "When a man becomes President, that doesn't make him superhuman. I would imagine that he has made mistakes---but so do all of us."

A 50-year-old district manager of a theater operation had this to say: "Nixon knows the problems and is best qualified to manage the government. Watergate problems and horrible press relations have made people forget about his very real accomplishments."

The findings reported today are based on a national survey of 1,583 adults, 18 and older, interviewed in more than 300 scientifically selected localities during the period Oct. 19-22.

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