

Iraq top issue, followed by health care; immigration and gas prices on the rise

Consistent with our last election tracking survey in March, the conflict in Iraq continues to dominate the list of issues that are important to the public, with 43 percent saying Iraq is one of the top issues they want to hear the presidential candidates discuss. Iraq continues to be the number one issue for self-reported Republicans, Democrats, and independents alike. Behind Iraq, health care continues to be the second most-mentioned issue, with 21 percent of the public saying they want to hear about it from candidates.

Health care continues to rank second for Democrats and independents, but in June immigration moved slightly ahead of health care for Republicans. That change in issue rank for Republicans is reflective of a broader trend, with a larger share of the public overall mentioning immigration in June (18 percent) compared to March (9 percent), most likely as a result of the recent discussions about immigration taking place in Congress. The economy ranked fourth behind immigration, mentioned by 13 percent of the public, and was closely followed by mentions of gas prices and energy issues (12 percent, up sharply from 3 percent in March). Terrorism and national security (mentioned by 7 percent) rounded out the list of top issues the public wants to hear about from candidates.

	Thinking about the campaign for the presidential election in 2008, what two issues would you most like to hear the presidential candidates talk about? (open-ended)							
	Total		Republicans		Democrats		Independents	
	Mar-07	Jun-07	Mar-07	Jun-07	Mar-07	Jun-07	Mar-07	Jun-07
Iraq	44%	43%	42%	43%	51%	52%	44%	37%
Health care	26	21	22	18	30	21	26	24
Immigration	9	18*	8	20*	7	14*	9	20*
Economy	18	13*	18	12	20	18	20	10*
Gas prices/Energy	3	12*	4	12*	5	11*	3	13*
Terrorism/Nat'l security	6	7	14	16	3	2	6	6

* indicates a statistically significant difference between March and June.

Within health care, focus is on cost and coverage

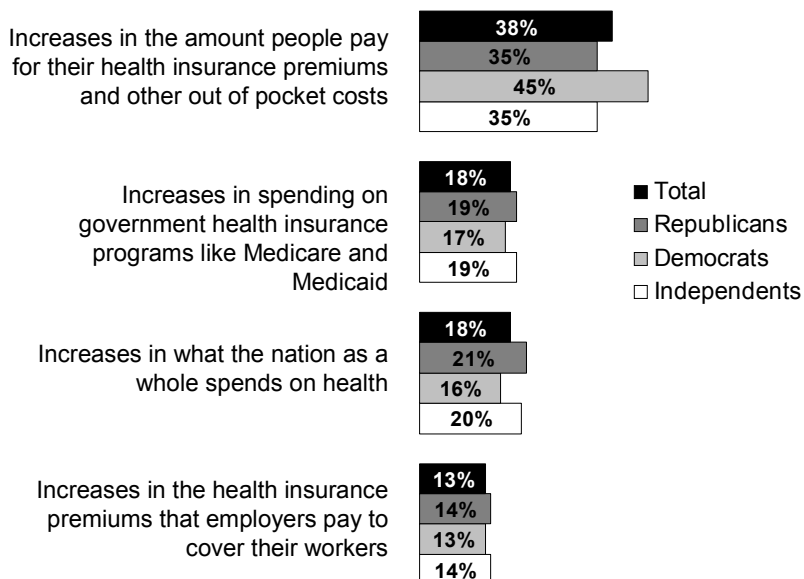
When asked specifically about the *health care* issues they'd like to hear the presidential candidates talk about, expanding coverage for the uninsured and health care costs both top the list. When respondents are asked to choose from a list of options, Democrats are more likely to choose expanding coverage for the uninsured, and Republicans are more likely to choose reducing health care costs, while independents are more split. These results are consistent with our March tracking poll.

