

Public Opinion Poll

Against Nixon's Pardon

On Monday, September 9, and Wednesday, September 11, over WMCX-FM 88.1 radio, an independent listener survey was conducted by Bob Williams and John Giase, to determine public reaction to the absolute, unconditional pardon, granted by President Ford to former president Richard M. Nixon.

Though most of the WMCX callers were typically intent on making song requests, rather than replying to the survey, twenty-six listeners did respond to our question. The sample was limited, but the trend was evident. Only three listeners felt that President Ford's pardon was justified, while an overwhelming twenty-three disapproved of his action. In all, fewer than 12% of those surveyed favored the pardon.

Of all the reasons for their disapproval of the pardon, the one most given by our listeners was that "Nixon is just like anybody else" or that "everybody else got punished, why not him also?" Many callers felt that certain men in power are above the law. One said that the point of the whole Watergate investigation is "that no man is above the law, but by pardoning Nixon, Ford was nullifying that point."

Another caller felt that

was wrong, but since it was already done, his subordinates involved in Watergate should also be pardoned. Thus, he felt a blanket pardon was the only fair solution.

A few respondents felt that the pardon was the completion of a deal between Ford and Nixon that was begun when Nixon selected Ford as his vice-president last October. One caller felt there was no basis to this because Ford "is a decent man and wants to do the right thing." She felt that the "scandal was bad enough" and that Ford "wants to clean up the mess."

Favoring the pardon, two callers specifically felt that covering up the Watergate scandal did not justify further punishment

of the former president after his resignation. One felt Nixon has suffered enough and to bring him to trial would lessen the respect Americans have for the presidency. She said that those subordinates of Nixon who were involved in the break-in deserve punishment, but those who only covered up should receive the same pardon that the former president received.