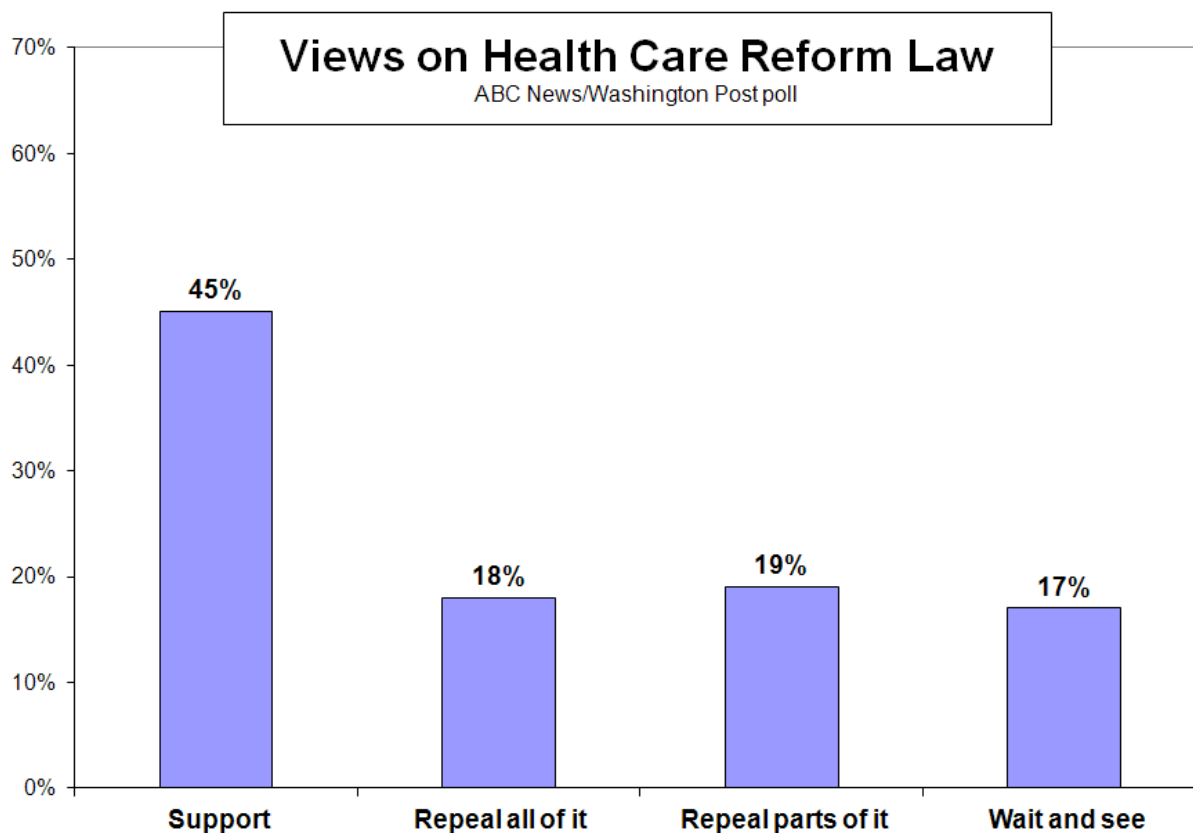


Criticisms of Health Law Resonate – But Repeal is Another Matter

On the eve of a repeal vote in the House, more Americans continue to oppose than support the health care reform law, with broad suspicions it'll hurt the economy, boost the deficit and – by a narrower margin – cut jobs. But repealing it is another matter.

Forty-six percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll think the law's likely to cut jobs, 8 points more than think it'll create them. More, 54 percent, think it's more apt to hurt than help the economy. And 62 percent see it as increasing rather than decreasing the federal deficit.

