

navigator*

Issue #2, May 2018

PAUL J. MANAFORT, JR. and
RICHARD W. GATES III,
Defendants.

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COLUMBIA COURT
CRIMINAL NO.
(18 U.S.C. §§ 2, 371, 98
1001(a), 1956(h), and 3553
U.S.C. §§ 612(a), 618(a)(1)
618(a)(2); 28 U.S.C. § 2461
§§ 5314 and 5322(b))

Grand Jury for the District of Columbia

INDICTMENT

A Guide for Advocates

What Americans Think and How to Talk to Them About It

Welcome to NAVIGATOR — a project designed to better understand the American public's views on the issues of the day and help advocates, elected officials, and other interested parties understand the language and messaging needed to make and win key policy arguments. This edition features findings from a national online survey of 1,017 registered voters conducted May 11-16, 2018. Two hundred (200) additional interviews were conducted among self-identified independents.

Every month, we pick a few topics for exploration. The topics we select aren't meant to cover every issue area facing the progressive community, but rather to give actionable advice on how to talk about the issues that are already central to the national discussion. This month we focused on:

Topic 1: A special counsel investigation reality check: Less about Russia, more about indictments.

What are they hiding? That's the question Americans want answered, especially when told the investigation has already led to numerous indictments – something many people don't actually know.

Topic 2: The cabinet scandals: A waste of taxpayer dollars.

Most Americans do not know their Pruitt from their Mnuchin, but private jets and honeymoon travel are widely viewed as unacceptable.

Topic 3: Congressional oversight: "Party over country" is the big problem.

When it comes to oversight over the Trump administration – on both the investigation and the Cabinet – the public is most troubled by congressional Republicans putting party over country.

Topic 4: On #MeToo, Americans say "both" – as in, both parties should lead. And women across party lines are paying closer attention than men.

Sexual misconduct by people in power is a problem for both parties, Americans agree on that. But party and gender drive real differences.

Americans want the investigation to continue, but are more interested in indictments and crimes than in rehashing 2016.

For many Americans, the cover up is the crime. When we ask Americans what this investigation *is about*, they say it's about Russian interference and collusion rather than obstruction of justice and cover-up by a 14-point margin. But when we ask them what **concerns them most** about the investigation, it's the potential for cover-up or obstruction of justice that worries people most (by 7 points overall and 12 points with independents).

Americans want the special counsel investigation to continue rather than be shut down, by a 55% to 35% margin. Even among whites without a college degree – 56% of whom approve of the president – just 44% believe the investigation should be shut down. However, there are still warning signs when it comes to public support for the investigation. The public is divided over how Mueller has handled it, and when President Trump and Republicans argue to shut it down, some counter-arguments are more persuasive than others.

Americans are more persuaded when it is pointed out that the investigation has yielded 22 indictments or guilty pleas, or when it is argued Trump should let the investigation continue if he's done nothing wrong and that no one is above the law – not even the President of the United States. Importantly, these arguments are considered persuasive by two-thirds of independents. It's less convincing to counter that ending the investigation would encourage more Russian meddling, or to simply appeal to the credentials of the investigator, special counsel Robert Mueller.

What is Trump hiding? If he's done nothing wrong, let the investigation finish.

This is powerful language that beats "it's time to end it" argument by a huge margin.

Whom do you agree with more?

Those who say that nobody is above the law, not even the President of the United States. If President Trump has nothing to hide and has done nothing wrong, then he should just let the investigation finish.

Those who say that it's been over a year since the 2016 election and it is time to move on — if Mueller won't finish the investigation soon, Congress or the President should move to end it themselves.



22 indictments or guilty pleas.

Showing results matters, and relates back to the argument above. If Trump has done nothing wrong, then why have there been so many indictments and guilty pleas?

Those who say we should let the investigation finish because it has already made significant discoveries — there have been 22 indictments or guilty pleas, including Trump's former campaign chairman, who has been indicted for "conspiracy against the United States of America."

