

**FOR RELEASE:  
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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:  
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**Clinton Ratings Increase Among Republicans and Independents  
TURNED OFF PUBLIC TUNED OUT IMPEACHMENT**

It may have been only the second impeachment in history, but it was a non-starter to the American public. Not only did the President's approval ratings go up following the House's decision, but only 34% of Americans paid very close attention to the proceedings. More people followed news about the attack on Iraq (44%) than the debate and historic vote this past weekend. In fact, the impeachment vote was not even among the top ten news interest stories of 1998.

The 805 adults who were re-interviewed December 19-21 were strongly supportive of Bill Clinton. His job approval rating rose from 61% to 71%, and there was no significant increase from the original survey in the number who want to see him removed from office (31% vs. 29%).<sup>1</sup> Only 30% say they would like to see Clinton resign in favor of Al Gore.

Two thirds of Pew's respondents (67%) think most members of Congress who voted for impeachment did so for political reasons, and only 25% think members did so because they thought Clinton's actions warranted removal from office. The public is divided over Representative Bob Livingston's decision to step down because of past marital infidelity. Some 46% say it was a good idea, 43% a bad one. A majority of Democrats oppose Livingston's decision (52%), while most Republicans believe it was a good idea (56%).

<b>Top Ten Stories of 1998</b>	
	<b>% Following Very Closely</b>
Jonesboro, Ark. shooting	49
Oregon high school shooting	46
U.S. Capitol shooting	45
Military strikes against Iraq	44
Military strikes in Sudan and Afghanistan	44
Outcome of elections	42
Unseasonable weather	39
Nationwide heat wave	38
Conflict with Iraq and UN weapons inspectors	36
Clinton/Lewinsky investigation (Early Sept.)	36
<b>House vote to impeach Clinton</b>	<b>34</b>

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<sup>1</sup> The original survey was conducted largely after the Judiciary Committee's vote on articles of impeachment (Dec 9-13,1998).

By a 56% to 35% margin the public thinks media coverage of the impeachment debate was fair and objective. But of those who disagree, most think the media favored a Republican point of view.

President Clinton's approval ratings increased significantly among political Independents and Republicans after his impeachment. This boost in ratings may represent a show of sympathy for the President rather than an increase in base support. This is particularly true among Republicans: while 41% now approve of the job the President is doing, 64% still believe he should be removed from office.

<b>Approval Bounce for Clinton</b>			
	<i>Percent Approving</i>		
	Before	After	
	<u>Vote</u>	<u>Vote</u>	<u>Change</u>
Total	61	71	+10
Male	58	70	+12
Female	64	71	+7
18-29	67	75	+8
30-49	59	69	+10
50-64	66	72	+6
65+	55	68	+13
\$75+K	55	58	+3
\$50-\$74K	61	73	+12
\$30-49K	58	70	+12
\$20-29K	71	79	+8
<\$20K	66	78	+12
Republican	30	41	+11
Democrat	89	95	+6
Independent	58	71	+13

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**ABOUT THIS SURVEY**

The survey results are based on telephone re-interviews conducted December 19-21, 1998 among 805 adults, 18 years of age or older under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates. All respondents are from a nationwide sample of 1,201 randomly selected adults, 18 years and older who were initially interviewed during the period of December 9-13, 1998. For results based on the re-interview sample (N=805), one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**IMPEACHMENT VOTE RE-INTERVIEW SURVEY**  
**— FINAL TOPLINE —**  
**December 19-21, 1998**  
**N=805**

**MY FIRST QUESTION IS...**

Q.1 Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as President? **[IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as President? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
Late December, 1998	71	27	2=100
Early December, 1998	61	32	7=100

Q.2 Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Republican leaders in Congress are doing? **[IF DK ENTER AS DK. IF DEPENDS PROBE ONCE WITH: Overall do you approve or disapprove of the job the Republican leaders in Congress are doing? IF STILL DEPENDS ENTER AS DK]**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
Late December, 1998	39	56	5=100
Early December, 1998	38	49	13=100

Q.3 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? **[READ AND ROTATE LIST]**

	<u>Very Closely</u>	<u>Fairly Closely</u>	<u>Not too Closely</u>	<u>Not at all Closely</u>	<b>(VOL)</b> <u>DK</u>
a. The debate and vote in the House of Representatives to impeach Bill Clinton	34	37	22	7	*=100
Early December, 1998 <sup>2</sup>	32	38	19	10	1=100
b. U.S. military strikes against Iraq	44	40	12	4	*=100

