

Public Opinion of the Affordable Care Act: A Deeply Loved/Hated Law

Mollyann Brodie, PhD
Senior VP of Executive Operations and Executive Director of Public Opinion and Survey Research
Kaiser Family Foundation

PAPOR Chapter Spotlight Webinar
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Filling the need for trusted information on national health issues.

Why KFF Does Public Opinion Research

1. Filling a need for independent, unbiased source that's in the public domain and in the public record
2. Give the public a voice in the system, especially groups who don't often have one
3. Show where leadership is necessary and where public education challenges exist
4. In addition to opinion, gather information about public's experiences, perceptions and knowledge

GOAL: Make sure all this information becomes part of policy debates and discussions



KFF Survey Design Basics

- General U.S. adult population ages 18+ (not just voters)
- Landline and cell phone with live interviewers
- Random digit dial (RDD) sampling
- English and Spanish
- Weighted to adjust demographics to match U.S. Census data
- For most surveys:
 - Sample size ~ 1,200
 - M.O.S.E for full sample \pm 3 percentage points
- KFF is a charter member of the Transparency Initiative of the American Association for Public Opinion Research

Findings We'll Cover

1. Views of the ACA historically and in the wake of repeal debate
2. What's up next for the ACA
3. Look ahead to 2018 Midterms



Insights from Eight Years of Polling on the ACA

A Brief History of U.S. Health Reform

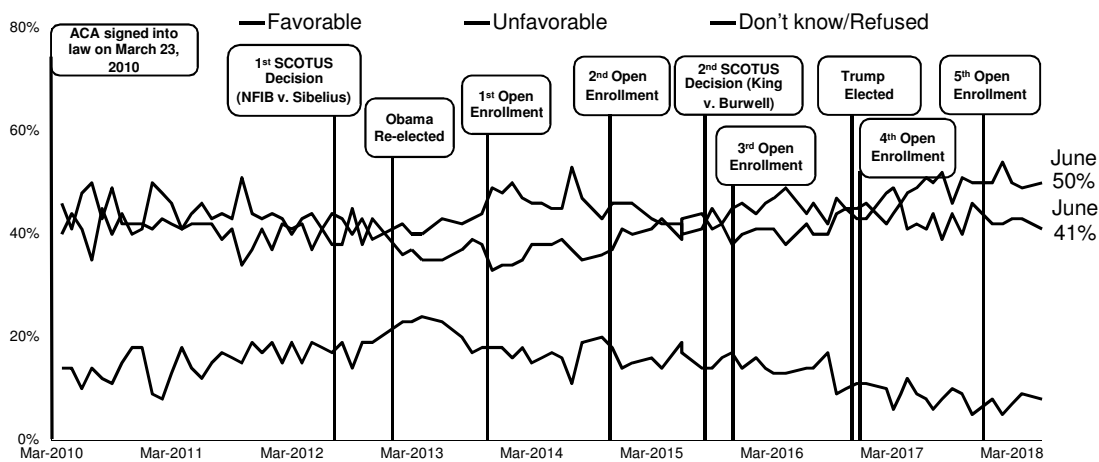
Who/When	What	Fate
1934-1939 (FDR)	NHI and the New Deal	Social Security Act passed w/no health insurance component
1945-1950 (Truman)	NHI and the Fair Deal	Labeled a "socialist plot"
1960-1965 (LBJ)	Medicare and Medicaid	Medicare/Medicaid incorporated into Social Security, expanding coverage for poor, elderly, and disabled
1970-1974 (Nixon/Ford/Mills)	Competing NHI proposals	Wilbur Mills resigns over scandal, leaving NHI w/no champion in Congress
1994 (Clinton)	Health Security Act	Plan seen as too complicated, process not transparent
1997 (Clinton)	State Children's Health Insurance Program	Enacted w/bipartisan support, # of uninsured children falls
2003 (G.W. Bush)	Medicare Rx Drug Act	Rx drug benefit added to Medicare, administered through private plans
2009-2010 (Obama)	Affordable Care Act (Obamacare)	Hybrid approach to coverage expansion through public and private programs – passed with only Democratic votes

What Do We Know About Public Opinion on the ACA?

1. Opinions largely stable
2. You can't overstate the impact of partisanship on ACA opinion
3. The whole is not the same as the parts
4. Remaining confusion, misperceptions
5. In wake of repeal effort, ACA has become more popular (but still divided)

Public Opinion on the ACA – Largely Stable Over Time

As you may know a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010, known commonly as the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?



SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Polls

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What to Call the ACA in Polling Questions?

- **Question wording matters.**

Including terms such as “Obamacare” or references to President Obama measured more partisan responses (Republicans hold more negative attitudes/Democrats hold more positive attitudes)

- **Questionnaire ordering matters.**

Placing the question after more political questions leads to more partisan responses (i.e. priming)

Obamacare vs Health Reform Law, by Party ID

Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a general favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?/Do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of Obamacare?

	Health Reform Law	Obamacare	Percentage Point Difference
Total Public			
Favorable	35%	42%	+7
Unfavorable	43	47	+4
Don't know/Refused	23	11	-12
Democrats			
Favorable	58%	73%	+15
Unfavorable	17	16	-1
Don't know/Refused	25	10	-15
Independents			
Favorable	32%	33%	+1
Unfavorable	43	52	+9
Don't know/Refused	24	14	-10
Republicans			
Favorable	12%	14%	+2
Unfavorable	76	86	+10
Don't know/Refused	11	1	-10

SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted June 4-9, 2013)

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Post-Obama, Question Wording Mattered Less

■ Favorable

■ Unfavorable

KFF: As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you generally have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of it? (Nov. 2016)

43%

45%

Gallup: Do you generally approve or disapprove of the 2010 Affordable Care Act, signed into law by President Obama that restructured the U.S. health care system? (Nov. 2016)

42%

53%

KFF: As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010, known commonly as the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or unfavorable opinion of it? (May 2017)

49%

42%

Gallup: Do you generally approve or disapprove of the 2010 Affordable Care Act, signed into law by President Obama that restructured the U.S. health care system? (April 2017)

55%

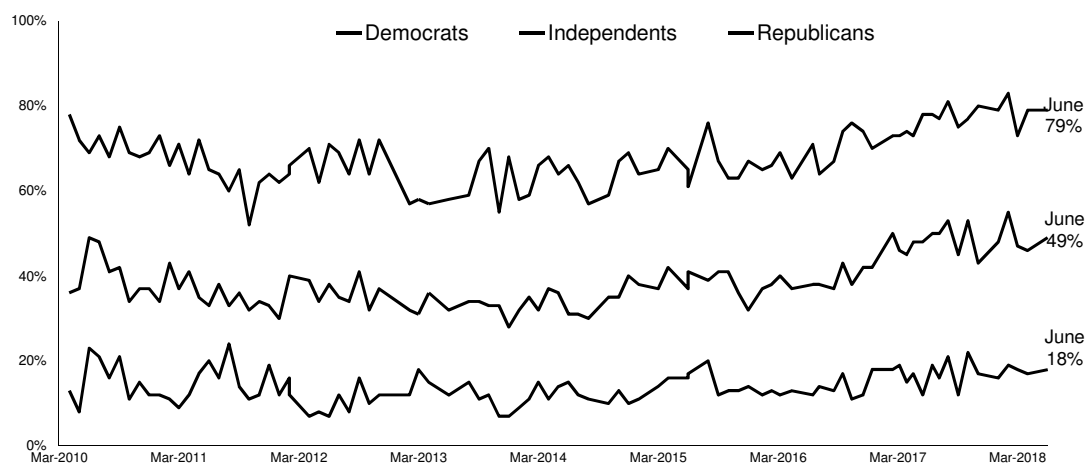
41%

SOURCE: Pew Research Center, Gallup Polls, KFF Health Tracking Polls

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Ongoing Partisan Divide on ACA