What two health care issues would you most like to hear the presidential candidates talk about? (open-ended)					Which one of the following health care issues would you most like to hear the candidates talk about and focus on in any health reform plan they may develop? (choose from list)				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind		Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
Coverage/uninsured	36%	28%	41%	38%	Expanding coverage for uninsured	32%	23%	40%	31%
Health care costs	27	23	25	34	Reducing health care costs	31	37	29	25
Medicare/Rx drugs	16	16	19	14	Improving Medicare Rx benefit	13	10	15	14
Quality of care	2	3	2	1	Improving quality of care	11	10	10	15
Insurance issues	1	1	1	1	Reducing gov't spending on health	7	13	2	7

Health care cost concerns centered around out-of-pocket expenses

We asked people what concerns them most when thinking about rising health care costs. For a plurality of the public (38 percent), their biggest health care cost-related concern has to do with increases in the amount people pay out of their own pockets for health care and insurance. This is somewhat higher among Democrats (45 percent) than among Republicans and independents (35 percent for both). Behind out-of-pocket costs, equal shares say they are most concerned about increased spending on government health insurance programs and increases in what the nation as a whole spends on health (18 percent each), while somewhat fewer are most worried about increases in insurance premiums paid by employers (13 percent).

When thinking about rising health care costs, which ONE of the following concerns you most...?



Democrats and independents most interested in hearing about big push on uninsured

Consistent with our March tracking survey, more than half the public in June say they would like to see candidates propose a major new health reform plan that would provide almost universal coverage, even if it involved a substantial increase in spending, while one in five say they would like to see a less expensive, more limited plan, and 17 percent say they would like candidates to propose keepings things as they are now. Interest in major health reform legislation varies greatly across political parties, with Democrats (72 percent) twice as likely as Republicans (36 percent) to say they would want a candidate to propose a costly push for greatly expanded coverage (independents are in between, with 49 percent).

Which ONE of the following three things would you like to see in a health care reform proposal from a presidential candidate? Would you want your candidate to propose...				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
A new health plan that would make a major effort to provide health insurance for all or nearly all of the uninsured BUT would involve a substantial increase in spending	53%	36%	72%	49%
A new plan that is more limited and would cover only some groups of the uninsured BUT would involve less new spending	21	29	14	23
Keeping things basically as they are	17	26	8	19

Few people are likely to vote solely based on health

As with most issues, a small group of the public (13 percent) say they would *only* vote for a presidential candidate who shares their views on health care. The vast majority (68 percent) say they would consider a candidate's position on health care as one of many important factors in their vote for president, and one in eight (13 percent) say they would not see health care as a major issue in their vote. Results on this question were similar for Democrats, Republicans, and independents.

Still no single candidate who stands out on health (Clinton gets most recognition among Democrats, but Obama inching up)

With the first presidential primaries more than six months away, most people still don't know or can't name a candidate who best represents their own views on health care, or say that *no* candidate represents their views. However, the share that is able to name a candidate who comes closest to their views increased somewhat, from 32 to 41 percent between March and June. In fact, a majority of Democrats (58 percent) now name a candidate who shares their views on health.

Hillary Clinton remains the candidate who gets the most mention in this question, with 17 percent of the public saying she best represents their health care views, followed by Barack Obama with 9 percent. Among Democrats, a third say Senator Clinton is the candidate who comes closest to their views (compared with 27 percent in March), followed by Senator Obama with 15 percent (up from 8 percent in March), and former Senator John Edwards with 4 percent. Since the earlier survey, Senator Obama announced his health proposal and Senator Clinton announced her plan on health care costs. Edwards announced his health reform plan prior to the March survey. Among Republicans, nearly one in ten (9 percent) name former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani as the candidate who best represents their views on health care, followed by former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney (6 percent, up from 2 percent in March), and Senator John McCain.

	Thinking about all of the candidates for president in 2008, regardless of political party or who you intend to vote for, which candidate BEST represents your own views on health care? (open-ended)							
	Total		Republicans		Democrats		Independents	
	Mar-07	Jun-07	Mar-07	Jun-07	Mar-07	Jun-07	Mar-07	Jun-07
Don't know/None	68%	59%*	71%	67%	52%	42%*	73%	68%
Named a candidate	32	41*	29	33	48	58*	27	32
Hillary Clinton	14	17	7	2*	27	33	9	13
Barack Obama	5	9*	3	4	8	15*	4	7
John Edwards	2	3	<1	1	4	4	1	3
Rudy Giuliani	3	3	7	9	1	1	4	3
Mitt Romney	1	3	2	6*	<1	<1	1	2
John McCain	2	2	4	5	1	1	2	1
Bill Richardson	1	1	<1	<1	1	1	1	1
Fred Thompson	<1	<1	<1	1	0	<1	0	1

* indicates a statistically significant difference between March and June.

