

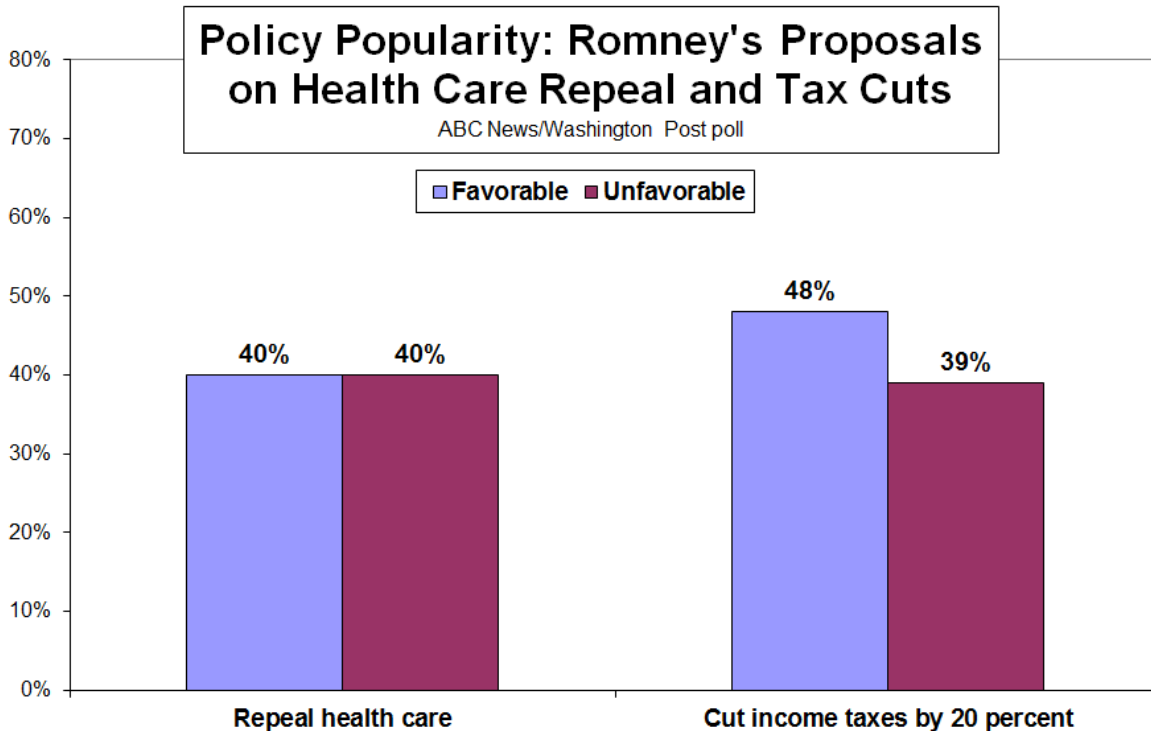
Views on Two Romney Policy Proposals Underscore the Candidates' Challenges

Two of Mitt Romney's key campaign proposals fall short of majority approval, with swing-voting independents especially cool on his plan to repeal health care reform and evenly divided on his offer of a hefty tax cut.

Trimming taxes does better overall. Among all Americans, 48 percent express a favorable opinion of Romney's proposal to reduce federal tax rates by 20 percent, while 39 percent see it unfavorably. His call to repeal the Obama health care law, for its part, gets a 40-40 split.

Neither proposal earns majority support in this ABC News/Washington Post poll, putting Romney in a similar bind as Barack Obama, with results that mark both candidates' difficulties breaking beyond partisan and ideological boundaries to marshal majorities for their positions.

Independents, customarily a critical voting group in presidential elections, respond more unfavorably than favorably to Romney's support for repealing the health care law, 47-33 percent. As noted, they only split evenly, 43-42 percent, favorable-unfavorable, on his tax plan.



Romney’s net score on taxes is similar to Obama’s, reported last week, on the auto industry bailout (seen favorably by a 7-point margin); Obama also is +5 on greater regulation of financial institutions (albeit in a poll done before the JPMorgan derivative debacle). Obama gets an even split both on his economic stimulus program and on gay marriage, much like responses to Romney’s proposed repeal of health care reform (albeit, in this case, with more undecided.)

There is, naturally, a political aspect to these opinions. In an ABC/Post poll in March, Americans by 55-37 percent said they’d rather have the Supreme Court entirely reject the health care law than entirely uphold it. This poll, though, adds the direct partisan element of asking favorable or unfavorable views of Romney’s proposal to repeal the law. The 40-40 percent split on that question suggests that some are more ill-disposed toward Romney than they are toward the law.

There was a similar result among racial groups in data released yesterday on gay marriage: More blacks favored Obama’s new position on the issue than have, in the past, supported gay marriage itself, with an opposite effect among whites.

POLITICS – As with Obama, this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds opinions on Romney’s campaign positions sharply divided along ideological and partisan lines. Three-quarters of Republicans hold favorable views of Romney’s position on taxes and the health care law alike. A third of Democrats are with him on the tax cut; on repealing the health care law, that slides to one in six.

	Favorable-unfavorable ratings	
	Health care repeal	20 percent tax cut
All	40-40%	48-39
Democrats	17-64	33-57
Republicans	75-10	76-16
Independents	33-47	43-42
Liberals	14-64	28-61
Moderates	30-53	47-40
Conservatives	63-20	64-27
Somewhat conservatives	58-25	61-28
Very conservatives	70-15	68-25
Liberal Democrats	8-69	23-67
Conservative Republicans	79- 5	78-15

Intensity of sentiment overall is a draw, with roughly equal numbers of Americans offering strongly favorable or strongly unfavorable responses. (That’s better than it is for Obama on the economic stimulus, on which strongly negative views predominate by 13 points.)

Specifically among independents, though, Romney gets more headwinds in terms of intensity. More rate his position on repealing health care reform strongly unfavorably than strongly favorably, by 29 to 20 percent; and on cutting taxes by 25-18 percent.

OTHER GROUPS – Beyond political and ideological groups, Romney’s campaign proposals do better with some of his customarily stronger support groups, including men (particularly on health care), the relatively more well-off, adults age 30 and older and whites (vs. blacks).

For example, men are more apt to favor his position on repealing the health care law than are women, 44 vs. 35 percent, and one-third of men feel that way strongly, compared with 21 percent of women. Favorable views of Romney’s stance on lowering taxes reach a majority (52 percent) among men; they’re a bit lower, 45 percent, among women.

And while 43 percent of adults age 30 and older support Romney on repealing the health care law, just 27 percent of younger adults say the same, with a sizable three in 10 undecided.

	Favorable-unfavorable ratings	
	Health care repeal	20 percent tax cut
All	40-40%	48-39
Men	44-37	52-37
Women	35-43	45-40
Whites	43-38	50-37
Blacks	23-59	34-53
Hispanics	37-41	57-32
18-29	27-42	40-41
30+	43-40	50-38
<\$50,000	35-43	44-41
\$50,000+	46-38	53-38

Finally, nearly twice as many whites as African-Americans support Romney on repealing the health care law (43 vs. 23 percent), with Hispanics more evenly split. Compared with views on the health care law, support for Romney on cutting taxes is notably higher among Hispanics, by 20 percentage points – a potential opening for him in a group considered critical to his prospects in the presidential election.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone May 9-13, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,008 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 Damla Ergun.

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)

a. Mitt Romney's proposal to repeal the federal law making changes in the health care system

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
5/13/12	40	27	13	40	15	25	20

b. Mitt Romney's proposal to cut federal income tax rates by 20 percent

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
5/13/12	48	25	23	39	14	25	13

1c previously released.

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