Percent who say they have a **favorable** opinion of the health reform law:

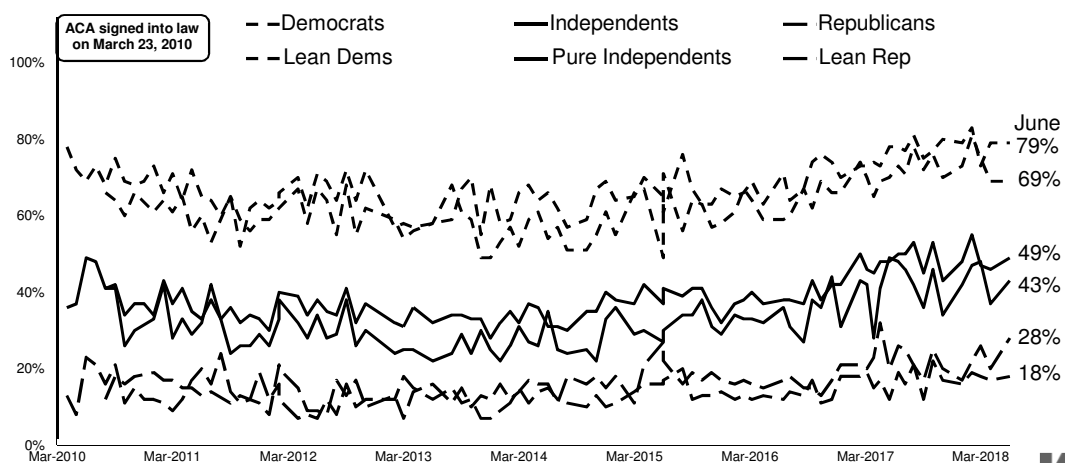


SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Polls

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Leaned Independents' Views Of ACA Looks Similar To Partisans

Percent who say they have a **favorable** opinion of the health reform law:

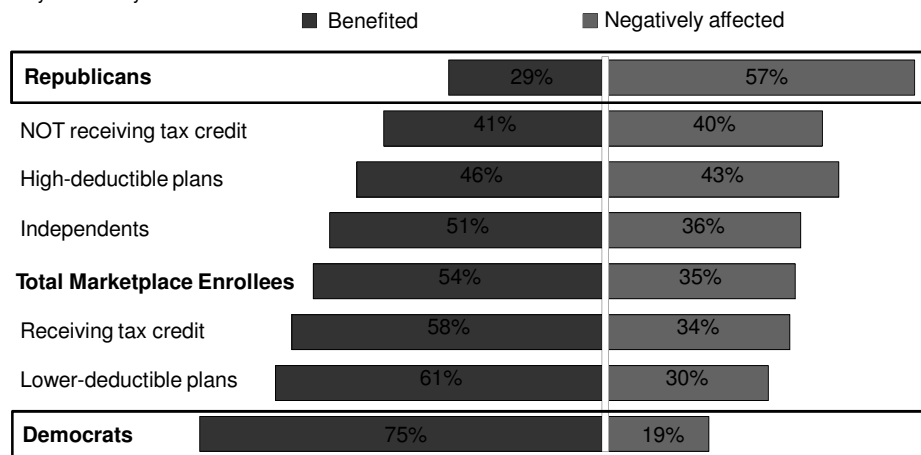


SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Polls

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Even Among Marketplace Enrollees, Partisanship Plays the Biggest Role in Perception of Whether ACA Helped You

AMONG NON-GROUP ENROLLEES WITH MARKETPLACE PLANS: Percent who say they have benefited or been negatively affected by the ACA:

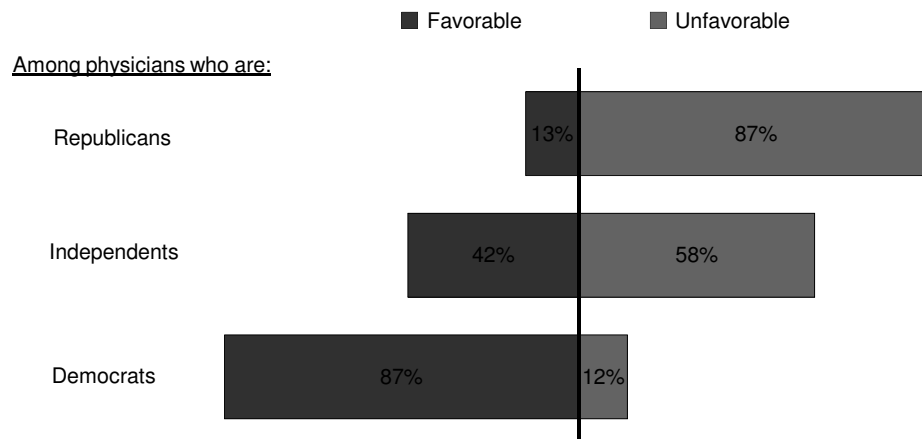


SOURCE: KFF Survey of Non-Group Health Insurance Enrollees, Wave 3 (conducted Feb. 9-Mar. 26, 2016)

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Even Primary Care Physicians' Views of ACA Divide Sharply On Party Lines

Overall, what is your opinion of the health care law that was passed in 2010, also known as the Affordable Care Act (ACA) or Obamacare?

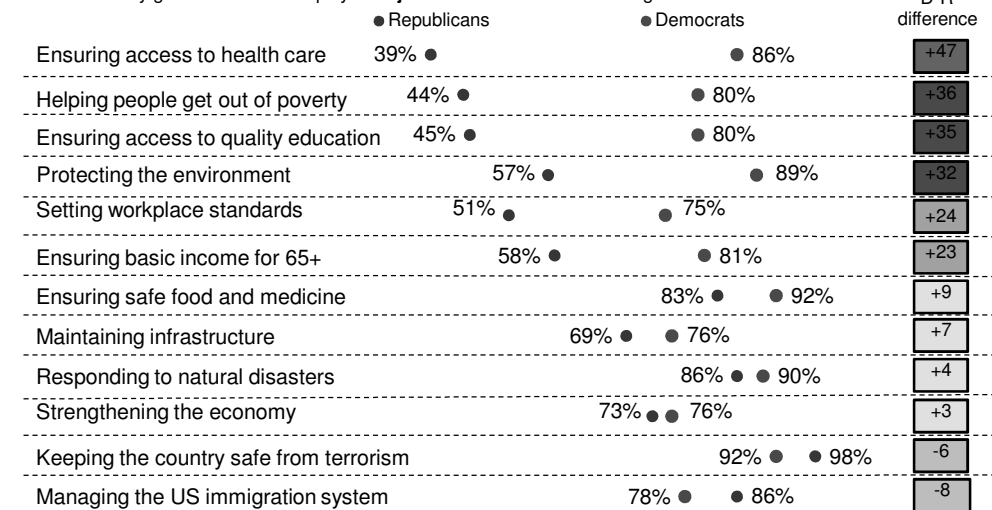


SOURCE: KFF/Commonwealth Fund 2015 National Survey of Primary Care Providers

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Views on Government Role in Health Care More Partisan than Other Areas

Percent who say government should play a **major role** in each of the following areas:

