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# Modest Changes in Views of Impeachment Proceedings Since Early September

*54% approve of House decision to conduct inquiry*

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# Modest Changes in Views of Impeachment Proceedings Since Early September

*54% approve of House decision to conduct inquiry*

Most Americans have not changed their views on whether the House should conduct impeachment proceedings against President Donald Trump since early September, before House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced that the House would conduct an impeachment inquiry of the president.

But about one-in-ten adults (9%) who had opposed the House opening impeachment proceedings last month now approve of the decision to conduct an impeachment inquiry, based on an analysis that tracks change in opinion among the same survey respondents over time.

Most of those who had opposed opening impeachment proceedings and now approve of the decision are Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (61%); about a third (32%) are Republicans and Republican leaners.

The new survey by Pew Research Center, conducted Oct. 1-13 among 3,487 adults, finds that 54% currently approve of the House's decision to conduct an impeachment inquiry, while 44% disapprove.

Neither party engenders a great deal of confidence that they will be "fair and reasonable" during the impeachment inquiry, the survey finds. About four-in-ten (43%) expect that the Republicans in Congress will be fair in handling the inquiry, while slightly more (47%) say the same about the Democrats in Congress.

The survey, conducted on Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel, enables us to examine opinions about impeachment among the same group of respondents over the past month. In an earlier wave of the online survey conducted in early September (Sept. 3-15) – before details about Trump's call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky were made public and Pelosi announced that the House would be moving forward with the inquiry – respondents were asked

## Majority of public approves of House decision to begin impeachment inquiry

*% who \_\_\_ of the House of Representatives' decision to begin an impeachment inquiry*



*How confident are you that \_\_\_ in Congress will be fair and reasonable during the impeachment inquiry? (%)*



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 1-13, 2019.

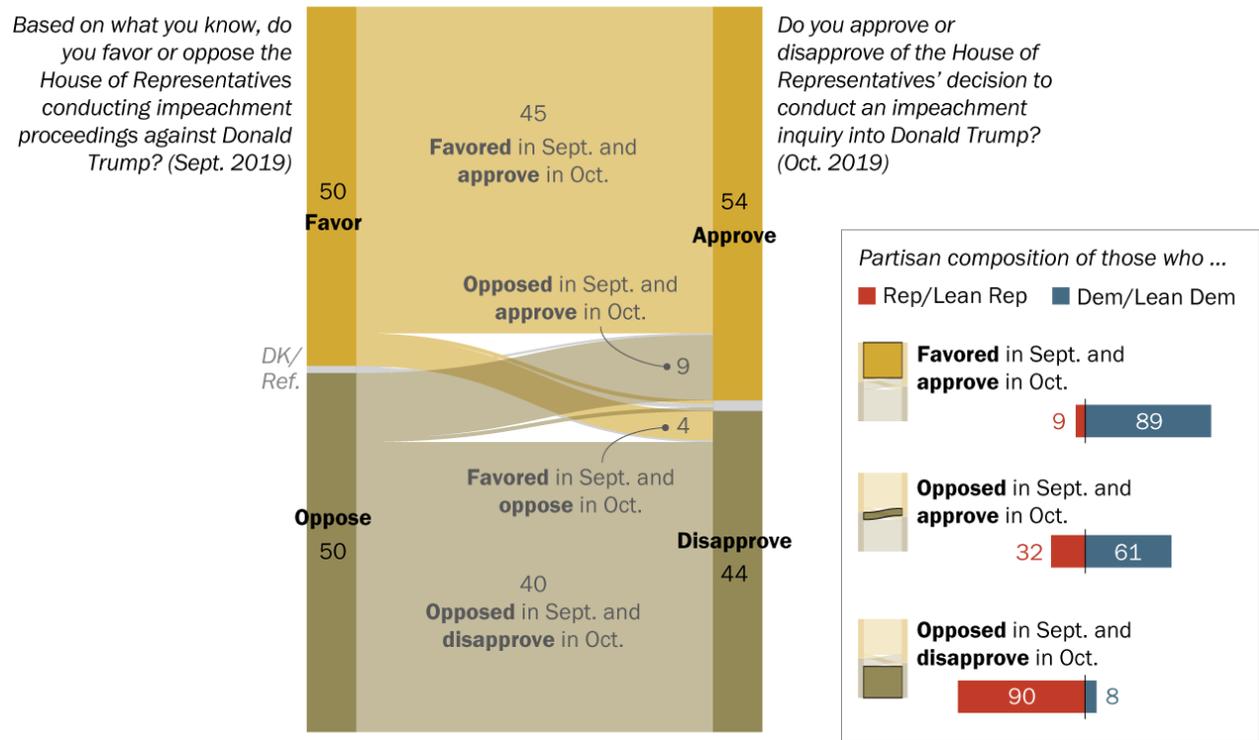
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a somewhat different question about whether they favored or opposed the House conducting impeachment proceedings against Donald Trump.

