

# MARIST POLL™

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

### **Impeachment Inquiry Gains Majority Approval, But Americans Divide on Impeachment and Removal... Americans Link Trump's Ukrainian Call to Re-Election For Immediate Release**

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

Americans, especially independents, have grown in favor of the House of Representatives' impeachment inquiry, and a majority now perceive the inquiry to be a very serious matter. Many Americans consider the motive behind President Donald Trump's phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to be political and say it is unacceptable for a president to seek a foreign leader's assistance for political gain. Still, Americans divide about the idea of impeachment. They are more likely to believe the fate of Trump's presidency should be decided at the ballot box rather than through the impeachment process.

A majority of Americans (52%) approve of the House's impeachment inquiry while 43% disapprove. Approval of the House's investigation has increased to a net +9 percentage points from a net +3 points in the late September NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll. At that time, Americans divided, 49% to 46%. Among independents, there has been a 19-point shift in favor of the inquiry. The impeachment probe now receives approval from a majority of independents (54% to 41%). Two weeks ago, 44% approved, and 50% disapproved.

"Both Democratic and Republican party bases are locked in on the impeachment inquiry," says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "But, Democrats are winning round one with independents who have moved in their direction."

A majority of Americans (51%) also consider the impeachment inquiry to be a very serious matter while 46% say the nature of the investigation is just politics. Residents divided (50% to 48%, respectively) in the late September NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll. Independents now divide. 47% perceive the impeachment inquiry as a very serious situation, and 49% consider it a political ploy. Previously, 52% of independents viewed the inquiry as political maneuvering and

45% described it as very serious. Also of note, one in five Republicans (20%) consider the inquiry to be very serious, up from 14% two weeks ago.

The extent to which Americans are following the news coverage of the inquiry matters. 58% of those who are very closely or closely following the news think it is a serious matter. 55% who are not as plugged in believe it is just politics.

More than six in ten Americans (61%) report following the news about the impeachment inquiry, down from 68%. 39% are paying little or no attention to the coverage at all, up from 32%. The shift is most prominent among those who are paying very close attention to the proceedings, 31% down from 37%.

Nearly six in ten Americans (59%) think President Trump acted in the interest of his re-election campaign and *not* in the best interest of the American public (31%) during his conversation with the President of Ukraine. While partisan differences matter, even 21% of Republicans consider the president's phone call to have been self-serving. A majority of independents (58%) and most Democrats (91%) agree.

More than two in three Americans (68%), including 94% of Democrats, 64% of independents, and a notable 40% of Republicans, say it is unacceptable for a president to ask a foreign leader to help investigate a political rival. Just 26% think such a tactic is acceptable including a majority of Republicans (52%).

Despite their perceptions of the inquiry and President Trump's actions, Americans divide about whether or not Trump should be impeached. 49% support the impeachment of President Trump, and 47% oppose it. Republicans (93%) overwhelmingly *oppose* impeachment. Most Democrats (87%) support impeaching the president, but more than one in ten (11%) oppose it. Independents divide. 47% are in support of impeachment, and 46% oppose. Among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents, those who identify as moderate (16%) are twice as likely as those who identify as progressive (8%) to *oppose* impeachment.

Americans are similarly divided about whether the U.S. Senate should vote to remove President Trump from office. 48% do not think the president should be removed. The same proportion think he should be. 93% of Republicans, 50% of independents, and even 11% of Democrats *oppose* removing the president from office. 85% of Democrats say the Senate should vote to remove Trump from office.

A majority of Americans (58%) report the fate of the Trump Presidency should be decided at the ballot box as opposed to through the impeachment process (37%). Most Republicans (93%) and nearly two-thirds of independents (65%) consider the electoral process to be the better arbiter of Trump's actions than impeachment. Democrats consider impeachment to be the

appropriate course of action (69%). A notable 24% of Democrats say the election is the better option.

Central to the impeachment debate is a whistleblower within the intelligence community who filed a complaint about the contents of Trump's call with the President of Ukraine. Nearly six in ten Americans (59%), including 34% of Republicans, say the identity of that individual should be protected. 38% of adults think it should be revealed.

The impact of impeachment is multi-faceted. Half of Americans (50%) fear that Congress' legislative agenda will stagnate once impeachment hearings begin. 42% believe Congress will continue to work on other policy initiatives.

Americans' differ on the impact the impeachment dispute will have on the 2020 presidential election. 44% think it is more likely to help the Democratic candidate for president. A similar 43% say the issue of impeachment is more likely to help President Trump's re-election bid. About one in five Democrats and Republicans think the issue of impeachment will give the opposing party's candidate an upper hand in the election. A plurality of independents (43%) say Trump will be the benefactor. 40% report it will bolster the Democratic candidate's chances.

Half of Americans think President Trump's inclusion of former Vice President Joe Biden's name during his call with the President of Ukraine will hurt Biden's chances of becoming the Democratic nominee. 28% say Biden's electoral prospects will be helped by the phone call. Nine percent percent say it will have no impact, and 13% are unsure. Regardless of party identification, at least a plurality believes the mention of Biden in the call harms the former vice president's chances of being the Democratic nominee.

