

A Majority Favors New Election

New York

A majority of Americans think that a special presidential election this year "would clear the air and give the country a new start," according to a Louis Harris poll released yesterday.

In a survey of 1496 households across the country, 53 per cent of those questioned said they favored such an election "because public confidence has been so shaken in the White House." Thirty-seven per cent disagreed.

The Constitution provides for a presidential election only once every four years. But it has been suggested that a special vote would be constitutional if a vice president not elected by the entire country were to succeed to the presidency.

That would be the case if President Nixon resigns or is impeached. He would be succeeded by Vice President Gerald Ford who was not

elected to the post, but confirmed by Congress after Spiro T. Agnew resigned.

"If Nixon goes out of office," the Harris Poll quoted a Framingham, Mass., engineer, "we'll have a man as president who was elected by the Congress, not the people. It's better to have another election and clear it all up once and for all."

The poll found the strongest sentiment for a special election on the East and West coasts.

And while Republicans oppose such a step, independents, "who now hold the balance of political power in the country, favor it by a clear 53 to 34 margin." The survey said opposition to a special election centered around the reason expressed by a Pennsylvania businessman who said, "It is our tradition to hold elections for president every four years. We should strictly follow the Constitution on such matters."

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