



President Barack Obama & Health Care Reform

*** Complete Tables for Poll Appended ***

For Immediate Release: Friday, August 14, 2009

Contact: Lee M. Miringoff
Barbara L. Carvalho
Mary E. Azzoli
Marist College
845.575.5050

This Marist Poll Reports:

Voters Divide on Obama's Handling of Health Care... Reform Would Not Improve Personal Situation, Say Americans

As the debate over health care reform rages on in Congress and in the public realm, President Barack Obama needs to do more to convince the American electorate that health care reform is the right course of action. 45% of registered U.S. voters say they disapprove of how the president is handling health care while 43% approve.

Not surprisingly, opinion is fractured along party lines with 74% of Democrats approving of how the president is dealing with the issue and 76% of Republicans *disapproving* of President Obama's methods. Independents align with the GOP on this matter. A majority of Independents -- 52% -- are unhappy with how Mr. Obama is addressing the health care situation in the United States. There is also a large racial split. Overwhelmingly, African American voters approve of how the president is dealing with health care. 87% report President Obama is handling the situation appropriately while just 6% think he is not. White voters, on the other hand, tip the scales in the opposite direction. 52% of whites disapprove while 38% approve. Latino members of the electorate fall in the middle with 44% saying they agree with the president's actions, and 32% reporting they do not.

Majority of Americans: Major Changes Needed, But Health Care Situation Will Not Improve

Although 65% of U.S. residents, including 67% of registered voters nationwide, think the country's health care system needs major change, many are not optimistic about the impact of health care reform.

If Congress passes health care legislation, just 39% of Americans say health care in this country will get better. 55%, on the other hand, report that it will get worse or stay the same. Registered voters closely reflect the views of the overall population.

Once again, party affiliation comes into play. 65% of Democrats believe reform will improve the status of the nation's health care while almost the identical proportion of Republicans -- 63% -- say it will worsen it. Looking at Independents, a plurality -- 44% -- believe reform will be a detriment to the system while 30% say it will be an improvement.

Older Americans are much more pessimistic about the future of the nation's health care situation than are younger U.S. residents. Although similar proportions within both age groups believe health care will improve, more residents age 45 and older -- 43% -- believe it will get worse compared with 32% of their younger counterparts.

How will health care reform affect Americans personally? Just 28% of U.S. residents think health care for themselves and their families will get better while 67% think it will get worse or remain the same. This includes nearly one-third of Americans -- 32% -- who believe it will get worse. Voters here, too, are in line with the overall population.

Democrats are more optimistic than are Republicans on this question. 42% believe their personal health care situation will improve while 40% think it will stay the same. Just 13% of Democrats say it will get worse. Republicans are Democrats' polar opposites here. 54% of Republicans say their health care will get worse, 31% report it will stay the same, and only 10% think it will get better.

Once again, older Americans are less optimistic than are younger residents. 36% of those 45 and older believe their personal health care circumstances will get worse while 27% of younger residents agree.

Nearly a Quarter to Blame Democrats in Congress if Health Care Doesn't Meet Expectations

Who do Americans say is most responsible if health care legislation doesn't live up to their expectations? 24% of residents say it's the Democrats' fault, 20% report the pharmaceutical companies are to blame, 15% point the finger at President Obama, 14% would fault the Republicans, and 12% blame doctors and hospitals.

Republicans are playing party politics on this question more than are the Democrats. 40% of Republicans say they would hold the Democrats responsible if health care legislation does not meet their expectations. On the other side of the aisle, Democrats are less likely to point the finger at Republicans. 25% of Democrats say they would hold members of the GOP accountable. More than a quarter of Independents -- 26% -- believe Democrats would be responsible. This proportion is followed closely by pharmaceutical companies.

Marist Poll August 2009

National Tables

Nature of the Sample: 938 U.S. Residents

This survey of 938 United States residents was conducted on August 3rd through August 6th, 2009. Residents 18 years of age and older were interviewed by telephone. Telephone numbers were selected based upon a list of telephone exchanges from throughout the nation. The exchanges were selected to ensure that each region was represented in proportion to its population. To increase coverage, this land-line sample was supplemented by respondents reached through random dialing of cell phone numbers. The two samples were then combined. Results are statistically significant at $\pm 3.2\%$. There are 854 registered voters. The results for this subset are statistically significant at $\pm 3.5\%$. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.

		Registered Voters		
		Do you approve or disapprove of how President Barack Obama is handling health care?		
		Approve	Disapprove	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %
	Registered Voters	43%	45%	12%
Party ID	Democrat	74%	12%	15%
	Republican	19%	76%	5%
	Independent	34%	52%	15%
Region	Northeast	50%	34%	16%
	Midwest	49%	43%	8%
	South	37%	48%	15%
	West	43%	49%	9%
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	43%	42%	16%
	\$50,000 or more	47%	45%	8%
Education	Not college graduate	41%	45%	14%
	College graduate	48%	42%	9%
Race	White	38%	52%	11%
	African American	87%	6%	7%
	Latino	44%	32%	24%
Age	18 to 29	58%	32%	11%
	30 to 44	37%	49%	14%
	45 to 59	46%	46%	8%
	60 or older	37%	48%	14%
Gender	Men	47%	45%	8%
	Women	40%	43%	16%

