

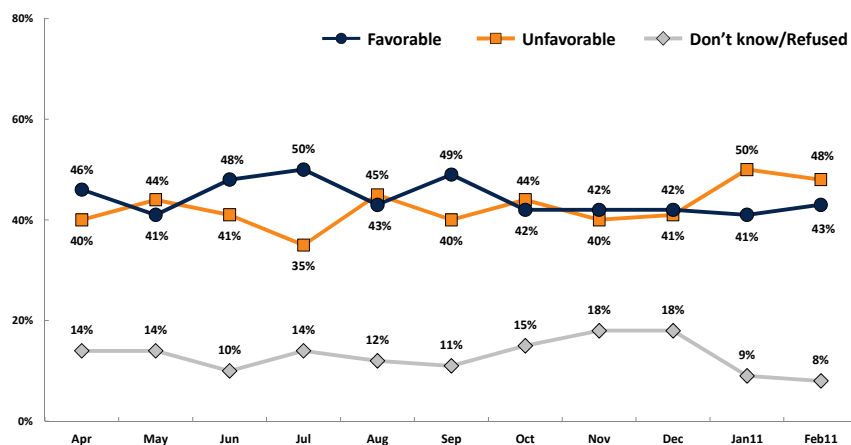
In the wake of the health reform repeal vote in the U.S. House and the ongoing legal challenges over the individual mandate, nearly half the country either believes that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been repealed and is no longer law (22 percent) or doesn't know enough to say whether it is still law (26 percent). Roughly half of Americans (52 percent) accurately report that the ACA is still the law of the land. Meanwhile, views on repeal continue to be very mixed: with four in ten backing repeal (and half of those hoping the law will be replaced with a Republican alternative), three in ten backing an expansion of the law, and two in ten hoping to see it implemented as is. And most Americans continue to report they want to keep many of the key provisions of the law. There is more agreement when it comes to the strategy of using the legislative budgeting process to stop implementation of the law: six in ten continue to oppose the idea (the main reason given: it's "not the way our government should work"). Overall opinion on the law is largely unchanged from January, with the public roughly divided and partisans on opposite sides of the issue, though negative views having risen among senior citizens in recent months, returning to earlier levels of opposition.

PUBLIC STILL DIVIDED ON REFORM LAW

Public opinion on health reform remains dug in this month, with the public roughly divided on the new law and partisans holding opposite views, a pattern that has been in place since passage last March. Overall, 48 percent of Americans have an unfavorable opinion of the law and 43 percent hold favorable views.

Views on Health Reform Remain Divided

As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law early last year. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?