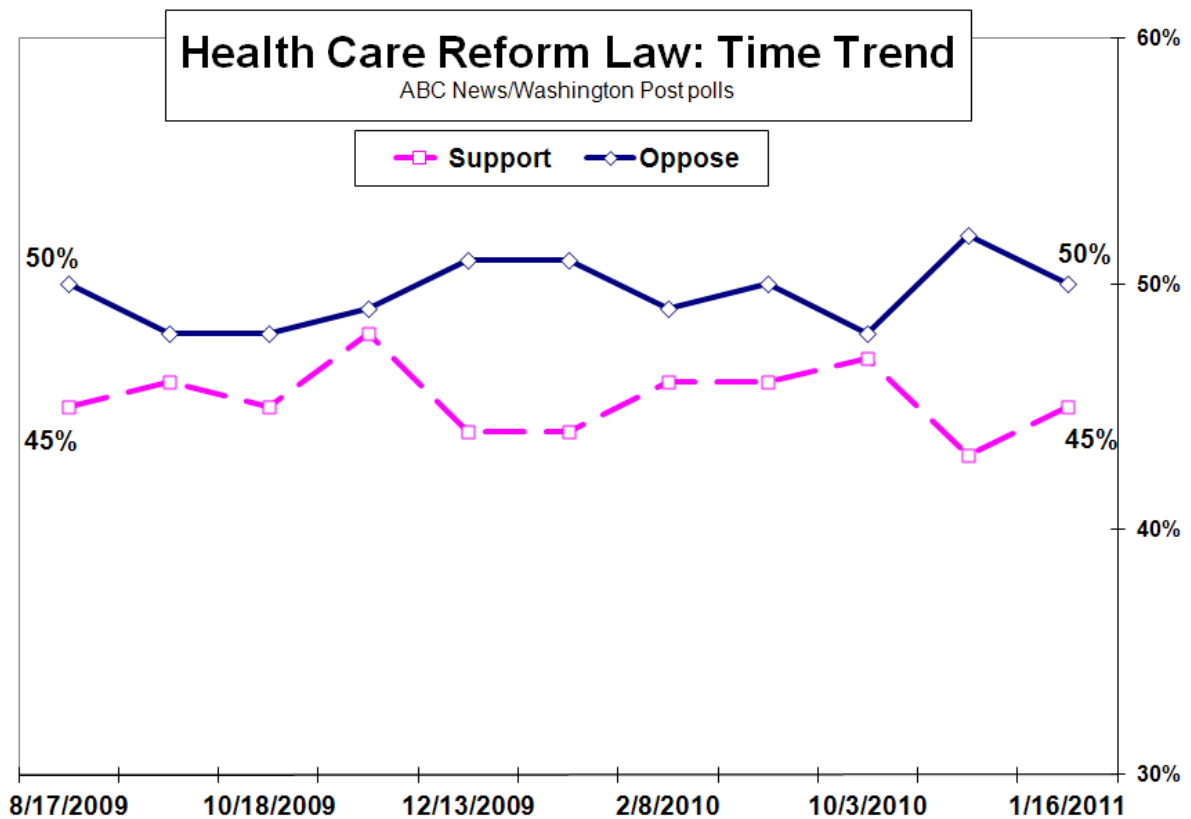
For all that, fewer than four in 10 – 37 percent – favor repealing all or parts of the law; the rest either support it, or want to wait and see. And just 18 percent favor repealing it entirely, as the Republican leadership in Congress seeks.



The results underscore the public's love-hate relationship with the law, which contains popular elements (e.g., extending coverage) with unpopular ones (e.g., paying for it). It appeals to

worries about future coverage and costs – but also raises concerns about its effects, wrapped in skepticism about government involvement in the health care system.

On balance this poll, produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds that 50 percent of Americans oppose the health care reform law overall, while 45 percent support it – similar to the record 52-43 percent negative verdict last month. That was its only foray into outright majority opposition; it’s never received outright majority support.