Those who say that it's been over a year since the 2016 election and it is time to move on — if Mueller won't finish the investigation soon, Congress or the President should move to end it themselves.



Centering the argument on Russian meddling and Mueller is less effective.

Those who say the investigation is about Russian government interference into the 2016 presidential election — abandoning it would be letting the Russians win and would encourage them to do it again.

Those who say that it's been over a year since the 2016 election and it is time to move on — if Mueller won't finish the investigation soon, Congress or the President should move to end it themselves.



Those who say Robert Mueller is a decorated war veteran, a former FBI Director, an experienced investigator and a registered Republican — he should be trusted to finish the investigation.

Those who say that it's been over a year since the 2016 election and it is time to move on — if Mueller won't finish the investigation soon, Congress or the President should move to end it themselves.



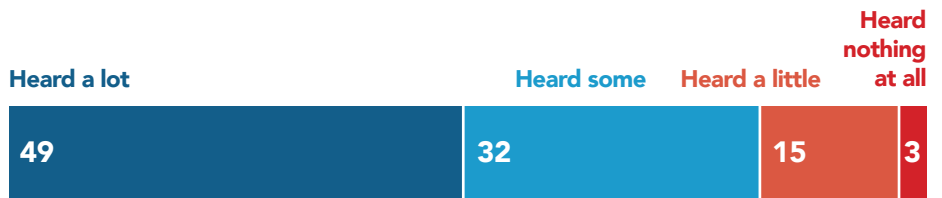
Known unknowns

It may feel as if news about the investigation has reached saturation, and in one way, that's true: 97% of Americans have heard at least a little about it, and half have heard "a lot." **But despite the indictments and guilty pleas by some of Trump's top campaign aides, a majority of Americans answer "no" when asked whether the investigation has uncovered any crimes.** For those trying to connect with Americans about the investigation and its future, an important first step is reminding them it has already resulted in serious criminal charges for people very close to Trump.

Half the story.

Eighty-one percent have heard more than a little bit about this investigation, but half that number appear aware of – or make the connection to – the numerous indictments and guilty pleas issued so far.

As you may know there is currently an investigation going on right now into Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign and any Russian government involvement in the 2016 election. How much have you heard about this investigation?



To the best of your knowledge, has the investigation uncovered any crimes?



Lifting Robert Mueller above the fray

Robert Mueller is a polarizing figure – just like most other people and institutions in Washington. Mueller's favorability rating is mixed, and the public is split on whether he has handled the investigation well. But he has been under persistent attack by some on the right, and as the face of the investigation, progressives need to counter with validating characterizations of him. The most effective ways to describe him are as an "experienced former federal prosecutor" and to depolarize him by reminding the public he served as FBI Director under both George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Notably, his cross-partisan credentials are more effective than calling Mueller a "lifelong Republican" – even among Republicans.

Which of the following makes you most confident in Robert Mueller's ability to conduct a fair investigation?

Experienced former federal investigator and prosecutor

39

Chosen to be FBI Director under both George W. Bush and Barack Obama

36

Led the FBI in the years after 9/11

15

Decorated US Marine veteran who fought in Vietnam

10

Lifelong Republican

7

None of these

37

What troubles Americans most about the Trump Cabinet scandals – and government oversight failures – is the waste of taxpayer money.

Scott Pruitt. Tom Price. David Shulkin. Steve Mnuchin. Ben Carson. The scandals are adding up, and Americans say the part of it that bothers them most is that the price tag is adding up too.

When it comes to these scandals, concern about wasted taxpayer money outstrips other concerns.

When getting into specifics (but without naming names), many of the stories that strike Americans as beyond politics-as-usual involve members of the Trump Administration using public money as their personal tab, especially in relation to personal travel. There does appear to be a distinction between use of taxpayer dollars for clearly personal purposes – like a honeymoon or a vacation in Europe – and taking personal favors like a discount rental rate or a ticket to Wimbledon.

