

Gallup Poll on Ford's Offer

How People View Clemency Plan

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President Ford's offer of conditional clemency for Vietnam war draft evaders and deserters parallels the views of the greatest number of persons interviewed in a recent nationwide survey.

About six in ten (59 per cent) of persons interviewed express opposition to unconditional clemency, while 34 per cent vote in favor of such a course of action and seven per cent do not express an opinion.

Although the majority opposes unconditional clemency, only about one person in eight among this group favors a punitive course of action, such as the imposition of a fine or a jail sentence. Most think draft evaders and deserters should be required to serve a period of time in either non-military or military service.

President Ford has offered conditional clemency to thousands of Vietnam war draft evaders and deserters

who agree to work for up to two years in public service jobs. He also established a nine-member presidential clemency board which will review the cases of those already convicted or punished for desertion or draft evasion.

The public's views have remained virtually unchanged since a survey taken in April. However, between the April survey and an earlier survey, taken in February, 1973, views had softened considerably in terms of opposition to unconditional clemency.

All persons surveyed were asked the following question:

"Do you think young men who have left the United States to avoid the draft should or should not be allowed to return to this country without punishment?"

	Favor Unconditional Clemency	Oppose Unconditional Clemency	No Opinion
Latest	34%	59%	7%
Apr. '74	34	58	8
1973	29	67	4
1972	36	60	4

Persons who said Vietnam draft evaders and deserters

should not be allowed to return without some form of punishment — that is, who oppose unconditional clemency — were then asked:

"Which of these would you favor?"

What should be done with draft evaders/deserters?

Require them to serve a period of time in military or non-military service	46%
Make them pay a fine	2
Send them to jail	5
No opinion	6
Total opposed to unconditional clemency	59%

An analysis of questions asked in the survey, which was conducted before President Ford's granting of a pardon to former President Nixon, brings these seeming contradictions to light:

Among those in the survey who favor unconditional clemency, or a pardon for draft evaders and deserters, opinion was more than 2 to 1 against granting Mr. Nixon a pardon in the event he were tried and found guilty.

Among those who oppose unconditional clemency, on the other hand, opinion was nearly 3 to 2 in favor of a pardon for Mr. Nixon.

Before and during World War II, Americans took a hard line toward conscientious objectors. In 1940, for example, a majority of the public approved the idea of jailing men who refused to register for the draft or serve in the military services.

After the war, however, public attitudes softened. In 1947 a Gallup survey found a large majority of Americans in favor of freeing conscientious objectors who had been given jail sentences for refusing to serve.

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