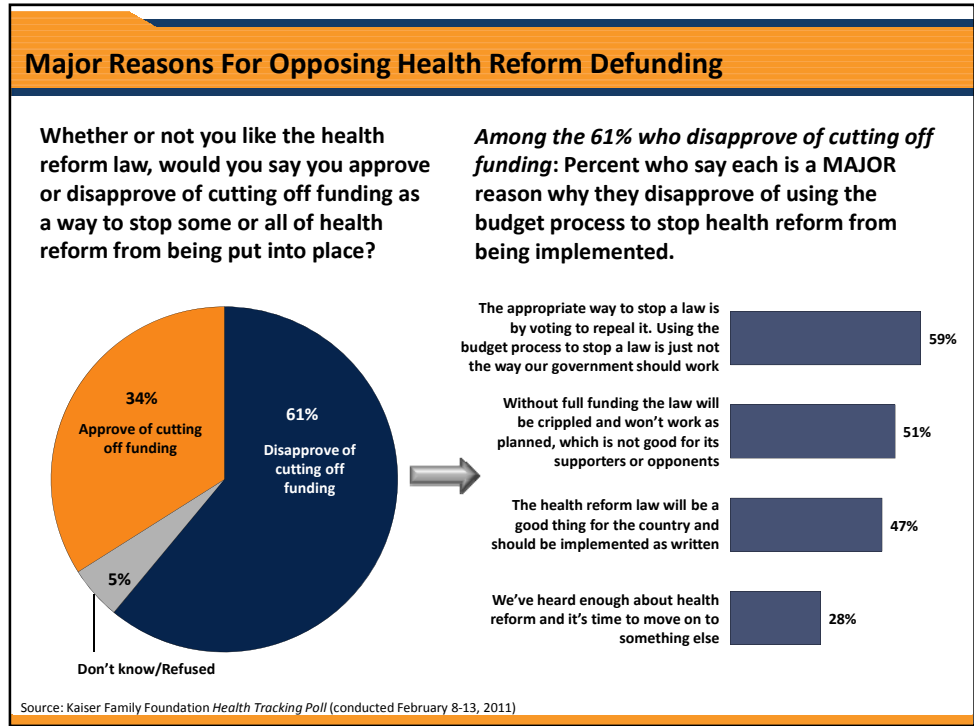
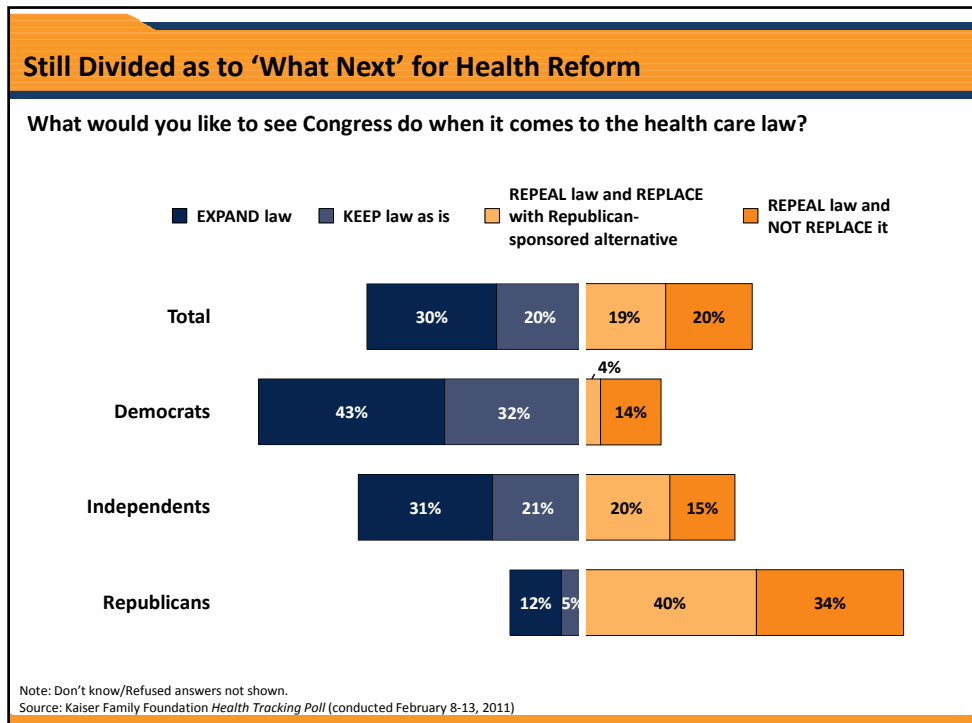


Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Polls

Overall, 66 percent of Democrats have a favorable view of the law, while an even larger proportion of Republicans (84 percent) have an unfavorable view, a proportion that has crept upwards in recent months. Independents are divided, 43 percent favorable, 47 percent unfavorable. Republicans are also twice as likely as Democrats to feel strongly on the issue, with 58 percent describing their views as "very unfavorable", compared to 30 percent of Democrats who say they are "very favorable".