Scott Pruitt is making a name for himself.

No single cabinet official is yet the poster child for spending tax dollars on personal items, but EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt starts to come close. Twenty-seven percent of Americans cite Pruitt as the Trump Administration figure whose actions have been most concerning, followed by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin at 15% and HUD Secretary Ben Carson at 10%.

Below is a list of some specific behavior in news stories involving members of the Trump Administration. Please indicate how much each one would concern you if true.

- Completely unacceptable
- Concerning but nothing new in Washington
- Not concerning

Requesting a government plane to go on a honeymoon after getting married



Taking a \$120,000 taxpayer-funded trip to Europe with a spouse



Purchasing \$31,000 dining set using taxpayer dollars



Spending over \$1 million in taxpayer-funded travel in six months



Bypassing official processes to give more than \$80,000 in raises to two of his top aides



Spending \$139,000 of taxpayer money on new office doors



Spending \$43,000 of taxpayer money on a soundproof phone booth in his office



Taking taxpayer-funded charter flights and helicopters for short trips and failing to keep proper records of travel



Spending \$168,000 in taxpayer money on charter, military, and first class flights over the course of a year in office



Renting a condo from a powerful lobbyist couple for \$50 per night, below market rate



Accepting tickets to the Wimbledon tennis match as a gift



Trump Scandals, The Investigation, The Cabinet: What does Congress have to do with it?

Americans want oversight over the Trump Administration to take place, but most are disinclined to believe Republicans can offer it. Whether it's the Mueller investigation or holding the Trump Administration accountable in general, most Americans have little faith in congressional Republicans.

Do you think Republicans in Congress have handled the [special counsel] investigation well so far, or not?



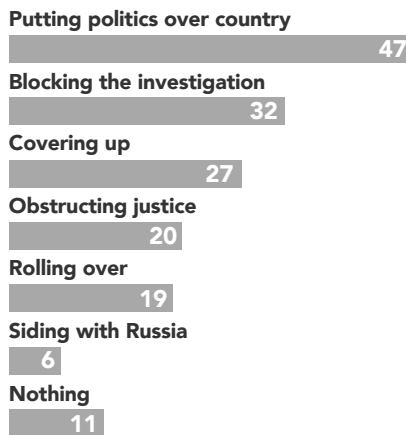
Do you approve or disapprove of the job Republicans in Congress are doing in terms of holding the Trump Administration accountable?



Party over country

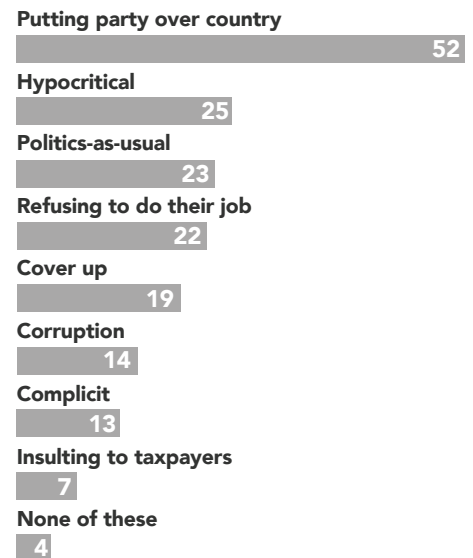
At the heart of Americans' frustration with accountability and oversight is a sense some in Congress are putting party interests ahead of their duties to the country. This is true for Cabinet scandals and the Mueller investigation.

Which of these words or phrases best describe what troubles you most about the way Republicans in Congress have handled the [special counsel] investigation?



This question was asked among the 58% of the sample who believe Republicans have not handled the Mueller investigation well.

Which of the following best describes why you disapprove of the way Republicans have conducted oversight and held the Trump Administration accountable?



This question was asked among the 53% of the sample who disapprove of how Republicans have done in terms of holding the Trump Administration accountable.

