

# MARIST POLL

## Marist College Institute for Public Opinion

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### POLL MUST BE SOURCED:

### PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll\*

## **Americans Divide about NFL Anthem Protests, But Many Do Not Think Players Should be Fired**

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### **This PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll Reports:**

Protesting the national anthem to draw attention to racial inequality in the United States is an issue which divides the nation. But, there is greater consensus among Americans about how President Donald Trump reacted to the boycott displayed by players in the NFL.

48% of Americans, including 54% of football fans, think that kneeling or locking arms together by NFL players during the national anthem is a respectful way to bring attention to their concerns about racial disparity in the United States. In contrast, 46% of residents believe these protests are a disrespectful way to draw attention to the issue. Six percent are unsure.

Opinions differ based on political beliefs, race, age, and gender. Most Democrats, 82%, perceive these protests to be a deferential way of expressing the players' opinions while most Republicans, 88%, consider it an inappropriate display. Independents divide. 45% say these protests are respectful, and 49% report it is a disrespectful expression of discontent.

African American, 77%, and Latino, 64%, residents are more likely than white Americans, 42%, to perceive the protests to be respectful. A majority of whites, 55%, view this public display to be disrespectful. There's a generation gap as well. 59% of Americans under the age of 45, compared with 39% of older Americans, believe the national anthem protest is an appropriate way to spotlight the players' concerns. A majority of women, 51%, also have this view. Men divide. 45% of men see the players' actions as respectful while 49% view them as disrespectful.

However, when it comes to Americans' reaction to President Trump's comments about the protests, more Americans are on the same page. Mr. Trump called the players' protests

\*All references to the survey must be sourced as "PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll"

disrespectful and grounds for firing the players involved. Six in ten U.S. residents disagree with the president. 60% of Americans, including 67% of football fans, agree with the NFL who says President Trump's remarks are inappropriate, offensive, and divisive. One in three U.S. residents, 33%, agree with Trump's opinion.

Political views are the driving force on this question. While at least a majority of every other demographic group agrees with the NFL's position, 72% of Republicans, 67% of those who identify as conservative or very conservative, and 76% of those who supported President Trump in the 2016 presidential election side with President Trump on the issue. White Americans without a college education divide. 45% align with the president's reaction while 48% agree with the response of the NFL.