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IMPEACHMENT POLLING

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Up until now, the central focus of the impeachment hearings has been Trump's conduct regarding military aid to Ukraine. Here, we test other reasons to expand the inquiry. We find that substantial numbers of voters support an inquiry that focuses on obstruction of justice, seeking foreign interference in elections as well as additional grounds such as Trump's bigotry, detention of immigrant families, and profiting off of his office. This memo briefly summarizes the results.

Executive summary

- ▶ On net, voters favor impeaching and removing the president by a 49-44 margin, and also favor the current impeachment inquiry by a 49-44 margin. This includes about nine in ten Democrats, one in three independents, and about one in sixteen Republicans. As such, there is no longer any difference between supporting the current inquiry and supporting impeaching the president
- ▶ About 42 percent of US voters support expanding the inquiry, about 9 percent want the inquiry to focus explicitly on Ukraine, about 3 percent of voters support the current inquiry but are unsure how they feel about whether it should expand, and 44 percent do not support the inquiry.
- ▶ Support for the inquiry and support for impeachment are synonymous: Support for one does not differ from support for the other across the partisan spectrum.
- ▶ Voters respond most clearly to supporting the inquiry on the grounds of pressuring a foreign government to interfere in domestic elections, and on the grounds of obstructing the inquiry.
- ▶ When provided a list of possible reasons to expand the inquiry, of those reasons voters most strongly supported expanding the inquiry to investigate claims Trump accepted money from foreign governments through his businesses.
- ▶ While the impeachment narrative current centers on Ukraine, we find voters are already nearly as supportive of impeachment on other grounds entirely, such as Trump's family-separation of immigrants or his incitements of discrimination and bigotry.
- ▶ There is little statistically consistent evidence for who can be moved in their opinion on the inquiry. Over the course of a survey battery providing several arguments in favor of the impeachment inquiry, we found only about 6 percent of voters could move toward the inquiry, with only about 1 percent moving from actively disfavoring the inquiry to favoring it.

Voters support the impeachment inquiry

At the outset of the survey, we asked voters how much they believed Trump should currently be facing impeachment and removal. We asked:

Congress has the power to impeach and remove a President for any high crimes and misdemeanors that are considered disqualifying of the office. Right now, do you believe President Trump should be impeached and removed from office?

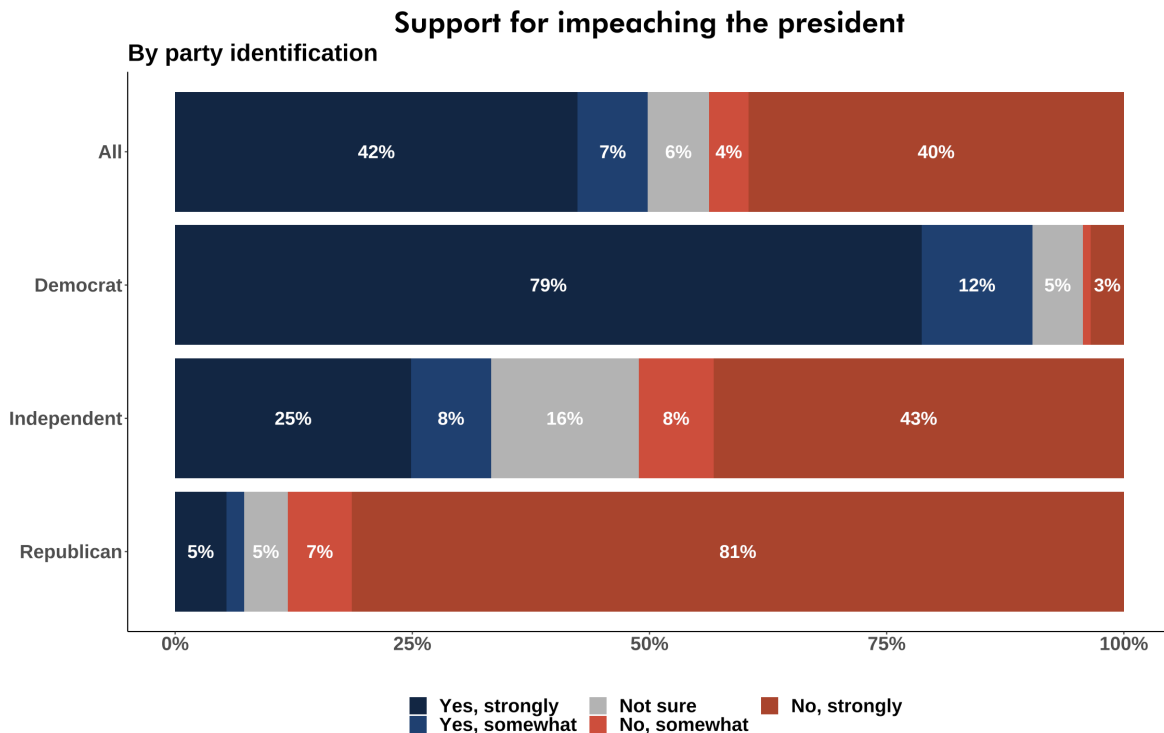
- <1> Yes, strongly
- <2> Yes, somewhat
- <3> No, strongly
- <4> No, somewhat
- <5 fixed> Not sure

