

## 1119a2 New Low in Support for Health Care Reform – 12/13/10

Coinciding with a federal judge's ruling invalidating a key element of the health care reform law, an ABC News/Washington Post poll finds support for the landmark legislation at a new low – but division on what to do about it.

The law's never been popular, with support peaking at just 48 percent in November 2009. Today it's slipped to 43 percent, numerically its lowest in ABC/Post polling. (It was about the same, 44 percent, a year ago.) Fifty-two percent are opposed, and that 9-point gap in favor of opposition is its largest on record since the latest debate over health care reform began in earnest in summer 2009.

More also continue to “strongly” oppose the law than to strongly support it, 37 percent to 22 percent.

What to do about it is another question: People who don't support the law fragment on how to proceed, with a plurality in this group, 38 percent, saying they'd rather wait and see before deciding on a direction. Among the rest, 30 percent would repeal parts of the law, while about as many, 29 percent, favor repealing all of it.

Health care reform has lacked broad support – as also was the case when it last was debated in 1994 – given the public's conflicting priorities and concerns. While many aspects of the reform law win broad backing, its rules, funding mechanisms and the issue of government involvement raise doubts. And while many Americans are concerned about their future costs and coverage, most are satisfied with their current coverage, care and even costs – raising fears that a new system could do more harm than good.

The law's individual mandate, requiring that nearly all adults must buy health insurance or face a fine, has been particularly unpopular; in a poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation last month, 68 percent of adults said that element should be repealed.

Views on reform are marked by sharp partisanship. Eighty-six percent of Republicans in the new ABC/Post poll oppose the health care law; that subsides to 47 percent of independents and 27 percent of Democrats. But support among Democrats (67 percent) is far exceeded by opposition across the aisle. And intensity of sentiment is far higher among Republicans – 69 percent “strongly” oppose the law, while just 41 percent of Democrats strongly favor it.

The trends are similar along ideological lines, with opposition, including strong opposition, higher among conservatives than the corresponding levels of support among liberals.

There also are partisan differences among critics of the law in how to proceed. Among Democrats who don't support the law, 54 percent prefer to wait and see how it unfolds. Republicans and conservatives are more apt to favor repeal. At the same time, these groups divide between repealing all of the law, or just parts of it.

U.S. District Judge Henry Hudson, in Richmond, Virginia, ruled today that Congress exceeded its authority by imposing the individual mandate, but he declined to freeze the rollout of the law while court cases proceed. Two other judges, in Detroit and Lynchburg, Va., have upheld the law, and it's expected ultimately to reach the Supreme Court.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Dec. 9-12, 2010, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of sampling error of 3.5 points. Click [here](#) for a detailed description of sampling error. This survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y, with sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, 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.

1-13, 18-39 held for release.

14-17 previously released.

19. Changing topics: overall, given what you know about them, would you say you support or oppose the changes to the health care system that have been enacted by (Congress) and (the Obama administration)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
12/12/10	43	22	21	52	14	37	6
10/3/10	47	26	21	48	13	35	5
3/26/10	46	32	13	50	10	40	4
2/8/10*	46	22	25	49	11	38	5
1/15/10	44	22	22	51	12	39	5
12/13/09	44	25	19	51	11	40	5
11/15/09	48	30	18	49	10	39	3
10/18/09	45	26	19	48	12	36	7
9/12/09	46	30	16	48	12	36	6
8/17/09	45	27	18	50	10	40	5

\*2/8/10 and prior: "proposed changes...that are being developed by"

20. (ASKED IF DO NOT SUPPORT HEALTH CARE CHANGES) What do you think is the best approach to the health care reform law: repeal all of it, repeal parts of it, or wait and see before deciding?

	Repeal all of it	Repeal parts of it	Wait and see	No opinion
12/12/10	29	30	38	3

\*\*\*END\*\*\*