Despite the anticipated damage to Biden's presidential bid, little evidence exists at this time that Biden has suffered. Though upside down, his favorable rating is little changed among Americans. 41% of Americans have a favorable view of him, and 45% do not. 15% are unsure. In mid-September, Americans divided, 44% favorable to 45% unfavorable. 11% were unsure.

Democrats are more likely than Americans, overall, to want impeachment discussed during next week's Democratic primary debate. A majority of Democrats (57%) have this view compared with 45% of Americans. In fact, the majority of Americans (51%) say the matter should be left off the debate stage. Many Republicans (66%) and a majority of independents (51%) think the topic should not be included.

Turning to the next year's congressional elections, more than one in three registered voters (34%) report they will be less likely to vote for their congressional representative if that candidate supports impeachment. 22% say they will be more likely to vote for their representative. A plurality, though, (43%) say it will make no difference to their vote. 67% of

Republicans say they are less likely to cast their ballot for their congressional representative if that person favors impeachment. Among Democrats, half say it will not matter to their vote, and 42% report they will be more likely to support their representative. Among independents, 50% say their representative's position on impeachment will not influence their vote. 32% think they will be less likely to support their congressperson while 17% say they will be more likely to do so if they vote to impeach Trump.

When looking at the generic congressional ballot question, the Democratic candidate (43%) is +3 percentage points over the Republican (40%) on the ballot among registered voters nationally. Two percent support another candidate, and 15% are undecided. Among independents, similar proportions support the Democratic candidate (36%) and Republican (33%) candidate on the ballot. A notable 27% are undecided.

Many Americans think Donald Trump is out of step with the moral values of most Americans. 61% of Americans say Trump does not share the moral values by which most Americans try to live. This includes 20% of Republicans, 41% of white evangelical Christians, and 19% of those who voted for Trump in 2016. 37% of adults believe he does share Americans' values.

According to a CBS News/New York Times survey conducted during the Clinton impeachment in 1998, 62% of Americans reported that Bill Clinton's moral values did not align with those of the American people.

Americans divide about their compatibility with Joe Biden's moral values. 45% of residents nationally think Biden's moral values *do* reflect those of most Americans. 42% do not think so, and more than one in ten (13%) are unsure. 70% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents believe Biden shares the values of most Americans.

In addition, 56% of Americans think most members of Congress do not share the moral values of most Americans. 37% believe they do. In that 1998 CBS News/New York Times poll, 58% of Americans thought Congress *did* share the moral values of the American people. 35% did not.

Democrats (50%) are currently more likely than Republicans (27%) and independents (32%) to consider the values of most members of Congress to align with those of Americans. More than six in ten Republicans (66%) and independents (61%) consider Congress' moral beliefs to be incongruous with most Americans.

Americans exhibit lackluster trust in the Trump Administration (40%), and Congress (31%) fares even worse. However, trust in the specific chambers of Congress – House Democrats (41%) and Senate Republicans (39%) – is better than the legislative branch as a whole. The only American institution with a lower level of trust in this survey is the media (29%). Majorities of Americans have a great deal or good amount of trust in the courts (58%), the Intelligence

Community such as the CIA and FBI (57%), and that elections are fair (51%).

TRUSTOR1. NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll Table of National Adults

National Adults			
How much do you trust each of the following: A great deal, a good amount, not very much, not at all:			
	A great deal/A good amount	Not very much/Not at all	Unsure
	Row %	Row %	Row %
The Courts	58%	39%	3%
The intelligence community such as the CIA and FBI	57%	41%	3%
That elections are fair	51%	46%	3%
Democrats in the House of Representatives	41%	56%	3%
The Trump administration	40%	59%	1%
Republicans in the U.S. Senate	39%	59%	3%
Congress	31%	66%	3%
The media	29%	69%	2%

NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll Table of National Adults

Half of Americans (50%) think the U.S. is prepared to keep the 2020 election safe and secure, down slightly from 53% in September 2018. 43%, up from 38%, believe the nation is not very prepared or not prepared at all to do so. This includes close to one in five (19%) who say the country is not prepared at all to ward off a threat.

39% of registered voters say they will definitely vote for President Trump in the 2020 election. 52% report they will definitely vote against him. These findings are nearly identical to those previously reported.

President Trump's job approval rating is at 42%, little changed from the 44% he received in the late September NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll. 52% disapprove. 27% of Americans who approve of the president's performance in office strongly do so, down from 31%. 40% of those who disapprove are strongly of this opinion. Two weeks ago, 39% were of this view.

President Trump's standing on the economy has rebounded. 50% report President Trump's decisions as president have strengthened the U.S. economy, and 39% say they have weakened it. Ten percent are unsure. When reported in September, Americans divided, 47% to 46%. Seven percent were unsure. There has been a shift among independents. While they divided 49% to 45% in mid-September, a majority (52%) now report Trump's decisions have strengthened the U.S. economic picture. 37% report his choices have weakened it.

However, residents divide about President Trump's impact on national security. 47% say his decisions have *weakened* the country's national security. 43% report his decisions have strengthened it. Nearly half of independents (48%) think the president has weakened U.S. national security compared with 39% who say he has strengthened it.

Americans remain pessimistic about the direction of the nation. 35% think it is moving in the right direction, and 57% say it is moving in the wrong one. When last reported in February, nearly identical proportions of Americans shared these views.