

Approval of Nixon Levels Off to 29% at Year End

By George Gallup

PRINCETON, N.J.—In the final 1973 measurement, President Nixon's job rating, after having risen slightly during November, leveled off at 29 per cent approval—two points above his low point to date.

The President's approval ratings have fluctuated by only a few percentage points in surveys since late September. Mr. Nixon's brief gain in popularity during November (four points nationally) was the result of a sharp rise in support in the South, following his speaking tour there as part of "Operation Candor." His gains in that region, however, have proved temporary.

Mr. Nixon's job rating has declined 39 percentage points since late January, 1973, when a survey taken immediately after the Vietnam peace settlement showed a record 68 per cent expressing approval of his performance in office. This decline represents the sharpest recorded for any President since these measurements were first undertaken during the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

A key factor in the President's slide in popularity last year was Watergate. "Corruption in government" for the first time in more than two decades was, in the mind of the public, one of the most important problems facing the nation. In surveys since June, roughly three-fourths of the public has held the view that

Mr. Nixon was, at least to some extent, involved in the scandal.

Another major factor in Mr. Nixon's popularity decline was inflation—the chief concern of voters during most of 1973. It is likely that the President's approval would have undergone a sharp downturn last year even if Watergate had not been in the picture, since the public traditionally holds the incumbent administration at least partly responsible for economic problems.

Analysis of the final 1973 results by population group reveals that disapproval outweigh approval except among Republicans, where a slight majority expresses approval. Following is the question that has been asked each incumbent President since FDR's presidency:

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Nixon is handling his job as President? Here are the national findings in the popularity trend for 1973:

	Approve	Disap-	No
	51%	37%	12%
Jan. 12-15	68	23	7
Feb. 16-19	66	25	9
Mar. 20-23	65	26	9
Apr. 24-27	54	37	9
May 28-31	45	46	9
June 1-4	44	47	9
July 5-8	44	45	11
Aug. 9-12	45	43	11
Sept. 13-16	48	40	12
Oct. 17-20	39	59	2
Nov. 21-24	30	60	10
Dec. 25-28	31	63	6
Jan. 29-Feb. 1	31	63	6
Feb. 2-5	31	63	6
Feb. 6-9	31	63	6
Feb. 10-13	31	63	6
Feb. 14-17	31	63	6
Feb. 18-21	31	63	6
Feb. 22-25	31	63	6
Feb. 26-29	31	63	6
Feb. 30-Mar. 5	31	63	6
Mar. 6-9	31	63	6
Mar. 10-13	31	63	6
Mar. 14-17	31	63	6
Mar. 18-21	31	63	6
Mar. 22-25	31	63	6
Mar. 26-29	31	63	6
Mar. 30-Apr. 2	31	63	6

A comparison of Mr. Nixon's support in late January, when his popularity was at a high of 68 per cent, with his current rating shows the

decline to be particularly marked among independents. While the decline during 1973 was 35 points among Democrats and 37 points among Republicans since late January, it was 48 points among independents. Decline has also been particularly pronounced among Catholics. In January Catholics and Protestants held closely comparable views, but today approval among Catholics is 22 per cent compared to 33 per cent among Protestants.

The following table compares Mr. Nixon's approval rating in late January, 1973, (his high point) with the latest rating recorded in December:

	Late Jan. 1973	Dec. 1973	Point Change
NATIONAL	68	29	-39
Men	67	28	-39
Women	71	31	-40
Whites	67	27	-40
Nonwhites	71	31	-40
East	65	23	-42
West	64	27	-37
South	74	39	-35
West	74	35	-39
East	65	31	-34
College	65	31	-34
High school	71	26	-45

Grade school	64	33	-31
18 to 29 years	62	22	-40
30 to 49 years	48	27	-21
50 years and over	72	35	-37
Republicans	90	53	-37
Democrats	52	17	-35
Independents	76	25	-51
Protestants	76	33	-43
Catholics	71	22	-49
Labor union families	61	20	-41
Nonunion families	70	31	-39
Million families over	64	19	-45
500,000-999,999	62	27	-35
100,000-499,999	67	27	-40
2,500-49,999	71	34	-37
Under 2,500	73	35	-38

The following table shows Mr. Nixon's average popularity rating year by year since he took office.

Year	Approved	Dis-	No
	62%	16%	22%
1969	62	29	14
1970	57	37	13
1971	50	30	19
1972	51	30	19
1973	42	47	11

The findings reported are based on a national survey of 1,536 adults, 18 and older, interviewed in person in more than 300 scientifically selected localities during the period Dec. 7-10.

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