

KAISER HEALTH TRACKING POLL

Public Opinion on Health Care Issues

January 2010

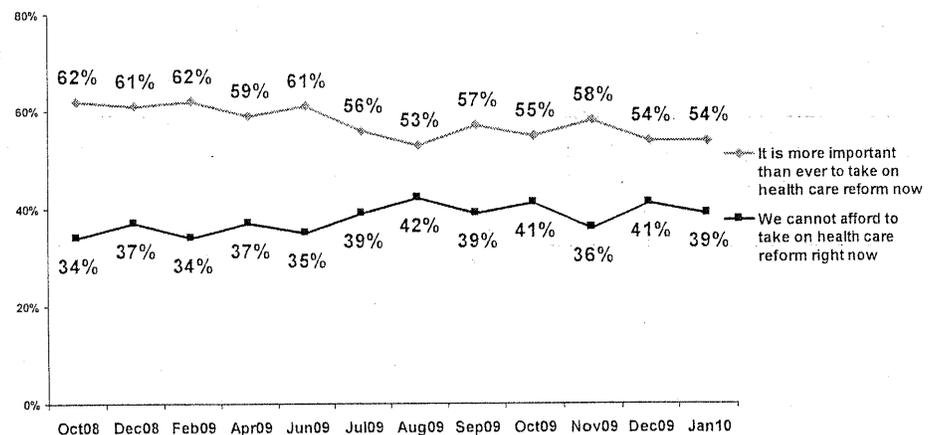
Kaiser's January Health Tracking poll finds the American public divided evenly between support and opposition to the health care proposals being discussed in Congress, pessimistic about the possible impact on the budget deficit, and increasingly concerned about the potential effect on their own families. At the same time, the poll finds that most Americans would react positively to the bulk of the provisions in the health reform proposals, even as awareness of some of the legislation's key selling points remains limited. Of the 27 elements tested, 17 moved a majority to feel more positively about the bills, including the creation of insurance exchanges, requirements that insurance companies cover those with pre-existing conditions, and the expansion of Medicaid. Two, however, moved a majority to feel more negatively, including the individual mandate and the projected price tag.

General Appetite for Reform Persists, but Country Deeply Divided on Proposed Legislation

For the past six months, a majority of Americans – hovering around 54 percent – have said that the country's economic challenges make health care reform writ large more important than ever, and the January Health Tracking survey finds no change in that view. But concrete legislative proposals are a different beast altogether, and this month's survey also finds the public deeply divided on the bills currently being debated on Capitol Hill, with 42 percent of Americans saying they are in favor of the proposals, 41 percent opposed and 16 percent currently withholding judgment.

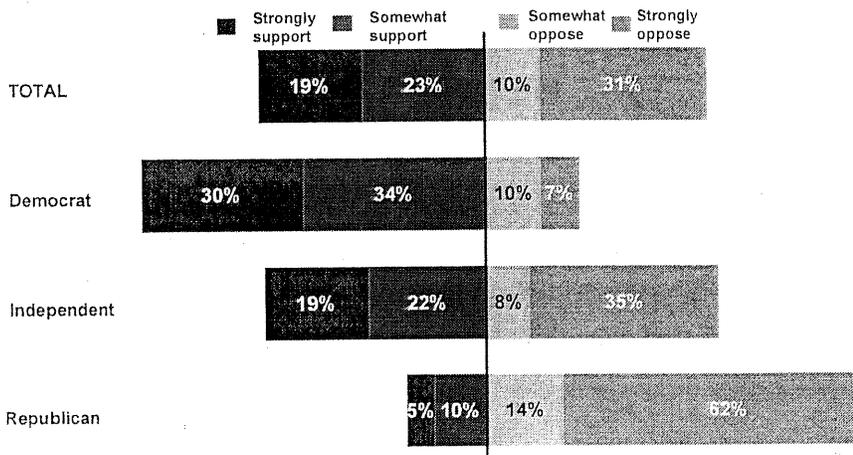
Health Care Reform... Is Now the Right Time?

Which comes closer to describing your own views? Given the serious economic problems facing the country...



Support/Opposition for Current Reform Proposals

As of right now, do you generally support or generally oppose the health care proposals being discussed in Congress? Is that strongly or somewhat?



Views on the proposed legislation seem indelibly partisan: A solid majority of Democrats (64 percent) support the proposals being discussed, while an even larger majority of Republicans (76 percent) oppose it. When it comes to the enthusiasm gap, strong feelings are significantly more predominant on the right, with twice as many Republicans saying they "strongly oppose" the proposed legislation as Democrats saying they "strongly support" it.

Political independents, that critical swing group, are divided down the middle: with 41 percent supportive and 43 percent opposed.

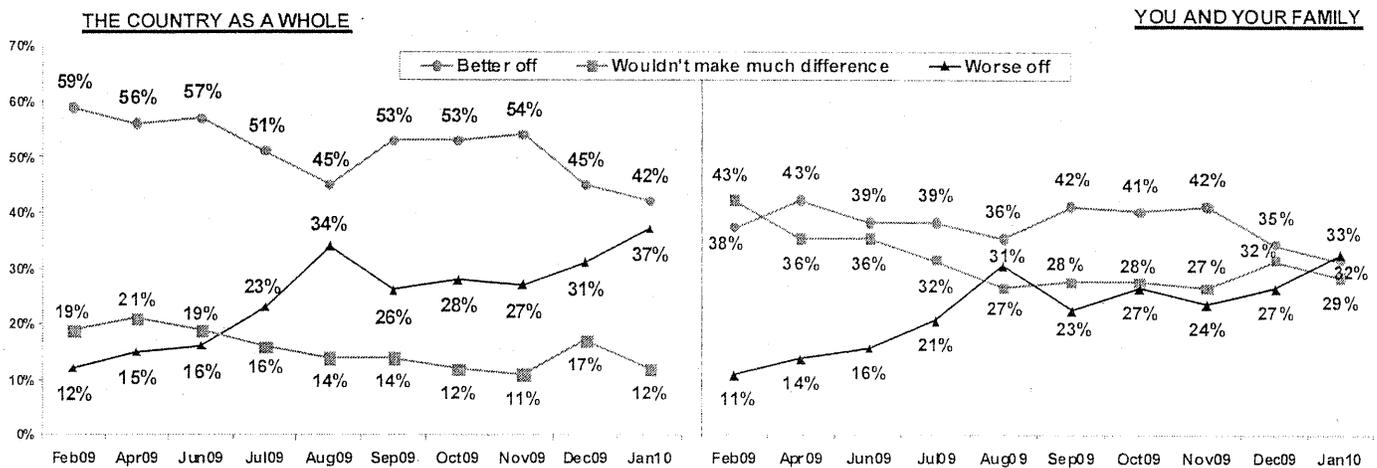
Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses for total=16%; Democrat=19%; Independent=15%; Republican=8%