Impeaching Trump is currently popular on net, with 49 percent of voters supporting impeachment and removal and 44 percent opposing it. We found a net level of support (5 percentage points) slightly higher than [other recent polling on the subject](#), which has impeachment supported by about 2 points on net, but this difference is not statistically distinguishable from the trendline.

Unsurprisingly, partisanship is the strongest determinant of support for, or opposition to, impeachment.

In a separate item, we asked:

The House of Representatives is conducting an inquiry to determine whether or not to draft and vote on articles of impeachment against President Trump. Do you [support or oppose/oppose or support] the current impeachment inquiry?

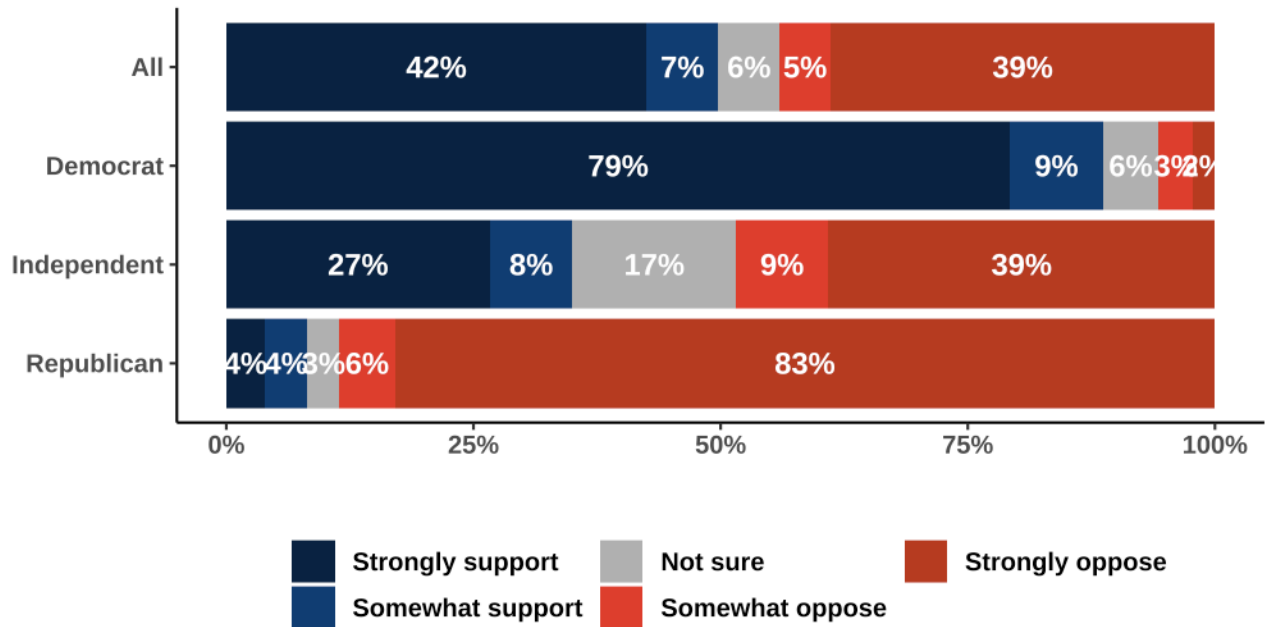


Congress has the power to impeach and remove a President for any high crimes and misdemeanors that are considered disqualifying of the office. Right now, do you believe President Trump should be impeached and removed from office?