What else are they hiding?

Pushing the idea that politicians are covering up secrets shouldn't be limited to how we talk about the Mueller investigation. It extends into all forms of oversight of the Trump administration and Congress. Public trust in government and elected officials is extremely low, as research elsewhere has repeatedly shown. As such, our survey also found it effective to allude to "cover up" language in calling for more accountability:

*That the Republicans are blocking these investigations and refusing to do real oversight over the Trump Administration because Republicans in Congress are **guilty of some of the same abuses themselves.***

*That the Republicans are blocking these investigations and refusing to do real oversight over the Trump Administration because **they think it is more important to protect the same wealthy corporate donors who fund their campaigns and have ties to the Trump Administration.***

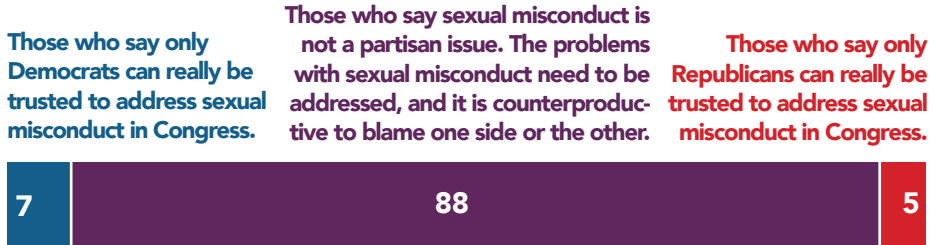
Americans do not see sexual misconduct as a partisan issue, but that doesn't mean they trust each party equally.

Last month, we found “using public money to settle workplace disputes, including sexual harassment” ranked second on a long list of different ways members of Congress might misuse their power. It surprised us how prominent #MeToo was on this list – and that led us to dig deeper this month. What drives these concerns, and do they apply to both parties’ leaders equally?

It turns out Americans see one party as most culpable, but would prefer both act responsibly. Americans do not see this as a partisan issue that can only be solved by one political party. When forced to choose, they do see it as a problem of sexual misconduct and lack of accountability more closely aligned with Trump and other elected Republicans – especially Trump himself.

If progressives are going to credibly lead this fight, they will need to meet voters where they are, and the data suggests this means acknowledging members of Congress on both sides of the aisle have real work to do, starting in the U.S. Capitol Building.

Whom do you agree with more?



You will now see a series of questions about sexual misconduct and Congress. For each, please tell me which one is more likely to take the action described.

Which is more likely to ignore the problem of sexual misconduct?



Which is more likely to cover up sexual misconduct by members of their own party?



Which is more likely to create workplace environments hostile to women?



Electing more women

For many Americans, there is an obvious solution to rampant sexual misconduct among public officials: elect more women. Democratic women and independent women are particularly likely to see harassment as a widespread problem and not just a few bad apples, and majorities of both these groups think 1) too many men are in power and 2) want to elect more women as a result.

There are clear divisions by both gender and party. For example, majorities of Democratic women (71%), Democratic men (59%) and independent women (54%) say they are more likely to support women for elected office as a result of sexual misconduct among elected officials. But among independent men (32%), Republican women (23%), and Republican men (18%), the numbers are far lower.

Another difference: while Democrats tend to see sexual misconduct among members of Congress as more of a hypocrisy issue (politicians talk about upholding family values, but they don't live it) Republicans tend to see it as a corruption issue (politicians are settling sexual harassment disputes in secret, and leaving taxpayers with the bill).

The numbers among Democrats should come as no surprise to those monitoring election results this year, but the numbers among independent women are striking – suggesting energy for women candidates may translate to elections this fall among a critical swing constituency.

The nature of the problem: Whom do you agree with more?

- Total
- Democrat Women
- Independent Women

Those who say stories of sexual misconduct among elected officials are evidence of a few bad apples, not a widespread occurrence.

