

\* POLL TAKEN 21 FEB 75

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**California Poll**

**Public Feeling About Nixon**

*By Mermin D. Field*

A significant change is occurring in the California public's feeling toward former President Nixon. Simply stated, it is a mixture of a sense that justice was not done when Mr. Nixon the President escaped standing trial for his actions in the Watergate affair, and a growing feeling of compassion for Mr. Nixon the man.

More Californians today think Mr. Nixon has not been penalized enough for what he did than think he should be. This is a significant change. In a state which has, over the years, been known for its consistently unfavorable attitude toward Nixon, it is the first of the U.S. when data from the national poll are compared.

The rise in sympathy for Mr. Nixon's personal life has not, however, eroded the public's firm belief that he should not be a high government official again. Even when asked if the public rejects the idea that he be the U.S. ambassador to China or run for the U.S. Senate, adamantly, virtually all Californians believe he would hurt rather than help the GOP if he became a spokesman for the party.

The sympathy wave for Mr. Nixon, who has been out of public life since last August, may be carrying over to Mr. Nixon's aides (H. R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman, and John Mitchell) who recently stood trial and were convicted for their Watergate roles. The public is now almost evenly divided over whether they should go to jail for these crimes or be pardoned.

A California Poll survey of a representative cross-section of this state's adult public was conducted between February 15 and March 3 and found

that

- 82 per cent of the public thinks Mr. Nixon should have been required to stand trial for what he may have committed while in office

- However, 51 per cent think he has now paid enough penalty for what he did (44 per cent think he has not been penalized enough)

- Californians strongly disapprove (79 per cent to 17 per cent) of the idea of former President Nixon becoming U.S. ambassador to China or some similar job

- By an even greater margin (84 per cent to six per cent) people say they would not vote for him if he were to run for U.S. Senate

- By an equally large ratio (83 per cent to eight per cent) Republicans say Nixon would hurt the GOP more than he would help if he became party spokesman

- The public is nearly evenly divided (46 per cent to 46 per cent) on whether convicted former Nixon Administration people like Haldeman, Mitchell, Ehrlichman and Robert Mardian should go to jail or be pardoned.

	State-wide	Democrats	Republicans
Should Mr. Nixon have had to stand trial?			
Should have had to	82%	77%	80%
Should not have had to	18%	21%	14%
No opinion	2	2	4
Mr. Nixon penalized enough?			
Not penalized enough	51%	35%	78%
Penalized enough	44%	60%	17%
No opinion	5	5	5
Mr. Nixon as China ambassador?			
Approve	18%	10%	30%
Disapprove	77%	88%	65%
No opinion	5	3	5
How vote if Mr. Nixon ran for U.S. Senate?			
Would vote against him	84%	95%	74%
Would vote for him	16%	3%	24%
No opinion	4	2	3
Would Mr. Nixon help or hurt GOP as spokesman?			
Would hurt	83%	88%	83%
Would help	16%	10%	15%
No difference	5	4	6
No opinion	5	6	3
Jail or pardon for Mr. Nixon aides?			
Should go to jail	46%	51%	38%
Should be pardoned	46%	48%	55%
No opinion	8	9	7

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