

The Harris Survey

Vote for President In 1974 Is Backed

By Lou Harris

By 50 to 36 per cent, Americans would favor holding a "special election for President in 1974, if the Supreme Court found it was constitutional." By 53 to 37 per cent, a majority agrees with the statement that "because public confidence has been so shaken in the White House, a special election for President would clear the air and give the country a new start."

It has been suggested that such a special election might be in order if a Vice President not elected by the entire country — such as Gerald Ford — were to succeed to the presidency. This possibility could become a reality if President Nixon were to resign or were impeached. In that case, Ford would become President and could ask Congress to call a special election if there were judged to be no constitutional obstacles.

It is by no means a foregone conclusion that a Democrat would be elected President in such an election. In recent Harris Survey trial runs for the 1976 election, Ford ran slightly ahead of both Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and Sen. Henry M. Jackson, two of the most frequently mentioned Democratic presidential prospects.

Recently, the Harris Survey asked a cross-section of 1,496 households across the country:

It has been suggested that it might be proper under the Constitution for Congress to call an election for President

in 1974. The person elected would serve until the regular election in 1976. If the U.S. Supreme Court found it was constitutional to have a special election for President in 1974, would you favor or oppose such a step?

	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
Nationwide	50%	36%	14%
East	54	30	16
Midwest	48	39	13
South	45	37	18
West	53	30	17
Republican	29	58	13
Democratic	60	25	15
Independent	53	34	13

To determine national feeling on questions surrounding a possible presidential election this year, the cross-section was asked:

Let me read you some statements on calling a special election for President in 1974. For each, tell me if you tend to agree or disagree.

	Dis- Agree	Not agree	Sure
Pro-Election Such an election for President would let the people decide what direction they think the country ought to go in and who should lead American.	63%	25%	12%
If a special election were held, the country could then have a new President elected by the people as he should be.	62	28	10
Because public confidence has been so shaken in the White House, a special election would clear the air and give the country a new start.	53	37	10
Anti-Election Our tradition is to have a President serve for four years and that should not be changed. It is not right to have a candidate go through a whole presidential campaign and then serve only two more years.	56	35	9
The Republicans won the office of President in 1972 and a Republican should be President until 1976.	48	39	13
	35	53	12