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Support for the impeachment inquiry

By party identification



The House of Representatives is conducting an inquiry to determine whether or not to draft and vote on articles of impeachment against President Trump. Do you [support or oppose] the current impeachment inquiry?

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The results on this item were almost identical to those asked in the initial impeachment ask. Forty-nine percent of voters support and 44 percent oppose the inquiry itself, mirroring the result for those who believe Trump should be impeached. While there are minor differences in the share of voters who support the inquiry and support impeachment itself, they are not statistically distinguishable from zero across the partisan spectrum.

There is variation, however, in what voters perceive to be a good reason to expand the impeachment inquiry. If voters reported that they somewhat or strongly supported the inquiry, we asked a follow-up question on if the inquiry should focus explicitly on Ukraine, or if it should expand to cover a range of alleged crimes. For the 49 percent of voters who somewhat or strongly reported supported the inquiry, we asked:

And even if it's not exactly right, which of the following statements comes closer to your point of view?

<1> The impeachment inquiry should focus solely to Trump's actions related to Ukraine

<2> The impeachment inquiry should focus on a range of alleged high crimes committed by Trump

<3> Not sure

The following chart shows how voters feel about the possibility of expanding the inquiry to cover other possible acts of malfeasance by the president. Among the 54 percent of voters who support the inquiry or were unsure how they felt, slightly over three quarters of them believe the inquiry should cover a range of crimes. **In total, this implies that about 42 percent of voters**

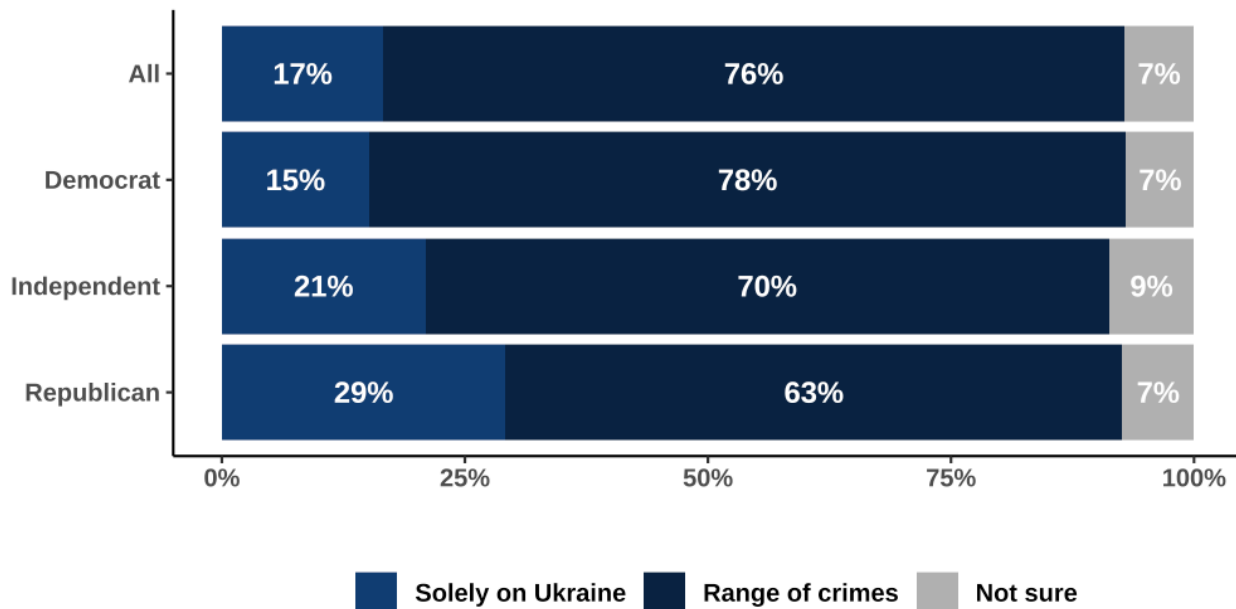
support expanding the inquiry, about 9 percent want the inquiry to focus explicitly on Ukraine, about 3 percent of voters support the current inquiry but are unsure how they feel about whether it should expand, and 44 percent do not support the inquiry.