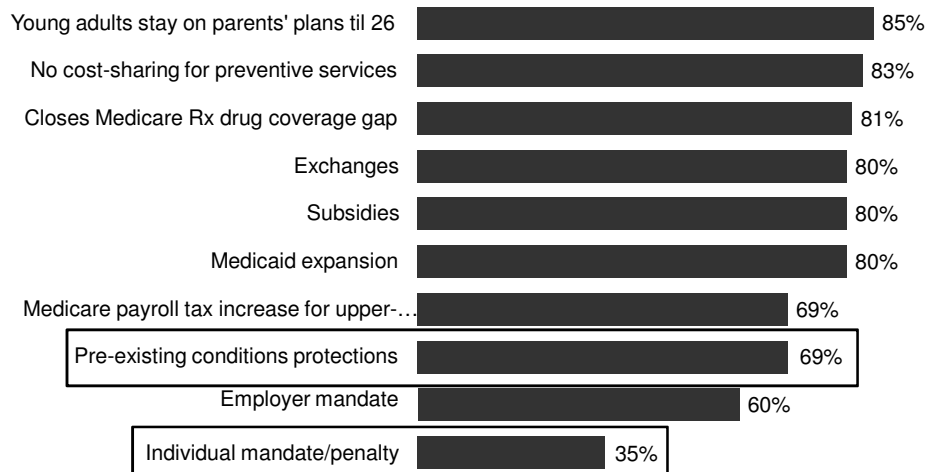


SOURCE: Pew Research Center poll (Nov. 29-Dec. 4, 2017)

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Many Individual Parts of ACA Are Popular, Except Mandate

Percent who **favor** each of the following specific elements of the health care law:



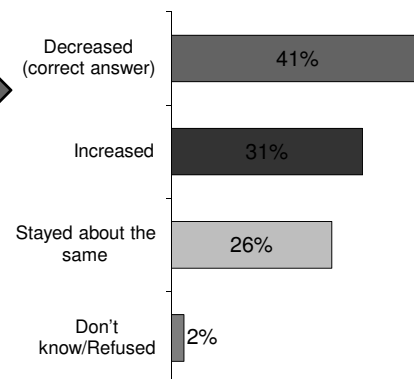
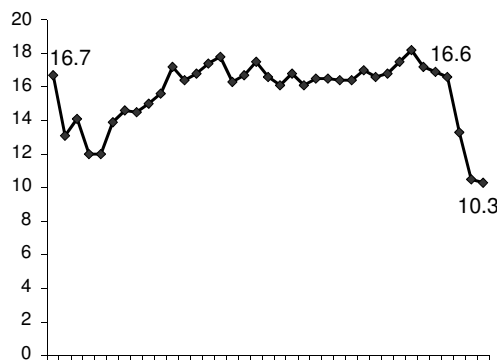
SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted November 15-21, 2016)

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Health Care is Complicated, Public Knowledge about What the ACA Actually Does is Spotty

Share of nonelderly population uninsured:

Since the 2010 health care law was passed, has the share of people who are uninsured...



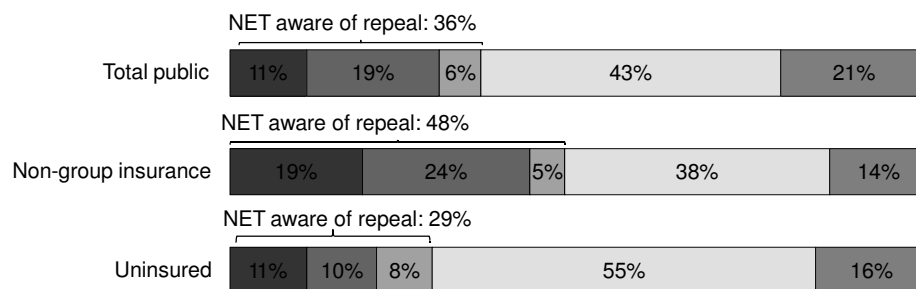
NOTE: 2016 data is for Q1-3 only.
SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Health Interview Survey; KFF Health Tracking Poll (March 6-12, 2017)

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Confusion on Status of Individual Mandate, Even Among Those Most Affected

As you may know, the Affordable Care Act required nearly all Americans to have health insurance, or else pay a fine. As far as you know, has Congress repealed this requirement, or not? Do you happen to know if this requirement is still in effect for 2018, or is it no longer in effect?

- Been repealed but is still in effect for 2018 (CORRECT ANSWER)
- Been repealed and is not in effect
- Has been repealed but don't know if still in effect for 2018
- Has not been repealed
- Don't know/Refused

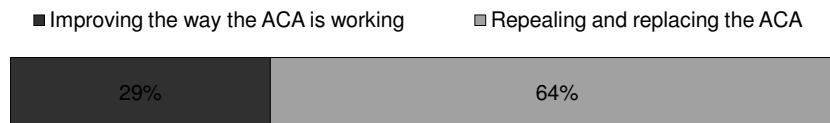


SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Polls (interviews from February and March 2018)

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Partisans Are Divided on What They Want Lawmakers to Focus on When It Comes to the ACA

AMONG REPUBLICANS: Do you think Republicans in Congress should focus their efforts on improving the way the Affordable Care Act is working or should they focus their efforts on repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act?

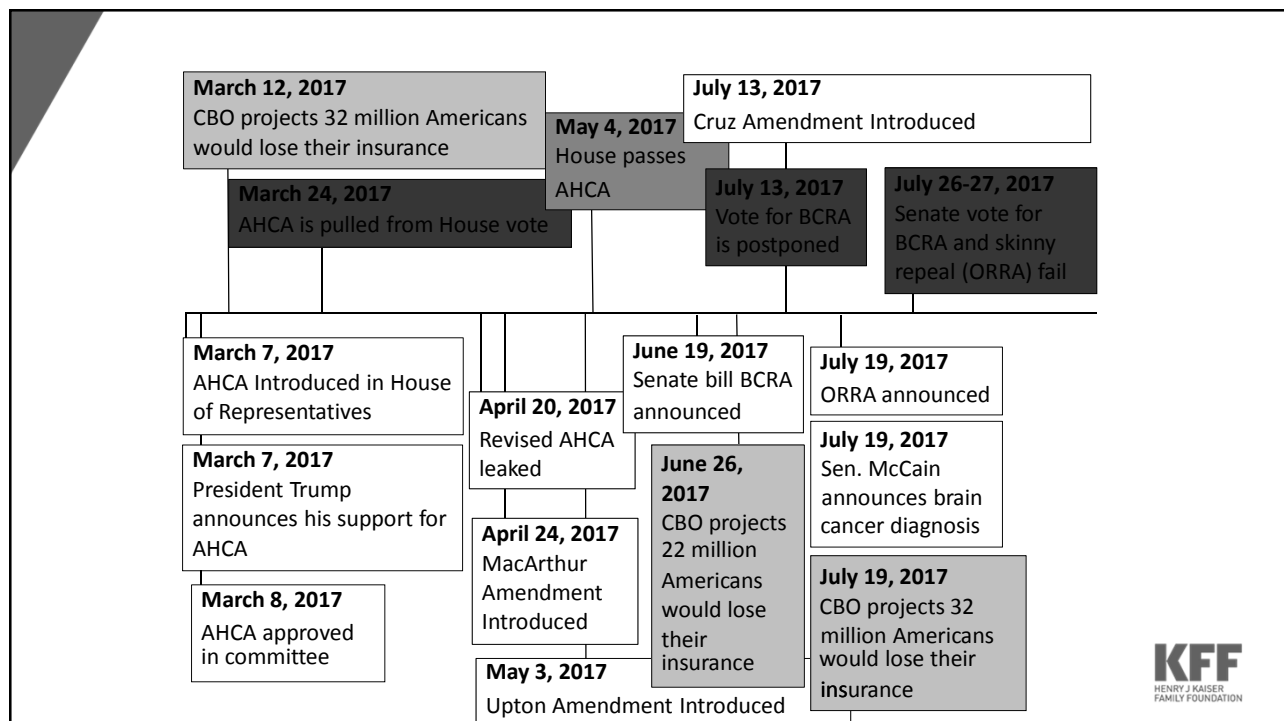


AMONG DEMOCRATS: Do you think Democrats in Congress should focus their efforts on improving the way the Affordable Care Act is working or should they focus their efforts on trying to pass a national health care plan in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan, or Medicare-for-all?