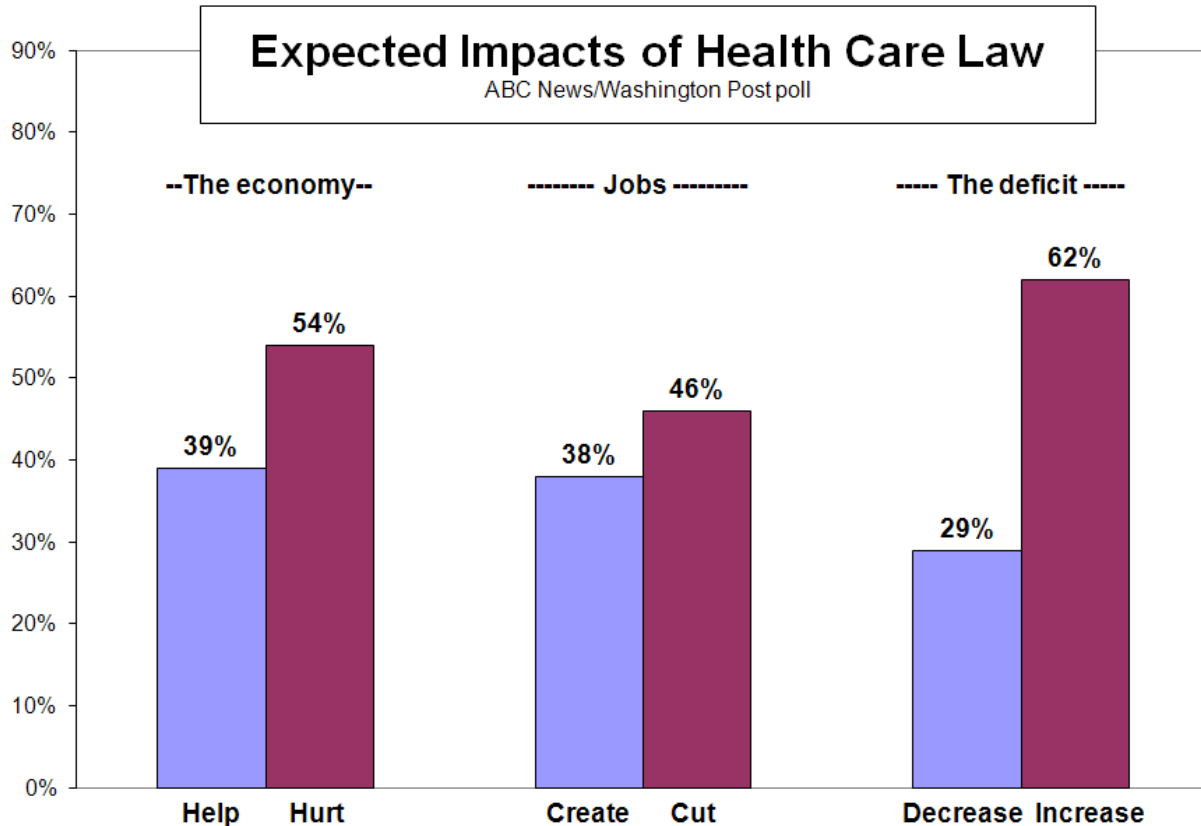


Opposition comes mostly, but not entirely, from people who say the law does too much. Critics include 35 percent of Americans who say the law goes too far in changing the health care system – but also 13 percent who say it doesn’t go far enough. Among the law’s supporters, moreover, more than half say it “should have done more,” although they’ll take it anyway.

JOBS – Opponents of the measure have characterized it as a jobs killer, and that charge does have some resonance, albeit with less than majority sign-up. As noted, 46 percent of Americans think it’s more likely to cut the number of jobs in this country, vs. 38 percent who think it’s more apt to create jobs – an 8-point tilt to the negative.

There’s broad partisanship in this view: Sixty-seven percent of Republicans think the reform law will cut jobs; 59 percent of Democrats think it’ll create them. As so often is the case, the tide shifts with independents, who, by 51-33 percent, see job losses as more likely.

ECONOMY, DEFICIT – Jobs are a salient issue at a time of more than 9 percent unemployment. But other concerns in fact gain greater purchase: Americans by a 15-point margin, 54-39 percent, suspect the law will hurt rather than help the economy overall. And most broadly, by 62-29 percent, the public thinks it’s more likely to increase than decrease the federal deficit.