Souring Views of Personal, National Impact

For the first time in a year of Kaiser tracking polls the proportion of Americans who think they would be worse off if health care reform passes was as large as the proportion who think they would be better off (33 percent versus 32 percent), with a similarly sized group not expecting any impact. There was also an uptick in the proportion of Americans who say the country overall would be worse off (from 31 percent in December to 37 percent now), though somewhat more (42 percent) still expect the country to be better off. In both cases opinion at the end of the intense, yearlong debate looks much more like it did in the contentious days of the August town hall meetings than at any other point. Views of personal and national impact also remain deeply, and increasingly, partisan.

Impact on Country and Own Family: Time Trend

Do you think ... would be better off or worse off if the president and Congress passed health care reform, or don't you think it would make much difference?



Measuring Americans' Familiarity with the Proposed Legislation

Anyone who has followed the health care reform debate this year recognizes that the reform proposals on the table are multi-faceted, complex, and in near-constant flux. One obvious question, then: Even after a year of substantial media coverage of the ongoing legislative process, what do average Americans really understand about the House and Senate reform bills? The January survey tried to answer this question in two ways, first by asking some big picture expectation questions and second by asking the public whether they thought each of a rather lengthy list of elements was "included in the health care reform proposed legislation being discussed in Congress or not."²

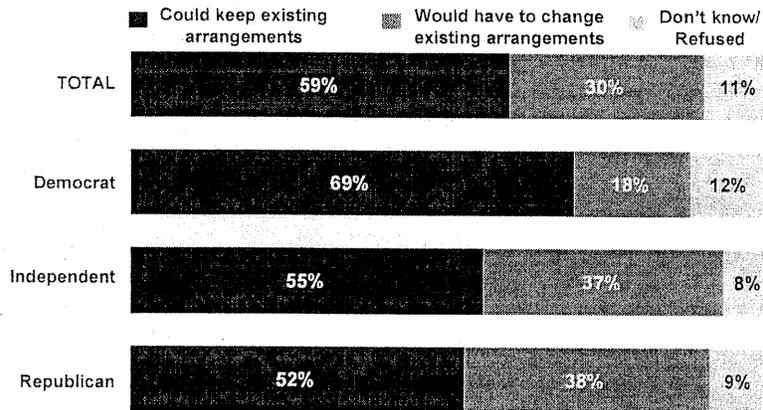
² To lessen the burden, each respondent was only asked about half the items on the list. See Topline (<http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8042.cfm>) for more details.

Americans' Big Picture Expectations

The poll suggests that backers of the proposed legislation can point to both successes and failures in managing Americans' expectations about the results of the measure. Throughout the year, supporters have attempted to convey the message: 'if you like your health insurance, you can keep it.' About six in ten Americans, including majorities – albeit narrow ones – of Democrats, Republicans and political independents seem to have received and accepted that message, saying that "most people who currently get health insurance coverage through their employers [could] keep their existing health insurance arrangements."

Will Proposals Require Change? By Party ID

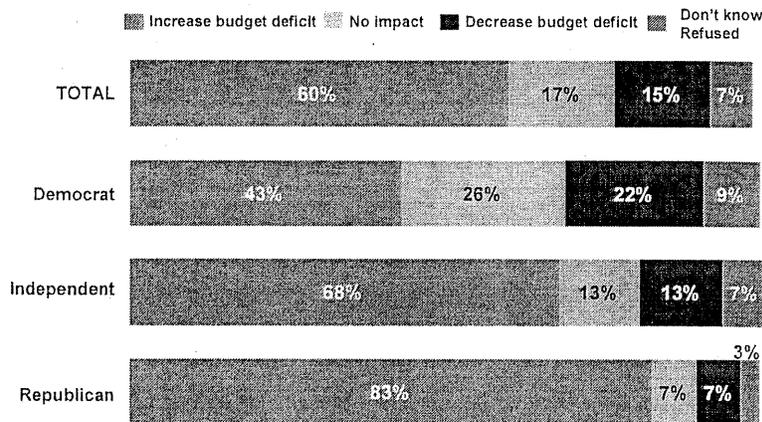
As far as you know, if Congress and the president did pass a health care reform bill, would most people who currently get health insurance coverage through their employers keep their existing health insurance arrangements or would most people have to change their existing health insurance arrangements?



Most Americans also report believing that most of the provisions in the bill would not take effect until at least 2013, an accurate perception in the case of most of the major aspects of the proposed legislation. Overall, 45 percent said they expected the provisions to be implemented three or four years from now and 17 percent said it would be further in the future than that.

Effect on the Deficit: Expectations by Party ID

As far as you know, is the health reform bill currently being discussed in Congress expected to increase the federal budget deficit over the next 10 years, decrease the federal budget deficit over the next 10 years, or is it not expected to have much impact on the deficit?



The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) scoring suggests that both the House and Senate proposal would result in a reduction in the federal budget deficit,³ but most Americans – including large majorities of Republicans and independents – believe that the proposed legislation would *increase* the deficit. This may reflect both a lack of widespread awareness of the official estimates and a reaction to the fact that opponents have publicly claimed the proposed legislation will increase the deficit.

