

The Harris Survey

Agnew Slips Badly in 1976 Poll

By Louis Harris

Embroiled in grand jury proceedings involving leaked charges of alleged kickbacks, Vice President Agnew has slipped badly in the trial heats for the 1976 presidential election. He now trails Sens. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), and Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn.) by wide margins.

Between Sept. 23 and 25, the Harris Survey asked a nationwide cross-section of 1,132 likely voters:

Suppose for President in 1976 it were between Spiro Agnew for the Republicans and Senator Edward Kennedy for the Democrats—if you had to choose, would you vote for Agnew, the Republican, or Kennedy, the Democrat?

	Agnew	Kennedy	Not Sure
Sep., 1973	31%	57%	12%
June	42	50	8
May	41	52	7
Oct., 1972	43	51	6

Although he has consistently trailed Kennedy in a hypothetical 1976 race for the White House, in this latest result Agnew has plummeted 11 percentage points while Kennedy jumped 7 points, producing a massive, 26-point spread.

A similar result emerged in a pairing between the Vice President and Mondale. The cross-section of voters was asked:

Suppose for President in 1976 it were between Agnew for the Republicans and Senator Mondale of Minnesota for the Democrats—if you had to choose, would you vote for Agnew, the Republican, or Mondale, the Democrat?

	Agnew	Mondale	Not Sure
Sept., 1973	27%	51%	22%
May	44	37	19

Only last May, Agnew was leading the Minnesota senator in a trial heat run. But now he has slipped behind Mondale by 24 points.

The widest margin in these trial heats was scored by Jackson, who led the Vice President by 30 points.

The cross-section was asked: *Suppose for President in 1976 it were between Agnew for the Republicans and Senator Henry Jackson of Washington for the Democrats—if you had to choose, would you vote for Agnew, the Republican, or Jackson, the Democrat?*

	Total Voters
Agnew	25%
Jackson	55
Not sure	20

The only group in which Agnew finishes on top against all three potential Democratic nominees is among rank-and-file Republicans. This fact, however, can have some significance in determining Agnew's future in the days of controversy that lie ahead. For it is likely that the Vice President will use his base of support among GOP regulars to try to set a backfire. He has stated categorically that he will not resign, even in the event of an indictment.

©1973, The Chicago Tribune