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A Majority of Americans Believe Questions Remain Post-Mueller Report But Don't Favor Impeachment For Immediate Release

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

This NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll Reports:

Nearly six in ten Americans (58%) think questions still exist about President Donald Trump's role following the conclusion of the Mueller investigation and the release of the redacted version of the report. Only 33% of Americans, including 73% of Republicans, believe the report exonerates the president.

But, what should come next divides Americans. 48% of Americans, fueled by 84% of Democrats, want the Democrats in Congress to hold hearings to further investigate the matter. In contrast, 46% of Americans, including 83% of Republicans, think the investigation should end. Independents divide 48% to 47%.

Asked about specific next steps, a majority of Americans (54%) think further action should be taken. Included here are 33% who want Congress to continue the investigation into potential wrongdoing. Among these are 56% of Democrats who share this view. 16% of Americans believe the next step should be to initiate impeachment proceedings, and 5% want the president to be publicly reprimanded or censured by Congress. 42% of Americans think no further action should be taken and the investigation should end, including 82% of Republicans. Among independents, 38% want to continue the investigation, and the same proportion want to end it.

At this point, a majority of Americans (53%) do not think Congress should impeach President Donald Trump based on Special Counsel Robert Mueller's report. 39% believe Congress should move to hold impeachment hearings.

"On each of these questions, Democrats and Republicans are polar opposites," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "On the question of

impeachment, independents aren't consistently on one side or the other."

The question of impeachment is, not surprisingly, politically charged. Republicans most vociferously express their opposition to impeachment hearings (91%), whereas seven in ten Democrats (70%) assert the report's findings do support the argument for impeachment.

51% of independents do not think the Mueller report should lead Congress to impeach Trump. When it comes to specifics, though, 52% of independents say either more investigations (38%) are needed or impeachment hearings should occur (14%). Another 7% believe the president should be censured.

By more than two to one, Special Counsel Robert Mueller continues to be more positively (54%) than negatively (26%) viewed for the job he did as special counsel, and nearly six in ten Americans (57%) characterize his investigation as fair.

Opinion about Attorney General Barr is more divided. 38% approve of the job Barr is doing as Attorney General, and 34% disapprove. Nearly three in ten Americans (28%) are unsure how to rate the job he is doing. In March, 35% approved of Barr's job performance, 31% disapproved, and 35% were unsure. A plurality of Americans (44%) think Barr in his position is serving mostly in the best interest of President Trump. 37% disagree and believe Barr is acting in the best interest of the American public. 19% are unsure.

About one-third of registered voters (33%) say they will definitely vote for President Trump in his re-election bid, little changed from the March survey. 54% think they will definitely vote against him, and 12% are unsure. Partisan allegiances are strong, though more so for the Democrats than Republicans. 91% of Democrats and 60% of independents report they will definitely not support Trump in 2020. Among Republicans, 79% say they will definitely back the incumbent GOP president.

"With a majority of voters saying they will definitely vote against him for a second term, President Trump faces strong headwinds in his re-election effort," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "Riding his strong base alone won't get him a second term. He needs a far greater number of independents than he is currently getting."

The Mueller report is not a significant voting issue for a majority of registered voters nationally. 53% of the electorate -- including 76% of Republicans, 35% of Democrats, and 50% of independents -- say the report's findings will not be an important factor in their 2020 presidential vote. 37% -- including a majority of Democrats (52%), 16% of Republicans, and 43% of independents -- report it will be only one of many factors in deciding for whom to cast their ballot. Six percent of registered voters say it will be the most important factor.

Among Democrats and Democratic leaning independents, though, 69% say they will definitely vote for a presidential nominee who wants to take steps to impeach the president. Nine percent will definitely vote against such a candidate. A notable 22% are unsure.

"The political risk for the 2020 field of Democratic candidates is that they will meet pro-impeachment primary voters along the campaign trail to the nomination," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "But, for the general election, voters overall are more reluctant to go down that road."

A plurality of registered voters (42%) report they will definitely vote against a congressional candidate who wants to impeach the president. 38% say they will definitely vote for a candidate with this position, and 20% are unsure. A year ago prior to the 2018 midterm elections, 47% of voters said they would definitely vote against a congressional candidate who wants to impeach Trump. 42% reported they would definitely vote for a candidate who supports impeachment, and 10% were unsure.

President Trump's job approval rating stands at 41% among Americans, comparable to the 42% score he received in March. 53% disapprove, and 6% are unsure. 26% strongly approve of how the president is doing his job, and 38% strongly disapprove.

68% of Americans believe Congress has done little or nothing at all since the last presidential election to ensure Russia does not interfere in the 2020 vote. 19% think Congress has done a great deal or good amount to prevent Russian meddling. 13% are unsure. In April 2018, 74% of Americans thought Congress needed to do more to protect the security of the electoral process. 16% believed Congress was working toward appropriate safeguards, and 10% were unsure.