When it comes to expectations about coverage, Americans had mixed views: 21 percent said they thought the reform bills being

discussed would provide coverage to *all* of the uninsured, 35 percent expected coverage for *most* of the uninsured, 32 percent for *some* of the uninsured and 5 percent did not expect it to cover any of those without insurance. CBO estimates suggest that the proposals would cover somewhere between half and two-thirds of the country's uninsured.⁴

³ See Kaiser summary document: http://www.kff.org/healthreform/upload/housesenatebill_final.pdf

⁴ See Table 4 here: http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/108xx/doc10868/12-19-Reid_Letter_Managers_Correction_Noted.pdf and Table 3 here: <http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/107xx/doc10741/hr3962Revised.pdf>.

Awareness of Specific Proposals⁵

The most widely recognized provisions – those identified as being included by at least six in ten Americans – include those touted by both supporters and by opponents. For example, at the top of the list, seven in ten (72 percent) are aware that the proposed legislation would provide subsidies to lower and middle income Americans who don't get insurance through their jobs, and six in ten are aware that insurance companies would be required to cover those with pre-existing conditions. Just as many recognize that the provisions being discussed include increasing taxes on the wealthy, either in the form of income taxes (68 percent) or Medicare payroll taxes (65 percent). Six in ten also recognize that the proposed legislation includes an expansion of Medicaid and a requirement that insurance companies include a basic benefit package, to be defined by government.

At the other end are provisions that most people do *not* recognize as being in the proposed legislation. For example, 37 percent are aware the proposed legislation would prohibit gender rating, and not many more realize the bills would eliminate caps on lifetime benefits (42 percent) or help close the Medicare doughnut hole (44 percent).

Are Americans Aware of Provisions of Reform Bills? ⁶	Percent who recognize this element is included in at least one version of the proposed legislation ⁷
Subsidy assistance to individuals	72%
Increased income taxes on wealthy	68%
Increase Medicare payroll tax on wealthy	65%
Basic benefits package, defined by gov't	63%
Medicaid expansion	62%
Guaranteed issue	61%
Employer mandate/penalties	58%
Health insurance exchange	58%
Individual mandate/penalty	57%
No federal money for abortion	56%
Tax credits to small businesses	52%
Cadillac-plan tax on insurers	51%
Taxes on drug and device makers, insurers	49%
Extend dependent coverage through age 25	48%
Limit increases in Medicare provider payments	47%
Limit age-adjusted rating	44%
Help close the Medicare doughnut hole	44%
Medical loss ratio	43%
Eliminating caps on lifetime benefits	42%
No federal money for illegal immigrants	40%
Prohibit gender rating	37%

Overall, Democrats and Republicans were equally proficient at identifying the provisions included in the bill. There were, however, partisan differences on particular items. For example, Democrats were more likely to say the proposals included efforts to close the Medicare doughnut hole (56 percent said so, compared to 36 percent of Republicans) and to provide tax credits to small businesses (59 percent compared to 39 percent). On the other side, however, members of the GOP were more likely than Democrats to be aware that the proposals include an individual mandate (64 percent versus 50 percent).⁸

⁵ We use the words awareness, recognition and understanding interchangeably here in assessing the percentage of Americans who correctly said that each of the provisions is included in at least one of the two legislative proposals under consideration. It is not possible to say whether each respondent truly knew the provision was included, or rather thought or guessed it was included. The results should be interpreted with this in mind.

⁶ Note that these descriptions are abbreviated for ease of presentation here. For example, rather than "Guaranteed issue," the questionnaire item read "Prohibit insurance companies from denying coverage or charging higher premiums because of a person's medical history or health condition." See Topline (<http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8042.cfm>) for full question wording.

⁷ Includes percentage who said the legislation being debated does include this element along with the (usually small) percentage who volunteered that the item was in either the House or the Senate proposal, but not both.

⁸ Full tables by party ID, as well as by age, are included in the appendix.

Provisions that Strengthen, and Weaken, Support

The above series makes clear that, for perfectly understandable reasons, many Americans remain unaware of the specific content of the legislation being discussed on Capitol Hill. But what would Americans think about each of these proposals if they *did* know about them? To answer this question, a separate subset of Americans were *told* the proposed legislation included each provision and asked whether that particular element made them more likely to support health reform, less likely to support it or didn't affect their views.

	Elements of Health Reform Legislation	More likely to support	Less likely to support	No diffc.
<i>Majority says makes them more likely to support</i>	Tax credits to small businesses	73%	11%	14%
	Health insurance exchange	67%	16%	14%
	Won't change most people's existing arrangements	66%	10%	19%
	Guaranteed issue	63%	24%	11%
	Medicaid expansion	62%	22%	14%
	Extend dependent coverage through age 25	60%	22%	15%
	Help close the Medicare doughnut hole	60%	21%	15%
	Increased income taxes on wealthy	59%	24%	16%
	Subsidy assistance to individuals	57%	24%	17%
	Reduce the deficit	56%	20%	18%
	Cover at least 31 million uninsured	56%	24%	16%
	No federal money for abortion	55%	26%	16%
	Limit age-adjusted rating	53%	25%	19%
	Taxes on drug and device makers, insurers	53%	26%	17%
	Public option	53%	31%	13%
	Medical loss ratio	52%	19%	21%
No federal money for illegal immigrants	52%	29%	17%	
<i>Plurality says makes them more likely to support</i>	Prohibit gender rating	50%	31%	17%
	Increase Medicare payroll tax on wealthy	49%	31%	18%
	Eliminating caps on lifetime benefits	48%	34%	16%
	Employer mandate/penalties	45%	33%	16%
	Limit increases in Medicare provider payments	43%	35%	15%
<i>Plurality says makes them less likely to support</i>	Basic benefits package, defined by gov't	38%	43%	16%
	Cadillac-plan tax on insurers	35%	40%	21%
	Not take full effect until 2013	23%	40%	34%
<i>Majority says makes them less likely to support</i>	Individual mandate/penalty	22%	62%	12%
	Cost at least \$871 billion over 10 years	19%	51%	24%

According to the survey, the provisions that would most shore up support: tax credits to small business (73 percent); the creation of the health insurance exchange(s) (67 percent); the fact that most people will not have to change their existing arrangements (66 percent); new requirements that insurance companies cover those with pre-existing conditions (63 percent); and the expansion of Medicaid (62 percent). As is clear in the above table, another dozen provisions prove appealing to more than half of Americans. Worth noting: tax credits for small businesses is the only element that is in the top five most persuasive provisions among Democrats, Republicans *and* political independents.