MIXED VIEWS ON ‘WHAT NEXT’ FOR REFORM LAW

As was true last month, there is a real splintering of opinion when it comes to what the public hopes to see Congress do with the reform law. Three in ten say they want Congress to expand the law, not something high on the legislature’s agenda at the moment. And two in ten vote for the status quo – leaving the law to be implemented as enacted. On the other hand, four in ten want to see the law repealed – with half of those (19 percent) hoping to see it replaced with a “Republican-sponsored alternative” and the other half (20 percent) wanting no further action. While most Republicans (74 percent) agree that the reform law should be repealed, they divide on what’s next: 40 percent want to see a Republican version of health reform put into place, while nearly as many (34 percent) want Congress to drop the issue entirely and move on.



Even as there are ongoing legislative discussions as to whether implementation of the law can be effectively stalled by funding cuts inserted into this year’s budget process, most Americans (61 percent) – including majorities of Democrats and Independents – continue to oppose using the budget process in this fashion. Most Republicans (59 percent) meanwhile, favor the idea. The most commonly chosen explanation for opposition to defunding health reform is that it doesn’t seem like “the way our government should work,” (named as a major reason by 59 percent in this group), followed by having concerns about the way funding cuts might impact the law’s performance (51 percent) and support for the law in general (47 percent).

Few say that issue fatigue is their main reason for opposing defunding efforts.

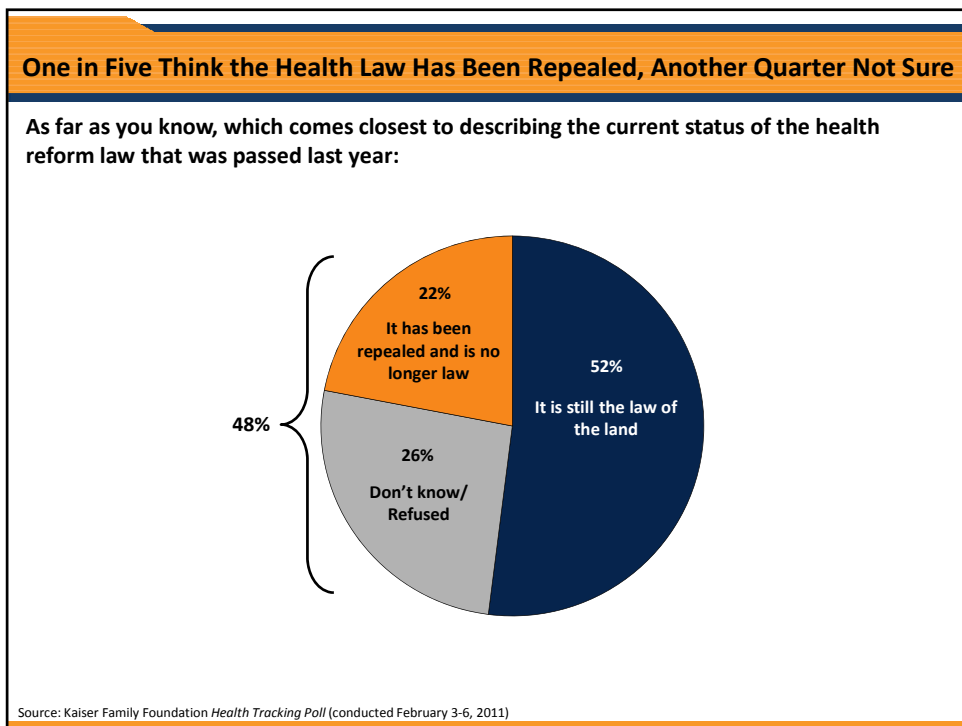
BUT REPEAL WHAT?

As has been true since early in the debate, individual provisions of the new law are more popular than the law itself, complicating the debate over repeal. So while the public in general is divided over whether to keep or repeal the legislation, if they could pick and choose, the large majority (roughly eight in ten Americans) would keep the provisions providing tax credits to small business, and upwards of seven in ten would keep the provisions that close the Medicare doughnut hole, provide coverage subsidies to those of low and moderate income, institute the new voluntary long term care insurance program known as the CLASS Act, and prohibit insurance companies from denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions. Even among those who want to repeal the law, most say they would like to keep five of the seven provisions queried. The one provision that the public remains happy to repeal: the individual mandate, which 67 percent would be happy to strip from the law, even as many experts say that without it the system may not work as intended.