Similarly, most people don't know or can't name a candidate who is placing the *biggest emphasis* on health, or say that *no* candidate is placing a big emphasis on health care issues (57 percent), although the share able to name a candidate again increased somewhat between March and June (from 34 to 43 percent). Again, Clinton is the only candidate to score double digits, with 23 percent saying she is the candidate most focused on health care. The share naming Barack Obama as the candidate most focused on health increased somewhat between the two tracking polls, but he is still behind Clinton in terms of perception as a health-focused candidate.

	And still thinking about all of the candidates for president, regardless of political party and whether or not you agree with their views, which candidate do you think is placing the BIGGEST EMPHASIS on health care issues? (open-ended)							
	Total		Republicans		Democrats		Independents	
	Mar-07	Jun-07	Mar-07	Jun-07	Mar-07	Jun-07	Mar-07	Jun-07
Don't know/None	66%	57%*	71%	64%	52%	44%*	69%	59%*
Named a candidate	34	43*	29	36	48	56*	31	41*
Hillary Clinton	21	23	19	17	28	32	20	21
Barack Obama	5	9*	1	8*	10	12	5	9
John Edwards	3	4	3	1	4	6	2	6
Rudy Giuliani	1	2	3	4	<1	1	1	1
Mitt Romney	<1	1	1	2	0	<1	0	1
John McCain	1	1	1	1	1	<1	<1	1
Bill Richardson	<1	<1	<1	0	<1	1	0	0
Fred Thompson	0	<1	0	0	0	0	0	<1

* indicates a statistically significant difference between March and June.

Methodology

This *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: Election 2008*, the second in a series, was designed and analyzed by researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation. A nationally representative random sample of 1,203 adults was interviewed by telephone between May 31-June 5, 2007. The margin of sampling error for the survey is plus or minus 3 percentage points; for results based on subgroups, the sampling error is higher.

March trends are from the first survey in the *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: Election 2008* series, and are based on a nationally representative sample of 1,233 adults interviewed March 8-13, 2007 (margin of sampling error plus or minus 3 percentage points).

Trends

1. To begin... What do you think is the most important problem for the government to address? Is there another problem you think is almost as important for the government to address? (OPEN-END)

Based on Half Sample (Note: mentions less than 5 percent not shown)

	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Iraq				
Jun07	43	36	50	45
Mar07	44	43	50	43
Health care				
Jun07	28	18	33	29
Mar07	29	28	31	29
Gas prices/energy				
Jun07	14	15	13	12
Mar07	4	4	5	4
Immigration				
Jun07	12	20	5	13
Mar07	9	12	4	11
Economy				
Jun07	11	12	10	12
Mar07	13	10	20	10
Frustration w/gov't/corruption				
Jun07	9	8	8	9
Mar07	7	6	9	7
Terrorism/nat'l security				
Jun07	9	17	1	12
Mar07	8	14	4	8
Education/schools				
Jun07	5	4	7	4
Mar07	8	8	8	8
Don't know/Refused				
Jun07	7	8	9	2
Mar07	11	7	8	11

2. Thinking about the campaign for the presidential election in 2008, what two issues would you most like to hear the presidential candidates talk about? IF R GIVES ONE ISSUE PROBE FOR SECOND: Is there another issue you'd like to hear about? (OPEN-END)

Based on Half Sample (Note: mentions less than 5 percent not shown)

	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Iraq				
Jun07	43	43	52	37
Mar07	44	42	51	44
Health care				
Jun07	21	18	21	24
Mar07	26	22	30	26
Immigration				
Jun07	18	20	14	20
Mar07	9	8	7	9
Economy				
Jun07	13	12	18	10
Mar07	18	18	20	20
Gas prices/energy				
Jun07	12	12	11	13
Mar07	3	4	5	3
Terrorism/nat'l security				
Jun07	7	16	2	6
Mar07	6	14	3	6
Don't know/Refused				
Jun07	9	13	6	8
Mar07	15	17	13	13