On the flip side, there are two provisions that make a majority *less* interested in supporting health care legislation: the individual mandate, named by 62 percent as making them less likely to support the proposed legislation, and the effort's overall price tag, named by 51 percent.

Somewhere in the middle are elements that are quite divisive in the way they push people, including the Cadillac-plan tax, which makes 40 percent of people feel more negative and 35 percent more positive, and the fact that the federal government will define a basic benefit package, which similarly pushes different people different ways.

Provisions with the Most Potential to Move Opponents, Supporters

Of course what matters to the public overall might be less important for debate participants than what elements could be used to turn current opponents into supporters, or to turn current boosters against the proposal.

As was true for the public overall, the inclusion of tax credits for small business was the top element in terms of making current opponents feel more positive about the proposed legislation, followed by hearing the statement that "most people who get health insurance through their jobs will keep the plans they have now." Also at the top of the list in terms of convincing opponents to become supporters: guarantees that the legislation will not provide federal money for abortion services beyond what is allowed by current law, and that it will not provide any money for illegal immigrants.

Turning Opponents into Supporters?	
	% of opponents who feel "more likely to support" because of that element
Tax credits to small businesses	62%
Won't change most people's existing arrangements	59%
No federal money for abortion	55%
No federal money for illegal immigrants	55%
Health insurance exchange	54%
Guaranteed issue	50%
Extend dependent coverage through age 25	48%
Help close the Medicare doughnut hole	42%
Increased income taxes on wealthy	41%
Medicaid expansion	40%

Unlike the above, in no case did a majority of supporters say any of the listed elements made them *less likely* to back any final bill. Still, nearly half (47 percent) said the individual mandate provisions made them feel less supportive of the proposed legislation. A third said the cost of the proposals dissuaded them from support.

Turning Supporters into Opponents?	
	% of supporters who feel "less likely to support" because of that element
Individual mandate/penalty	47%
Cost at least \$871 billion over 10 years	32%
No federal money for illegal immigrants	30%
Not take full effect until 2013	30%
No federal money for abortion	29%
Prohibit gender rating	25%
Eliminating caps on lifetime benefits	23%
Limit increases in Medicare provider payments	22%
Cadillac-plan tax on insurers	21%

Lesser Known Provisions That Would Be Popular

Combining estimates of Americans' awareness of the contents of the proposed legislation with what we've learned of their likes and dislikes enables us to assess the provisions that have the most potential to change current support. The table below shows eight lesser known provisions (elements that fewer than half of Americans recognize as being in the bill), that would make a majority of Americans feel warmer about the legislation were they to learn about each. The most room for movement here for health reform supporters is in convincing Americans that the proposed legislation would decrease the deficit in the way the CBO predicts: currently only 15 percent of the public believes the proposed legislation would do so, yet 56 percent say it would make them feel more supportive of the effort.

Most Popular of the Lesser Known Provisions	Percent of the public who believe proposed legislation would do each	Percent of the public who say hearing the legislation would do each makes them more likely to support it
Reduce the deficit	15%	56%
Prohibit gender rating	37%	50%
No federal money for illegal immigrants	40%	52%
Medical loss ratio	43%	52%
Help close the Medicare doughnut hole	44%	60%
Limit age-adjusted rating	44%	53%
Extend dependent coverage through age 25	48%	60%
Taxes on drug and device makers, insurers	49%	53%

There were no lesser known provisions that would move a majority of supporters away from the bill.

Finally...

Political Independents: A Closer Look

With rank and file Democrats and Republicans having staked out their territory in the pro and con camps of the health care debate, the middle ground is left to political independents. The January survey finds independents divided on the proposed health care legislation, with 41 percent in favor (19 percent strongly in favor) and 43 percent opposed (35 percent strongly opposed), even as a narrow majority (52 percent) say that it is more important than ever to take on health care reform now.

When it comes to which provisions are most and least appealing to independents, the list looks much like it does for the public overall. At the top, in terms of pushing support for the proposed legislation, are tax credits for small business (74 percent of independents say these make them more likely to support), the health insurance exchanges (69 percent), the lack of change expected by most people with employer sponsored coverage (66 percent) and the efforts to close the doughnut hole (65 percent). The list of negatives is topped by the individual mandate (67 percent say this makes them feel less supportive) and the cost of the measure (57 percent).

Elements of Health Reform Legislation	Most and least popular proposals among independents		
	More likely to support the bill	Less likely to support the bill	No difference
MOST POPULAR			
Tax credits to small businesses	74%	10%	12%
Health insurance exchange	69%	14%	15%
Won't change most people's existing arrangements	66%	10%	21%
Help close the Medicare doughnut hole	65%	19%	13%
Cover at least 31 million uninsured	61%	22%	13%
Increased income taxes on wealthy	59%	25%	15%
LEAST POPULAR			
Not take full effect until 2013	26%	44%	27%
Cost at least \$871 billion over 10 years	14%	57%	26%
Individual mandate/penalty	19%	67%	10%

Independents do differ in some respects from those with avowed partisan affiliations. For example, the fact that the proposed legislation would provide coverage for many of the uninsured is much more appealing to independents than to Republicans (61 percent say it makes them more likely to support the eventual bill, compared to 22 percent of Republicans). On the flip side, the measure's multi-billion dollar price tag is much more of an issue for independents than for Democrats. Nearly six in ten independents (57 percent) say this makes them feel less supportive of reform efforts, compared to roughly three in ten Democrats (34 percent).