	Among those who want to REPEAL health reform law		Among those who want to KEEP health reform law		Democrats		Independents		Republicans	
	Keep	Repeal	Keep	Repeal	Keep	Repeal	Keep	Repeal	Keep	Repeal
Tax credits to small business	70	26	93	7	91	7	84	14	69	27
Gradually close the Medicare “doughnut hole”	60	35	87	10	88	10	73	22	61	33
Financial help for low and moderate income Americans in need of coverage	52	41	91	7	88	10	73	23	54	39
CLASS act (voluntary long-term care insurance program)	58	36	87	9	85	11	75	19	57	36
Guaranteed Issue	56	38	84	15	82	16	72	25	56	40
Increase Medicare payroll tax on wealthy	40	56	75	19	76	20	61	32	40	57
Individual mandate	11	85	42	52	44	51	27	69	9	86

ONE IN FIVE THINK LAW HAS ALREADY BEEN REPEALED

Meanwhile, the successful House repeal vote, the ongoing effort to bring a repeal vote to the Senate floor and the ongoing developments in federal court over the legality of the individual mandate have set up an environment where confusion over the status of the reform law can thrive. In fact, half of Americans say they are confused about the law. And while about half the country (52 percent) is aware the health reform law is still the law of the land, just over one in five Americans (22 percent) think



health reform has been repealed and is no longer the law and another quarter (26 percent) aren't sure either way. College graduates and those living in higher income households are more likely to be aware of the actual status of the law.

More Americans seem to be familiar with the pace of reform's implementation. Asked how many of the reform law's provisions have been implemented thus far, 62 percent correctly chose "some" as the closest appropriate answer. Meanwhile 17 percent thought none had been implemented, and 10 percent are under the impression that "most" or "all" have been put into place.

GETTING CONCRETE: ESTIMATES OF PERSONAL BENEFIT AND HARM

In the February survey, Americans were asked whether they and their family "have personally benefited from the health reform law", and whether they had "been negatively affected" by the same. Overall, 14 percent say they have benefited in some way thus far, with the most commonly offered experiences being improved access to care or coverage, the ability to keep grown children on the family insurance plan, and reduced costs. At the same time, 17 percent say they have been negatively affected. Increased costs were by far the most commonly cited issue, followed by reduced benefits or choices and an inability to get or keep insurance.

As is clear from the direct quotes below, however, it is difficult to determine which effects were caused by the law and which are due to changes in the marketplace that the public merely attributes to the law. To the extent that Americans have difficulty distinguishing between the two, public perceptions of the law will likely be based on some misunderstanding.