NOTE: "Other/Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.
SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted March 8-13, 2018)

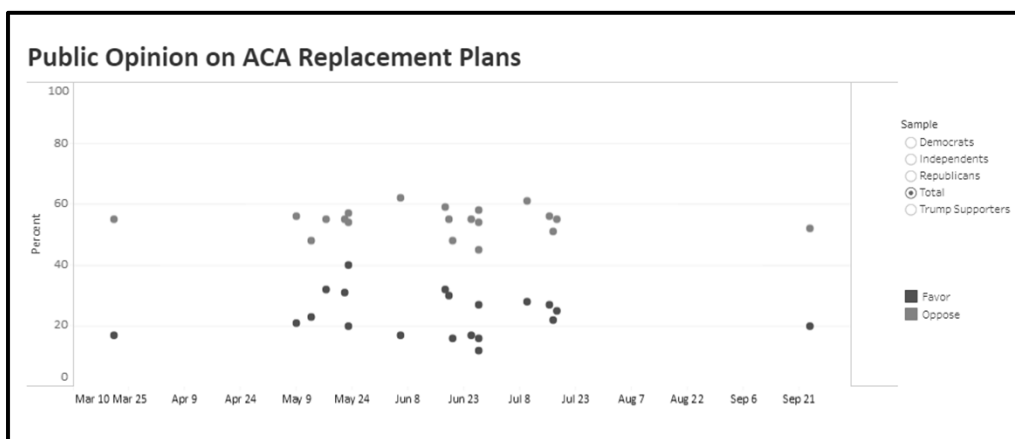
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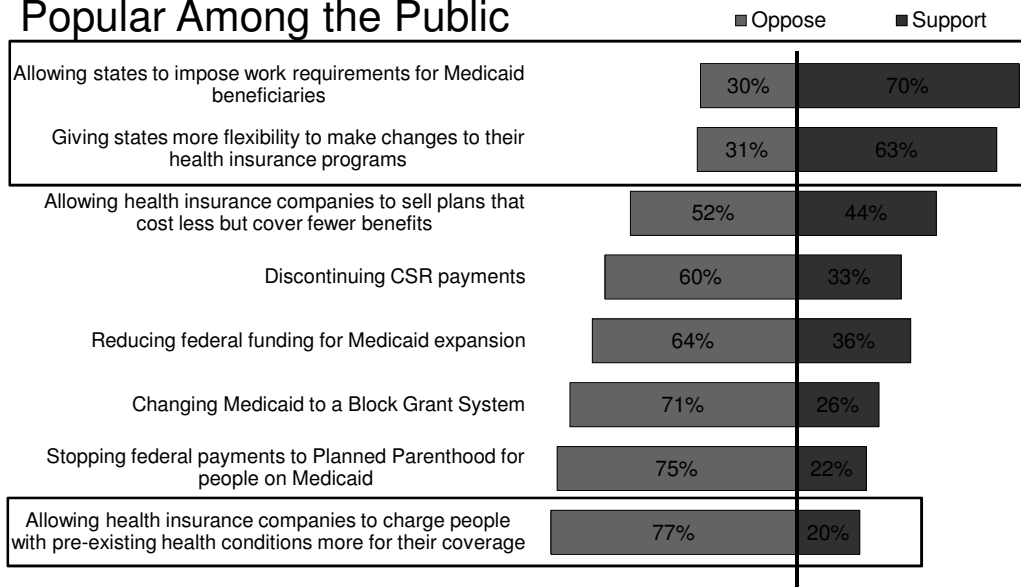
OBAMACARE REPEAL VOTE FAILS 51-49

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Polling on the ACA Replacement Plans



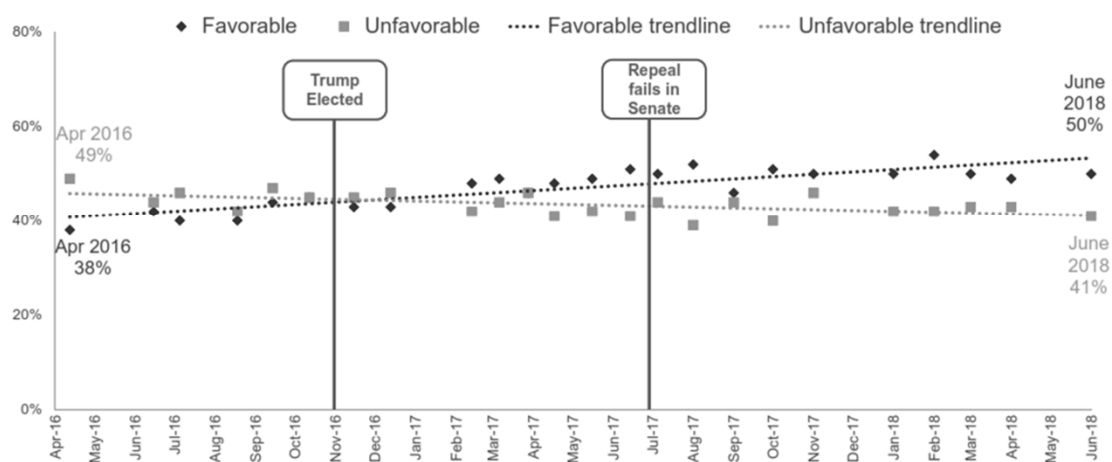
Few Changes Included in ACA Replacement Plans Were Popular Among the Public



SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Polls

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Under Threat, ACA Has Become More Popular (But Opinion Still Divided)



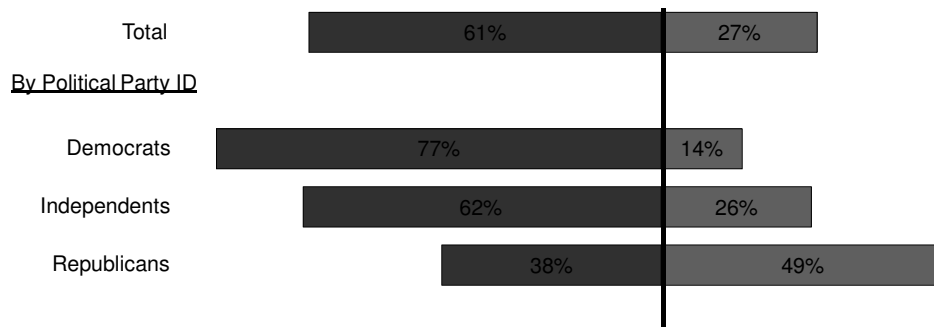
SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Polls

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Majority of the Public Say President Trump and Republicans Are Responsible for ACA Moving Forward

Which comes closer to your view?