After gauging voters' attitudes toward the inquiry, we asked all respondents about different reasons why one might support impeaching the president. By a narrow margin, the most popular reason to support impeachment pertains to Trump's corruption as relates receiving payments from foreign governments -- a violation of the emoluments clause of the Constitution. We asked

Would you [support or oppose] impeaching Donald Trump and removing him from office on the basis of the corrupt use of the presidency to enrich himself by seeking and accepting payments from foreign governments and taxpayer funds through his hotels and other businesses in violation of the Constitution?

This motivation to impeach the president, part of the original reasoning to open the inquiry in the first place, earned the support of about 52 percent of voters. This argument drew the support of fully about one in nine Republicans as well.

Support for scope of the impeachment inquiry
By party identification, among voters who support the inquiry



And even if it's not exactly right, which of the following statements comes closer to your point of view?

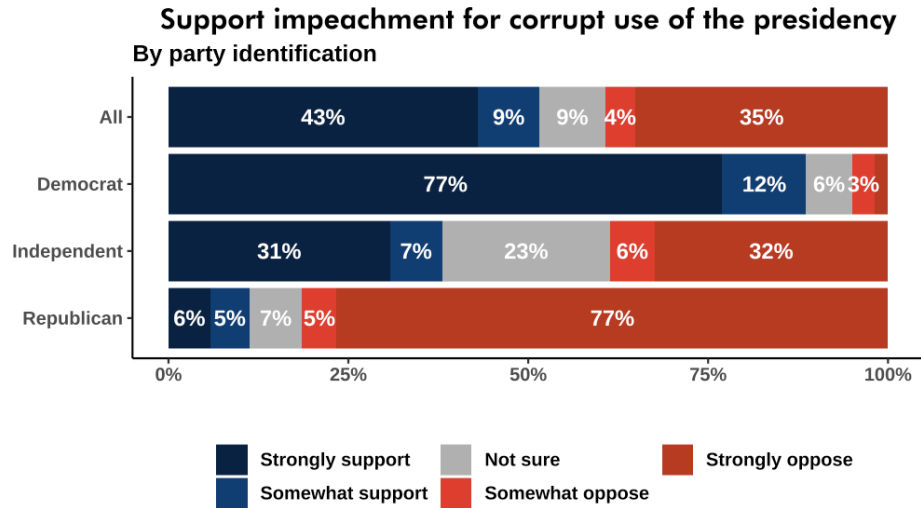
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We found the same number by asking about corruption related to foreign governments and election interference, such as the kind Trump said he solicited from Ukraine. We next asked:

Would you [support or oppose] impeaching Donald Trump and removing him from office on the basis of conduct related to soliciting or pressuring foreign

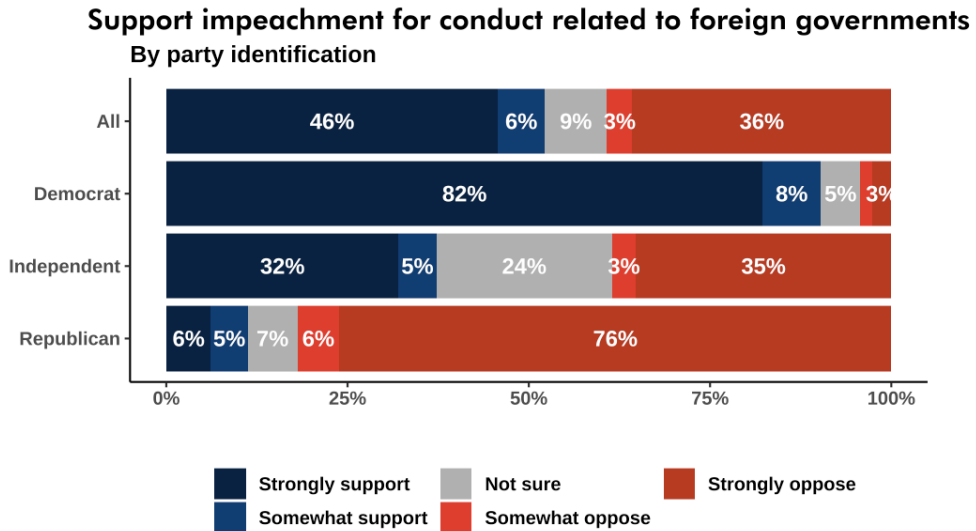
governments to interfere in our elections on his behalf?

