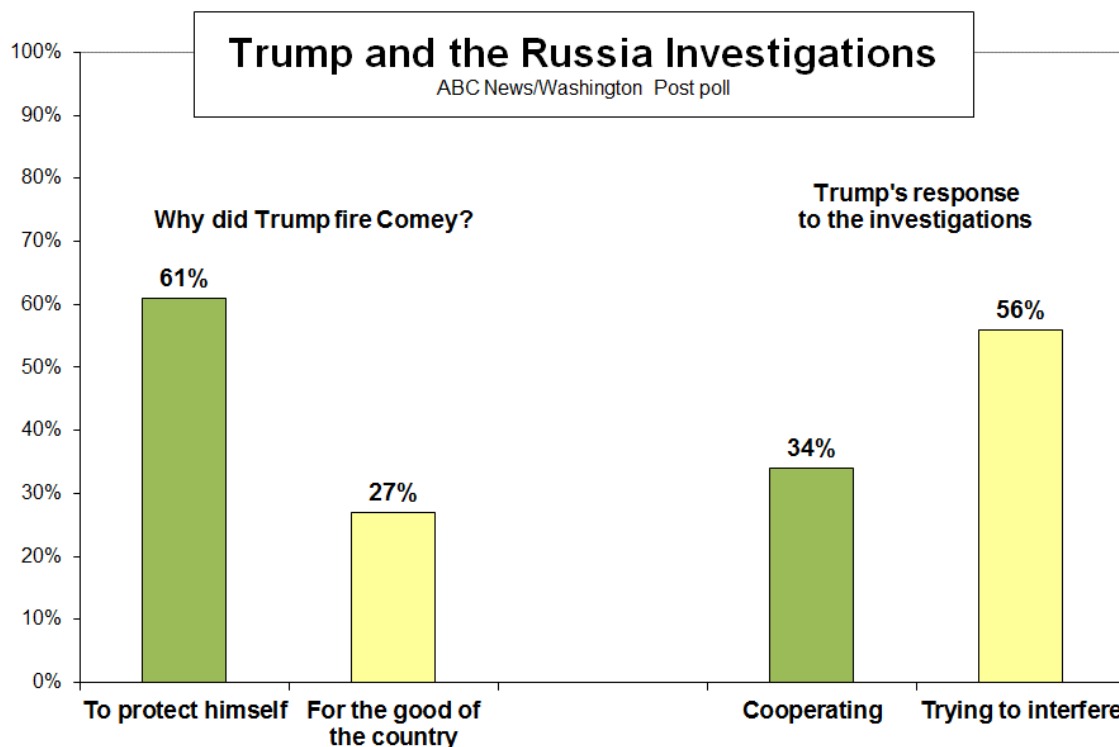


Sharp Criticism for Trump on Russia Issue; Most Say He Fired Comey to Protect Himself

Six in 10 Americans think Donald Trump fired FBI Director James Comey in order to protect himself rather than for the good of the country, and most think Trump is trying to interfere with official investigations of possible Russian influence in the 2016 election.

A broad seven in 10 in an ABC News/Washington Post poll also doubt Trump's word on the Russia issue. That said, 55 percent doubt Comey's word as well – likely a sign of his own past controversies, as well as general distrust of Washington.

With Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein testifying before the Senate Intelligence Committee today and Comey himself to do so tomorrow, the survey finds the public taking a particularly dim view of Trump in the controversy. Sixty-one percent say he ditched the director to protect himself; just 27 percent think he did it for the good of the nation.

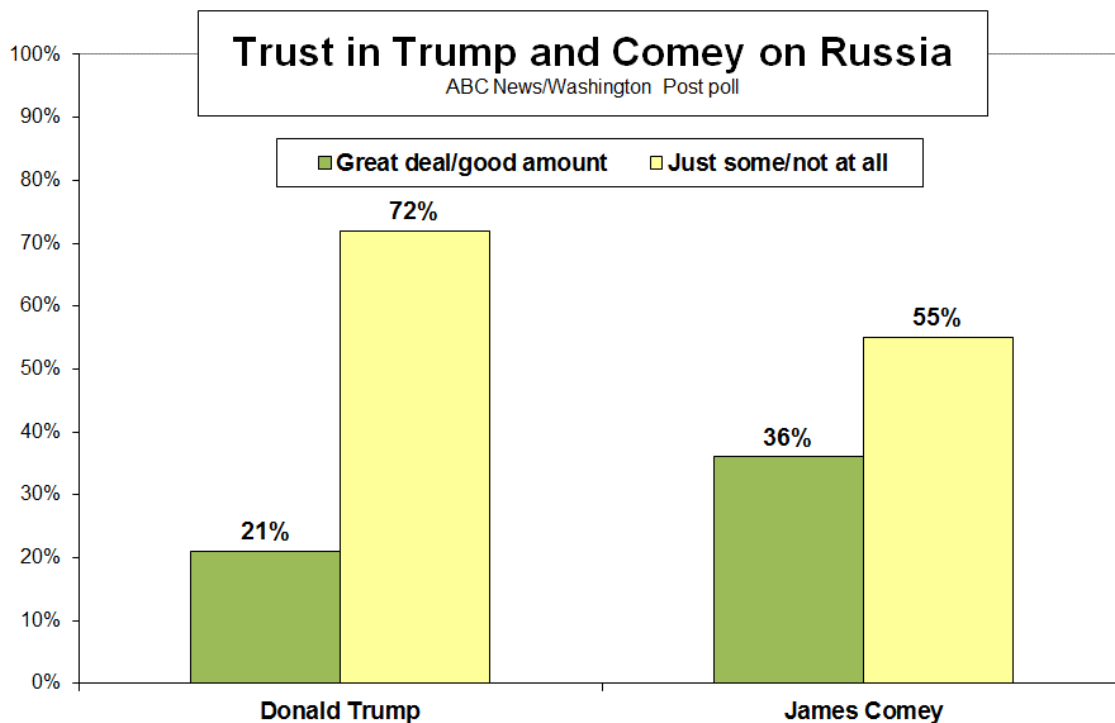


Fifty-six percent also think Trump is trying to interfere with investigations into possible Russian interference in the election, while just a third think he's cooperating. And 72 percent report just

