



Most Americans support inquiry into decisions to monitor former Trump campaign officials: poll

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In a new Hill-HarrisX survey, a majority of registered voters said they support a new Department of Justice inquiry into whether official procedures were followed when the FBI began examining allegations of connections between Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign and Russia.

Sixty-two percent of respondents to the May 17-18 survey said they support Attorney General William Barr's decision to name a U.S. attorney to determine whether law enforcement officers had obeyed regulations governing surveillance of U.S. citizens while 38 percent said they opposed the new inquiry.

The poll found broad agreement across age groups in favor of the probe led by Connecticut-based U.S. attorney John H. Durham with more than 58 percent of voters under 35, between 35 and 49, between 50 and 64, and older than 64 saying that they supported it.

The president and congressional Republicans have stepped up their attacks on the FBI after special counsel Robert Mueller published a report saying that he could not find evidence that established proof of a criminal conspiracy between Trump 2016 campaign officials and people working for the government of Russia.

Republican respondents were overwhelmingly likely to say they approved of the Durham inquiry with 74 percent supporting it and 26 percent opposing it. Most independents, 67 percent, backed the probe while only 33 percent said they were against it.

Democratic respondents were divided on the issue with 48 percent saying that FBI officials should be investigated for potentially abusing their authority and 52 percent saying that they opposed the idea.

That such a large percentage of Democrats would support investigating the FBI was not necessarily a surprise, Mallory Newall, research director at Ipsos Public Affairs told Hill.TV.

"My thought of why this might be the case is because of their feelings toward the attorney general who I think has sort of become a, some would say, a mouthpiece or looking at this through a partisan lens," she told "What America's Thinking" host Jamal Simmons. "It's possible that Democrats are looking for validation from a third party to investigate the investigators."

The Department of Justice previously directed Inspector General Michael Horowitz to examine whether law enforcement officials acted appropriately in their handling of an investigation into former secretary of state Hillary Clinton's unauthorized private email server. Horowitz determined that some FBI officials had exhibited a personal political bias against Trump but that it did not influence the investigation.

The Hill-HarrisX survey was conducted online among a statistically representative panel of 1,030 registered voters with a confidence level of 95 percent and a sampling margin of error of 3.1 percentage points.

—Matthew Sheffield