Ipsos/Vox/PerryUndem

# American Public Opinion on Impeachment and High Crimes

**Washington, DC, November 7, 2019**

A new Ipsos survey of the American public conducted on behalf of Perry/Undem and Vox finds that while a small majority (56%) of Americans believe in removing from office elected officials who engage in unethical behavior a large majority (71%) supports removing officials who break the law or abuse the power of their offices.

In a testament to the low regard Americans have for elected officials, a majority (54%) believe half or more of elected officials engage in unethical behavior and a similar number (50%) believe half or more of elected officials break the law or abuse their offices.

Combining these two findings together and it is not surprising that a large majority (78%) view impeachment as an important tool for our democracy.

Focusing on how the public defines “high crimes and misdemeanors,” large, bipartisan majorities say that the following qualify:

* Abusing the powers of your office for personal enrichment – 88%
* Misuse of public funds or assets – 87%
* Abusing the powers of your office for political advantage – 80%
* Negligence of the oath of office – 76%
* Dishonesty to the American people – 63%

However, when it comes to the President “pressuring another country to investigate a political rival,” the results return with a massive partisan split with Democrats overwhelmingly agreeing it is “morally wrong” (89%) and “a high crime and misdemeanor” (77%) with very few Republicans agreeing to the same (39% and 22% respectively). Conversely, most Republicans (65%) think this is “something presidents do all the time”.

**For full results, please refer to the following questionnaire.**

## Full Annotated Questionnaire:

1. If an elected official is found to behave unethically or inappropriately, should there be a mechanism or way to remove him or her from office OR should keeping or removing him or her be up to the voters in the next election?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total****(N=1,007)** | **Republican (N=425)** | **Democrat****(N=394)** | **Independent****(N=104)** |
| Mechanism to remove from office | 56% | 42% | 72% | 54% |
| Up to the voters | 31% | 48% | 19% | 31% |
| Don’t know  | 13% | 11% | 10% | 15% |

1. If an elected official is found to have broken the law or abused the powers of his or her office, should there be a mechanism to remove him or her from office OR should keeping or removing him or her be up to the voters in the next election?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Mechanism to remove from office | 71% | 61% | 83% | 69% |
| Up to the voters | 19% | 32% | 11% | 20% |
| Don’t know  | 9% | 7% | 6% | 12% |

1. How many elected officials do you think behave unethically or inappropriately?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Just a few | 10% | 10% | 13% | 2% |
| A sizable minority | 28% | 23% | 34% | 27% |
| About half | 19% | 20% | 18% | 20% |
| Most | 22% | 21% | 21% | 21% |
| Almost all | 13% | 19% | 6% | 14% |
| Don’t know  | 10% | 8% | 7% | 16% |
| Minority (Net) | 37% | 32% | 47% | 29% |
| Majority (Net) | 34% | 40% | 27% | 35% |

1. How many elected officials do you think break the law or abuse the powers of their office?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Just a few | 12% | 12% | 16% | 8% |
| A sizable minority | 28% | 27% | 33% | 23% |
| About half | 18% | 17% | 20% | 20% |
| Most | 20% | 21% | 20% | 22% |
| Almost all | 12% | 16% | 6% | 13% |
| Don’t know  | 9% | 7% | 5% | 15% |
| Minority (Net) | 41% | 39% | 49% | 31% |
| Majority (Net) | 32% | 36% | 26% | 35% |

1. **[Only asked if Q1 or Q2 = mechanism to remove from office]** Should we use this mechanism to remove elected officials who behave unethically or illegally only occasionally or whenever we find bad behavior?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total****(N=731)** | **Republican****(N=272)**  | **Democrat****(N=343)** | **Independent****(N=71)** |
| Should use it only occasionally | 37% | 46% | 33% | 30% |
| Should use it for all bad behavior | 53% | 41% | 60% | 50% |
| Don’t know  | 10% | 13% | 7% | 20% |

1. There has been a lot of news lately about impeachment. How familiar would you say you are with how impeachment works in the federal government?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Very familiar | 26% | 26% | 27% | 25% |
| Somewhat familiar | 41% | 42% | 43% | 43% |
| Not too familiar | 21% | 23% | 20% | 23% |
| Not at all familiar  | 7% | 6% | 6% | 3% |
| Don’t know  | 5% | 3% | 4% | 6% |
| Familiar (Net) | 67% | 68% | 71% | 68% |
| Not familiar (Net) | 28% | 29% | 25% | 25% |

