

A Gallup Poll on Ford's Popularity

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President Ford's popularity rating has declined to its lowest point to date, with 47 per cent of the public expressing approval of the way he is handling his job as

chief executive, compared with 33 per cent who disapprove and 20 per cent who are undecided.

The latest approval rating is eight points down from the previous measurement taken in late October, when 55 per cent said they ap-

proved of Mr. Ford's performance in office.

Discontent over the economy is clearly a key factor in the downturn in Mr. Ford's rating. In the current survey only 32 per cent say they approve of the way he is dealing with economic conditions in this country, while nearly half (48 per cent) disapprove.

The public favors tougher measures on the economic front, with 51 per cent in an earlier survey saying Mr. Ford's economic policies do not go far enough compared with only seven per cent who say too far. Large majorities of both Republicans and Democrats, for example, are found to favor a return to wage and price controls.

Mr. Ford's economic program includes decreasing the rate of federal spending and restraining the growth of the monetary supply. To deal with the slowdown of economic activity with the rise in unemployment that are the expected results of such a policy, the President has called for remedial programs such as public service employment, with a five per cent surtax on individuals and companies to finance the programs. In other respects, President Ford has adopted a laissez-faire approach.

The history of popularity ratings reveals that a President does not usually run into popularity problems until well into his second year of office. In Mr. Ford's case, however, the traditional presidential honeymoon ended prematurely with his pardon of former President Nixon on September 8, an action disapproved of by the public by a 2-to-1 vote. Mr. Ford's popularity rating today is 14 percentage points below Mr. Nixon's after a comparable period — the "first 100 days" in office. In a survey conducted in late April, 1969, 69 per cent said they approved of the way Mr. Nixon was handling his job compared with 11 per cent who disapproved.

Economic developments can have a major impact on the popularity of the chief executive even though he may have little or no control over these developments.

President Harry S Truman's popularity slid 44 points between mid-1945 and mid-1946 largely as a result of economic problems. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's low point in popularity, 49 per cent, was recorded in the spring of 1958 during a period of recession. And concern over the high cost of living, which in regular surveys during 1973 and 1974 consistently overshadowed Watergate as a chief concern of the public, contributed to the 44-point downslide in President Nixon's popularity between January, 1973, and July, 1974.

Following is the question that has been asked over the last 35 years to measure presidential popularity:

"Do you approve or disapprove of the way (name of incumbent) is handling his job as president?"

	Ap- prove	Disap- prove	No Opinion
Latest (post-elections)	47%	33%	20%
Oct. 18-21	55	28	17
Oct. 11-14	52	29	19
Sept. 27-30	50	28	22
Sept. 6-9	66	13	21
Aug. 16-9	71	3	26

Mr. Ford's approval rating is slightly lower in the east than in the other three major regions of the nation, as seen below:

	Ap- prove	Disap- prove	No Opinion
East	42%	38%	20%
Midwest	49	33	18
South	51	27	22
West	47	35	18

Seven in ten Republicans (72 per cent) express approval, compared with 36 per cent of Democrats and 48 per cent of independents.

	Ap- prove	Disap- prove	No Opinion
Republicans	72%	13%	15%
Democrats	36	43	21
Independents	48	35	17

Here is the question asked to determine the public's rating of the President's economic policies:

"Do you approve or disapprove of the way Mr. Ford is dealing with economic conditions in this country?"

	Ap- prove	Disap- prove	No Opinion
Nationwide	32%	48%	20%
Republicans	50	29	21
Democrats	26	54	20
Independents	29	54	17
East	27	53	20
Midwest	34	48	18
South	38	39	23
West	30	53	17

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