In that survey, 50% said they favored the House launching impeachment proceedings, while an identical share was opposed. The vast majority of those who now either approve or disapprove of the House conducting an impeachment inquiry (85%) held similar views in early September.

Overall, 45% approve of the impeachment inquiry today *and* favored the House starting impeachment proceedings then; this group largely consists of Democrats (89% are Democrats or Democratic leaners). Nearly as many (40%) disapprove of the impeachment inquiry now *and* opposed impeachment proceedings in early September; the vast majority of this group (90%) are Republicans and Republican leaners.

### Democrats make up a majority of those who now approve of the House decision to begin an impeachment inquiry but opposed proceedings in early September



Notes: September survey was fielded prior to Speaker Nancy Pelosi's announcement about opening an impeachment inquiry (Sept. 3-15). There are not enough cases to look at the partisan composition of those who favored impeachment in September and disapprove in October. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 1-13, 2019.

However, 9% approve of the House's decision to conduct an impeachment inquiry against Trump and opposed starting proceedings last month. As noted, Democrats make up most of this group: 35% identify as Democrats, 26% lean Democratic, 21% lean to the Republican Party and just 10% identify as Republicans.

A much smaller share of the public (4%) currently disapproves of the House decision to begin an impeachment inquiry, but favored the House opening impeachment proceedings last month.

## Little confidence in either party to be 'fair' on impeachment

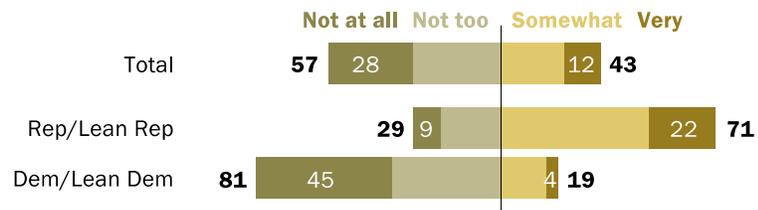
About four-in-ten (43%) expect that the Republicans in Congress will be fair and reasonable in handling the inquiry; 57% say they are not too confident or not at all confident. Nearly half (47%) are at least somewhat confident that congressional Democrats will be fair, while 52% have little or no confidence in the Democrats.

These views are deeply divided by party. About seven-in-ten Republicans and Republican leaners (71%) say they are at least somewhat confident in congressional Republicans to be fair, but only 22% say they are *very* confident. By contrast, 90% of Republicans express little or no confidence in Democrats in Congress – with 67% saying they are *not at all* confident.

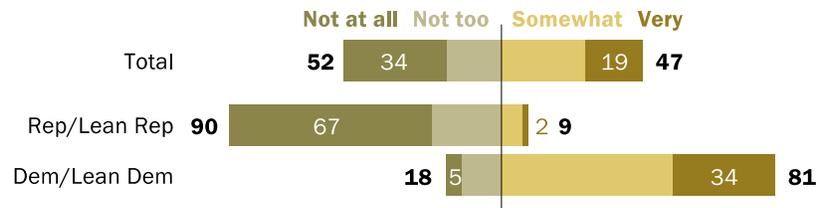
Among Democrats and Democratic leaners, 81% are at least somewhat confident in congressional Democrats to be fair, while an identical share has little or no confidence in congressional Republicans. However, fewer Democrats say they are very confident in congressional Democrats (34%) than say they are not at all confident in congressional Republicans (45%).