Seniors: A Closer Look

For most of the past year, those over age 65 have been more likely than younger Americans to say the country cannot afford to take on health care reform now and less likely to see benefits for themselves or for the nation in the proposed legislation. In the current poll, they lean against the proposed legislation: 48 percent oppose, 37 percent support, and 15 percent did not provide an opinion.

The poll suggests the underpinnings of these attitudes may lie in the fact that many of the provisions that younger Americans say would make them more supportive of the legislation may not be directly relevant to seniors' lives. To take an obvious example: 70 percent of those under age 40 say the fact that parents would now be able to keep their twenty-something children on their health insurance longer makes them more supportive of the proposals, compared to only 45 percent of seniors. Covering the uninsured and expanding Medicaid are also less appealing to seniors, who are themselves already covered for the duration of their lives by the Medicare program.

Perhaps surprisingly, seniors are somewhat less aware of the Medicare-related provisions of the legislation than their younger counterparts. Specifically, seniors were less likely than those under age 40 to believe that the proposed legislation includes efforts to close the Medicare doughnut hole. Among those aged 65 and older, 37 percent were aware that the proposals included such provisions, compared to 53 percent of those under age 40. They were similarly less likely to acknowledge that the proposals would limit future increases in some Medicare provider payments.

Six in ten say that if the legislation did work to close the doughnut hole they would feel more supportive of it, an identical level of support as found among younger Americans for this popular provision. The generations divide, however, on the adjustments to Medicare provider payments, with younger Americans by two to one saying this is a net positive in their book, while for seniors it is a net negative.

	Age		
	18-39	40-64	65+
Support/Oppose Current Reform Proposals			
Support proposals being discussed in Congress	47%	41%	37%
Oppose proposals being discussed	33%	46%	48%
No opinion	20%	13%	15%
Awareness of Medicare provisions			
Aware proposals would limit future increases in Medicare provider payments	54%	46%	37%
Aware proposals would help close the Medicare doughnut hole	53%	38%	37%
Limiting future increases in Medicare provider payments...			
Makes you more likely to support proposals	53%	43%	24%
Makes you less likely to support	29%	37%	46%

APPENDIX:
AWARENESS OF ELEMENTS OF HEALTH CARE REFORM;
PUBLIC REACTION TO SPECIFIC ELEMENTS

PERCENT OF PUBLIC AWARE THAT AT LEAST ONE VERSION OF HEALTH REFORM LEGISLATION INCLUDES EACH ELEMENT

<u>Elements of Health Reform Legislation*</u>	Yes, health reform legislation includes this proposal**	No, health reform legislation does not include this proposal	Don't know if this is in the legislation
Subsidy assistance to individuals	72%	20%	8%
Increased income taxes on wealthy	68%	23%	9%
Increase Medicare payroll tax on wealthy	65%	20%	15%
Basic benefits package, defined by gov't	63%	20%	17%
Medicaid expansion	62%	26%	12%
Guaranteed issue	61%	29%	10%
Employer mandate/penalties	58%	30%	12%
Health insurance exchange	58%	25%	17%
Individual mandate/penalty	57%	32%	11%
No federal money for abortion	56%	29%	15%
Tax credits to small businesses	52%	32%	16%
Cadillac-plan tax on insurers	51%	22%	27%
Taxes on drug and device makers, insurers	49%	29%	22%
Extend dependent coverage through age 25	48%	33%	19%
Limit increases in Medicare provider payments	47%	34%	19%
Limit age-adjusted rating	44%	35%	21%
Help close the Medicare doughnut hole	44%	33%	23%
Medical loss ratio	43%	31%	26%
Eliminating caps on lifetime benefits	42%	36%	22%
No federal money for illegal immigrants	40%	41%	20%
Prohibit gender rating	37%	37%	25%

* Note: Question wording abbreviated in tables. For full question wording, see survey Topline at: <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8042.cfm>.

** Note: includes those who volunteered that it was in either the House or Senate bill only

AWARENESS BY POLITICAL PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Elements of Health Reform Legislation*	Percent who are aware [each] proposal is included in the legislation**		
	Democrat	Independent	Republican
Subsidy assistance to individuals	77%	68%	72%
Increased income taxes on wealthy	69%	62%	76%
Increase Medicare payroll tax on wealthy	64%	72%	66%
Basic benefits package, defined by gov't	66%	59%	65%
Medicaid expansion	63%	65%	58%
Guaranteed issue	58%	62%	64%
Employer mandate/penalties	54%	59%	63%
Health insurance exchange	65%	57%	57%
Individual mandate/penalty	50%	61%	64%
No federal money for abortion	56%	52%	61%
Tax credits to small businesses	59%	51%	39%
Cadillac-plan tax on insurers	46%	60%	58%
Taxes on drug and device makers, insurers	45%	50%	53%
Extend dependent coverage through age 25	57%	44%	38%
Limit increases in Medicare provider payments	50%	44%	44%
Limit age-adjusted rating	45%	50%	37%
Help close the Medicare doughnut hole	56%	40%	36%
Medical loss ratio	52%	37%	33%
Eliminating caps on lifetime benefits	39%	49%	46%
No federal money for illegal immigrants	44%	38%	40%
Prohibit gender rating	43%	39%	29%

* Note: Question wording abbreviated in tables. For full question wording, see survey Topline at: <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8042.cfm>.

** Note: includes those who volunteered that it was in either the House or Senate bill only

AWARENESS BY PERCEIVED URGENCY OF HEALTH CARE REFORM

Elements of Health Reform Legislation*	Percent who are aware [each] proposal is included in the legislation**	
	Among those who say it's more important than ever to take on health care reform now	Among those who say we cannot afford to take on health care reform now
Subsidy assistance to individuals	76%	70%
Increased income taxes on wealthy	73%	64%
Increase Medicare payroll tax on wealthy	68%	65%
Basic benefits package, defined by gov't	60%	67%
Medicaid expansion	64%	60%
Guaranteed issue	63%	57%
Employer mandate/penalties	54%	61%
Health insurance exchange	63%	53%
Individual mandate/penalty	54%	63%
No federal money for abortion	61%	49%
Tax credits to small businesses	57%	42%
Cadillac-plan tax on insurers	51%	56%
Taxes on drug and device makers, insurers	52%	46%
Extend dependent coverage through age 25	50%	45%
Limit increases in Medicare provider payments	47%	50%
Limit age-adjusted rating	46%	41%
Help close the Medicare doughnut hole	52%	36%
Medical loss ratio	46%	43%
Eliminating caps on lifetime benefits	47%	41%
No federal money for illegal immigrants	43%	35%
Prohibit gender rating	45%	28%

* Note: Question wording abbreviated in tables. For full question wording, see survey Topline at: <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8042.cfm>.