Marist Poll National Registered Voters "N=854 MOE +/- 3.5%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		Americans		
		Do you think the current health care system in this country needs major changes, minor changes, or no changes at all?		
		Major changes	Minor changes	No changes at all
		Row %	Row %	Row %
	Americans	65%	29%	6%
	Registered Voters	67%	28%	5%
Party ID	Democrat	79%	19%	3%
	Republican	47%	46%	7%
	Independent	69%	26%	4%
Region	Northeast	65%	28%	6%
	Midwest	70%	25%	5%
	South	61%	32%	7%
	West	68%	29%	3%
Income	less \$50,000	68%	25%	7%
	\$50,000-\$99,999	66%	33%	2%
	\$100,000 or more	66%	29%	6%
Education	Not college graduate	63%	30%	7%
	College graduate	70%	27%	3%
Race	White	61%	33%	6%
	African American	80%	13%	7%
	Latino	71%	27%	2%
Age	Under 45	69%	26%	4%
	45 or older	62%	31%	7%
Gender	Men	64%	31%	6%
	Women	67%	27%	6%
Households with children under 18	Household with children	70%	26%	4%
	No children in household	62%	31%	7%
Marist Poll National Residents "N=938 MOE +/- 3.2%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.				

		Americans			
		If health care reform is passed by Congress, do you expect health care in this country to get better, to get worse, or remain the same as it is now?			
		Get better	Get worse	Remain the same as it is now	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
	Americans	39%	38%	17%	6%
	Registered Voters	38%	39%	17%	6%
Party ID	Democrat	65%	14%	15%	6%
	Republican	16%	63%	18%	4%
	Independent	30%	44%	19%	7%
Region	Northeast	42%	33%	19%	6%
	Midwest	46%	32%	17%	5%
	South	36%	41%	18%	6%
	West	34%	42%	17%	7%
Income	less \$50,000	40%	36%	20%	4%
	\$50,000-\$99,999	44%	35%	16%	6%
	\$100,000 or more	38%	43%	13%	6%
Education	Not college graduate	38%	37%	20%	6%
	College graduate	42%	38%	14%	6%
Race	White	35%	43%	16%	6%
	African American	69%	11%	20%	0%
	Latino	36%	40%	17%	7%
Age	Under 45	40%	32%	24%	5%
	45 or older	37%	43%	14%	6%
Gender	Men	37%	37%	22%	4%
	Women	40%	38%	14%	7%
Households with children under 18	Household with children	38%	36%	22%	5%
	No children in household	39%	39%	15%	6%

Marist Poll National Residents "N=938 MOE +/- 3.2%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		Americans			
		If health care reform is passed by Congress, do you expect health care for you and your family to get better, to get worse, or remain the same as it is now?			
		Get better	Get worse	Remain the same as it is now	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
	Americans	28%	32%	35%	5%
	Registered Voters	27%	34%	35%	4%
Party ID	Democrat	42%	13%	40%	4%
	Republican	10%	54%	31%	4%
	Independent	24%	37%	34%	4%
Region	Northeast	30%	32%	34%	4%
	Midwest	31%	26%	41%	3%
	South	28%	34%	33%	5%
	West	25%	38%	33%	5%
Income	less \$50,000	30%	31%	35%	3%
	\$50,000-\$99,999	30%	29%	38%	3%
	\$100,000 or more	23%	34%	38%	5%
Education	Not college graduate	30%	31%	33%	5%
	College graduate	26%	33%	39%	2%
Race	White	22%	35%	38%	5%
	African American	53%	7%	41%	0%
	Latino	37%	41%	15%	7%
Age	Under 45	30%	27%	38%	5%
	45 or older	27%	36%	33%	4%
Gender	Men	32%	31%	34%	3%
	Women	25%	34%	35%	6%
Households with children under 18	Household with children	29%	32%	35%	5%
	No children in household	28%	33%	34%	4%

Marist Poll National Residents "N=938 MOE +/- 3.2%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

		Americans					
		Who do you think is most responsible, if legislation to reform health care does not meet your expectations:					
		President Obama	The Democrats in congress	The Republicans in congress	Doctors and hospitals	The Pharmaceutical companies	Unsure
		Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
	Americans	15%	24%	14%	12%	20%	15%
	Registered Voters	14%	24%	14%	12%	21%	15%
Party ID	Democrat	8%	11%	25%	16%	23%	17%
	Republican	19%	40%	3%	13%	16%	8%
	Independent	14%	26%	10%	8%	23%	19%
Region	Northeast	11%	18%	21%	14%	20%	16%
	Midwest	14%	22%	16%	12%	21%	14%
	South	19%	25%	10%	12%	17%	17%
	West	13%	27%	11%	10%	26%	13%
Income	less \$50,000	17%	22%	12%	13%	19%	17%
	\$50,000-\$99,999	13%	22%	14%	15%	25%	11%
	\$100,000 or more	10%	28%	17%	10%	20%	15%
Education	Not college graduate	17%	21%	12%	15%	19%	16%
	College graduate	12%	29%	16%	8%	23%	13%
Race	White	15%	26%	12%	10%	22%	15%
	African American	18%	10%	19%	23%	20%	9%
	Latino	14%	25%	15%	17%	15%	14%
Age	Under 45	16%	24%	13%	13%	19%	15%
	45 or older	15%	24%	14%	11%	22%	15%
Gender	Men	15%	26%	14%	14%	19%	10%
	Women	14%	21%	13%	10%	21%	20%
Households with children under 18	Household with children	17%	22%	11%	11%	21%	17%
	No children in household	14%	25%	15%	12%	20%	14%

Marist Poll National Residents "N=938 MOE +/- 3.2%" Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.