

Clinton Still Doing a Good Job, Not a Popular Person

For more information, contact Andrew Smith, UNH Survey Center, at 603-862-4367. Results also will be available at the center Web site, <http://www.unh.edu/ipssr/survey-center/index.html>

By [Carmelle Druchniak](#)
UNH News Bureau

DURHAM, N.H. -- President Bill Clinton is thought to be doing a good job as President by New Hampshire voters. However, his personal favorability ratings remain low.

These findings are based on the latest WMUR / CNN Poll, conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. The WMUR / CNN Poll is sponsored by WMUR TV, Channel 9 in Manchester, New Hampshire and CNN. The poll was conducted Sept. 5-11, with a random sample of 702 likely New Hampshire primary voters interviewed by telephone. In 95 out of 100 cases, the statewide estimate will be accurate to plus or minus 3.7 percent.

As the summer ends and the U.S. economy continues to hum, President Bill Clinton continues to get high approval ratings for his job as President. In the latest WMUR / CNN Poll, 60% of New Hampshire likely voters say they approve of the way Clinton is handling his job as President, 39% disapprove, and 1% are neutral. His approval remains unchanged since the May WMUR / CNN Poll when 61% approved of the job he was doing as President and 36% disapproved.

But these high job performance numbers don't mean New Hampshire voters like President Clinton as a person, says Survey Center Director Andrew Smith. When asked if they have a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of Clinton, only 36% of New Hampshire voters say they have a favorable opinion of him, 57% have an unfavorable opinion, and 6% are neutral. These numbers are also unchanged since the May WMUR / CNN Poll when 38% had a favorable opinion of Clinton and 54% had an unfavorable opinion of him.

"President Clinton looks to leave a mixed legacy as he heads toward his final year in office -- high approval for keeping the economy healthy, but a stained personal reputation as a result of impeachment and numerous administration scandals," Smith points out.

The strong economy has kept Clinton's unfavorable numbers from damaging his job approval rating. Seventy-two percent of New Hampshire voters say they approve of the way President Clinton is handling the economy, 20% disapprove, and 8% are neutral. Again, these figures are unchanged since May when 74% approved of Clinton's handling of the economy and 18% disapproved.

Currently, 59% of New Hampshire likely voters say they approve of the way President Clinton is handling foreign affairs, 37% disapprove, and 4% are neutral. These figures are up somewhat since May when 54% approved of his handling of foreign affairs and 41% disapproved. The successful conclusion of NATO's campaign in Kosovo may be responsible for the increase. However, Clinton's foreign affairs approval ratings remain significantly lower than his economic approval ratings.

September 14, 1999

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