- Since President Trump and Republicans in Congress have made changes to the law, they are responsible for any problems with it moving forward
- Since President Obama and Democrats in Congress passed the law, they are still responsible for any problems with it moving forward



NOTE: Question wording abbreviated. See topline for full question wording. Neither of these/someone else is responsible (vol.), Both are equally responsible (vol.), and Don't know/Refused responses not shown.
SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted January 16-21, 2018)

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Looking Toward the 2018 Midterms



Poll: Voters say health care top issue in midterms

BY PETER SULLIVAN - 04/04/18 01:03 PM EDT

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PowerPost

PowerPost • Analysis

The Health 202: Democrats argue health care was stealth winning issue in Pennsylvania special

By Paige Winfield Cunningham March 15 Email the author



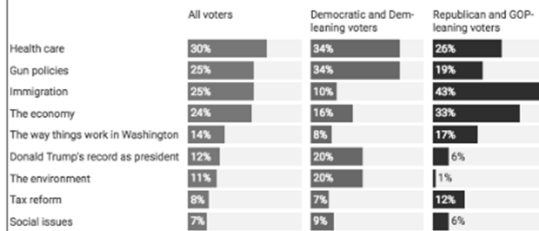
Health care is Democrats' secret weapon in the 2018 midterm elections

2018 is shaping up to be the inverse of 2010.

By Dylan Scott | @dylanlscott | dylan.scott@vox.com | Mar 22, 2018, 8:30am EDT

Health Care Tops Voters' Midterm Concerns

Thinking about the 2018 midterm elections, which two issues are the MOST important to you? Select up to TWO issues.



Health care top issue for voters, and could hurt Republicans in 2018 midterms big-time

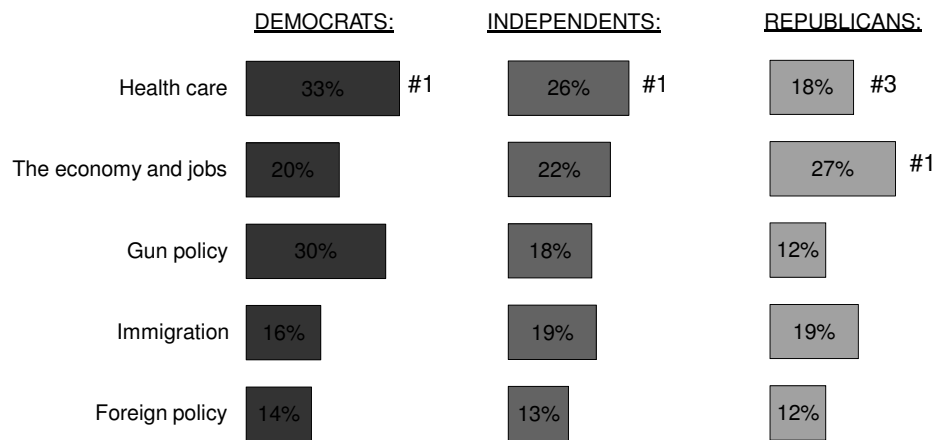
- More than half of all voters view health care as a top priority, far outpacing any other single issue.
- A large majority of voters say President Trump and Republicans should drop efforts to repeal Obamacare and work with Democrats to improve the law.
- By a margin of 47 percent to 38 percent, voters said they would be less likely to reelect their members of Congress if they voted Obamacare repeal.

Dan Mangan | @DanMangan
Published 2:32 PM ET Fri, 12 Jan 2018 | Updated 2:49 PM ET Fri, 12 Jan 2018
CNBC

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Health Care Is Top Issue for Democratic and Independent Voters, Less So For Republican Voters

REGISTERED VOTERS: Percent who say each of the following is "the most important issue" for 2018 candidates to talk about during their upcoming campaigns:

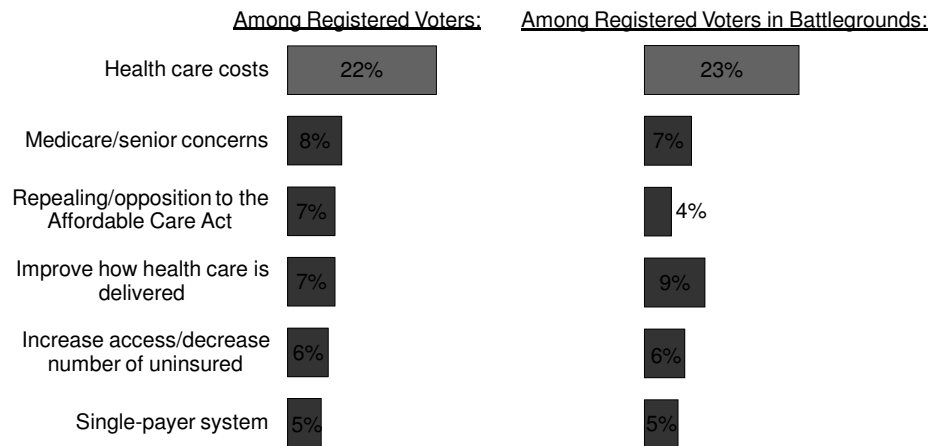


SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted June 11-20, 2018)

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What Do Voters Mean When They Say They Want Candidates to Talk About Health Care?

While this year's election is still a long way off, what **health care issue** do you most want to hear candidates talk about during their upcoming campaigns? (*open-end*)



NOTE: Only top six responses listed.

SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted February 15-20, 2018)

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Americans Reported Real Problems With Cost Before ACA

Over half (58 percent) say they or another family member living in their household have **put off some sort of health care** because of cost in the last year

A quarter (26 percent) say they or another family member in their household have **experienced problems paying medical bills** in the last year

These numbers are significantly higher among certain groups, such as the uninsured, those in poor health, and those with lower incomes

Insurance doesn't offer ironclad protection

- Among those with health insurance under 65, 64 percent **are worried about having to pay more for their health care or health insurance**

SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll conducted May 8-14, 2012

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AND This Hasn't Changed: Today

Over half (51 percent) (from January 2017) say they or another family member living in their household have **put off some sort of health care** because of cost in the last year

A quarter (29 percent) (from February 2017) say they or another family member in their household have **experienced problems paying medical bills** in the last year

These numbers are significantly higher among certain groups, such as the uninsured, those in poor health, and those with lower incomes

Insurance doesn't offer ironclad protection

- Among those with health insurance under 65, 68 percent (from January 2016) **are worried about having to pay more for their health care or health insurance**

SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Polls

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Health Care Priorities = “Lower My Costs!”

Percent who said each should be a **top priority** for Donald Trump and Congress to do when it comes to health care:

RANK	TOTAL	DEMOCRATS	INDEPENDENTS	REPUBLICANS
1	Lowering the amount individuals pay for health care (63%)	Lowering the amount individuals pay for health care (68%)	Lowering the cost of Rx drugs (58%)	Lowering the amount individuals pay for health care (67%)
2	Lowering the cost of Rx drugs (60%)	Lowering the cost of Rx drugs (64%)	Lowering the amount individuals pay for health care (56%)	Repealing the ACA (61%)
3	Dealing with the Rx painkiller addiction epidemic (53%)	Dealing with the Rx painkiller addiction epidemic (46%)	Dealing with the Rx painkiller addiction epidemic (50%)	Lowering the cost of Rx drugs (60%)
4	Decreasing the role of the federal government in health care (33%)	Decreasing how much the federal government spends on health care over time (22%)	Decreasing the role of the federal government in health care (32%)	Dealing with the Rx painkiller addiction epidemic (52%)
5	Repealing the ACA (32%)	Decreasing the role of the federal government in health care (19%)	Repealing the ACA (27%)	Decreasing the role of the federal government in health care (51%)
6	Decreasing how much the federal government spends on health care over time (30%)	Repealing the ACA (13%)	Decreasing how much the federal government spends on health care over time (27%)	Decreasing how much the federal government spends on health care over time (43%)

