



NEWS

Poll: Americans split 42%-42% on impeaching Trump

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Published 5:00 a.m. ET Jul. 24, 2017 | Updated 5:22 p.m. ET Jul. 25, 2017

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: An earlier version of this story misstated the percentage of respondents who said President Trump wasn't likely to complete his first term. The correct number is 36%.

WASHINGTON — Just six months after his inauguration, Americans already are split down the middle, 42%-42%, over whether President Trump should be removed from office, a new USA TODAY/iMediaEthics Poll finds.

While no serious effort is now underway in Congress to impeach Trump, the results underscore how quickly political passions have become inflamed both for and against the outsider candidate who won last year's campaign in a surprise. A third of those surveyed say they would be upset if Trump is impeached; an equal third say they would be upset if he's not.

Those findings, designed to measure the intensity of opinion, also show a perfect divide, 34%-34%.

"I don't really trust him — all the things he's done while he's in office, all of the lies, the investigation that goes on with him, the things he says to his staff," Vera Peete, 47, of Antioch, Calif., said in a follow-up phone interview. The caregiver from suburban San Francisco, an independent who voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton for president, was among those surveyed.

The online poll of 1,330 adults, taken July 17-19 by SurveyUSA, has a margin of error of 2.8 percentage points.

Americans are braced for turmoil ahead.

More than a third, 36%, say Trump isn't likely to complete his first term, for whatever reason. Only about one in four, 27%, express confidence he'll serve all four years of his term. Even one in 10 Republicans doubt he'll finish his tenure.

"These results suggest that Trump is probably the most beleaguered first-term president in the country's history, and certainly in modern history — highly unpopular among the public, with a significant portion clamoring for his impeachment barely six months after his inauguration," says David Moore, a senior fellow at the University of New Hampshire and polling director for iMediaEthics.org, a nonprofit, non-partisan news site.

Read more:

David Moore's analysis of the poll on iMediaEthics

Methodology for the USA TODAY/iMediaEthics Poll

In the poll, 44% approve of the job Trump is doing, 51% disapprove. His opposition is more intense than his support: 38% strongly disapprove of him; 22% strongly approve.

Nearly seven in 10 Democrats say Trump should be impeached. So do 36% of independents and, perhaps surprisingly, 15% of Republicans.

Sherman argued that the ousting of Comey, who was leading the investigation into Russia, amounted to the "high crimes and misdemeanors" required in the Constitution for removal from office.

In a speech on the House floor in May, Rep. Al Green, D-Texas, also called for Trump's impeachment.

But more senior Democrats haven't joined in. House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi has called instead for creating an outside, independent commission to investigate the Russia allegations. House Republicans, who hold a 46-seat majority, are unlikely to entertain the possibility of removing the president.

That said, if Democrats won control of the House in next year's midterm elections, the party's base might press for a debate on the issue, especially depending on what the Russia investigations conclude.

Special counsel Robert Mueller and congressional oversight committees are investigating meddling in the 2016 election by Moscow that U.S. intelligence agencies have concluded

were designed to help Trump and hurt Clinton. The inquiries are examining whether Trump associates may have colluded with the Russians, an allegation the president strongly denies.

Support for impeachment is stronger among younger people than older ones; 51% of those under 35 but just 33% among those 50 and older say Trump should be removed from office. Women are more likely than men to back impeachment, 46% compared with 38%. There is also a racial and ethnic divide. Two-thirds of African-Americans and a majority of Hispanics back impeachment, compared with a third of whites.

"I believe in 2018 they will vote enough Democrats and independents in to impeach him," says Jeffrey Hobbs, 49, of Ochlocknee, a town of 605 in southern Georgia. He voted for Republican Mitt Romney in 2012 but didn't cast a ballot in 2016, and now he vows to never vote Republican again because of the GOP's failure to stand up to Trump.

Trump denounces the Russia allegations as a "political witch hunt," and his aides and allies argue he is the victim of biased news coverage.

"At the end of the day, I think, when those investigations are over, it will be another chapter in Washington scandals incorporated, that we had to have a scandal going on and gin up all this sort of nonsense, so that we could distract the president from his agenda and his people, and run around chasing something that's all about nothing," the new White House communications director, Anthony Scaramucci, said dismissively on CBS' *Face the Nation*, one of a series of appearances he made on Sunday talk shows.

Opponents of other modern presidents have backed impeachment, even when that didn't seem to be a realistic prospect. In 2014, a third of those surveyed by CNN/ORC said Barack Obama should be impeached; 65% said he shouldn't. In 2006, 30% said George W. Bush should be impeached; 69% disagreed.

As the Watergate scandal unfolded in 1973 and 1974, the Gallup Poll showed support for impeaching Richard Nixon steadily grew. It rose from 19% in June 1973 to 57% in August 1974, when he resigned in the face of his almost certain removal from office.

Bill Clinton is the only modern president to be impeached by the House, though the Senate refused to convict him on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice in connection with the Monica Lewinsky affair. Even as the House was moving to impeach him, though, Gallup found the public opposed to the step by 2-1.

No president since Nixon has faced as broad and fervent calls for his ouster as Trump does now, a situation that creates complicated cross-currents for him in politics and governing.

House Speaker Paul Ryan last month dismissed a reporter's suggestion that Republicans would be suggesting impeachment if a Democratic president had been accused of the same actions as Trump. "No, I don't think we would, actually," he said. "I don't think that's at all the case."

In the new poll, more than one in four, 27%, say Congress already has enough evidence to impeach Trump. Another 30% say there isn't sufficient evidence yet but predict there eventually will be from ongoing investigations.

Only about a third of those surveyed, 31%, say there will never be enough evidence to justify removing Trump from office.