

The Harris Survey

For Release: Friday, July 26, 1974 --- A SPECIAL BONUS COLUMN

MAJORITY FEEL HOUSE SHOULD VOTE TO IMPEACH PRESIDENT

By Louis Harris

By a 53-34 percent majority, the American people feel that "the House of Representatives should vote to impeach President Nixon so he can be tried by the U.S. Senate." When asked then what they thought the Senate should do, by a plurality of 47-34 percent, most people thought the "U.S. Senate should vote to convict him."

In an in-depth, in-person survey taken among a cross section of 1,447 adult Americans nationwide between July 17 and 21, the latest Harris Survey can report these key results:

--- Although a majority want to see the President impeached and a plurality believe he should be convicted, by a substantial 55-27 percent margin, most Americans "do not think that President Nixon will be found guilty and impeached and removed from office." Somehow, a majority reason, Congress will simply not bring itself to turn this President out of office.

--- Back of this doubt that Congress will act is a 60-34 percent negative rating for Congress in its "handling of the Watergate affair" and an even worse 65-27 percent negative rating on the way it has "handled the impeachment proceedings against President Nixon."

--- However, Congress is taken to task more than the House Judiciary Committee; the latter received negative marks for the job it has done, but by a much closer 48-36 percent margin. Chairman Peter Rodino is accorded 38-32 percent negative ratings, Democratic party members of the Judiciary Committee 46-32 percent negative scores, and Republican members of the Judiciary Committee 53-24 percent negative marks. Among the chief lawyers in the proceedings, John Doar and former minority counsel Albert Jenner came up with a 35-26 percent negative assessment from the public, James St. Clair as the President's lawyer with a higher 39-39 percent standoff, but Leon Jaworski emerges with the highest marks of all at 50-31 percent positive.

The public holds mixed views about the impeachment proceedings up to now. Majorities of the public agree with many of the negative criticisms leveled against the Committee by the White House and other sources:

--- By 56-26 percent, a majority feel the "House Judiciary Committee has allowed too many leaks of confidential information to get into the press."

--- By 54-24 percent, a majority of the public also feel the "House Judiciary Committee has become too partisan along party lines, making the impeachment process a political football."

--- By 52-32 percent, a majority feel that the "House Judiciary Committee has dragged out the impeachment proceedings far longer than it should have."

At the same time, public ambivalence toward the Judiciary Committee can be seen in majorities who also went along with statements sympathetic and even praiseworthy of the Committee's efforts:

--- By 58-25 percent, a majority agree that "given a tough job, the House Judiciary Committee seems to be handling the impeachment of President Nixon in a thorough and fair-minded fashion."

--- By 56-26 percent, a majority also agree that the "House Judiciary Committee has had almost no cooperation from President Nixon, but is getting its job done anyway."

--- And by 54-31 percent, a majority feel that "because of the importance of the impeachment of a President, the House Judiciary Committee has been right to take such a long time in its proceedings."

What emerges from these results is a deeply frustrated public opinion, convinced long ago of President Nixon's involvement in the Watergate cover-up. By 56-35 percent, a majority feel that "if Congress decides that President Nixon was involved in the Watergate cover-up, Congress should remove him from office." This latest survey shows that a 72-19 percent majority believe Mr. Nixon knew about the cover-up while it was going on, and for the first time, a majority of 54-34 percent think "President Nixon knew about the original Watergate break-in at Democratic headquarters."

Above all else, the people want the judicial process of impeachment to work. Faith in Congress is so low that the public doubts that body will get the job done. The public tends to think partisanship and politics will interfere with the judicial process.

Nonetheless, a clear majority now feels that the House should vote a bill of impeachment. The cross section was asked:

"The House of Representatives can only vote to impeach the President -- that is, have him put on trial. Then the U.S. Senate would hold a trial, and either acquit or convict him. All in all, from what you know or have heard, do you think the House of Representatives should vote to impeach President Nixon so he can be tried by the U.S. Senate, or would you oppose such a step by the House?"

HOUSE VOTE TO IMPEACH

	<u>Total Public</u>
	<u>%</u>
Should vote to impeach	53
Oppose such a step	34
Not sure	13

Much the same sentiment prevails on a later U.S. Senate conviction of President Nixon, although less than a majority now hold the view that he should be convicted. And, of course, it takes a two-thirds vote of the Senate itself for conviction. People were asked:

"From what you know or have heard, if the House of Representatives votes impeachment and President Nixon is put on trial before the U.S. Senate, do you think the U.S. Senate should vote to convict him or not?"

U.S. SENATE VOTE TO CONVICT

	<u>Total Public</u>
	<u>%</u>
Should vote to convict	47
Should not	34
Not sure	19

Clearly, the weight of public opinion has now moved toward impeachment of President Nixon, although a crucial one in five people are still withholding ultimate judgment on conviction, undoubtedly awaiting action by the House and for an actual trial to take place.