Fifty-two percent of voters support impeachment on these grounds, with 39 percent opposed. Just as with the other corruption item, one in nine Republicans and 37 percent of independents support impeachment on these grounds.



Would you [support or oppose] impeaching Donald Trump and removing him from office on the basis of the corrupt use of the presidency to enrich himself by seeking and accepting payments from foreign governments and taxpayer funds through his hotels and other businesses in violation of the Constitution?

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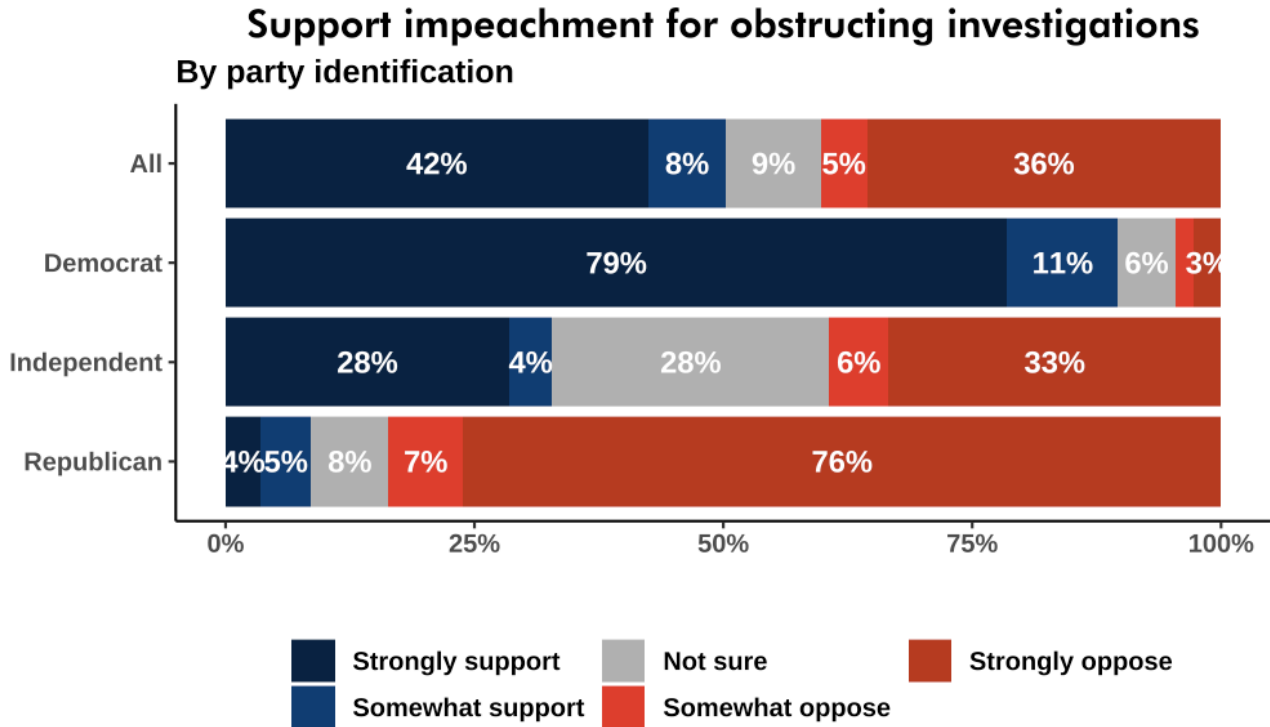
Would you [support or oppose] impeaching Donald Trump and removing him from office on the basis of conduct related to soliciting or pressuring foreign governments to interfere in our elections on his behalf?