### Americans express slightly more confidence in Democrats in Congress to be fair in impeachment

*% who are \_\_\_ confident that **Republicans** in Congress will be fair and reasonable during the impeachment inquiry*



*% who are \_\_\_ confident that **Democrats** in Congress will be fair and reasonable during the impeachment inquiry*



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 1-13, 2019.

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Partisans generally have confidence in their own party – and little confidence in the opposing party – to handle the impeachment inquiry fairly and reasonably.

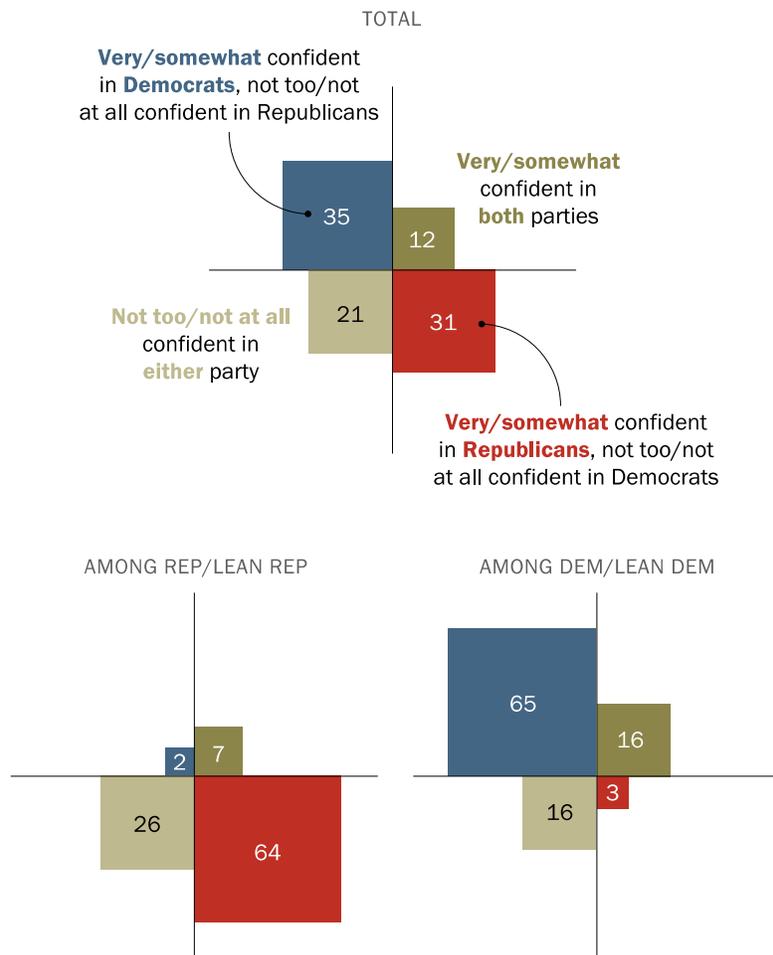
Among the public overall, 35% have confidence in congressional Democrats – but not the Republicans – to act in a fair and reasonable way during the impeachment inquiry, while 31% express confidence in the Republicans but not the Democrats.

About two-thirds of partisans express confidence in their own party but not the other (64% of Republicans and Republican leaners and 65% of Democrats and Democratic leaners).

Nearly one-in-five Americans (21%) are not too confident or not at all confident that *either* Republicans or Democrats will act fairly and reasonably during the impeachment proceedings, while about one-in-ten (12%) are at least somewhat confident that both parties will act fairly.

### About one-in-five Americans are not confident in either party to act fairly in impeachment inquiry

% who are \_\_\_\_\_ confident that Republicans/Democrats in Congress will be fair and reasonable during the impeachment inquiry



Note: No answer responses not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 1-13, 2019.

