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**Strauss:
The Issue
Is Nixon**

By Jules Witcover
Washington Post Staff Writer

Democratic National Chairman Robert S. Strauss, with a poll of voters in last Tuesday's special House election in Ohio in hand, yesterday advised other Democratic candidates for Congress this year to run hard against President Nixon.

The survey, of 353 voters as they left the polls in Cincinnati and suburbs in Democrat Thomas A. Luken's victory over Republican Willis D. Gradison Jr., indicated that nearly half of all Luken voters meant their vote as a protest against Mr. Nixon.

Luken had urged voters to "send a signal to Washington" through his candidacy, and 45 per cent of those polled who voted for him said it was their intention to do just that.

By contrast, only 20 per cent of those who said they voted for Gradison said they meant their vote as an expression of support for the President. Gradison had pointedly sought to keep the race from becoming a referendum on Mr. Nixon, observing he was not on the ballot.

Strauss said his advice to campaigning Democrats is to run on the issues, and the issue is very clear—the Nixon leadership. "I'd run on the failure of Richard Nixon in the leadership of the country."

In the first four special House races of 1974, in

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which Democrats took away three Republican seats, there has been some differences of opinion concerning the political sagacity of making Mr. Nixon the issue.

In the first election, in Pennsylvania's 12th Congressional District on Feb. 5, the Democrat, John P. Murtha, chose to soft pedal the President and the Watergate scandal as an issue. He barely beat the Republican, Harry Fox in a district a Republican had held for 25 years.

Then in the second, in Michigan's 5th Congressional District on Feb. 18, Vice President Gerald R. Ford's old seat for 25 years, the Democrat, Richard VanderVeen, went all-out against Mr. Nixon from the start in

On a question gauging personal confidence, in this usually heavy Republican district that has elected a Democrat to the House only four times in this century, only one in three voters considered Mr. Nixon trustworthy. This compared, Hart said, to 87 per cent for Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, 78 per cent for Luken and 75 per cent for Gradison.

Of those surveyed, Hart said, 40 per cent described themselves as Democrats, 38 per cent as Republicans and 22 per cent as independents. Only 60 per cent of the Republicans said they trusted Mr. Nixon, Hart reported.

The survey indicated, Hart said, that Luken kept about 90 per cent of the Democratic vote and Gradi-

son about 90 per cent of the Republican, but that the independents, who usually vote heavily Republican in the district, gave three of five votes to Luken.

Strauss said the survey showed "the traditional Democratic voter we lost in 1972 we see coming back with a vengeance."

Ohio voters also were asked if they wanted the man they elected to the House Tuesday to vote to have the Senate "hold a trial to determine President Nixon's innocence or guilt on the charges related to Watergate." Fifty-eight per cent said yes, Hart reported, to 30 per cent no and 12 per cent not sure.

In national polls on the question of presidential impeachment, those surveyed have indicated they do not

favor that step. The Hart question, notably, avoided use of the word impeachment." Hart said his survey did so intentionally because the public confuses an impeachment inquiry and subsequent trial with actual removal from office.

In another post-election survey of voters in the Cincinnati area Tuesday taken for the Cincinnati Enquirer under the direction of Philip E. Meyer of Knight Newspapers, 60 per cent disagreed when asked if Mr. Nixon "should be impeached and removed from office."

The Meyer poll, based on a sampling of 119 voters on election day, also found 64 per cent who said they preferred keeping Mr. Nixon in the White House to having Vice President Gerald R. Ford as President. But 59

demeanors." Until then, Luken had stopped even shorter than that on the question of impeachment.

Even in the one Republican victory this year, in California's 13th Congressional District on Tuesday, post-election analysis indicated that Watergate and the President's other troubles sharply cut the traditional Republican vote that went to Robert J. Lagomarsino in his race against seven Democrats who hit the issue hard.

The Democratic National Committee survey in Ohio, conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. of Washington, is the first statistical evidence—admittedly self-serving for the sponsoring Democrats—that attacking Mr. Nixon head-on is good campaign strategy this year.

Luken won by about 4,000 votes.

The Republican National Committee reported that it is undertaking post-election review of both the Ohio and California House races, but that no results are expected until later this week. The GOP check, a committee spokesman said, is a statistical review and not a poll of voters.

In a third survey of the Ohio race, by the Joint Center for Political Studies here, 26 precincts in which blacks constituted about 95 per cent of the vote were analyzed. The survey indicated, the center said, that about 31 per cent of Luken's vote was provided by blacks, who went 92 per cent for him and thus gave him his "clear margin" of victory.

per cent said they thought Mr. Nixon probably was personally involved in the Watergate matter or cover-up.

In job rating as President, only 16 per cent said they thought he was excellent; 25 per cent rated him good, 20 per cent said they voted for him in 1972. Thirty-five per cent said they were Republicans, 35 per cent Democrats and the rest did not reply.

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