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Next, we asked voters:

Would you [support or oppose] impeaching Donald Trump and removing him from office on the basis of obstructing investigations into his misconduct and interfering in the oversight activities of Congress?

Similar to the prior question, a majority of voters support impeaching the president for obstructing the existing inquiry, with 50 percent supporting impeachment on these grounds, though support for the inquiry on this basis had lower overall support among Republicans and independents.



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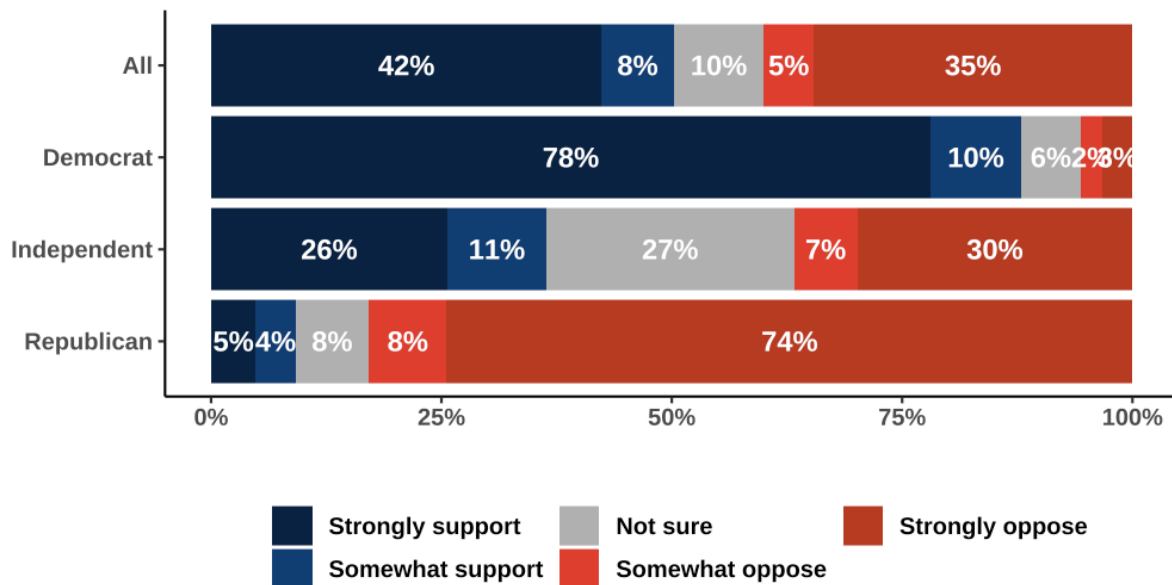
The results remained consistent when we asked voters about Trump’s plan to target his enemies, which had a similar narrative thrust to the argument about Trump soliciting foreign election interference. Next, we asked voters:

Would you [support or oppose] impeaching Donald Trump and removing him from office on the basis

of directing law enforcement and federal agencies to target, investigate, or retaliate against political adversaries and critics or members of the press?

Half of voters, including about nine in ten Democrats, almost four in ten independents, and one in eleven Republicans support impeaching Trump on this basis.

