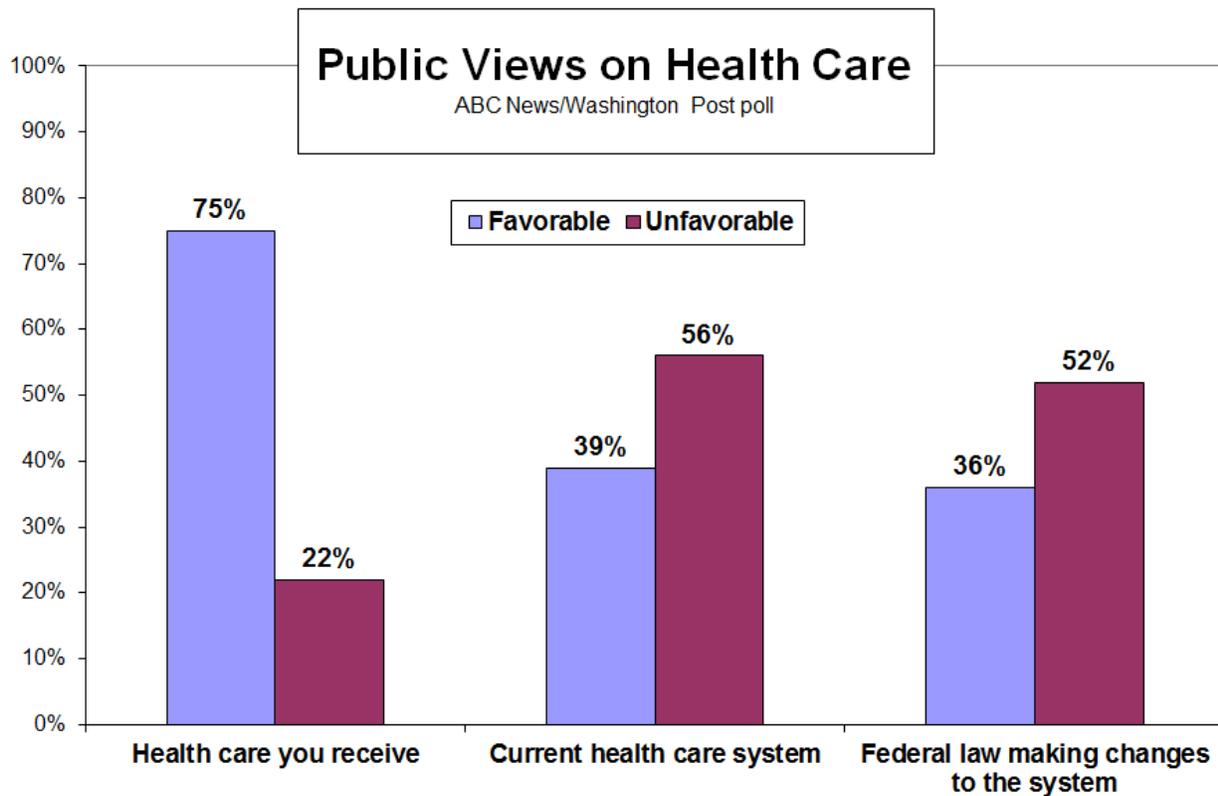


Health Care Law Lacks Support – But So Does the Status Quo

Americans are equally dissatisfied with the current health care system and with the federal law intended to improve it – suggesting that the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision on that law will by no means end the country’s sharp political debate over health care policy.

Just 36 percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll express a favorable opinion of the health care law under Supreme Court review. But ratings of the health care system as it currently stands are about as weak, 39 percent favorable. That means that while the intended fix is unpopular, so is the status quo – leaving the public still in search of solutions.

One key challenge is that while Americans are broadly dissatisfied with the system overall, vastly more – 75 percent – rate their own quality of care favorably. The difficulty thus remains where it’s been all along: Forging solutions to the current system’s problems that don’t leave people fearing they’ll lose what many see as their own good quality of care now.