On both of these, again, the partisan divisions are broad. But notably, even among Democrats nearly half (46 percent) think the law is more likely to increase the deficit; that rises to 66 percent of independents and 78 percent of Republicans. (The Congressional Budget Office, by contrast, has projected that the law will reduce the deficit, and repeal would increase it.)

Although it has the biggest gap, the deficit is the least decisive factor in support for the reform law. The law is opposed by 65 percent of those who think it’ll boost the deficit, leaving 31 percent in this group who support it anyway. By contrast, it’s opposed by 79 percent of those who think it’ll cut jobs and by 83 percent of those who think it’ll hurt the economy.

People who think it’ll help the economy or the jobs situation, conversely, overwhelmingly support it. (As [reported separately](#), 72 percent of Americans call the economy a highest-priority item for Obama and the Congress, far and away No. 1 on the list.)

OBAMA SLIPPAGE – Concerns about the law’s impact are mitigated to some extent by support for its popular provisions, chiefly in terms of expanding coverage. Nonetheless the negatives may be contributing to political slippage on the issue for President Obama.

As noted in results this morning, Obama’s approval rating for handling health care reform dropped to 43 percent in this poll, matching his career low. Fifty-two percent disapprove, and “strong” disapprovers outnumber strong approvers by a 15-point margin.

In trust to handle the issue, Obama’s gone from a 13-point advantage over the Republicans in Congress last month, 51-38 percent, to an even split this month, 42-42 percent. It’s a month in which the Republicans have been hammering away – to some success, as these results show – at the health care law’s potential impacts on the deficit, the economy and jobs.

GROUPS AND CONSISTENCY – There are differences among groups in basic views of the law in addition to partisan and ideological divisions. Support is 10 points higher among people under 50 than among their elders; it peaks at 51 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds and bottoms out at 38 percent among seniors.

Support also is vastly higher among non-whites (62 percent) than whites (39 percent); nonwhites are far more apt to be Democrats. It’s 9 points higher among college graduates than among those with less education, peaking at 56 percent among those with post-graduate educations.

Finally, whatever the public’s conflicts, Americans can’t be accused of inconsistency; views on the law have been remarkably stable. In nearly a dozen ABC/Post polls since August 2009 it’s averaged 45 percent support, 50 percent opposed – both precisely the same as they are now.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Jan. 13-16, 2011, among a random national sample of 1,053 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. 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 TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

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

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow.

*= less than 0.5 percent

1-18 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
1/16/11	45	25	20	50	14	36	5

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 OPPOSE HEALTH CARE CHANGES) Overall, do you think the new health care law (goes too far) or (does not go far enough) in changing the health care system?

	Too far	Not far enough	No opinion
1/16/11	71	25	3

19/20. NET Table

	Support	NET	Too far	Not far enough	Don't know	No opinion
1/16/11	45	50	35	13	2	5

21. (ASKED IF SUPPORT HEALTH CARE CHANGES) Overall, do you think the new health care law should have done more to change the health care system, or is it about right?

	Should have done more	About right	No opinion
1/16/11	56	42	2

19/21. NET Table

	NET	Support	About right	Don't know	Oppose	No opinion
1/16/11	45	25	19	1	50	5

22. (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
1/16/11	33	35	30	3
12/12/10	29	30	38	3

19/22. NET Table

	Support	NET	Do not support (Oppose / DK / Ref)	No opinion		
			Repeal all of it	Repeal parts of it	Wait and see	No opinion
1/16/11	45	55	18	19	17	2
12/12/10	43	58	17	17	22	2

23. (If the health care reform law does not change, in the long run...) Do you think the health care reform law is more likely to help or hurt the economy overall?

	Help	Hurt	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
1/16/11	39	54	3	4

24. (If the health care reform law does not change, in the long run...) Do you think the health care reform law is more likely to create jobs or cut the number of jobs in the country?

	Create jobs	Cut number of jobs	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
1/16/11	38	46	6	9

25. (If the health care reform law does not change, in the long run...) Do you think the health care reform law is more likely to increase or decrease the federal deficit?

	Increase	Decrease	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
1/16/11	62	29	2	7

26-36 held for release or previously released.

END