Q.4 Based on what you know at this point, do you think the Senate should or should not find Bill Clinton guilty and remove him from office?<sup>3</sup>

		<i>Based on Registered Voters</i>			
		Early Dec <u>1998</u>	Nov <u>1998</u>	Late Oct <u>1998</u>	Early Oct <u>1998</u>
31	Should be removed	29	23	28	32
65	Should not be removed	67	70	66	62
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>
100		100	100	100	100

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY:**

Q.5aF1 If you had to choose, which do you think would be better for the country — if Clinton were to remain in office until the end of his term, OR if Clinton were to resign now, and turn the presidency over to Al Gore?

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY:**

Q.5bF2 If you had to choose, which do you think would be better for the country — if Clinton were to resign now, and turn the presidency over to Al Gore, OR if Clinton were to remain in office until the end of his term?

		<i>----- Gallup -----</i>					
		Early Sept <u>1998</u>	Late Aug <u>1998</u>	Aug 17 <u>1998</u>	Jan 25-26 <u>1998</u>	Jan 24-25 <u>1998</u>	Jan 23-24 <u>1998</u>
68	Remain in office	76	75	72	68	67	71
30	Resign	20	21	23	26	25	23
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100	100

<sup>2</sup> In Early December the story was listed as "The impeachment inquiry in Congress into allegations against President Clinton."

<sup>3</sup> Trend figures based on slightly different question, "Based on what you know at this point, do you think that Bill Clinton should or should not be impeached and removed from office?"

**IF ANSWERED "2" (SHOULD RESIGN) IN Q.5a or "1" (SHOULD RESIGN) IN Q.5b, ASK: [N=271]**

- Q.6 Why do you think Clinton should resign from office now — because you think the charges against him are serious enough to end his presidency, OR because it would be better for the country to avoid a trial in the Senate?
- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 39       | Charges against him are serious enough to end his presidency |
| 42       | Better for country to avoid a trial in the Senate            |
| 17       | Other/Both (VOL)   |
| <u>2</u> | Don't know/Refused   |
| 100      |  |

**ASK ALL:**

- Q.7x Why do you think most members of Congress voted in favor of impeaching President Clinton — because they think what he has done is serious enough to end his presidency OR for political reasons?
- |          |                                      |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| 25       | Serious enough to end his presidency |
| 67       | For political reasons                |
| 5        | Both (VOL)                           |
| <u>3</u> | Don't know/Refused                   |
| 100      |                                      |

- Q.7y Representative Bob Livingston, who was to be the next Republican Speaker of the House, announced that he is leaving Congress because he had committed adultery in the past. Do you think it was a good idea or a bad idea for him to step down?
- |           |                    |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 46        | Good idea          |
| 43        | Bad idea           |
| <u>11</u> | Don't know/Refused |
| 100       |                    |

- Q.7a In general, do you think the news coverage of the impeachment debate was fair and objective, or do you think the news coverage was biased?
- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 56       | Coverage was fair and objective — <b>GO TO Q.8</b> |
| 35       | Coverage was biased — <b>GO TO Q.7b</b>            |
| <u>9</u> | Don't know/Refused — <b>GO TO Q.8</b>              |
| 100      |  |

**IF ANSWERED "2" (BIASED) IN Q.7a, ASK: [N=281]**

- Q.7b Do you think the news coverage favored Clinton and the Democrats too much, or do you think the news coverage favored the Republicans too much?
- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 26       | Coverage favored Clinton and Democrats |
| 66       | Coverage favored Republicans           |
| 3        | Other (VOL)                            |
| <u>5</u> | Don't know/Refused                     |
| 100      |  |

**FINALLY, ON ANOTHER SUBJECT,**

- Q.8 Do you approve or disapprove of the U.S. military strikes against Iraq?
- |          |                    |
|----------|--------------------|
| 75       | Approve            |
| 20       | Disapprove         |
| <u>5</u> | Don't know/Refused |
| 100      |                    |

- Q.9 Do you think the military strikes will be effective in reducing Iraq's ability to produce weapons of mass destruction, or not?
- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 50       | Reduced Iraq's ability to produce weapons |
| 41       | Will not reduce Iraq's ability            |
| <u>9</u> | Don't know/Refused                        |
| 100      |   |