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Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say that neither party will act fairly (26% vs. 16%). Democrats, on the other hand, are more likely than Republicans to say that they have confidence in both parties (16% vs. 7%).

## Most Democrats say Trump has definitely done things that are ‘grounds for impeachment’

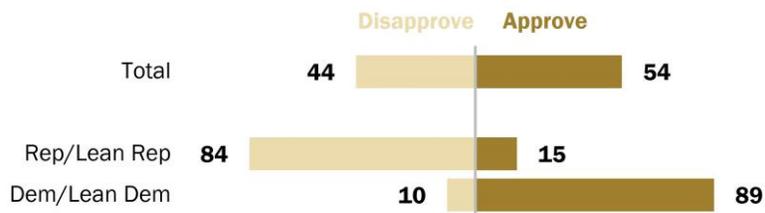
Partisanship is by far the most important factor in public attitudes about the impeachment inquiry.

Currently, 89% of Democrats and Democratic leaners approve of the House’s decision to conduct an impeachment inquiry; slightly fewer Republicans and Republican leaners (84%) disapprove of the House beginning an inquiry.

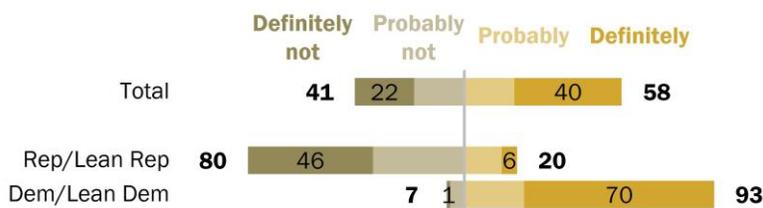
Partisan opinions are less symmetrical on whether Trump has definitely or probably “done things that are grounds for impeachment.”

### A 58% majority says Trump definitely or probably has done things that are ‘grounds for impeachment’

% who \_\_\_\_\_ of the House of Representatives’ decision to conduct an impeachment inquiry into Donald Trump



% who think Donald Trump has \_\_\_\_\_ done things that are grounds for impeachment



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 1-13, 2019.

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While 93% of Democrats say Trump has definitely or probably done things that are grounds for impeachment – including 70% who say he has *definitely* done such things – a smaller majority of Republicans (80%) say he has not. Fewer than half of Republicans (46%) say Trump has definitely not done things that are grounds for impeachment.

There are age and educational differences in opinions about the House's decision to launch and impeachment inquiry. A majority of adults under 30 (63%) approve of the House's decision; older age groups are less supportive. And those who have completed college are more likely to approve of the impeachment inquiry than adults who do not have a four-year degree (61% vs. 51%).

While majorities of Republicans and Republican leaners across all age categories disapprove of the impeachment inquiry, there is more support for the inquiry among young Republicans (30% of those younger than 30) than those 65 and older.

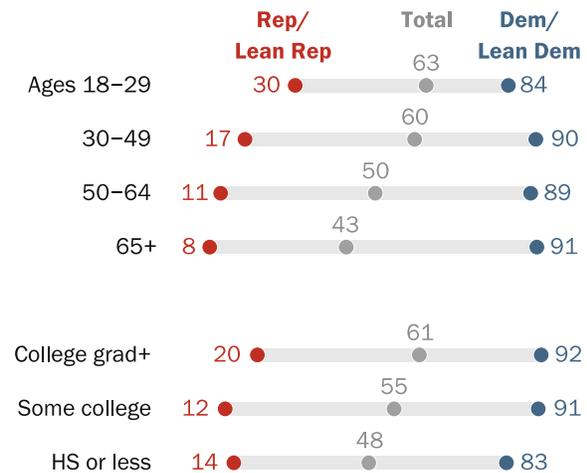
Democrats' views of impeachment do not vary as much by age, but the support for impeachment is slightly lower among those with no college experience compared with those who have attended at least some college.

The partisan gap in views of impeachment is more pronounced among those who say they have read or heard a lot about it compared with those who say they have only heard a little or nothing at all.