** Note: includes those who volunteered that it was in either the House or Senate bill only

AWARENESS BY AGE

Elements of Health Reform Legislation*	Percent who are aware [each] proposal is included in the legislation**		
	18-39	40-64	65+
Subsidy assistance to individuals	75%	71%	67%
Increased income taxes on wealthy	74%	66%	65%
Increase Medicare payroll tax on wealthy	70%	61%	63%
Basic benefits package, defined by gov't	68%	60%	57%
Medicaid expansion	64%	60%	62%
Guaranteed issue	64%	61%	52%
Employer mandate/penalties	55%	59%	60%
Health insurance exchange	61%	56%	57%
Individual mandate/penalty	58%	54%	62%
No federal money for abortion	52%	59%	57%
Tax credits to small businesses	49%	56%	46%
Cadillac-plan tax on insurers	51%	51%	52%
Taxes on drug and device makers, insurers	52%	51%	38%
Extend dependent coverage through age 25	55%	45%	42%
Limit increases in Medicare provider payments	54%	46%	37%
Limit age-adjusted rating	54%	43%	28%
Help close the Medicare doughnut hole	53%	38%	37%
Medical loss ratio	53%	40%	30%
Eliminating caps on lifetime benefits	43%	42%	41%
No federal money for illegal immigrants	43%	36%	42%
Prohibit gender rating	41%	37%	31%

* Note: Question wording abbreviated in tables. For full question wording, see survey Topline at: <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8042.cfm>.

** Note: includes those who volunteered that it was in either the House or Senate bill only

PUBLIC REACTION TO ELEMENTS: BY PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Elements of Health Reform Legislation*	Percent who say [each] proposal will make them more likely to support the bill...			Percent who say [each] proposal will make them less likely to support the bill...		
	Democrat	Independent	Republican	Democrat	Independent	Republican
Tax credits to small businesses	84%	74%	58%	6%	10%	18%
Health insurance exchange	78%	69%	53%	11%	14%	24%
Won't change most people's existing arrangements	67%	66%	64%	10%	10%	11%
Guaranteed issue	76%	56%	55%	17%	27%	26%
Medicaid expansion	79%	59%	43%	10%	25%	32%
Extend dependent coverage through age 25	74%	55%	52%	13%	25%	30%
Help close the Medicare doughnut hole	71%	65%	34%	17%	19%	33%
Increased income taxes on wealthy	72%	59%	43%	14%	25%	37%
Subsidy assistance to individuals	71%	57%	29%	16%	23%	42%
Reduce the deficit	72%	53%	45%	12%	21%	34%
Cover at least 31 million uninsured	72%	61%	22%	11%	22%	48%
No federal money for abortion	57%	52%	60%	26%	24%	28%
Limit age-adjusted rating	64%	51%	45%	18%	28%	30%
Taxes on drug and device makers, insurers	66%	55%	35%	13%	31%	40%
Public option	71%	51%	32%	14%	34%	49%
Medical loss ratio	65%	56%	36%	9%	19%	28%
No federal money for illegal immigrants	42%	58%	55%	35%	23%	30%
Prohibit gender rating	60%	55%	30%	25%	25%	45%
Increase Medicare payroll tax on wealthy	65%	47%	22%	15%	32%	61%
Eliminating caps on lifetime benefits	61%	47%	35%	23%	36%	44%
Employer mandate/penalties	60%	47%	26%	22%	33%	49%
Limit increases in Medicare provider payments	53%	42%	32%	23%	38%	51%
Basic benefits package, defined by gov't	55%	39%	13%	26%	41%	73%
Cadillac-plan tax on insurers	48%	36%	14%	27%	38%	66%
Not take full effect until 2013	27%	26%	14%	33%	44%	48%
Individual mandate/penalty	35%	19%	8%	48%	67%	78%
Cost at least \$871 billion over 10 years	34%	14%	6%	34%	57%	70%

* Note: Question wording abbreviated in tables. For full question wording, see survey Topline at: <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8042.cfm>.

PUBLIC REACTION TO ELEMENTS AMONG CURRENT SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS

Elements of Health Reform Legislation*	Generally support current health care proposals			Generally oppose current health care proposals		
	More likely to support	Less likely to support	No difference	More likely to support	Less likely to support	No difference
Tax credits to small businesses	89%	1%	9%	62%	21%	15%
Health insurance exchange	76%	13%	9%	54%	24%	19%
Won't change most people's existing arrangements	73%	9%	16%	59%	14%	23%
Guaranteed issue	76%	17%	6%	50%	32%	16%
Medicaid expansion	83%	10%	6%	40%	39%	16%
Extend dependent coverage through age 25	72%	17%	11%	48%	31%	18%
Help close the Medicare doughnut hole	73%	15%	10%	42%	33%	21%
Increased income taxes on wealthy	76%	10%	13%	41%	42%	16%
Subsidy assistance to individuals	78%	11%	10%	33%	43%	22%
Reduce the deficit	75%	6%	15%	37%	38%	20%
Cover at least 31 million uninsured	79%	11%	8%	26%	44%	24%
No federal money for abortion	59%	29%	11%	55%	23%	19%
Limit age-adjusted rating	67%	17%	14%	38%	35%	24%
Taxes on drug and device makers, insurers	71%	12%	14%	35%	46%	16%
Public option	78%	9%	11%	27%	58%	13%
Medical loss ratio	69%	9%	18%	38%	33%	22%
No federal money for illegal immigrants	47%	30%	20%	55%	29%	14%
Prohibit gender rating	60%	25%	14%	35%	39%	23%
Increase Medicare payroll tax on wealthy	67%	15%	16%	22%	58%	18%
Eliminating caps on lifetime benefits	62%	23%	14%	38%	46%	16%
Employer mandate/penalties	63%	18%	16%	26%	55%	14%
Limit increases in Medicare provider payments	59%	22%	13%	22%	57%	16%
Basic benefits package, defined by gov't	65%	17%	16%	9%	76%	12%
Cadillac-plan tax on insurers	53%	21%	24%	16%	64%	15%
Not take full effect until 2013	33%	30%	35%	11%	53%	33%
Individual mandate/penalty	36%	47%	13%	9%	81%	6%
Cost at least \$871 billion over 10 years	34%	32%	29%	5%	77%	15%

* Note: Question wording abbreviated in tables. For full question wording, see survey Topline at: <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8042.cfm>.