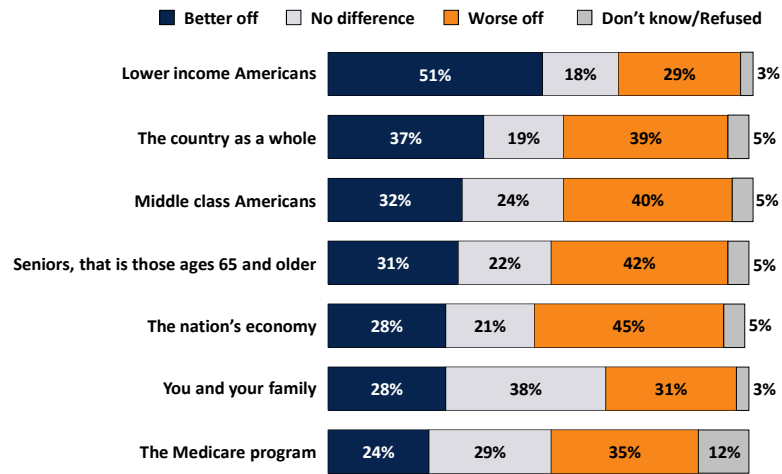
IN THEIR OWN WORDS... BENEFITS AND HARM	
Among the 14% who say they have personally benefited from the health reform law: In what ways would you say you have benefited from the health reform law?	Among the 17% who say they have been negatively affected by the health reform law: In what ways would you say you have been negatively affected by the health reform law?
"I'm not worried about being bumped off [down] the road because of some major illness...And as I get older toward qualifying for Medicare, I am more comfortable because the prescription drugs will be less."	"My health insurance doubled since the health care law, and I pay for my own because I run my own business."
"My son, 23, works two jobs that do not have health insurance, and he can stay under my health insurance."	"My personal health insurance went up, and I am sure it will continue. I am afraid it is going to break the country economically."
"I got health coverage when I needed it."	"My mother had to pay more money for medication."
"My husband fell into the doughnut hole and received \$250."	"Financially the middle class will not be able to afford the insurance."
"If we need to purchase new health care coverage, nobody can turn us down."	"It is going to cost the taxpayers more money. It was passed...and people didn't get a chance to read it."
"We have children with disabilities. The new reform law has really helped us. Since we have children with pre-existing conditions, we get coverage."	"Because of our income, we are being strangled with paying for everyone else. Middle America will not exist under these conditions."
"It makes our health insurance more inexpensive."	"I don't like someone telling me I have to do this."
"It has allowed my husband to have all his medical treatments for his illness."	"Whenever the government controls anything, people get affected negatively. Government should stay out of it and not have control over it."

WHO DOES THE PUBLIC THINK WILL BENEFIT

Broadly speaking, a slim majority of the public (51 percent) sees the law as improving the health care situation of lower income Americans, but beyond that there is significantly less optimism. For all the remaining groups asked about, at least as many if not more say they expect things will be worse off under health reform than expect them to be better off. In no case, however, does a majority agree that each would be worse off.

Which Groups Benefit?

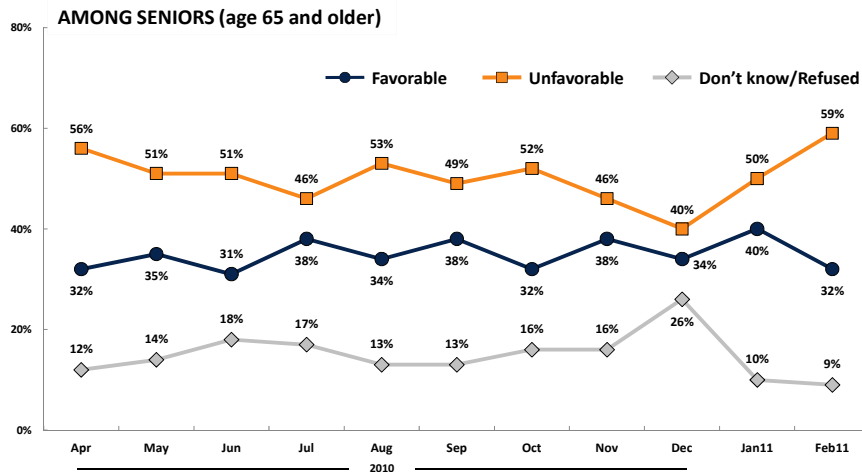
Do you think each of the following will be better off or worse off under the health reform law, or don't you think it will make much difference?



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll (conducted February 8-13, 2011)

Unfavorable Views Up Among Seniors, Rivaling Views After Passage

As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law early last year. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Polls

