

# The Harris Survey

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## NIXON IMPEACHMENT AND REMOVAL FROM OFFICE NOW FAVORED 49-41%

BY LOUIS HARRIS

In the aftermath of President Nixon's release of the 1,300 pages of edited tape transcripts and his refusal to turn over any more materials on the Watergate case, by 49-41 percent a plurality of the American people now want him "impeached and removed from office." This is a rise from a 42-42 percent standoff in public opinion for removal of the President in April.

On 7 key counts, a majority of the public believe President Nixon is guilty of committing an act which a majority in turn also believe is grounds for impeachment and removal from office:

-- By 64-23 percent, a majority feel Mr. Nixon "knew about the attempt to cover up White House involvement in the Watergate case." By 57-31 percent, a majority also feel this is an offense for which he should be removed from office by Congress.

-- By 61-20 percent, a majority believe Mr. Nixon "signed back-dated tax forms claiming deductions for giving away his Vice Presidential papers, claiming tax credits a year after the law had been changed." A 53-33 percent majority believe such an offense is sufficient grounds for "impeachment and removal from office."

-- By 59-24 percent, a majority believe President Nixon "knew about and signed false statements on his income tax return filed with the Internal Revenue Service." A 61-29 percent majority feel such income tax fraud is grounds for removal from office.

-- By 55-24 percent, a majority of the public feel that Mr. Nixon "knew about and did not object to paying the original Watergate defendants hush money to keep quiet." A 67-20 percent majority feel commission of this act is sufficient grounds for "impeachment and removal from office."

-- By 55-23 percent, a majority believe Mr. Nixon "knew that key Watergate tapes were either destroyed or parts damaging to himself were erased." By 54-32 percent, a majority feel such an act is impeachable and could be a legitimate basis for removal of the President.

-- By 52-25 percent, a majority of the public believe President Nixon "allowed the 18-1/2 minutes to be erased from the taped conversation between himself and H. R. Haldeman a few days after the Watergate break-in." By 51-33 percent, a majority feel he should be impeached and removed for such an offense.

-- By 51-26 percent, a majority feel the President "knew about and did not object to offering executive clemency to the original Watergate defendants to keep them quiet." A 59-26 percent majority believe this is sufficient grounds for removal.

A high 87 percent of the 1,555 adult Americans who were interviewed in person and in depth nationwide on May 7th and 8th said they had heard or read about the President's release of the transcript of edited tapes and subsequent events. Uniformly, by roughly a 2-1 majority, the public rejects Mr. Nixon's claim about what the transcripts show:

-- By 59-28 percent, a majority reject the President's contention that with the "turning over of the 1,300 pages of edited tapes, Congress now has all the information it needs to judge his guilt or innocence."

-- By 64-24 percent, a majority disagree with Mr. Nixon that "there is no need for electronic experts to check the original tapes to be sure they have not been altered or parts erased."

-- By 60-24 percent, most Americans simply do not believe the transcripts "prove the President had no knowledge of the White House Watergate cover-up."

-- By 63-23 percent, a majority rejects the President's claim that "the transcripts prove he wanted everything about Watergate to be known and nothing to be held back."

-- By 55-24 percent, most people simply do not believe Mr. Nixon's statement that "he was sure neither Rose Mary Woods nor any White House aides deliberately erased the missing 18-1/2 minutes on the tape."

It is patently apparent from these results that President Nixon's bold and daring gamble in releasing the edited tape transcripts has backfired badly among the people and has left him more susceptible than ever to impeachment and removal by Congress. His refusal to furnish additional data to either the House Judiciary Committee or to Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski now seems certain to cause even further deterioration of the President's case with public opinion.

There is now a rising public call for the impeachment and removal of this President from office by Congress. People were asked:

"All in all, do you think President Nixon should or should not be impeached by Congress and removed from office?"

#### REMOVAL OF NIXON FROM OFFICE BY CONGRESS

	<u>May</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>March</u>
	%	%	%
Should be impeached and removed	49	42	43
Should not be impeached and removed	41	42	41
Not sure	10	16	16

While on the key question the number who advocate removal is just below the majority mark, on 7 key specific possible charges, a majority favoring a conviction of the President now exists. It is apparent now that he is in deeper trouble than ever before on the Watergate matter.

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