3. Next, thinking about the campaign for the presidential election in 2008, which ONE of the following health care issues would you most like to hear the presidential candidates talk about and focus on in any health reform plan they may develop? (READ AND RANDOMIZE 1-5)

Based on Half Sample

	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Expanding health insurance coverage for the uninsured				
Jun07	32	23	40	31
Mar07	32	22	38	32
Reducing health care costs				
Jun07	31	37	29	25
Mar07	31	38	28	31
Improving the Medicare RX drug benefit for seniors				
Jun07	13	10	15	14
Mar07	12	10	15	11
Improving the quality of care and reducing medical errors				
Jun07	11	10	10	15
Mar07	12	16	7	14
Reducing spending on gov't health programs like Medicare/Medicaid				
Jun07	7	13	2	7
Mar07	7	11	6	6
None of these (VOL)				
Jun07	2	4	*	2
Mar07	1	1	1	*
Other issue (VOL)				
Jun07	1	1	*	3
Mar07	3	1	4	2
Don't know/Refused				
Jun07	3	3	4	3
Mar07	2	1	1	3

4. Now thinking specifically about HEALTH CARE, what two health care issues would you most like to hear the presidential candidates talk about? IF R GIVES ONE ISSUE PROBE FOR SECOND: Is there another health care issue you'd like to hear about? (OPEN-END)

Based on Half Sample

	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Coverage/uninsured				
Jun07	36	28	41	38
Mar07	35	35	37	33
Health care costs				
Jun07	27	23	25	34
Mar07	32	34	34	27
Medicare/RX drugs				
Jun07	16	16	19	14
Mar07	22	17	23	24
Quality of care				
Jun07	2	3	2	1
Mar07	3	2	2	4
Insurance issues				
Jun07	1	1	1	1
Mar07	3	2	3	2
Other health care issue				
Jun07	21	26	20	22
Mar07	19	25	16	18
Non-health care issue				
Jun07	12	12	14	13
Mar07	6	5	7	4
Don't know/Refused				
Jun07	17	21	13	16
Mar07	17	17	15	17

5. Thinking about all of the candidates for president in 2008, regardless of political party or who you intend to vote for, which candidate BEST represents your own views on health care? (OPEN-END)

	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Named any candidate (NET)				
Jun07	41	33	58	32
Mar07	32	29	48	27
Hillary Clinton				
Jun07	17	2	33	13
Mar07	14	7	27	9
Barack Obama				
Jun07	9	4	15	7
Mar07	5	3	8	4
Rudy Giuliani				
Jun07	3	9	1	3
Mar07	3	7	1	4
John Edwards				
Jun07	3	1	4	3
Mar07	2	*	4	1
Mitt Romney				
Jun07	3	6	*	2
Mar07	1	2	*	1
John McCain				
Jun07	2	5	1	1
Mar07	2	4	1	2
Bill Richardson				
Jun07	1	*	1	1
Mar07	1	*	1	1
Fred Thompson				
Jun07	*	1	*	1
Mar07	*	*	--	--
Dennis Kucinich				
Jun07	*	--	1	--
Mar07	*	--	--	*
Ron Paul				
Jun07	*	*	--	*
Mar07	*	--	--	*
Al Gore				
Jun07	*	--	*	--
Mar07	*	--	*	1
Newt Gingrich				
Jun07	*	*	--	--
Mar07	*	1	--	*
George W. Bush				
Jun07	*	--	*	--
Mar07	*	*	*	1
John Kerry				
Jun07	*	*	*	--
Mar07	--	--	--	--
Joe Biden				
Jun07	*	--	*	--
Mar07	*	--	*	--
Other candidate				
Jun07	*	1	*	1
Mar07	*	--	--	*
Democratic candidate, non-specific				
Jun07	1	*	1	*
Mar07	2	*	4	1
Republican candidate, non-specific				
Jun07	1	3	--	1
Mar07	1	3	--	1
Don't know/No candidate				
Jun07	59	67	42	68
Mar07	68	71	52	73

