

MARIST POLL™

POLL MUST BE SOURCED:
NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll*

Turning Tide for Mueller? **For Immediate Release: Tuesday, April 17, 2018**

Contact: Lee M. Miringoff
Barbara L. Carvalho
Mary E. Griffith
Marist College
845.575.5050

This NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll Reports:

Americans' attitudes about Special Counsel Robert Mueller are mixed, and a growing proportion of Americans have an unfavorable opinion of the special counsel. 30% of Americans, up from 20% in late March, have an unfavorable view of Mueller. The change is in part due to more Americans now having formed an opinion of the special counsel. While 38% of residents still say they have either never heard of Mueller or are unsure how to rate him, this is down from 47% previously. 32% of Americans have a favorable view of Mueller, little changed from the 33% he received in late March.

The most striking shift is among Republicans. 49% of the GOP now have a negative impression of Mueller up from 30% when this question was last reported in March. This is the largest proportion of Republicans with this view since this question was first tracked in January. At that time, 40% of Republicans had a negative opinion of Mueller. The special counsel's negative rating has also increased, but to a lesser degree, among Democrats and independents since March.

"Although a plurality of Americans are still on the sidelines about Special Counsel Mueller, there's been a decided increase in those who have a negative view of him as greater attention has been focused on him," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "Mueller hasn't worn well under the barrage of debate about the investigation."

There has also been an uptick in the proportion of Americans who believe Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election has been *unfair*. 30% of U.S. residents compared with 26% previously, have this view. Even though a plurality of residents (45%) still believe the investigation has been conducted fairly, 48% had this view in March. 26% of Americans, relatively unchanged from 27%, are unsure.

For the first time since this question was initially asked this past January, a majority of Republicans (55%) think the investigation has been unfair. When this question was last reported in late March, 46% of GOP voters had this view.

Though nearly two in three Americans (65%), including 56% of Republicans, think Mueller should be permitted to finish his investigation, that proportion is also at its lowest. At its height, 70% of Americans in February thought Mueller should not be fired. When this question was last reported in March, 69% reported Mueller's investigation should continue. Currently, 15% of Americans, including 24% of Republicans, think Mueller should be fired. 20% are unsure.

Although many Americans (61%) think the FBI is just doing its job, that opinion is down from 71% in February. Instead, 31%, up from 23% last time, think the FBI is biased against the Trump Administration. Nine percent are currently unsure. Among Republicans, 56%, up from 49%, say the FBI has an axe to grind against President Trump. There has also been a shift among independents. 30%, up from 20%, now say the FBI is biased against the Trump Administration.

Among Trump's 2016 supporters, there has been a double-digit shift in the proportion who say the FBI is biased against the White House. 63% of those who backed Trump in 2016, up from 51%, express this view.

Overall, a majority of Americans still have confidence in the FBI. 54% of U.S. residents, down slightly from 57% in February, have either a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the Bureau. 41% have little or no confidence in this institution.

A primary focus of Mueller's investigation is Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election. But, do Americans think Russian interference is likely to happen during the 2018 midterm elections? 55% say it is either very likely or likely that Russia will meddle in the elections. 40% of U.S. residents report it is not very likely or not likely at all that they will interfere. Since it was first asked, attitudes have reversed on this question. In early February, 53% of residents nationally had little or no concern about Russian interference this election cycle while 41% were worried about the possibility.

Regardless of party, there is increased concern about Russian interference in the mid-term elections. The largest shift has been among Republicans. 36% of the GOP, up from 17%, say the likelihood exists that Russia will have a hand in the midterm elections.

"Americans are unable to find a silver lining on this issue," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "Not only are more Americans worried about Russian tampering in this November's election, but they also think Congress and social media

sites are asleep at the switch over the threat this poses.”

Americans do not think Congress, nor social media sites, have done enough since 2016 to ensure that there is no Russian interference in the electoral process. 74% of residents, comparable to 73% in February, think Congress has done little or nothing at all to prevent such meddling from occurring. 10% are unsure. When it comes to Facebook and Twitter, an identical proportion, 74% of Americans, say social media sites have not done enough to protect the electoral process from outside influence.

Eight in ten Americans (80%), including 84% of Facebook users, have not very much or no confidence at all in Facebook to protect users' privacy and personal information. Only 12% have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in Facebook to keep their personal information secure. Regardless of demographic group, more than seven in ten say Facebook does not safeguard its users' personal information.

83% of Americans, including 92% of Facebook users, have little or no confidence in the veracity of what they read on Facebook. Only 4% of U.S. residents say they are confident in the truthfulness of what they read on the social media site.

Are Americans on Facebook? 64% of Americans say they do have a Facebook account. 11% say they once had a Facebook account but no longer do, and 25% do not use Facebook. Of those who have a Facebook account, 52% say they are on the site every day. An additional 20% visit Facebook several times a week, and 9% say they frequent the site once a week. 20% are less frequent Facebook users.