PUBLIC REACTION TO ELEMENTS: BY AGE

Elements of Health Reform Legislation*	Percent who say [each] proposal will make them more likely to support the bill...			Percent who say [each] proposal will make them less likely to support the bill...		
	18-39	40-64	65+	18-39	40-64	65+
Tax credits to small businesses	71%	77%	66%	8%	8%	22%
Health insurance exchange	68%	66%	69%	16%	18%	15%
Won't change most people's existing arrangements	70%	68%	56%	9%	11%	10%
Guaranteed issue	64%	67%	51%	25%	18%	35%
Medicaid expansion	66%	63%	50%	19%	19%	33%
Extend dependent coverage through age 25	70%	57%	45%	16%	23%	34%
Help close the Medicare doughnut hole	60%	62%	59%	18%	25%	20%
Increased income taxes on wealthy	58%	62%	55%	24%	23%	29%
Subsidy assistance to individuals	61%	56%	50%	19%	23%	37%
Reduce the deficit	59%	57%	49%	16%	19%	31%
Cover at least 31 million uninsured	63%	56%	47%	22%	24%	25%
No federal money for abortion	52%	58%	54%	31%	21%	28%
Limit age-adjusted rating	46%	61%	53%	26%	23%	26%
Taxes on drug and device makers, insurers	55%	50%	55%	24%	27%	29%
Public option	52%	59%	41%	29%	29%	39%
Medical loss ratio	49%	60%	40%	15%	18%	29%
No federal money for illegal immigrants	49%	56%	47%	31%	27%	32%
Prohibit gender rating	54%	50%	42%	28%	28%	42%
Increase Medicare payroll tax on wealthy	47%	47%	56%	31%	31%	33%
Eliminating caps on lifetime benefits	53%	48%	39%	26%	37%	45%
Employer mandate/penalties	47%	47%	36%	32%	32%	38%
Limit increases in Medicare provider payments	53%	43%	24%	29%	37%	46%
Basic benefits package, defined by gov't	43%	37%	32%	40%	42%	49%
Cadillac-plan tax on insurers	43%	31%	29%	34%	42%	49%
Not take full effect until 2013	26%	23%	18%	34%	42%	45%
Individual mandate/penalty	26%	22%	15%	60%	63%	66%
Cost at least \$871 billion over 10 years	17%	20%	23%	49%	51%	52%

* Note: Question wording abbreviated in tables. For full question wording, see survey Topline at: <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8042.cfm>.

HOW WELL RECOGNIZED ARE THE MORE POPULAR PROVISIONS?

Elements of Health Reform Legislation (ranked by % saying it makes them more likely to support the bill)*	% who are aware it is included in the legislation**	% more likely	% less likely	% no difference
Tax credits to small businesses	52%	73%	11%	14%
Health insurance exchange	58%	67%	16%	14%
Guaranteed issue	61%	63%	24%	11%
Medicaid expansion	62%	62%	22%	14%
Extend dependent coverage through age 25	48%	60%	22%	15%
Help close the Medicare doughnut hole	44%	60%	21%	15%
Increased income taxes on wealthy	68%	59%	24%	16%
Subsidy assistance to individuals	72%	57%	24%	17%
No federal money for abortion	56%	55%	26%	16%
Limit age-adjusted rating	44%	53%	25%	19%
Taxes on drug and device makers, insurers	49%	53%	26%	17%
Medical loss ratio	43%	52%	19%	21%
No federal money for illegal immigrants	40%	52%	29%	17%
Prohibit gender rating	37%	50%	31%	17%
Increase Medicare payroll tax on wealthy	65%	49%	31%	18%
Eliminating caps on lifetime benefits	42%	48%	34%	16%
Employer mandate/penalties	58%	45%	33%	16%
Limit increases in Medicare provider payments	47%	43%	35%	15%
Basic benefits package, defined by gov't	63%	38%	43%	16%
Cadillac-plan tax on insurers	51%	35%	40%	21%
Individual mandate/penalty	57%	22%	62%	12%

* Note: Question wording abbreviated in tables. For full question wording, see survey Topline at: <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8042.cfm>.

** Note: includes those who volunteered that it was in either the House or Senate bill only

METHODOLOGY: This *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll* was designed and analyzed by public opinion researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation led by Mollyann Brodie, Ph.D., including Claudia Deane, Liz Hamel, Carolina Gutiérrez, and Sarah Cho. The survey was conducted January 7 through January 12, 2010, among a nationally representative random sample of 2,002 adults ages 18 and older. Telephone interviews conducted by landline (1,350) and cell phone (652, including 255 who had no landline telephone) were carried out in English and Spanish by Princeton Survey Research Associates.

At the time the poll was in the field there were two separate legislative proposals in existence, a House-passed bill and a Senate-passed bill. Many provisions are similar across the two but important differences remain. For ease of reference and understanding, respondents were asked about "health care proposals being discussed in Congress" more generally. In order to gauge both knowledge and opinions about a long list of elements included in the legislation currently being discussed in Congress, most questions on the survey were asked of either random half-samples (roughly 1,000 respondents each) or quarter-samples (roughly 500 respondents each). Full details about which questions were asked of which samples are included in the Topline document (<http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8042.cfm>).¹

The margin of sampling error for the total sample is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For results based on half-samples, the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 4 percentage points, and for results based on quarter-samples it is plus or minus 5 percentage points. For results based on other subgroups, the margin of sampling error may be higher. Note that sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other public opinion poll.

