

Even Split on Ford In the Gallup Poll

Princeton, N.J.

President Ford's popularity so far this year is holding in the range that has characterized his job performance ratings during the last 14 months.

In the latest survey, recorded the weekend after his State of the Union address, Americans are evenly split in their opinion concerning Mr. Ford's performance in office with 45 per cent approving and 45 per cent disapproving. In early January, 46 per cent approved and 42 per cent disapproved.

With the exception of the period immediately after the Mayaguez incident, Mr. Ford's popularity in 1975 fluctuated between 48 and 37 per cent. So far this year, his job rating has remained in that range.

The President's popularity among members of his own party is also unchanged since the State of the Union speech. Currently, 63 per cent of Republicans approve of the way Mr. Ford is handling his duties — a level of party support far below that of his two GOP predecessors at comparable times in their tenures.

Analysis of the intensity of the Ford approval vote indicates his support is weak.

Nationwide, only one person in seven, 14 per cent, expresses

"strong approval" of Mr. Ford's performance. Even among party members (who are, predictably, most enthusiastic about Mr. Ford) only 25 per cent approve strongly while the rest of the Republicans supporting Mr. Ford, 38 per cent, express only mild approval.

By way of comparison, ten per cent of Democrats and 12 per cent of independents strongly approve Mr. Ford's actions.

Here is the question that has been asked to determine the President's popularity since Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration and the trend so far this year:

"Do you approve or disapprove of the way (name of incumbent) is handling his job as President?"

	Ap- prove	Dis- approve	No Opinion
Latest	45%	45%	10%
Jan. 2-5	46%	42%	12%

To determine intensity of opinion, all persons approving or disapproving of Ford were asked the following question:

"How strongly would you say you approve-disapprove — very strongly or so strongly?"

	National	Repub- licans	Dem- ocrats	Inde- pendents
Strong approval	14%	25%	10%	12%
Mild approval	31%	38%	25%	35%
Total approving	45%	63%	35%	47%
Mild disapproval	21%	16%	23%	21%
Strong disapproval	24%	14%	31%	22%
Total disapproving	45%	30%	54%	43%
No opinion	10%	7%	11%	10%

Copyright 1976, Field Enterprises, Inc.