

President Clinton Relies on Public Opinion Polls

<https://archives.nbclearn.com/portal/site/k-12/browse/?cuecard=3170>



General Information

Source:	NBC Nightly News	Resource Type:	Video News Report
Creator:	Tom Brokaw/Claire Shipman	Copyright:	NBCUniversal Media, LLC.
Event Date:	01/19/1999	Copyright Date:	1999
Air/Publish Date:	01/29/1999	Clip Length	00:02:59

Description

Whether choosing a vacation spot or determining how voters would react to policy proposals, President Bill Clinton has relied heavily upon public opinion polls. Now with the impeachment battle, Clinton's approval rating has never been higher, but can it protect the President from losing his job? This report includes an interview with Dick Morris, the president's former adviser and pollster.

Keywords

Polls, President, Bill Clinton, Use of Polls, Presidency, Strategy, Approval Ratings, Job Approval, Impeachment, Monica Lewinsky, Presidential Vacations, Social Security, Dick Morris, Health Care Reform, Scandals, Communications, Policy, Pollsters, Voter Priorities, Public Supports, Balanced Budget, Economy, Harold Ickes, Fundraising, Campaign Finance

Citation

MLA

"President Clinton Relies on Public Opinion Polls." Claire Shipman, correspondent. *NBC Nightly News*. NBCUniversal Media. 29 Jan. 1999. *NBC Learn*. Web. 20 March 2015

APA

Shipman, C. (Reporter), & Brokaw, T. (Anchor). 1999, January 29. President Clinton Relies on Public Opinion Polls. [Television series episode]. *NBC Nightly News*. Retrieved from <https://archives.nbclearn.com/portal/site/k-12/browse/?cuecard=3170>

CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE

"President Clinton Relies on Public Opinion Polls" *NBC Nightly News*, New York, NY: NBC Universal, 01/29/1999. Accessed Fri Mar 20 2015 from NBC Learn: <https://archives.nbclearn.com/portal/site/k-12/browse/?cuecard=3170>

Transcript

President Clinton Relies on Public Opinion Polls

TOM BROKAW, anchor:

President today was more like a flashback to 1992 when his campaign motto was, "It's the economy, stupid." Joining me now is NBC's Claire Shipman who's at the White House. Claire?

CLAIRE SHIPMAN reporting:

Tom, the President's message today: the economy and, in fact, anything but impeachment as part of a highly effective strategy with some extraordinary results this year.

President BILL CLINTON: This morning we received more good news about the American economy.

SHIPMAN: A rosy scenario today for the nation's mayors from a President who's poll numbers have never been higher, and likewise there's never been a President who's higher on public opinion polls.

Mr. STUART ROTHENBERG (Political Analyst): He's positioned himself where ever the public is, wherever the public wants to go.

SHIPMAN: When polls show that voters liked camping and riding, Bill Clinton vacationed in Wyoming. When polls showed the public wanted the President to ignore the Lewinsky scandal and do his job...

President CLINTON: I should be doing my job for the country.

SHIPMAN: Dick Morris, the President's former advisor and pollster, looked at some of Clinton's recent performances with NBC.

President CLINTON: (From tape) We must save Social Security for the 21st century.

Mr. DICK MORRIS: Now, save Social Security, or later keep Social Security sound, the "s" words. That absolutely dominated this speech.

SHIPMAN: Mentioned more than 20 times in the State of the Union speech and at four separate Presidential events since then, because, Morris says, polls show it's a top priority for Americans. The

polling strategy hasn't always worked. Clinton pushed sweeping healthcare reform and watched his popularity plummet to 44 percent. But by seizing on other popular ideas, like the balanced budget, and by talking jobs and education while Congress dwells on impeachment, Clinton has pushed his numbers to an all time high of 68 percent.

How healthy do you think it is for a President to rely on polls to—to come up with his policy?

Mr. MORRIS: President Clinton doesn't use polls to determine what to be for. When he's for something that's unpopular, he uses polls to figure out how to survive the experience.

SHIPMAN: But that survival instinct, many say, can also prove dangerous. A private poll early in the scandal from Morris may have encouraged this denial.

President CLINTON: I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky.

SHIPMAN: Now that was not one of his best performances, and it's come back to haunt him over and over again.

Mr. MORRIS: Yeah. What we're looking at here is the intersection of polling and perjury.

SHIPMAN: And the danger today, overconfidence, a belief that high poll numbers can protect the President on Capitol Hill. They certainly didn't offer much protection against an impeachment vote. And Tom, tonight there is some good news for the White House on another subject. Attorney General Janet Reno has ruled against appointing another independent counsel. This independent counsel would have investigated whether former Deputy Chief of Staff Harold Ickes may have lied before a Senate committee. And the fear here was that that investigation could have broadened to include the entire campaign finance scandal. Tom?

BROKAW: Claire Shipman at the White House tonight. Thanks very much.