Those who say stories of sexual misconduct among elected officials are evidence of what happens when too many men are in positions of power.



How to frame it

As with the Trump Cabinet scandals, one of the most troubling aspects of sexual harassment in Congress is the use of public money to pay for the settlements. Framing the settlements as a misuse of taxpayer money will connect with Americans.

As for possible solutions – Americans want members of Congress to get their own house in order. Establishing “internal zero tolerance policies that punish members who face credible allegations” is a popular step, as is publicizing sexual harassment disputes.

Which of the following concerns you most about the issue of sexual misconduct in Congress?





Bonus Points

One to watch: Michael Cohen

- In today's polarized politics, most public figures have a floor of support that reflects the partisan die-hards who will support pretty much anyone on their side of the aisle. Not so for Trump's longtime personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, who boasts a dismal rating even among Republicans: just 13% favorable to 43% unfavorable. With the general public, it's even worse at 7% favorable to 50% unfavorable. He may not be the best known of Trump's associates, but he may have the fewest defenders.

CorruptionWatch

- Donald Trump campaigned on draining the D.C. "swamp" of corruption, but by a 60% to 40% margin Americans believe he's doing just the opposite – and bringing even more corruption to Washington.
- The sentiment defies pure partisanship, with two thirds (66%) of independents saying Trump is worsening corruption rather than fixing it.

Potential allies on guns: parents

- While the leaders of the post-Parkland push on gun violence prevention have been students, their parents are also an important constituency.
- According to the latest Navigator survey, parents with children under 25 years old and non-parents are equally likely to identify as Democrats (42%), and parents are slightly more likely to identify as Republicans (36%, compared to 34% for non-parents). But parents are much less sympathetic to the NRA: 65% have an unfavorable opinion of the organization, and just 28% have a favorable opinion of the organization. For non-parents, the split is 38% favorable to 52% unfavorable.

Words to use about Trump

- People have a lot to say about the president. This month's survey dug into different frames for Trump to tease out the specific words to use when making a critique.

	It's better to say his behavior is...	Rather than...
When talking about security...	Dangerous, Reckless	Unsafe
When undercutting Trump's populism...	For the wealthy	Out of touch, Not for you
When talking about personality...	Egotistical, Narcissistic, Childish, Embarrassing	Selfish, Offensive
When describing his fitness for office...	Incompetent	Ignorant, Not smart

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About Navigator

In a world where the news cycle is the length of a tweet, the messaging challenge progressives face today is more acute than ever. Our leaders often lack the real-time public-sentiment analysis to shape the best approaches to talking about the issues that matter the most. Navigator is designed to act as a consistent, flexible, responsive tool to inform policy debates. By conducting research and reliable guidance to inform allies, elected leaders, and the press, Navigator helps top leaders in Washington and grassroots leaders around the country shape the debate on the issues that matter most. Navigator is a project led by pollsters from Global Strategy Group and GBA Strategies along with an advisory committee of progressive leaders, including: Andrea Purse, The Hub Project; Arkadi Gerney, The Hub Project; Christina Reynolds, EMILY's List; Delvone Michael, Working Families; Felicia Wong, Roosevelt Institute; Mike Podhorzer, AFL-CIO; Jesse Ferguson, progressive strategist; Navin Nayak, Center for American Progress Action Fund; Nick Gourevitch, Global Strategy Group; Ron Klain, Revolution; and Stephanie Valencia, Latino Victory Project. To learn more about Navigator:

<http://navigatorresearch.org/>

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About the Study

Global Strategy Group conducted a public opinion survey among a base sample of 1,017 registered voters, along with 200 additional interviews of independents with no partisan lean, between May 11-16, 2018. The survey was conducted online recruiting respondents from multiple opt-in online panel vendors. Respondents were verified against a voter file and special care was taken to ensure that the demographic composition of our sample matched that of national registered voter population across a variety of demographic variables.