Support impeachment for Trump targeting his enemies By party identification



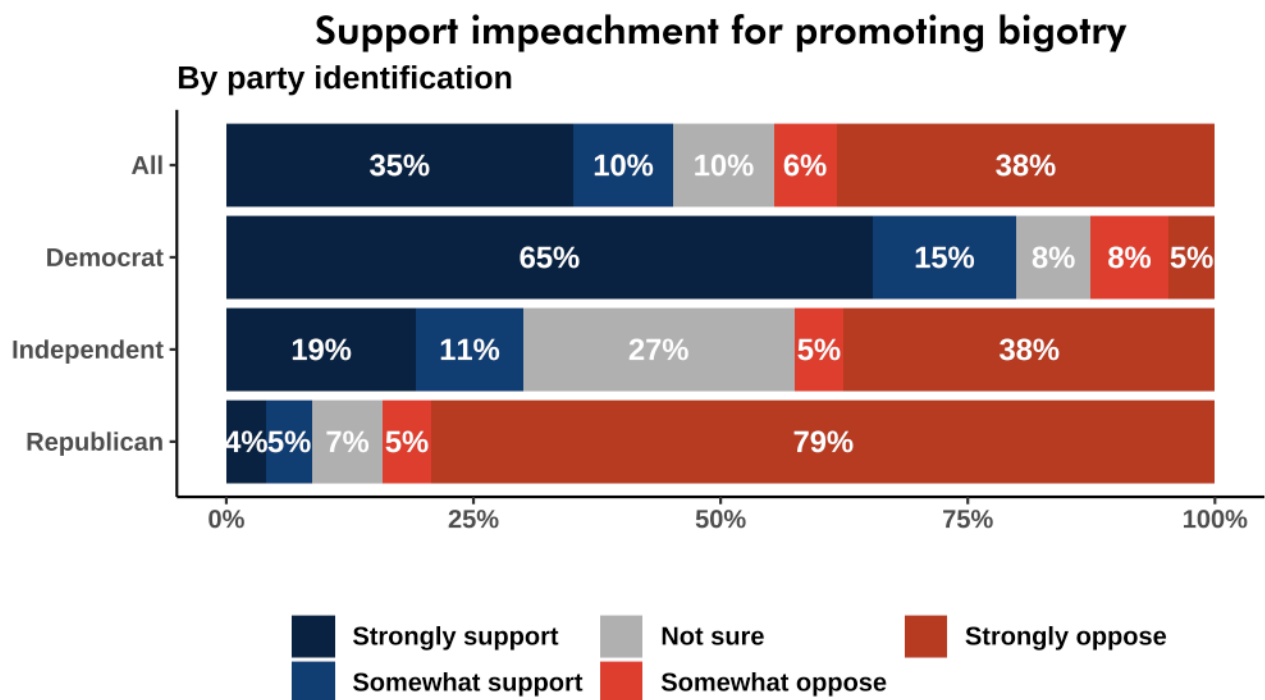
Would you [support or oppose] impeaching Donald Trump and removing him from office on the basis of directing law enforcement and federal agencies to target, investigate, or retaliate against political adversaries and critics or members of the press?

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While the media narrative around impeachment has focused almost exclusively on the question of Ukraine and the “quid pro quo,” we also tested support for impeachment on a variety of other grounds. These included Trump’s history of statements promoting violence against immigrants and minorities. For example, on the issue of Trump’s bigoted views and statements, we asked:

Would you [support or oppose] impeaching Donald Trump and removing him from office for promoting bigotry, discrimination, and hostility, undermining equal protection under the law, and inciting violence on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin?

Voters are somewhat less supportive of this reasoning. Support for the inquiry drops to 45 in this case, with opposition rising to 44 percent. Support drops to three in ten among independents, and to fewer than one in twelve among Republican voters.