Please note: "VOL" indicates that a response was volunteered by respondent, not an explicitly offered choice; due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100.

¹Note that the questions measuring knowledge about the different elements included in the health care legislation and the questions asking whether the inclusion of different elements makes respondents more or less likely to support the legislation were asked of separate half-samples, so the results for these two sets of questions cannot be cross-tabulated.

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The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation: Headquarters 2400 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025 Phone: 650.854.9400 Fax: 650.854.4800

Washington Offices and Barbara Jordan Conference Center: 1330 G Street N.W., Washington, DC 20005 Phone: 202.347.5270 Fax: 202.347.5274 www.kff.org

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The Washington Post

New poll finds voter anger drove results of Mass. Election

By Dan Balz and Jon Cohen
Saturday, January 23, 2010

Dissatisfaction with the direction of the country, antipathy toward federal-government activism and opposition to the Democrats' health-care proposals drove the upset election of Republican senatorial candidate Scott Brown in Massachusetts, according to a post-election survey of state voters.

The poll by The Washington Post, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University's School of Public Health underscores how significantly voter anger has turned toward Democrats in Washington and how dramatically the political landscape has shifted during President Obama's first year in office.

The findings do not provide a political portrait of the entire country in the opening weeks of the 2010 election year. But given that Massachusetts has been reliably Democratic in presidential elections, the results of Tuesday's special Senate election and the reasons voters sided with Brown over Democrat Martha Coakley speak to broader shifts that have taken place across the country over the past year.

These changes were echoed in national polling and helped elect Republican governors in Virginia and New Jersey in November. Democrats have been put squarely on the defensive. Obama and Democratic leaders are looking for ways to alter the political dynamics in the hope of heading off potentially sizable losses in their congressional majorities in this November's elections.

Sixty-three percent of Massachusetts special-election voters say the country is seriously off track, and Brown captured two-thirds of these voters on Tuesday. In November 2008, Obama won decisively among the more than 80 percent of Massachusetts voters seeing the country as off-course.

Nearly two-thirds of Brown's supporters say their vote was intended at least in part to express opposition to the Democratic agenda in Washington, but few say the senator-elect should simply work to stop it. Three-quarters of those who voted for Brown say they would like him to work with Democrats to get Republican ideas into legislation in general; nearly half say so specifically about health-care legislation.

When Obama was elected, 63 percent of Massachusetts voters said government should do more to solve problems, according to exit polling. In the new poll, that number slipped to

50 percent, with 47 percent saying government is doing too many things better left to businesses and individuals.

Like Obama, Coakley won the votes of more than 70 percent of those seeking government involvement, but the bigger pool of voters seeing government overreach helped Brown claim victory.

Health care topped jobs and the economy as the most important issue driving Massachusetts voters, but among voters for Brown, it was closely followed by the economy and jobs, and "the way Washington is working."

Overall, 43 percent of Massachusetts voters say they support the health-care proposals advanced by Obama and congressional Democrats; 48 percent oppose them. Among Brown's supporters, eight in 10 said they were opposed to the measures, 66 percent of them strongly so.

Sizable majorities of voters for Brown see the Democrats' plan, if passed, as making things worse for their families, the country and Massachusetts. Few Coakley voters see these negatives, and most of those backing her see clear benefits for the country if health-care reform becomes law. Less than half of Coakley's supporters say they or the state would be better off as a result.

Among Brown's supporters who say the health-care reform effort in Washington played an important role in their vote, the most frequently cited reasons were concerns about the process, including closed-door dealing and a lack of bipartisanship. Three in 10 highlighted these political maneuverings as the motivating factor; 22 percent expressed general opposition to reform or the current bill.

Voters for Coakley, by contrast, cited the need to cover the uninsured and fix the health-care system as the main reasons the issue drove their votes.

Massachusetts enacted a universal health-care plan several years ago, and the survey shows that it remains highly popular. Overall, 68 percent of the voters in Tuesday's election say they support the plan, including slightly more than half of those voting for Brown.

Obama also remains popular in Massachusetts. More than six in 10 of those who voted approve of his job performance, with 92 percent of Coakley's voters expressing satisfaction, along with 33 percent of Brown's. More than half of Brown's backers say Obama was not a factor in their vote.

But the Obama administration's policies draw some fire, with nearly half of all special-election voters either dissatisfied or angry about those initiatives. Three-quarters of Brown's supporters expressed the negative view.

Despite the resistance to the Democratic agenda, Obama signaled Friday that he will continue to fight for his policies, including health care. Speaking in Elyria, Ohio, the president acknowledged that he had run into "a buzz saw" of opposition. "I didn't take this up to boost my poll numbers," he said. He added, "And I'm not going to walk away just because it's hard."

GOP policies prove even less popular, with 58 percent of Massachusetts voters saying they are dissatisfied or angry about what Republicans in Congress are offering. Among those voting for Brown, 60 percent give positive marks to the policies of congressional Republicans, but a sizable number, 37 percent, offer a negative appraisal.

The Massachusetts election brought another indication that the Obama coalition from 2008 has splintered, just as the results in gubernatorial races in Virginia and New Jersey showed in November.

Compared with the 2008 presidential results, Coakley suffered significant erosion among whites, independents and working-class voters, according to the survey.

In Massachusetts, independents made up about half of Tuesday's electorate, according to the poll, and they supported Brown by nearly 2 to 1. Obama carried Bay State independents by 17 percentage points in 2008. Among those voting for Brown, 28 percent said they backed Obama over Republican John McCain.

Tuesday's competitive election caught many poll-watchers by surprise, with news interest in the campaign peaking too late to organize an exit poll of voters on Election Day. The Washington Post, the Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University conducted this poll to provide a more complete picture of the stated motivations of special-election voters.