6. And still thinking about all of the candidates for president, regardless of political party and whether or not you agree with their views, which candidate do you think is placing the BIGGEST EMPHASIS on health care issues? (OPEN-END)

	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Named a candidate (NET)				
Jun07	43	36	56	41
Mar07	34	29	48	31
Hillary Clinton				
Jun07	23	17	32	21
Mar07	21	19	28	20
Barack Obama				
Jun07	9	8	12	9
Mar07	5	1	10	5
John Edwards				
Jun07	4	1	6	6
Mar07	3	3	4	2
Rudy Giuliani				
Jun07	2	4	1	1
Mar07	1	3	*	1
Mitt Romney				
Jun07	1	2	*	1
Mar07	*	1	--	--
John McCain				
Jun07	1	1	*	1
Mar07	1	1	1	*
Newt Gingrich				
Jun07	*	1	--	1
Mar07	--	--	--	--
Bill Richardson				
Jun07	*	--	1	--
Mar07	*	*	*	--
Dennis Kucinich				
Jun07	*	--	*	*
Mar07	--	--	--	--
John Kerry				
Jun07	*	--	*	--
Mar07	--	--	--	--
Al Gore				
Jun07	*	--	--	--
Mar07	*	--	*	--
George W. Bush				
Jun07	*	--	--	--
Mar07	*	--	--	1
Fred Thompson				
Jun07	*	--	--	*
Mar07	--	--	--	--
Joe Biden				
Jun07	*	--	*	--
Mar07	*	--	*	--
Other candidate				
Jun07	*	--	1	*
Mar07	*	--	*	1
Democratic candidate, non-specific				
Jun07	2	*	2	1
Mar07	1	--	3	1
Republican candidate, non-specific				
Jun07	*	1	*	*
Mar07	1	2	*	*
Don't know/No candidate				
Jun07	57	64	44	59
Mar07	66	71	52	59

7. Thinking about how the issue of health care might affect your vote for president, would you ... ?
(CATEGORIES READ IN ORDER AND REVERSE ORDER)

	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
ONLY vote for a candidate who shares your views on health care				
Jun07	13	9	17	10
Mar07	14	7	17	15
Consider a candidate's position on health care as just one of many important factors				
Jun07	68	67	67	74
Mar07	69	77	70	67
Not see health care as a major issue in your vote				
Jun07	13	21	9	13
Mar07	10	11	7	11
Don't know/Refused				
Jun07	5	2	6	3
Mar07	8	5	6	7

8. Which ONE of the following three things would you like to see in a health care reform proposal from a presidential candidate? Would you want your candidate to propose... (READ)? (Which would you want your presidential candidate to propose - a major plan OR a more limited plan OR to keep things as they are?)

	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
A new health plan that would make a major effort to provide health insurance for all or nearly all of the uninsured BUT would involve a substantial increase in spending				
Jun07	53	36	72	49
Mar07	52	38	66	52
A new health plan that is more limited and would cover only some groups of the uninsured BUT would involve less new spending				
Jun07	21	29	14	23
Mar07	24	33	18	25
A health plan that would keep things basically as they are				
Jun07	17	26	8	19
Mar07	14	19	9	13
Don't know/Refused				
Jun07	9	9	6	10
Mar07	11	10	8	10

8a. When thinking about rising health care costs, which ONE of the following concerns you most... (READ AND RANDOMIZE)?

	TOTAL	REP	DEM	IND
Increases in the amount people pay for their Health insurance premiums and other out-of-pocket costs				
Jun07	38	35	45	35
Increases in spending on government health Insurance programs like Medicare and Medicaid				
Jun07	18	19	17	19
Increases in what the nation as a whole spends on health				
Jun07	18	21	16	20
Increases in the health insurance premiums that employers pay to cover their workers				
Jun07	13	14	13	14
All of these (VOL)				
Jun07	4	3	3	5
None of these (VOL)				
Jun07	3	4	1	4
Don't know/Refused				
Jun07	5	4	5	4