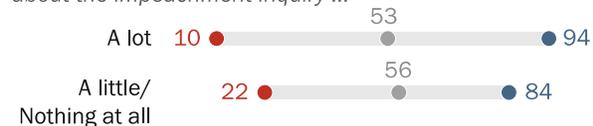
Among the over half of Republicans who have heard a lot about impeachment, just 10% approve of the impeachment inquiry; about twice as many (22%) Republicans who have heard less about impeachment approve of the probe. Democrats who have heard a lot about impeachment are 10 percentage points more likely to approve of it than Democrats who have heard little or nothing about it (94% vs. 84%).

### Among Republicans, age differences in support for impeachment inquiry

*% who approve of the House of Representatives' decision to conduct an impeachment inquiry into Donald Trump*



*Among those who have read or heard \_\_\_\_\_ about the impeachment inquiry ...*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 1-13, 2019.

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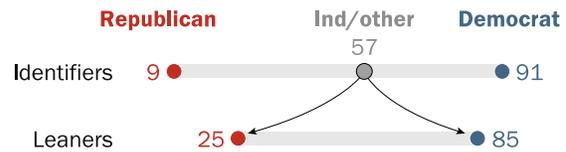
A large majority of political independents – those who decline to identify with one of the two major parties when asked – say they lean toward one of the parties. These independent leaners [look much like partisans in their attitudes across a range of different issues](#). Attitudes about impeachment are no exception to this general pattern. Overall, 57% of those who do not identify with one of the two major parties approve of the impeachment inquiry. But independents who lean toward either the Republican or Democratic Party are very distinct in their views of impeachment.

Democrats (91% approve) and Democratic leaners (85%) have similar views of the impeachment inquiry. While independents who lean toward the Republican Party are somewhat more likely to approve of the impeachment inquiry than Republican identifiers (25% of leaners compared with 9% of identifiers), the gap in approval between Republican-leaning independents and Democratic-leaning independents is 60 percentage points.

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### Like partisans, independents who lean toward a party are polarized in their views of an impeachment inquiry

*% who approve of the House of Representatives' decision to conduct an impeachment inquiry into Donald Trump*



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 1-13, 2019.

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## Acknowledgments

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals:

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## Methodology

### The American Trends Panel survey methodology

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report are drawn from respondents to panel waves conducted September 3 to September 15, 2019, and October 1 to October 13, 2019. Out of 3,954 panelists who were sampled, a total of 3,487 panelists responded to both waves, for a combined response rate of 88%. This does not include

three panelists who were removed from the data due to extremely high rates of refusal of straightlining. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 5.9% for the September wave and 4.9% for the October wave. The break-off rate among panelists who logged onto the survey and completed at least one item is 0.8% for the September wave and 0.9% for the October wave. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 3,487 respondents is plus or minus 2.2 percentage points.

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#### American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	2,500
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	1,464
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	799
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS/web	9,396	8,778	8,661
	<b>Total</b>	<b>29,114</b>	<b>18,720</b>	<b>13,424</b>

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

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The subsample from the ATP was selected by grouping panelists into six strata so demographic groups that are underrepresented in the panel had a higher probability of selection than overrepresented groups:

- Stratum A consists of panelists that completed interviews for previous ATP Waves 17, 33, or 34. They were sampled at a rate of 100%.
- Stratum B consists of panelists who are non-internet users. They were sampled at a rate of 72%.
- Stratum C consists of panelists with a high school education or less. They were sampled at a rate of 64.7%.

- Stratum D consists of panelists that are Hispanic, unregistered to vote, or non-volunteers. They were sampled at a rate of 26.6%.
- Stratum E consists of panelists that are black or 18-34 years old. They were sampled at a rate of 12.8%.
- Stratum F consists of the remaining panelists. They were sampled at a rate of 9.6%.