The high court’s ruling on the health care law, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, known as the ACA, is expected Thursday. While the law’s popularity is weak, barely more than half, 52 percent, see it unfavorably, including 38 percent who have a “strongly” unfavorable opinion. With key provisions yet to take effect, 12 percent are undecided.

Other polling has indicated that a variety of aspects of the ACA are broadly popular – but that these are outweighed by the unpopularity of the so-called individual mandate, requiring nearly all adults to purchase insurance or pay a fine.

Another difficulty for proponents of the ACA is that dissatisfaction with the health care system now, or with current care, doesn’t boost support for the new law. Among people who rate the current system unfavorably, just 35 percent have a favorable opinion of the ACA. And among those who give a negative review to their own care, the ACA’s popular with just 32 percent.

Still, while the ACA is not popular, an ABC/Post poll in May found weak support for Mitt Romney’s call to repeal it – a 40-40 percent division in favorable vs. unfavorable views. And in another measure, in April, just 38 percent said the Supreme Court should reject the law in its entirety. Twenty-five percent wanted it entirely upheld; 29 percent said it should be upheld in part, rejected in part.

POLITICAL LINES – This poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds sharp political differences, with the ACA seen favorably by 59 percent of Democrats, falling sharply to 36 percent of independents and just 14 percent of Republicans. Ideological divisions are similar, with liberals nearly three times more supportive of the law than are conservatives.

Divisions on the current health care system are more muted. Republicans divide, 47-49 percent, in favorable vs. unfavorable opinions of the system as it is now. Positive views are 10 and 13 percentage points lower among Democrats and independents, respectively.

	Favorable-unfavorable ratings		
	Care you receive	Current system	Federal law
All	75-22%	39-56	36-52
Democrats	73-26	37-58	59-30
Republicans	83-13	47-49	14-81
Independents	69-26	34-62	36-52
Liberals	72-26	28-69	58-30
Moderates	74-23	38-57	40-50
Conservatives	78-19	48-46	20-71
Liberal Dems.	76-23	32-64	71-19
Conservative Reps.	87-10	51-44	11-85

Among one group – conservative Republicans – favorable views of the current system inch over the halfway point, to 51 percent, while positive ratings of the ACA crater in this group at just 11

percent. Across the spectrum, among liberal Democrats, the current system is less popular by 19 points, while the ACA is more popular by a vast 60-point margin vs. conservative Republicans.

A difference in intensity of sentiment boosts critics of the health care law: It's seen "strongly" unfavorably by 63 percent of Republicans and 57 percent of conservatives, but strongly favorably by just 30 percent of Democrats and 31 percent of liberals.

OTHERS – Among other groups, views of the ACA are more strongly negative by 15 points among full-time workers vs. those who are employed part time; by 18 points among middle-aged and older adults (40 and up) vs. those who are younger; and by 10 points among people with middle or higher incomes vs. those with household incomes less than \$50,000 a year.

Positive ratings of current care, for their part, peak among senior citizens, at 86 percent – perhaps ironically, given their enrollment in the government-run Medicare program. Current care ratings also are higher, by 15 points, among people with \$50,000-plus incomes, vs. their lower-income counterparts. And strongly favorable ratings of current care spike, in particular, among people in \$100,000-plus households.

In all, however the Supreme Court rules, views on health care leave most Americans in a long-familiar place: torn between satisfaction with their own quality of care and unhappiness with the current system overall – and dissatisfied with the solutions as yet put forth.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone June 20-24, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,022 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS/Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

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

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Full results follow.

1. Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of (ITEM)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat? (ITEMS SCRAMBLED)

6/24/12 - Summary Table

	NET	Favorable Strgly.	Smwt.	NET	Unfavorable Smwt.	Strgly.	No op.
a. The current health care system in this country	39	14	25	56	21	35	5
b. The health care you receive	75	42	33	22	9	13	3

c. The federal law making
changes in the health
care system 36 16 20 52 14 38 12

*** END ***