

Watergate Senators Gain Favor

By Louis Harris

As the second phase of the Senate Watergate hearings resume, public approval of individual members of the committee, almost without exception, is on the rise. The committee chairman, Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. of North Carolina, leads the way with a positive rating of 63 to 22 per cent "in the way he has handled himself in the questioning of witnesses."

Between Aug. 18 and 24, a cross-section of 1,546 adults were asked in person across the nation:

In the way he has handled himself in the questioning of witnesses by the U.S. Senate committee, how would you rate the job done by (READ LIST) — excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?

	Good-Excellent	Only fair-Poor	Not Sure
Sam Ervin			
Aug.	63%	22%	15%
July	62	16	22
Howard Baker			
Aug.	61	16	23
July	57	13	30
Daniel Inouye			
Aug.	56	17	27
July	47	15	38
Lowell Weicker			
Aug.	45	18	37
July	38	16	46
Edward Gurney			
Aug.	43	23	34
July	37	21	42
Herman Talmadge			
Aug.	43	19	38
July	38	18	44
Joseph Montoya			
Aug.	41	22	37
July	33	21	46
Samuel Dash, Majority Counsel			
Aug.	45	16	39
July	43	14	43
Fred Thompson, Minority Counsel			
Aug.	39	17	44
July	X	X	X
X—Not asked in July.			

Although the number of people who view each committee member in a negative light (only fair-poor) has risen in every case, in almost every case the committee member's positive rating (pretty good-excellent) has gone up even more. This pattern holds for Sens. Baker, Inouye, Weicker, Gurney, Talmadge and Montoya.

The lone exceptions are Sen. Ervin, the committee chairman, and Samuel Dash, the majority counsel. Criticism of Ervin has risen by six points, while praise for him has gone up only one point. In the case of Dash, he has improved his positive rating by two points,

but these gains are canceled out by a two-point rise on the negative side of the ledger.

Ervin has taken on partisan overtones when his standing is analyzed by people's politics:

	Positive	Negative	Not Sure
Nationwide			
Aug.	63	22	15
July	62	16	22
BY POLITICS			
Republican			
Aug.	52	32	16
July	59	22	19
Democratic			
Aug.	71	16	13
July	65	15	20
Independent			
Aug.	62	24	14
July	63	15	22