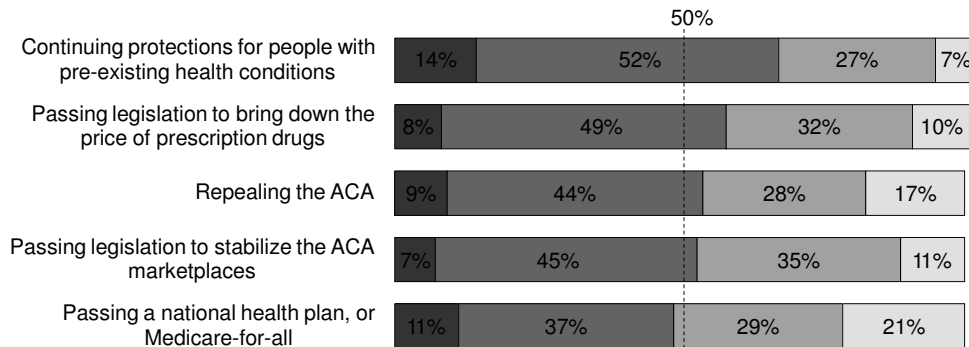
SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted April 17-23, 2017)

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Candidates' Support for Continued Protections for Pre-Existing Conditions Tops Health Care Positions for Voters

REGISTERED VOTERS: Thinking about the upcoming election, is a candidate's support for each of the following the single most important factor in your vote, very important but not the most important factor, one of many factors you'll consider, or not an important factor in your vote?

- Single most important factor
- Very important, but not the most important factor
- One of many factors you'll consider
- Not an important factor in your vote



NOTE: "Don't plan to vote (Vol.*)" and Don't know/Refused responses not shown.
SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted June 11-20, 2018)

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Majorities Say It Is Very Important That ACA Provisions Protecting Those With Pre-Existing Conditions Remain Law

How important is it to you that the provision that prohibits health insurance companies from ... remains law?

■ Very important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not too important □ Not at all important

...denying coverage because of a person's medical history...



...charging sick people more...

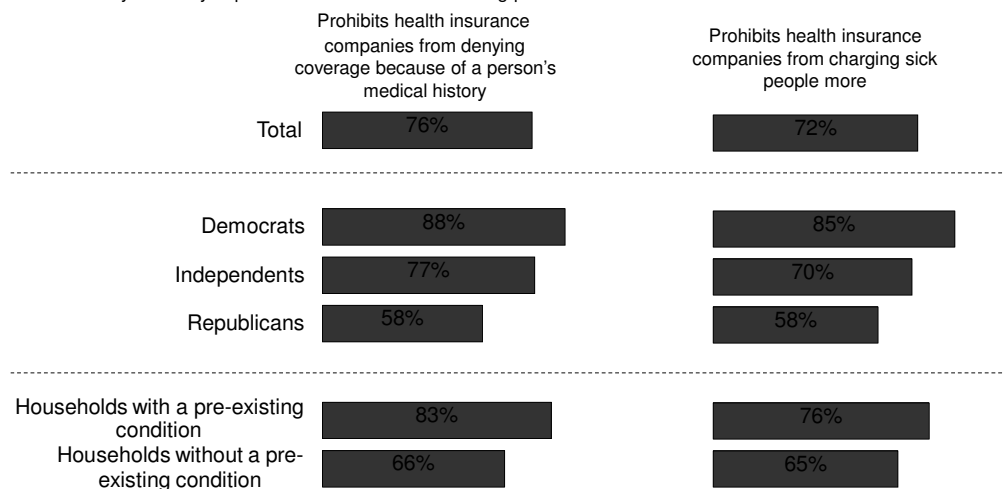


NOTE: Questions asked of separate half samples. Don't know/Refused responses not shown.
SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted June 11-20, 2018)

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Across Partisans and Household Health Status, Most Say It's Very Important ACA Pre-Existing Provisions Remain Law

Percent who say it is "very important" to them that the following provisions remain law:

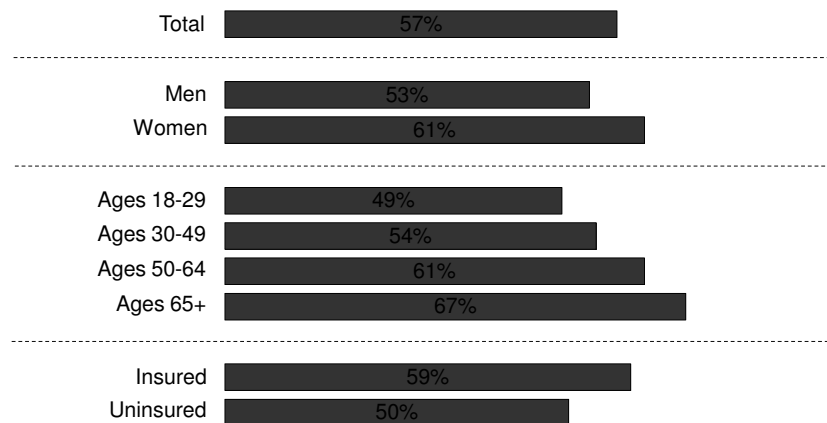


SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted June 11-20, 2018)

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About Six in Ten Say They or Someone in Their Household Has a Pre-Existing Condition

Percent who say they or someone else in their household has a pre-existing condition, defined as a term used by insurance companies to describe an illness or medical condition that a person had before they began looking for insurance, such as a history of asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, or cancer:



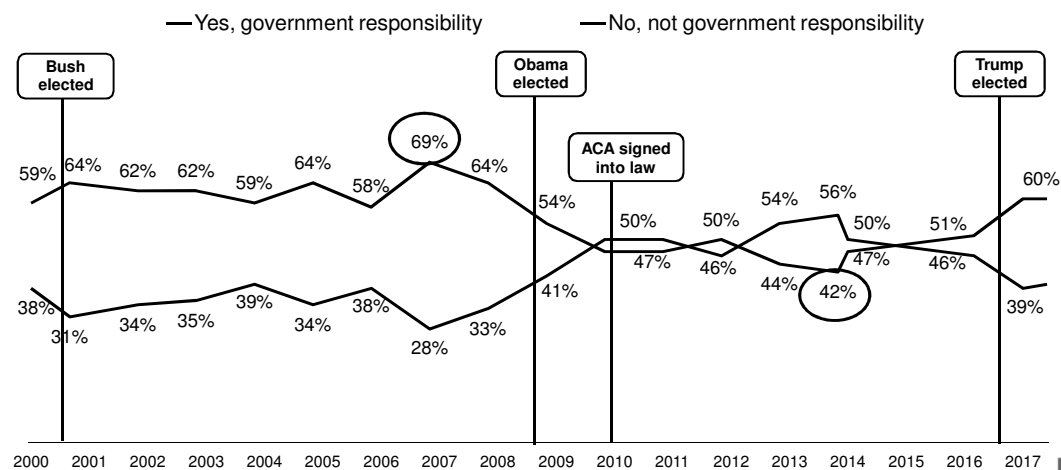
SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted June 11-20, 2018)

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Is the U.S. Ready for Single-Payer?

Public Opinion on Government Responsibility to Provide Health Care Fluctuates Over Time

Do you think it is the responsibility of the federal government to make sure all Americans have health care coverage, or is that not the responsibility of the federal government?

