

For Immediate Release

August 13, 1998

Pew's Poll Numbers: LEWINSKY TESTIMONY — A YAWN

Monica Lewinsky's testimony in the investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct against Bill Clinton failed to spark any new interest in the scandal. Similarly, American attitudes toward the importance of the story or the merits of impeachment were unaffected by reports that she recanted her denial of a relationship with Clinton.

FINDING 1: Lewinsky's testimony before the federal grand jury drew the very close attention of just 17% of the public — notably less than the 24% who paid similar attention just a week earlier to news that she had reached an agreement to appear in court.

FINDING 2: Overall, interest in the investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct against Bill Clinton is static, with 26% of the public paying very close attention compared to 29% the week before. Interest peaked at 38% in January.

FINDING 3: Just 24% of Americans say the allegations are of great importance to the nation. This figure has held steady since early February, even as the percentage of people saying President Clinton probably or definitely had sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky increased 20 points to 72% currently.

FINDING 4: Showing a steady decline since early February, just 39% of the public says Clinton should be impeached if it turns out that he encouraged Lewinsky to lie under oath about the nature of their relationship; 48% felt that way in early February. Just 29% favor impeachment if he lied under oath about their relationship, down from 50% who favored impeachment under such circumstances six months ago.

These findings come from a new nationwide telephone survey of 1,016 adults conducted August 7-11. For full question wording and trends, visit our website at www.people-press.org, or call Greg Flemming at 202-293-3126.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
LEWINSKY TESTIMONY
— TOPLINE RESULTS —

Aug 7-11, 1998

N=1,016

Margin of error: +/- 3.5 percentage points

- Q.1 Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. (First,...) (Next,...) **(INSERT ITEM)**
(IF NECESSARY: Did you happen to follow this story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?)

		<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	(VOL) DK
a.	The investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct against Bill Clinton	26	30	20	24	*=100
	Early August, 1998	29	34	22	14	1=100
	June, 1998 ¹	28	32	24	15	1=100
	April, 1998	27	39	20	14	*=100
	March, 1998	30	35	25	9	1=100
	February, 1998 ²	21	44	25	10	*=100
	Early February, 1998	34	42	17	7	0=100
	<i>Gallup</i> : 1/27/98	37	43	15	4	1=100
	<i>CBS</i> : 1/26/98	38	41	15	5	1=100
b.	Monica Lewinsky's testimony in this matter	17	24	21	37	1=100
	Early August, 1998 ³	24	33	22	19	2=100
c.	Bill Clinton's decision to testify in the Lewinsky investigation	21	24	23	31	1=100
	Early August, 1998 ⁴	25	28	23	22	2=100
d.	Recent major ups and downs in the stock market	17	23	21	39	*=100
	November, 1997	25	36	18	20	1=100
	April, 1997	17	21	22	40	*=100
	February, 1996	12	20	25	42	1=100

¹ In June, April and March 1998 story was listed as "Allegations of sexual misconduct against Bill Clinton."

² In February 1998, story was listed as "Allegations that President Clinton had an affair with former White House intern, Monica Lewinsky."

³ In August 1998 story was listed as "Monica Lewinsky's agreement to testify in this matter in return for immunity from prosecution."

⁴ In August 1998 story was listed as "Bill Clinton's decision to testify by videotape in the Lewinsky investigation."

Q.1 CONTINUED ...

		<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	(VOL) DK
e.	The current dispute with Iraq over UN weapons inspections	18	31	23	27	1=100
	February, 1998 ⁵	36	40	16	8	*=100
	January, 1998 ⁶	32	35	18	15	*=100
	November, 1997 ⁷	44	32	10	13	1=100
f.	Reports about two babies who were switched at birth in a Virginia hospital	13	32	27	27	1=100
g.	The bombings at U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania	27	37	18	18	*=100

Q.2 Now a few questions about the allegations of sexual misconduct against President Clinton. Thinking specifically about these allegations, how important an issue do you think this whole situation is to the nation — of great importance, of some importance, or of very little importance?