1. In your opinion, is impeachment an important tool for our democracy or not an important tool?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Very important | 46% | 26% | 67% | 45% |
| Somewhat important | 32% | 41% | 24% | 38% |
| Not too important | 9% | 17% | 3% | 8% |
| Not at all important | 5% | 10% | 1% | 1% |
| Don’t know  | 8% | 6% | 6% | 8% |
| Important (Net) | 78% | 67% | 91% | 83% |
| Not important (Net) | 14% | 27% | 3% | 9% |

1. What does “high crimes and misdemeanors” mean to you?

**[Open-ended answers provided separately]**

1. Do you consider the following to be a “high crime or misdemeanor”:

Total Yes Summary

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Abusing the powers of your office for personal enrichment | 88% | 82% | 95% | 82% |
| Misuse of public funds or assets | 87% | 83% | 92% | 82% |
| Abusing the powers of your office for political advantage  | 80% | 67% | 93% | 75% |
| Negligence of the oath of office | 76% | 64% | 86% | 72% |
| Dishonesty to the American people | 63% | 50% | 74% | 56% |

* 1. Dishonesty to the American people

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Definitely Yes | 33% | 25% | 40% | 29% |
| Probably Yes | 29% | 25% | 34% | 28% |
| Probably Not | 26% | 35% | 18% | 29% |
| Definitely Not | 7% | 9% | 4% | 10% |
| Don’t know  | 5% | 6% | 3% | 6% |
| Yes (Net) | 63% | 50% | 74% | 56% |
| No (Net) | 33% | 44% | 23% | 38% |

* 1. Negligence of the oath of office

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Definitely Yes | 46% | 30% | 60% | 46% |
| Probably Yes | 29% | 34% | 26% | 26% |
| Probably Not | 17% | 25% | 10% | 19% |
| Definitely Not | 2% | 4% | 2% | 1% |
| Don’t know  | 5% | 6% | 3% | 8% |
| Yes (Net) | 76% | 64% | 86% | 72% |
| No (Net) | 19% | 29% | 11% | 20% |

* 1. Abusing the powers of your office for personal enrichment

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Definitely Yes | 61% | 43% | 80% | 54% |
| Probably Yes | 26% | 40% | 14% | 28% |
| Probably Not | 8% | 12% | 2% | 12% |
| Definitely Not | 2% | 2% | 2% | 3% |
| Don’t know  | 3% | 3% | 1% | 4% |
| Yes (Net) | 88% | 82% | 95% | 82% |
| No (Net) | 10% | 15% | 4% | 15% |

* 1. Abusing the powers of your office for political advantage

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Definitely Yes | 51% | 28% | 73% | 54% |
| Probably Yes | 29% | 39% | 21% | 21% |
| Probably Not | 13% | 25% | 3% | 15% |
| Definitely Not | 2% | 4% | 1% | 4% |
| Don’t know  | 4% | 5% | 2% | 6% |
| Yes (Net) | 80% | 67% | 93% | 75% |
| No (Net) | 15% | 28% | 5% | 19% |

* 1. Misuse of public funds or assets

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Definitely Yes | 61% | 49% | 72% | 60% |
| Probably Yes | 26% | 33% | 20% | 22% |
| Probably Not | 8% | 11% | 4% | 9% |
| Definitely Not | 2% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| Don’t know  | 4% | 4% | 2% | 8% |
| Yes (Net) | 87% | 83% | 92% | 82% |
| No (Net) | 9% | 14% | 5% | 10% |

1. How closely have you been following news about the impeachment inquiry into President Trump?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Very closely | 28% | 28% | 34% | 25% |
| Somewhat closely | 33% | 32% | 36% | 35% |
| Not too closely | 26% | 29% | 22% | 24% |
| Not following it at all | 11% | 9% | 7% | 14% |
| Don’t know  | 2% | 1% | 1% | 2% |
| Closely (Net) | 61% | 61% | 70% | 61% |
| Not closely (Net) | 37% | 38% | 29% | 37% |

1. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements…

Total Agree Summary

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| If President Trump abused the powers of his office, he should be removed. | 73% | 52% | 92% | 83% |
| The impeachment inquiry into Donald Trump is a major moment in our country’s history. | 64% | 44% | 84% | 59% |
| The impeachment inquiry is an example of our dysfunctional politics.  | 59% | 77% | 45% | 61% |

