

Poll says Carter bad but Congress worse

NEW YORK (AP) — Although public judgment of President Carter's work stands at a historic low, Americans say Congress is doing an even poorer job, an Associated Press-NBC News poll shows.

Only about one out of eight Americans — 13 percent — give Congress a good or excellent rating, the lowest number found in the last three years.

In the poll, taken Sept. 10 and 11, Carter received a 19 percent approval mark, which is the lowest rating found for a president in nearly three decades.

While 13 percent gave Congress' work overall top marks, 47 percent said its work has been "only fair." Thirty-six percent called congressional work poor and 4 percent of the 1,600 adults participating in the nationwide telephone interviews said they were not sure.

In the April AP-NBC News survey, 20 percent rated Congress good or excellent, 50 percent only fair and 24 percent poor. Six percent in that survey said they were not sure.

The latest poll rating on Congress indicates a substantial slippage after more than a year of stability in the public's rating of the nation's legislature. Since May 1978, the public had consistently given Congress from 20 percent to 23 percent good or excellent marks.

On energy matters, the public again rates Congress lower than Carter.

Nearly half — 49 percent — rated Congress' energy work poor, while 41 percent said it had been only fair. Only 9 percent said it was good or excellent and 2 percent were undecided.

This finding shows a decline in the figures of the April poll, when 10 percent said Congress' energy efforts were good or excellent, 49 percent said only fair and 44 percent said poor. Seven percent were not sure.

On energy, although Carter got a low rating, he was still rated better than Congress.

Sixteen percent rated the president's energy initiatives good or excellent, and 32 percent said they had been only fair. Forty-nine percent said his work was poor, and 3 percent said they were not sure.

While the presidency and the current occupant of the Oval Office are inextricably linked in the public mind, there is less of a link between Congress and one's own representative.

For example, the AP-NBC News poll taken in June 1978 showed members of the public gave their own congressman or congresswoman a 47 percent good or excellent rating, while only 29 percent gave Congress as a whole the same marks. This tendency to rate one's representative far higher than the institution has been confirmed in other surveys.

As with every sample survey, the results of the AP-NBC News poll can vary from the opinions of all those with telephones across the country because of chance variations in the sample.

For polls with about 1,600 interviews, the results should vary no more than 3 percentage points either way, simply because of sample error.

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STATE II

Fairs said to reap riches, harbor corruption

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP) — From state fairs to weekend gigs at shopping plazas, carnivals this year could reap up to \$25 billion across the nation, midway game investigators estimated.

They also say the amount unreported for tax purposes is unknown, but could be as much as \$6 billion.

Up to 5 percent of the money, or possibly \$300 million, probably will end up as free rides, prizes, food and drink, and donations to police and politicians for their favorable attitudes — or as outright payoffs, investigators in two states said.

At the center of investigations into allegedly crooked carnival games in several states is Gene Sorrows, a controversial former "carry" who admits he was an expert at cheating the public but is clamoring now that the industry is rife with ripoffs and bribery.

Sorrows, 31, has gotten both praise and criticism. Some police officials say specifics of his evidence have fallen through, and several cases he has been involved in have not ended in convictions.

However, police agree on his expertise at spotting rigged games and teaching others to do so.

They also agree his crusade has made him a target.

Police in four states confirmed that they became aware last fall of an alleged "contract" to kill Sorrows. But a detective in Cleveland, where the plot was supposed to have hatched, said the suspected triggerman had made no move to carry out the threat.

An officer with the Washington, D.C., Police Department, who knows Sorrows, said: "I don't like Gene's percentages for living."

Sorrows, of Atlanta, Ga., has helped shut down alleged rigged games in California, Georgia, Illinois, Ohio and Oklahoma. He also helped in indictments of city councilmen in Cleveland and Atlanta.

A 15-year carry veteran who says he "was one of the best at rubbing people," Sorrows also has taught police how to rig games at seminars across the country.

Investigations director Ed Greenan of

the Illinois State Police said authorities made use of training by Sorrows in spotting and forcing closure this summer of more than a dozen allegedly fixed carnival games at county fairs at Decatur, Peoria and Lincoln.

"He certainly knows how the games are rigged," Greenan said. He and Peoria County state's attorney Michael Mihm both said Sorrows lacked details they could consider as evidence in a prosecution.

But Mihm said: "He's got a level of expertise in this area that we simply don't have."

Sorrows, who said he began his carry career at age 15 under an uncle's guidance, has been branded a zealot out for personal gain and "a phony" by carnival operators.

Bob Negus of the "Magic Midway" carnival at this summer's Illinois State Fair said: "Guys like Sorrows are just trying to make a name for themselves. There are crooked carnivals, there's no question about that. But they're not all crooked. We aren't crooked."

Negus said his firm's games are geared to award prizes to customers as a percentage — about 35 percent — of the money coming in.

"That means if a toy costs \$3.50, that game should be giving away one toy for every \$10 the game takes in," he said. "We don't count money, we count merchandise" to figure a booth's take, he said, acknowledging that game operators could cheat patrons and the firm.

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