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NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll*

**Kavanaugh Crisis:
Nearly Six in Ten Plan to Watch Testimony,
Plurality Opposes Kavanaugh Confirmation
But, Opposition Surges if Allegations are True...
Kavanaugh Nomination a Voting Issue for November
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Contact: Lee M. Miringoff
Barbara L. Carvalho
Mary E. Griffith
Marist College
845.575.5050

This NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll Reports:

Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, who has accused Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh of sexual assault while the two were in high school, is scheduled to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Thursday. Nearly six in ten Americans (58%) tell the NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll they plan to pay attention to the proceedings if both Dr. Ford and Judge Kavanaugh testify.

Right now, a plurality of Americans (43%) oppose the nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. 38% support it, and 19% are still on the fence. Americans who have closely watched the Kavanaugh confirmation hearings, divide. 47% support his nomination, and 45% do not.

Partisan allegiances divide Americans, with 83% of Republicans supporting the nomination and 77% of Democrats opposing it. But, more than one in ten Democrats (13%) and Republicans (12%) are unsure about whether or not Kavanaugh should be confirmed. Among independents, 42% support the nomination, and 41% do not. 17% are unsure. There is a 21-point gender gap. A plurality of men (45%) support Kavanaugh's appointment, a net +6 points, while a plurality of women (47%), a net -15 points, oppose it.

However, if the sexual assault charges levied against Kavanaugh are true, opposition to Kavanaugh's nomination increases dramatically. 59% of Americans say the Senate should not

confirm Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court compared with 29% who think he should be confirmed regardless. 12% are unsure. Republicans (54%) are the only group among whom a majority believes Kavanaugh should be confirmed even if the accusations prove to be true although 32% of GOP voters disagree.

According to a 1991 CBS News/*New York Times* Poll, 67% of Americans thought then Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas should not be confirmed if the accusations of sexual harassment by Anita Hill proved to be true. 21% thought he should be confirmed, and 12% were unsure.

Who do Americans believe – Dr. Ford or Judge Kavanaugh? A plurality of residents are withholding judgment. 42% of residents nationally are unsure about whether Dr. Ford or Judge Kavanaugh is telling the truth. 32% believe Dr. Ford's story while 26% find Judge Kavanaugh's account credible.

"The jury is still out in the court of public opinion about whether Judge Kavanaugh or Dr. Ford is more believable," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "With so many people on the fence the stakes for each of them could not be higher."

Although pluralities of men and women are not sure who is telling the truth, a 19-point gender gap exists among those who have an opinion. Men are slightly more likely to believe Kavanaugh (32%) than to believe Ford (28%). In contrast, women are more likely to believe the accuser (35%) than the accused (20%).

Pluralities of Americans think the Senate Judiciary Committee has treated both Ford and Kavanaugh fairly to this point, but more than one in four is still withholding judgement. 43% believe the committee has treated Ford fairly, and 30% say she has been treated unfairly. 27% are unsure. Similarly, 46% assert the committee has treated Kavanaugh with fairness. 28% say he has not been treated fairly. 26% are unsure.

The Senate currently consists of 21 women. If more women were in the U.S. Senate, would Dr. Ford's accusations be taken more seriously? Americans divide. 46% think they would, and 45% believe it would not make a difference. Only 2% say the accusations would be taken less seriously with more women in the Senate.

In 1991 when the Senate had only two women at the time of the Clarence Thomas hearings, the CBS News/*New York Times* Poll reported that 62% of Americans thought Anita Hill's accusations against Clarence Thomas would have been taken more seriously if there had been more female members of the Senate.

Notable proportions of Americans haven't formed opinions about Ford or Kavanaugh. 56% say

they have either never heard of Dr. Ford or are unsure how to rate her. 24% have an unfavorable opinion of her, and 20% have a favorable view, a net -4 points. Close to one in three Americans (32%) have either never heard of Kavanaugh or are unsure how to rate him. Perceptions of him are a net -6 points. 37% have an unfavorable opinion of Kavanaugh, and 31% have a favorable one.

Half of Americans (50%) have watched the Senate's confirmation hearings of Judge Kavanaugh either very closely or closely. 48% have either watched them not very closely or not closely at all.

The Kavanaugh nomination is a voting issue. Nearly seven in ten voters nationally say the nomination will impact their vote for Congress this November. 37% of voters, up slightly from 33% in the July NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll, say they are more likely to support a candidate who opposes the Kavanaugh nomination. 32% are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports it. 27% of voters say the appointment of Kavanaugh does not make a difference to their vote.

While more than two in three Republicans (67%) are more likely to favor a candidate who backs Kavanaugh, the same proportion of Democrats (67%) are more likely to support one who opposes his nomination. A plurality of independents (36%) say the nomination will not impact their vote. An additional 33% report they will oppose a candidate who supports the nomination while 27% say they will favor a candidate who supports it.

"What's going on in Washington this week will not only impact the people involved and the makeup of the Supreme Court, but will also shape voters' views heading into the midterm elections," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "White voters with a college education, who have been slipping away from the GOP, are taking particular note of the proceedings."

The Republicans have narrowed the gap on the generic congressional ballot question. Earlier this month, the Democrats had a net 12-point lead over the Republicans among registered voters nationally. The Democrats (48%) currently have a net seven-point lead over the Republicans (41%).

The Republicans have solidified. 93% of Republicans, up from 88%, say they are more likely to vote for the Republican candidate in their district. 92% of Democrats support the member of their party on the ballot. A plurality of independents (43%) back the Democrat in their district.

President Donald Trump's job approval rating (42%), up from 39% earlier this month, matches his highest score since taking office. Trump last achieved a 42% approval score in early March. 49% of Americans currently disapprove, and 9% are unsure.

26% of those who approve of how the president is doing his job strongly approve. 37%, down from 42% in early September, strongly disapprove.