The Politics of Health Care Reform:
Now and After the 2012 Election

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Key Points about Politics of Health Reform

• Country continues to remain divided on the Obama health reform

• Huge divisions in views by voters in each party

• Budget battles in new Congress will reduce the scale of implementation of the legislation

• 2012 election will resolve future of the law and its implementation

• Medicare reform will await the next election results before any action taken

• A number of wildcards may affect the future here
Recent Political Ideology Trend -- Among Republicans

Based on annual averages

Gallup polls, 2000-2010.
Recent Political Ideology Trend -- Among Democrats
Based on annual averages

Gallup polls, 2000-2010.
### What Should Congress Do with New Health Care Law

*By actual vote for Congress*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Total voters</th>
<th>Voters for Democrats</th>
<th>Voters for Republicans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expand it</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave it as is</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeal it</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2010 Exit Polls.
Voter Turnout in National Elections

Center for the Study of the American Electorate (2010)
Future between Now and 2012 Election

- Continuing major conflicts over bill
- Serious debate but little action on Medicare reform
- Planned expenditures for enforcement, planning, technical assistance to states, comparative effectiveness, research, innovation grants, new public health initiatives will be reduced substantially in 2012 budget
- Continuing investigations of Administration’s implementation efforts/few senior health appointments confirmed
- Democratic state governors will start planning for implementation/Republican governors will proceed slowly (the exception exchanges)
Approval of Health Care Bill, Average of Polls, March 2010 and March 2011

March 2010

Support: 40%
Oppose: 41%

March 2011

Support: 42%
Oppose: 49%

## Post-Election Public Views about the New Health Care Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Difference – Rep minus Dem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>+49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Don’t know” responses not shown.

Current Public Views about Stopping Funding for the New Health Care Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Difference – Rep minus Dem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favor</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>+58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>-55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Don’t know” responses not shown.

CNN poll, April 2011.
## Post-Election Public Views on Repealing the New Health Care Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congress should…</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Difference – Rep minus Dem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repeal the law</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>+57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let it stand</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>-61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Don’t know” responses not shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Important Problem Facing Nation, by Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Democrats</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dissatisfaction with govt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Federal budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gallup, April 13, 2011.
### Americans’ Views on the Best Way to Reduce the Federal Budget Deficit, by Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Difference – Rep minus Dem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cutting federal spending</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>+34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing taxes</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of both</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>-31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Don’t know” responses not shown.

ABC/WP, April 14-17, 2011
Republican Vote, 1982-2010: Voters 60 and Older

### Americans’ Views about Ways to Reduce the National Debt, by Party Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Difference – Rep minus Dem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raising taxes on Americans with incomes over $250,000 a year</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting military spending</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting spending on Medicaid, which is the govt health insurance program for the poor</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>+24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting spending on Medicare, which is the govt health insurance program for the elderly</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>+16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Don’t know” responses not shown.

ABC/WP, April 14-17, 2011
Public Attitudes about What Government Should Do to Control Cost of Medicare

By party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Difference – Rep minus Dem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completely overhaul</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make major changes</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make minor changes</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not try to control costs</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>+12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

USA Today/Gallup, April 11, 2011.
## Americans’ Preferences about the Future Form of Medicare, by Party Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Difference – Rep minus Dem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicare should remain as it is today, with a defined set of benefits for people over 65</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicare should be changed so that people over 65 would receive a check or voucher from the government each year for a fixed amount they can use to shop for their own private health insurance</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Don’t know” responses not shown.

ABC/WP, April 14-17, 2011
The Two Great “Wildcards” of Health Policy

• The overall state of the economic recovery in 2012

• The Supreme Court’s decision about the constitutionality of the Obama Health Plan
Recovery Seen as More Distant

Long time before economy recovers

Not recovering yet, will recover soon

Economy is recovering

Four Scenarios –
Health Reform after 2012 Election

Scenario I – Democrats win everything, Pres/House/Senate

Scenario II – Republicans win everything, Pres/House/Senate

Scenario III – Democrats win Presidency, Republicans House and Senate

Scenario IV – Status quo
Scenario I – Democrats Win Everything

- Obama bill implemented – 30+ million uninsured covered
- Public option re-emerges
- Tighter controls in Rx prices in Medicare and Medicare Advantage Plans
- Comparative effectiveness decision-making begins
Scenario II – Republicans Win Everything

• Obama bill repealed

• Modest substitute proposal implemented – covering 3 million uninsured, more markets and competition (private sector)

• Little regulation or major new spending

• Block grant for Medicaid to the states with strong financial limits, but few program constraints enacted

• Medicare benefits become highly income-related/more private choices

• Federal regulation of private insurance mostly disappears (exception pools for high risk people)
Scenario III – Obama Wins, Republicans Win House and Senate

- Major compromise reached – Obama bill reduced in size, scope, coverage, regulation, and expenditure and then moves forward
- Individual mandates become elective option for states
- Medicaid provided to states in a block grant with many restraints on policy choices
- Medicare expenditures reduced by payment reductions to providers and increased use of means-testing for benefits, particularly those of high income
State Issues
Public Impressions of State Budget Problems

State is currently facing budget problems
- 82%
  - And they are very serious
    - 34%
  - And they are fairly serious
    - 37%
  - And they are not too serious
    - 10%

State is NOT currently facing budget problems
- 12%

Pew poll, February 3-6, 2011.
Public’s Views of the Best Way to Deal with Budget in Your State

- Cutting major programs: 19%
- Increasing taxes: 4%
- Combination of both: 68%
- Neither: 5%

Pew poll, February 3-6, 2011.
Public’s Views What States Should Do to Balance Budget

Raise Taxes

Increase taxes on businesses 41%
Increase sales tax 30%
Increase personal income taxes 28%

Cut Programs

Decrease pension plans of govt employees 47%
Decrease funding for maintaining roads/public transportation systems 31%
Decrease funding for public colleges and universities 31%
Decrease health care services 21%
Decrease funding for K-12 public schools 18%

Pew poll, February 3-6, 2011.
# States by Political Ideology

**Top Ten Conservative States**
*(based on % self-identifying as politically conservative versus politically liberal)*

1. Alabama
2. Mississippi
3. Louisiana
4. Idaho
5. Oklahoma
6. Utah
7. North Dakota
8. South Carolina
9. South Dakota
10. Arkansas

**Top Ten Liberal States**
*(based on % self-identifying as politically liberal versus politically conservative)*

1. District of Columbia
2. Massachusetts
3. Vermont
4. Oregon
5. New York
6. Hawaii
7. Washington
8. California
9. New Jersey
10. Connecticut

*Gallup Poll, 2009.*