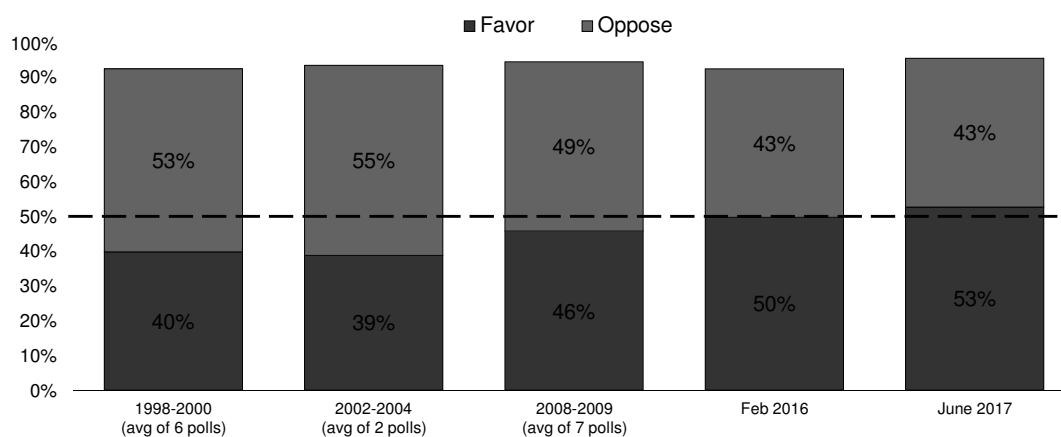


NOTE: Don't know/Refused responses not shown
SOURCE: Pew/Gallup Polls

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Modest Increase in Support for Single Payer Health Care in 2017

Percent who favor or oppose a national health plan in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan



NOTE: Question wording varied slightly over time. See topline for full question wording.
SOURCE: KFF Polls

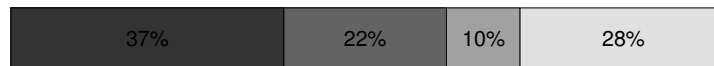
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Similar Shares of Republicans “Strongly Oppose” and Democrats “Strongly Favor” National Health Plan

Do you favor or oppose having a national health plan, or Medicare-for-all, in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan?

■ Strongly favor ■ Somewhat favor ■ Somewhat oppose □ Strongly oppose

Total

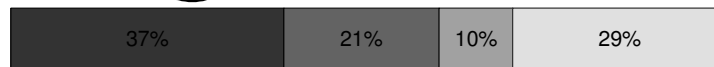


By Political Party ID

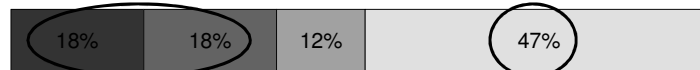
Democrats



Independents



Republicans



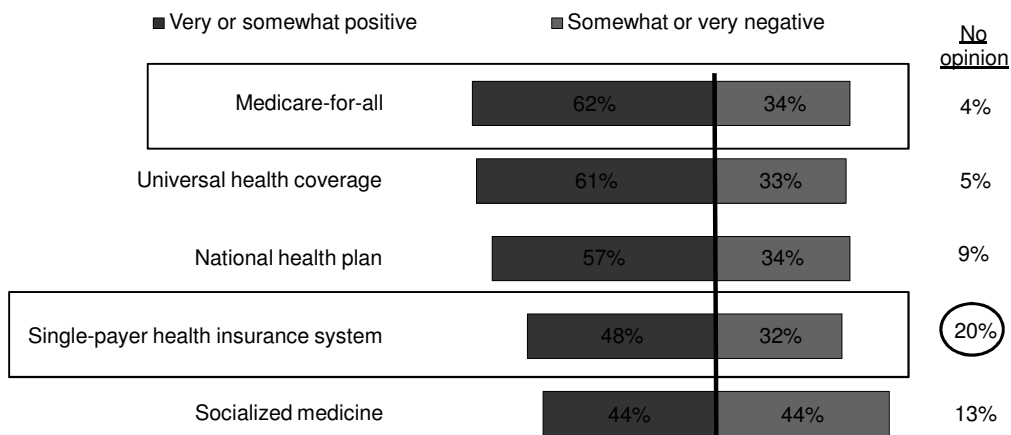
NOTE: Don't know/Refused responses not shown.

SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted March 8-13, 2018)

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Terminology Affects Public Opinion on Single-Payer

Do you have a positive or negative reaction to the following terms?



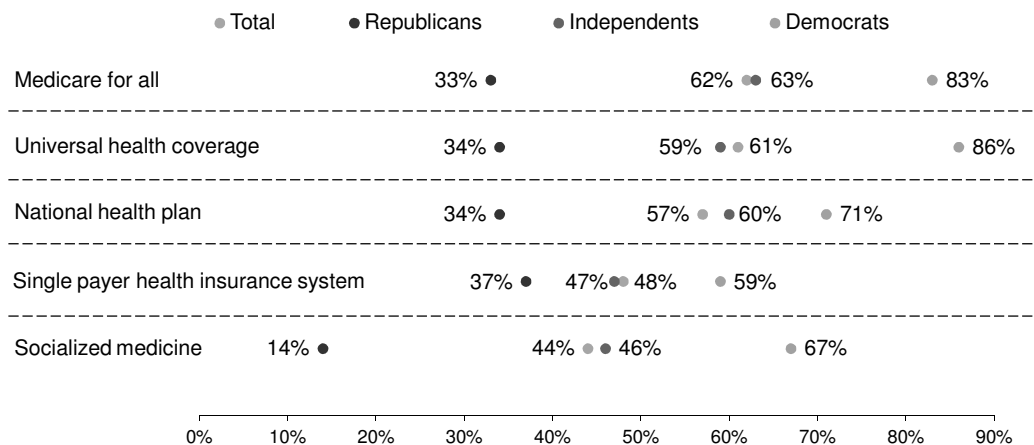
NOTE: Items asked of separate half samples.

SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted from November 8-13, 2017)

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Language Matters in Describing a National Health Plan

Percent who say they have a **positive reaction** to each of the following terms:



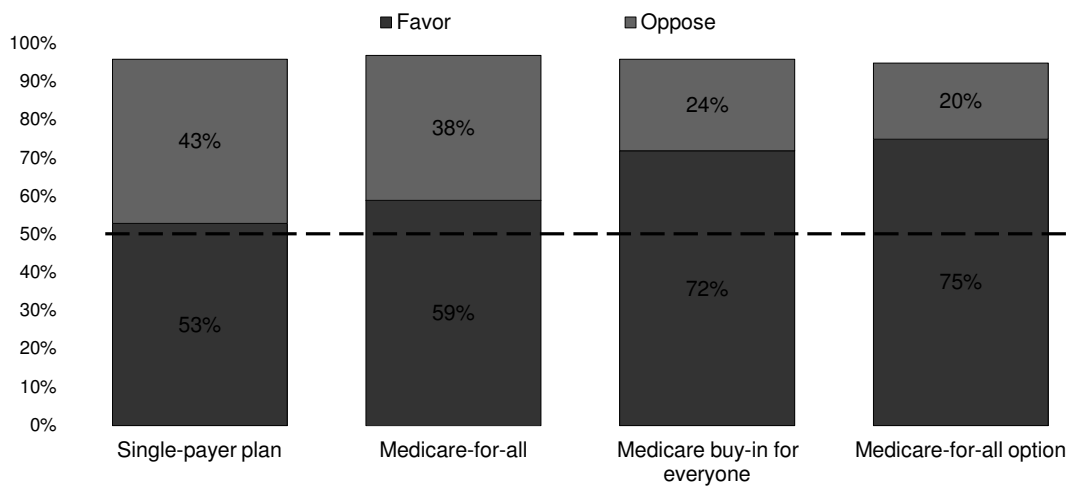
NOTE: Items asked of separate half samples

SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted November 8-13, 2017)

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Broad Support for Proposals to Expand Medicare

Percent who favor or oppose:

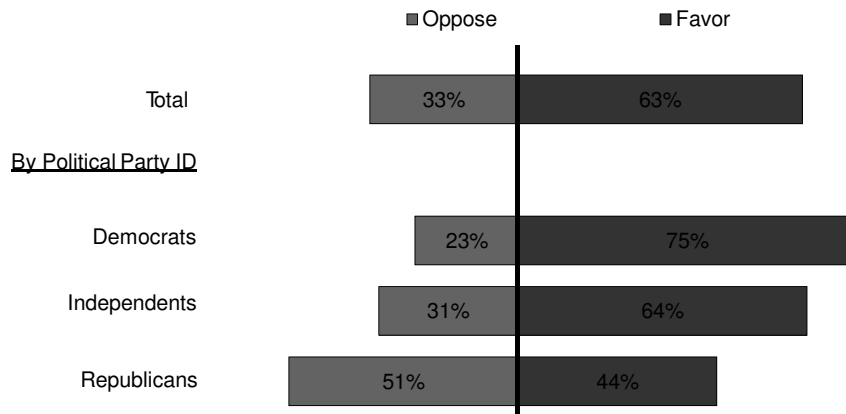


SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Polls 2017-2018

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More Incremental Approach to Universal Coverage: Medicare “Buy-In”

As you may know, people become eligible for health insurance through Medicare when they turn 65. Do you favor or oppose letting some people under the age of 65 buy insurance through the Medicare program?



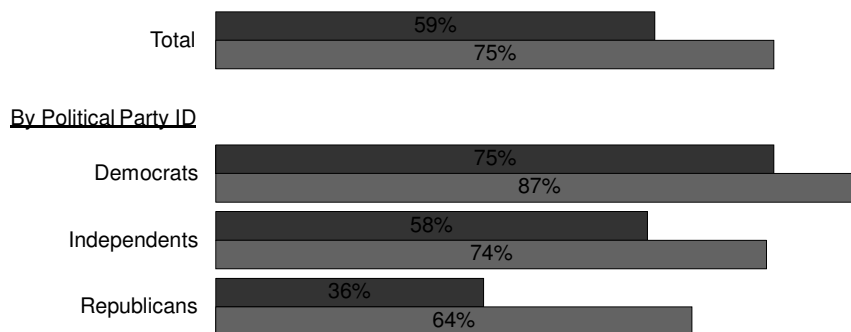
SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted September 13-18, 2017)

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“Optional” Medicare-for-All Popular Across Parties

Percent who **favor** the following proposals:

- A national health plan, or Medicare-for-all, in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan
- A national Medicare-for-all plan open to anyone who wants it but people who currently have other coverage could keep what they have



SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted March 8-13, 2018)

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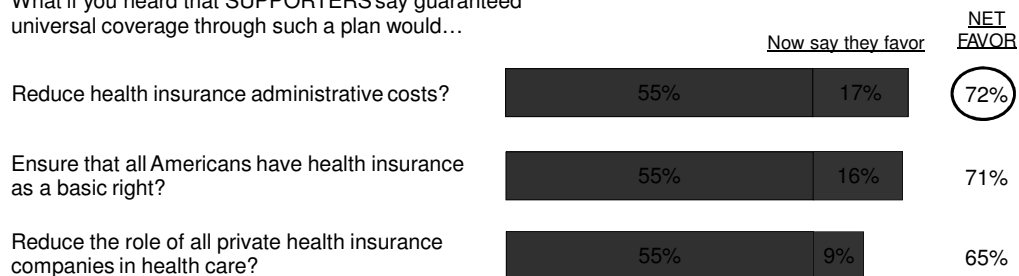
Arguments in Favor of Single-Payer Plan Sway Some Initial Opponents

Do you favor or oppose having a national health plan, or (single-payer/Medicare-for-all) plan, in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan?



ASKED OF THE 40% WHO OPPOSE:

What if you heard that SUPPORTERS say guaranteed universal coverage through such a plan would...



NOTE: Top bars show results for combined question wording. Don't know/Refused responses not shown.
SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll (conducted June 14-19, 2017)

Arguments Against Single-Payer Plan Sway Some Initial Supporters

Do you favor or oppose having a national health plan, or (single-payer/Medicare-for-all) plan, in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan?



ASKED OF THE 55% WHO FAVOR:

What if you heard that OPPONENTS say guaranteed universal coverage through such a plan would...

Give the government too much control over health care?

NET
OPPOSE

Now say they oppose

62%

21%

40%

Require many Americans to pay more in taxes?

60%

19%

40%

Eliminate or replace the Affordable Care Act?

53%

13%

40%

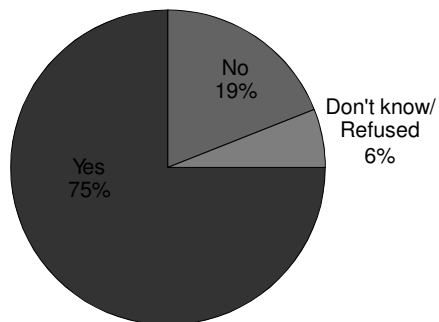
NOTE: Top bars show results for combined question wording. Don't know/Refused responses not shown.
SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll (conducted June 14-19, 2017)

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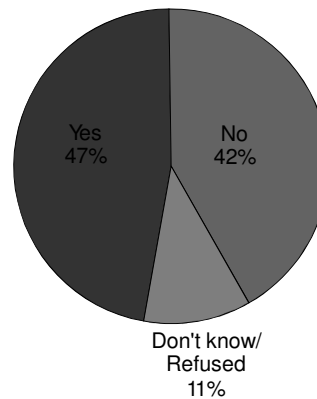
Misconceptions Persist About National Health Plan Provisions

Percent who think that, if a national health plan was put into place, they and their family would...

...have to **pay more in taxes** to cover the cost of health insurance



...be able to **keep their current health insurance**



SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted October 5-10, 2017)

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Voters Say Candidate's Stance on National Health Plan Is Important, But Few Say It Is Most Important Factor in 2018

Thinking about the upcoming elections, is a candidate's position on a national health plan the single most important factor in your vote, is it important, but not the most important factor, or is it not an important factor?

■ Single most important factor ■ Important, but not the most important factor ■ Not an important factor



NOTE: Don't know/Refused responses not shown.

SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted March 8-13, 2018)

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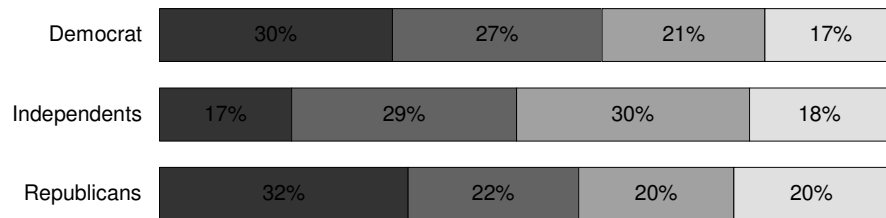
For Partisans, Trump “Trumps” Issues

What will make the biggest difference in how you vote for Congress?

- A candidate's support/opposition to President Trump
- The candidate's character and experience
- Specific national issues
- Local or state issues



Voters by Political Party ID



NOTE: "Don't Plan to Vote (Vol.)," "All (Vol.)," "None/other (Vol.)," and Don't know/Refused responses not shown.
SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted April 20-30, 2018)

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