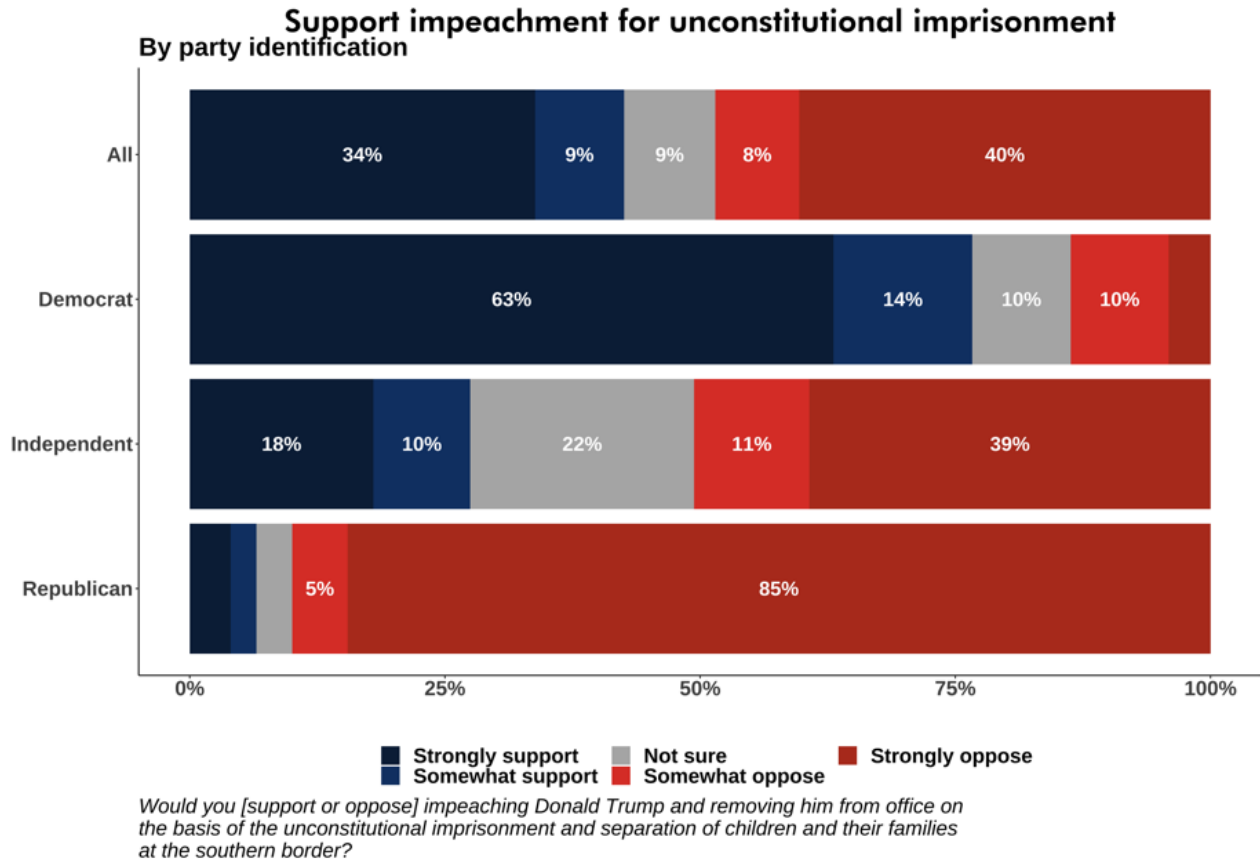


Would you [support or oppose] impeaching Donald Trump and removing him from office for promoting bigotry, discrimination, and hostility, undermining equal protection under the law, and inciting violence on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin?

Similarly, voters do not support impeachment on the basis of the border crisis. We asked respondents,

Would you [support or oppose] impeaching Donald Trump and removing him from office on the basis of the unconstitutional imprisonment and separation of children and their families at the southern border?

Overall, the current stated purpose of the impeachment inquiry is roughly the most popular, with other reasons being less popular. The effects of expanding the inquiry are ambiguous in some cases but, on net, there is perhaps surprisingly good support for the inquiry on grounds not related to the current drumbeat of the inquiry.



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On net, voters actively disfavor impeachment under these circumstances, with 43 percent of voters supporting and 48 percent opposing the inquiry in this case.

Conclusion

Overall, voters are supportive of the impeachment inquiry. They are most supportive of the inquiry on the basis of foreign interference and financial malfeasance by President Trump, but there are also significant levels of support for reasons to impeach the president unrelated to the current inquiry. Attitudes on the inquiry are beginning to crystallize, with voters not being more or less likely to move with respect to the inquiry on the basis of commonly suspected demographic or political factors.

Methods statement

On behalf of Data for Progress, YouGov Blue fielded a national survey on YouGov's online panel on a sample that included 1,216 US voters. The survey fielded from November 9 through November 11, 2019. The results were weighted to be representative of the population of US voters by age, race/ethnicity, sex, education, US Census region, and 2016 presidential vote choice.