* 1. The impeachment inquiry into Donald Trump is a major moment in our country’s history.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Strongly agree | 39% | 23% | 58% | 32% |
| Somewhat agree | 25% | 22% | 27% | 26% |
| Somewhat disagree | 19% | 27% | 10% | 26% |
| Strongly disagree | 12% | 23% | 3% | 10% |
| Don’t know  | 6% | 5% | 3% | 6% |
| Agree (Net) | 64% | 44% | 84% | 59% |
| Disagree (Net) | 30% | 51% | 13% | 35% |

* 1. If President Trump abused the powers of his office, he should be removed.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Strongly agree | 50% | 19% | 77% | 54% |
| Somewhat agree | 24% | 33% | 14% | 29% |
| Somewhat disagree | 11% | 20% | 4% | 8% |
| Strongly disagree | 9% | 20% | 2% | 4% |
| Don’t know  | 7% | 9% | 2% | 5% |
| Agree (Net) | 73% | 52% | 92% | 83% |
| Disagree (Net) | 20% | 39% | 6% | 12% |

* 1. The impeachment inquiry is an example of our dysfunctional politics.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Strongly agree | 34% | 51% | 21% | 36% |
| Somewhat agree | 24% | 26% | 24% | 25% |
| Somewhat disagree | 13% | 11% | 16% | 6% |
| Strongly disagree | 18% | 6% | 31% | 20% |
| Don’t know  | 10% | 6% | 8% | 13% |
| Agree (Net) | 59% | 77% | 45% | 61% |
| Disagree (Net) | 31% | 17% | 48% | 26% |

1. Do you think a President of the United States pressuring another country to investigate a political rival is…

Total Yes Summary

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Morally wrong | 65% | 39% | 89% | 74% |
| A “high crime and misdemeanor” | 51% | 22% | 77% | 52% |
| Something Presidents do all the time | 44% | 65% | 28% | 37% |

* 1. A “high crime and misdemeanor”

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Definitely Yes | 29% | 8% | 51% | 30% |
| Probably Yes | 22% | 14% | 27% | 23% |
| Probably Not | 22% | 34% | 11% | 26% |
| Definitely Not | 16% | 34% | 3% | 9% |
| Don’t know  | 11% | 10% | 8% | 13% |
| Yes (Net) | 51% | 22% | 77% | 52% |
| No (Net) | 38% | 68% | 14% | 34% |

* 1. Morally wrong

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Definitely Yes | 41% | 12% | 68% | 46% |
| Probably Yes | 24% | 26% | 21% | 28% |
| Probably Not | 17% | 33% | 4% | 13% |
| Definitely Not | 8% | 17% | 1% | 4% |
| Don’t know  | 9% | 11% | 6% | 9% |
| Yes (Net) | 65% | 39% | 89% | 74% |
| No (Net) | 25% | 50% | 5% | 17% |

* 1. Something Presidents do all the time

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total** | **Republican**  | **Democrat** | **Independent** |
| Definitely Yes | 14% | 23% | 6% | 15% |
| Probably Yes | 30% | 41% | 22% | 22% |
| Probably Not | 21% | 15% | 24% | 27% |
| Definitely Not | 23% | 9% | 39% | 21% |
| Don’t know  | 12% | 11% | 9% | 15% |
| Yes (Net) | 44% | 65% | 28% | 37% |
| No (Net) | 44% | 24% | 63% | 48% |

## About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between November 5-6, 2019, on behalf of Vox. For this survey, a sample of roughly 1,007 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii was interviewed online in English. The sample includes 425 Republicans, 394 Democrats, and 104 Independents.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos’ online panel (see link below for more info on “Access Panels and Recruitment”), partner online panel sources, and “river” sampling (see link below for more info on the Ipsos “Ampario Overview” sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing a sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2016 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Posthoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online non-probability polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=1,007, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=+/-5.0 percentage points).

The poll also has a credibility interval of plus or minus 5.4 percentage points for Republicans, plus or minus 5.6 percentage points for Democrats, and plus or minus 11.0 percentage points for Independents.

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## About Ipsos

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Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. We serve more than 5000 clients across the world with 75 business solutions.

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