		Early				--- CBS News ---	
		Aug	March	Feb	Early Feb	Jan 26th	Jan 24-25
		1998	1998	1998	1998	1998	1998
24	Great importance	22	26	22	25	39	40
21	Some importance	22	24	25	27	28	21
49	Very little importance	51	46	50	45	28	35
3	None (VOL)	3	2	3	1	2	3
<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100
						(N=609)	(N=943)

Q.3 Now I'm going to describe some of the allegations being made in this matter. As I read each one, please say whether you think it is definitely true, probably true, probably not true, or definitely not true. First, the allegation that Bill Clinton had sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky? (IF NECESSARY: Do you think this is definitely true, probably true, probably not true, or definitely not true?)

	<u>Definitely True</u>	<u>Probably True</u>	<u>Probably Not True</u>	<u>Definitely Not True</u>	<u>DK/ Ref</u>
Mid-August, 1998	22	50	13	6	9=100
Early August, 1998	19	51	14	7	9=100
February, 1998	9	43	29	10	9=100

⁵ In February 1998 story was listed as "The conflict in Iraq over UN weapons inspectors and U.S. threats to retaliate with air strikes."

⁶ This month the story was listed as "The conflict in Iraq over UN weapons inspectors"

⁷ This month the story was listed as "Iraq's refusal to let Americans participate in weapons inspections."

Q.4 Next, the allegation that Bill Clinton lied under oath about having an affair with Monica Lewinsky? (**IF NECESSARY:** Do you think this is definitely true, probably true, probably not true, or definitely not true?)

	Definitely <u>True</u>	Probably <u>True</u>	Probably <u>Not True</u>	Definitely <u>Not True</u>	DK/ <u>Ref</u>
Mid-August, 1998	21	45	18	5	11=100
Early August, 1998	20	46	16	8	10=100
February, 1998	9	40	31	11	9=100
<i>Gallup:</i> Jan 28, 1998	9	37	31	13	10=100
<i>Gallup:</i> Jan 25-26, 1998	18	38	23	13	8=100
<i>Gallup:</i> Jan 23-24, 1998	15	40	26	10	9=100
<i>Gallup:</i> Jan 21, 1998	8	41	28	15	8=100

Q.5 Next, the allegation that Bill Clinton participated in an effort to obstruct justice by getting Monica Lewinsky to lie under oath about the affair? (**IF NECESSARY:** Do you think this is definitely true, probably true, probably not true, or definitely not true?)

	Definitely <u>True</u>	Probably <u>True</u>	Probably <u>Not True</u>	Definitely <u>Not True</u>	DK/ <u>Ref</u>
Mid-August, 1998	13	34	30	12	11=100
Early August, 1998	14	34	28	14	10=100
February, 1998	8	32	36	16	8=100
<i>Gallup:</i> Jan 28, 1998	6	30	36	16	12=100
<i>Gallup:</i> Jan 25-26, 1998	14	34	28	16	8=100
<i>Gallup:</i> Jan 23-24, 1998	11	35	31	14	9=100
<i>Gallup:</i> Jan 21, 1998	6	33	33	18	10=100

Q.6 If it turns out that President Clinton lied under oath about having a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky, do you think that he should be impeached and removed from office, or not?

	Early Aug <u>1998</u>	March <u>1998</u>	Early Feb <u>1998</u>
29 Yes, should be impeached	31	40	50
65 No, should not	63	55	46
<u>6</u> Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>
100	100	100	100

Q.7 If it turns out that President Clinton encouraged Monica Lewinsky to lie under oath about the nature of their relationship, do you think that he should be impeached and removed from office, or not?

	Early Aug <u>1998</u>	March <u>1998</u>	Early Feb <u>1998</u>
39 Yes, should be impeached	41	48	48
55 No, should not	53	47	47
<u>6</u> Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
100	100	100	100