some or no trust in what Trump says about the issue – half, none at all. Just 21 percent report a great deal or good amount of trust in what the president says about it.

Even conservatives are about twice as apt to have low trust in what Trump says about Russian interference than to have substantial trust, 60-33 percent. And in the president’s own party, Republicans split evenly on the question of trust, 48 percent expressing distrust, 45 percent, trust.

As noted, there’s also skepticism of Comey in the poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#); 55 percent have just some or no trust in what he says about possible Russian interference. That said, distrust is 17 points lower than it is for Trump, and twice as many Americans have no trust whatsoever in what Trump says on the issue (50 percent) as have no trust at all in what Comey says (25 percent).



GROUPS – Distrust of Trump is widespread; as noted, even 48 percent of Republicans express just some or no trust in what the president says about possible Russian influence in the election and related issues, as do 60 percent of conservatives, 65 percent of middle-aged and older adults, 68 percent of men and 71 percent of whites. These numbers are as high or higher in other groups.

Views that Trump fired Comey to protect himself, and is trying to interfere in the investigation, peak among Democrats, liberals, younger adults, nonwhites and women. Adults age 18 to 39, for example, are 25 points more apt than their elders to think Trump fired Comey to protect himself and 21 points more likely to doubt what the president says about possible Russian interference. Nonwhites are 20 points more likely than whites to think Trump is interfering in the investigations. Women think so more than men by 12 points.

Party lines are sharp: Eighty-eight percent of Democrats and nearly two-thirds of independents think Trump fired Comey to protect himself; 71 percent of Republicans think it was for the country’s good. And Democrats overwhelmingly think Trump is interfering with the investigation, 87-10 percent; that virtually flips among Republicans, with 77 percent saying he’s cooperating. Independents are about twice as likely to think Trump is interfering rather than cooperating.

Similarly, a steep majority of liberals (86 percent) think Trump was protecting himself in firing Comey, as do 66 percent of moderates; that declines to 38 percent of conservatives. A narrow majority of conservatives, 52 percent, think Trump’s decision was for the good of the country.

Views of Comey also are partisan, but less overwhelmingly so. Fifty-four percent of Democrats trust what he says on the Russia issue, declining to 32 percent of independents and 18 percent of Republicans; it’s 60-37-16 percent from liberals to moderates to conservatives. There’s a larger division by race on Comey than on Trump, with whites 11 points more likely than nonwhites to distrust Comey.

	Trump fired Comey		Trump is		Trust in Trump		Trust in Comey	
	To protect himself	For good of the country	Co-operating	Inter-fering	Higher	Lower	Higher	Lower
All	61%	27	34%	56	21%	72	36%	55
Dems	88	7	10	87	10	87	54	39
Reps	22	71	77	17	45	48	18	76
Inds	63	20	27	58	17	77	32	59
Cons	38	52	60	32	33	60	16	75
Mods	66	18	25	62	17	77	37	60
Libs	86	8	15	81	10	89	60	35
18-39	77	12	20	70	9	86	38	52
40+	52	34	42	49	27	65	35	57
Whites	51	35	40	50	23	71	32	59
Nonwhites	79	10	21	70	17	76	43	48
Men	55	31	39	50	25	68	41	51
Women	66	22	28	62	17	76	32	59

These results set the stage for Comey’s highly anticipated testimony Thursday: Most Americans approach what he has to say with considerable skepticism. Yet far more express deep doubts about what the president says – and about what he’s done – in the ongoing Russia controversy.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone June 2-4, 2017, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 527 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 5.0 points, including the design effect. Partisan divisions are 33-23-38 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS of Media, Pa. See details on the survey's methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Christine Filer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

Media contacts: [Heather Riley](#) or [Julie Townsend](#).

Full results follow.

1-3 previously released.

4. On another subject, just your best guess, do you think Trump fired former FBI director James Comey (in order to protect himself) or (for the good of the country)?

	To protect himself	For the country	No opinion
6/4/17	61	27	13

5a. How much do you trust what Trump says about possible Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election and related issues: a great deal, a good amount, just some or not at all?

	----- More trust -----			----- Less trust -----			
	NET	Great deal	Good amount	NET	Just some	Not at all	No opinion
6/4/17	21	12	9	72	22	50	7

5b. How much do you trust what Comey says about possible Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election and related issues: a great deal, a good amount, just some or not at all?

	----- More trust -----			----- Less trust -----			
	NET	Great deal	Good amount	NET	Just some	Not at all	No opinion
6/4/17	36	18	18	55	30	25	9

6. Do you think Trump is (cooperating) with investigations of possible Russian influence in the 2016 election, or is (trying to interfere) with those investigations?

	Cooperating	Trying to interfere	No opinion
6/4/17	34	56	10

*** END ***