

Voter plurality for impeachment

By Louis Harris
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In the aftermath of President Nixon's release of the 1300 pages of edited tape transcripts and his refusal to turn over any more materials on the Watergate case, by 49-41 percent, a plurality of the American people now wants him "impeached and removed from office." This is a rise from a 42-42 percent standoff in public opinion for removal of the President in April.

On seven key counts, a majority of the public believes President Nixon is guilty of committing an act which a majority in turn also believes is grounds for impeachment and removal from office:

- By 64-23 percent, a majority feels Nixon "knew about the attempt to cover up White House involvement in the Watergate case." By 57-31 percent, a majority also feels this is an offense for which he should be removed from office.
- By 61-20 percent, a majority believes Nixon "signed back-dated tax forms claiming deductions for giving away his Vice Presidential papers." A 53-33 percent majority believes such an offense is sufficient for impeachment.
- By 59-24 percent, a majority believes President Nixon "knew about and signed false statements on his income tax return filed with the Internal Revenue Service." A 61-29 percent majority feels this is grounds for removal.
- By 55-24 percent, a majority believes Nixon "knew about and did not object to paying the original Watergate defendants hush money to keep quiet." A 67-20 percent majority feels commission of this act is sufficient grounds for "impeachment and removal from office."
- By 55-23 percent, a majority believes Nixon "knew that key Watergate tapes were either destroyed or parts damaging to himself were erased." By 54-32 percent, a majority feels such an act is impeachable.
- By 52-25 percent, a majority of the public believes President Nixon "allowed the 18½ minutes to be erased from the taped conversation between himself and H. R. Haldeman." By 51-33 percent, a majority feels he should be impeached and removed for such an offense.
- By 51-26 percent, a majority feels the President "knew about and did not object to offering executive clemency to the original Watergate defendants to keep them quiet." A 59-26 percent majority believes this is sufficient grounds for removal.

A high 87 percent of the 1555 adult Americans who were interviewed in person and in depth nationwide on May 7 and 8 said they had heard or read about the President's release of the transcript of edited tapes and subsequent events. Uniformly, by roughly 2-1 majority, the public rejects Nixon's claim about what the transcripts show.