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Americans Divide About Impeachment Inquiry But Want to Know More For Immediate Release

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This NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll Reports:

Americans are plugged into the news about the House of Representatives' impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump. Despite the perceived seriousness of the president's actions, Americans divide about starting an impeachment inquiry and want to know more from the whistleblower.

More than two in three Americans (68%) say they are following the news about the House of Representatives formally starting an impeachment inquiry of President Trump either very closely (37%) or fairly closely (31%). This includes 80% of Republicans, 70% of Democrats, and 64% of independents. Partisans are more connected to watching the course of events. In fact, 46% of Democrats say they are following the news about impeachment very closely along with 43% of Republicans who are doing the same. Only 32% of independents are similarly inclined.

In a phone call between President Trump and the Ukrainian president, Trump requested the foreign leader investigate his potential political opponent, former Vice President Joe Biden. 55% of Americans believe this is a serious matter that requires investigation including 27% of Republicans. 43% of residents nationally do not consider the matter to be a serious one and say "it is just politics." 78% of Democrats and 54% of independents say the matter should be investigated. 69% of Republicans disagree.

"House Democrats still need to make their case to Americans," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "They will be doing so with a public that is paying considerable attention as events unfold and think President Trump's interest in investigating Biden on the call with the Ukrainian president is a serious matter."

Given the partisan polarization, it is not surprising that Americans are divided about the House of Representatives going forward with an impeachment inquiry. 49% of Americans approve of the House taking this action, and 46% disapprove. Again, Democrats (88%) drive support for the impeachment inquiry including 61% who *strongly* approve of moving forward. Republicans (93%) are opposed including 80% who *strongly* disapprove with the actions of the House of Representatives. Half of self-described independents (50%) disapprove of starting an impeachment inquiry of the president, and 44% support the House of Representatives' move to begin one.

Both progressive (93%) and moderate (75%) Democrats support the start of an impeachment inquiry by the House of Representatives although progressive Democrats are more supportive of the direction the House has taken. In fact, 67% of progressive Democrats *strongly* favor the impeachment inquiry compared with 47% of moderate Democrats who *strongly* support it.

Although driven by most Democrats (82%), half of Americans (50%) consider the House of Representatives' impeachment inquiry to be a very serious matter. 48%, though, say the probe is "just politics" including 85% of Republicans and 52% of independents.

Americans also divide about whether or not impeachment is worth it given the current makeup of the Congress. 47% of Americans say it is worth it for House Democrats to impeach the president even if Senate Republicans will not vote to convict the president. This includes 75% of Democrats who think it is worth moving forward with the inquiry regardless. 49% say it is not worth it including 85% of Republicans and 52% of independents. Even 20% of Democrats say impeachment is not worth it if the Republican Senate will not move it forward.

Yet, most Americans express a need to know more from the whistleblower. Nearly three in four Americans (73%) think the whistleblower should testify to the House of Representatives. This opinion is shared by 88% of Democrats, 74% of independents, and even a majority, 52%, of Republicans. 18% of Americans, including 38% of Republicans, do not think the whistleblower should testify.

The impeachment inquiry could very well be a factor in the 2020 elections although more so for Congress than for the president. 59% of registered voters nationally say the House of Representatives' impeachment inquiry will be either a major factor (42%) or minor factor (17%) in deciding their vote for Congress next year. Regardless of partisanship, at least a majority of voters say the proceedings will impact their vote for Congress somewhat. Democrats though are more likely to report the inquiry will play a major factor into deciding for whom they will vote for Congress.

Voters think the impeachment inquiry will have little impact on their vote for president next year. Nearly six in ten voters (58%), including 78% of Republicans, 57% of independents, and 43% of Democrats, report the impeachment inquiry will not be a factor at all in deciding their vote for president in 2020. 56% of Democrats say the probe will play either a major (38%) or minor (18%) role in deciding their presidential pick.

President Trump's job approval rating among Americans is 44%, notched up from 41% earlier this month. 53% of Americans disapprove of how the president is doing in office, comparable to the 54% who had this view in the NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll released in mid-September.

The proportion of Americans who strongly approve of the president's job performance is 31%. 39% of those who disapprove say they strongly do so. When reported earlier this month, 28% said they strongly approved of the president's job performance, and 45% reported they strongly disapproved.

The congressional leadership fares worse than President Trump. 39% of Americans approve of how House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is doing in office. 52%, including 21% of Democrats, 62% of independents, and 88% of Republicans disapprove of the job House Speaker Pelosi is doing. Eight percent of Americans are unsure.

Only 32% of Americans approve of how Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is performing in his post. 50% disapprove, including 25% of Republicans, 57% of independents, and 74% of Democrats.

"This poll, and others likely to follow, are taking place in a rapidly changing political environment," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "Poll consumers should pay special attention to the timing of each poll and the specific question wording."