SENIORS

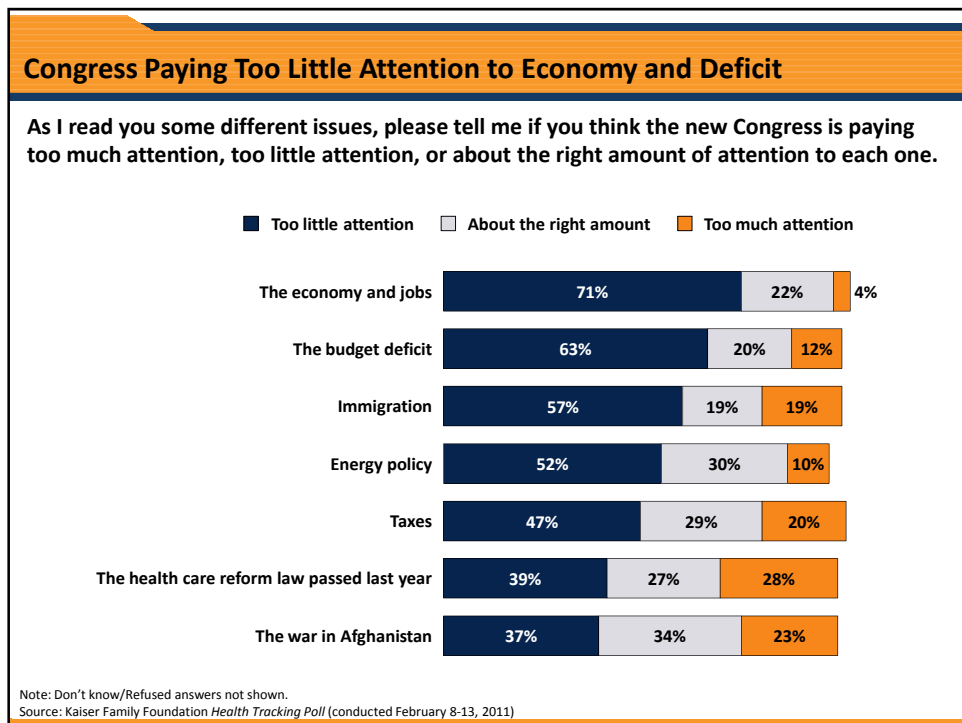
After the nation's economy, Americans are most likely to say that seniors will be worse off under the health reform law (42 percent say so, compared to 31 percent who say seniors will be better off.) And seniors agree: 48 percent say the elderly will be worse off, twice as many as say they will benefit (22 percent).

Seniors as a group have been consistently less likely to support health reform since passage than younger Americans. Recent months, however, have seen a rise in unfavorable views among seniors to 59 percent. This level of opposition represents a 19

percentage point increase from the low point of 40 percent in December, and returns unfavorable views to roughly the level they were at immediately after passage last March.

ONLY LIMITED EVIDENCE OF “HEALTH REFORM FATIGUE”

When it comes to early evaluations of how the 112th Congress is spending its time, most Americans say there has been too little focus on the economy (71 percent), the deficit (63 percent) and immigration (57 percent). But it's not necessarily the case that they are blaming health reform for hogging the spotlight. In fact, 39 percent say Congress is paying too little attention and another 27 percent say it's getting about the right amount, meaning most Americans don't seem to be tired of the topic despite the fact that the debate has stretched out into a new session. Nearly three in ten (28 percent) do, however, think Congress is devoting too much time to health reform this year.



Methodology

This Kaiser Health Tracking Poll was designed and analyzed by public opinion researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation led by Mollyann Brodie, Ph.D., including Claudia Deane, Sarah Cho, and Theresa Boston. The survey was conducted February 8 through February 13, 2011, among a nationally representative random sample of 1,202 adults ages 18 and older. Telephone interviews conducted by landline (801) and cell phone (401, including 205 who had no landline telephone) were carried out in English and Spanish by Princeton Survey Research Associates. Two additional items (as noted on the full topline) were fielded on a separate survey conducted by landline and cell phone February 3 through 6, 2011 among a nationally representative random sample of 1,001 adults ages 18 and older. The survey was carried out in English by Princeton Survey Research Associates.

The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for the main survey and plus or minus 4 percentage points for the smaller survey. For results based on other subgroups, the margin of sampling error may be higher. Note that sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other public opinion poll.

The full question wording, results, charts and a brief on the poll can be viewed online at <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8156.cfm>.

Additional copies of this publication (#8156-F) are available on the Kaiser Family Foundation's website at www.kff.org.