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of which 9,942 agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a random, address-based sample (ABS) of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. In each household, the adult with the next birthday was asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. For a random half-sample of invitations, households without internet access were instructed to return a postcard. These households were contacted by telephone and sent a tablet if they agreed to participate. A total of 9,396 were invited to join the panel, and 8,778 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. Of the 18,720 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 13,424 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling.](#)"

## Weighting

The ATP data were weighted in a multistep process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 and 2017 some respondents were subsampled for invitation to the panel. The next step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on the dimensions listed in the accompanying table.

Sampling errors and test of statistical-significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the American Trends Panel's Hispanic sample is predominantly U.S. born and English speaking.

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.

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## Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Gender	2017 American Community Survey
Age	
Education	
Race/Hispanic origin	
Hispanic nativity	
Home internet access	
Region x Metropolitan status	2018 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2017 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2016 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	Average of the three most recent Pew Research Center telephone surveys.

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total US adult population.

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The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	3,487	2.2 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	1,453	3.2 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	1,942	3.0 percentage points
<i>Among those who ...</i>		
Favored impeachment in Sept. and approve in Oct.	1,668	3.2 percentage points
Opposed impeachment in Sept. and disapprove in Oct.	1,332	3.3 percentage points
Opposed impeachment in Sept. and approve in Oct.	320	7.4 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

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**2019 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL  
WAVE 53 July & WAVE 55 September  
COMBINED FINAL TOPLINE  
WAVE 53: SEPTEMBER 3-15, 2019  
WAVE 55: OCTOBER 1-13, 2019  
TOTAL N=3,487**

*Note: Data below based on those who responded to Wave 53 and Wave 55 surveys.*

**WAVE 53 QUESTIONS**

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ASK ALL:**

IMPEACHT As you may know, the House of Representatives has been investigating Donald Trump's conduct during his time in office and during his campaign for president.

Based on what you know, do you favor or oppose the House of Representatives conducting impeachment proceedings against Donald Trump?

	-----Favor-----			-----Oppose-----			No
	<b>NET</b>	<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<b>NET</b>	<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	answer
Sep 3-15, 2019	<b>50</b>	32	18	<b>50</b>	35	15	1

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**WAVE 55 QUESTIONS**

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK ALL:**

IMPEACHEARD As you may know, the House of Representatives has begun an impeachment inquiry into Donald Trump's conduct as president.

How much have you heard or read about the impeachment inquiry?

Oct 1-13		
<u>2019</u>		
52	A lot	
41	A little	
6	Nothing at all	
*	No answer	

**ASK ALL:**

IMPEACHAPP Do you approve or disapprove of the House of Representatives' decision to conduct an impeachment inquiry into Donald Trump?

Oct 1-13		
<u>2019</u>		
54	Approve	
44	Disapprove	
1	No answer	

**ASK ALL:**

IMPEACHREM Regardless of your view of the House of Representatives' decision to conduct an inquiry...  
Do you think Donald Trump has done things that are grounds for his impeachment?

Oct 1-13

2019

40	Definitely
19	Probably
19	Probably not
22	Definitely not
1	No answer

**RANDOMIZE IMPCONFREP AND IMPCONFDEM, SHOW ON SAME SCREEN****ASK ALL:**

IMPCONFREP How confident are you that REPUBLICANS in Congress will be fair and reasonable during the impeachment inquiry?

Oct 1-13

2019

12	Very confident
31	Somewhat confident
29	Not too confident
28	Not at all confident
1	No answer

**RANDOMIZE IMPCONFREP AND IMPCONFDEM, SHOW ON SAME SCREEN****ASK ALL:**

IMPCONFDEM How confident are you that DEMOCRATS in Congress will be fair and reasonable during the impeachment inquiry?

Oct 1-13

2019

19	Very confident
28	Somewhat confident
19	Not too confident
34	Not at all confident
1	No answer

**ASK ALL:**

IMPKNOW Thinking about the impeachment process in general...

As far as you know, if the House of Representatives votes to impeach the president, which of the following would happen next? [**RANDOMIZE 1 AND 2, 3 ALWAYS LAST**]

	The president is <u>removed from office</u>	The matter goes <u>to the Senate for trial</u>	Not <u>sure</u>	No <u>answer</u>
Oct 1-13, 2019	7	69	23	1