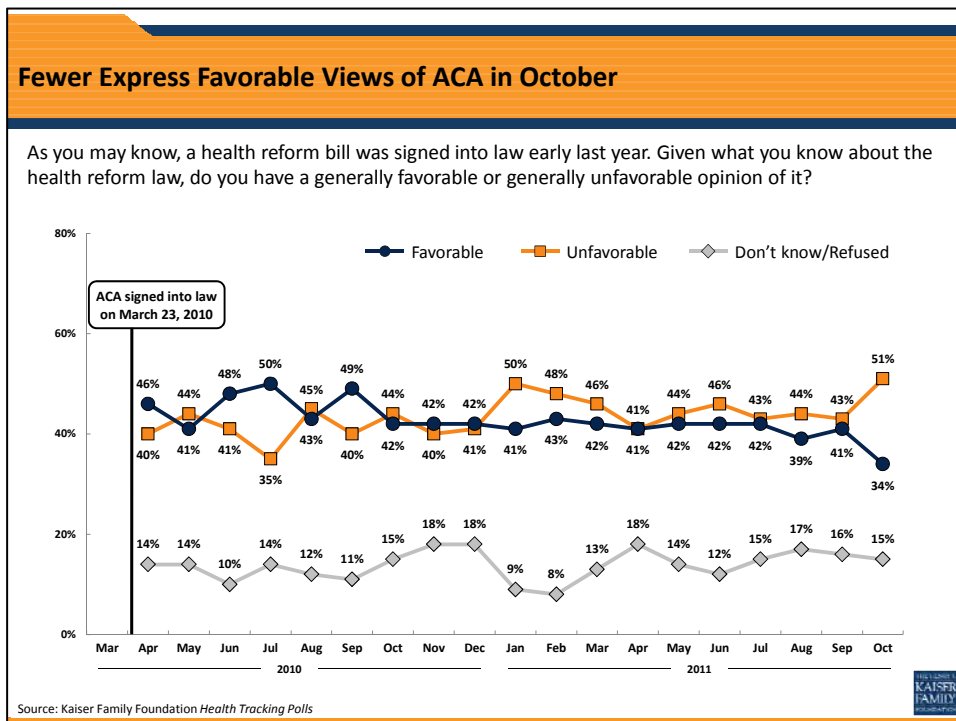


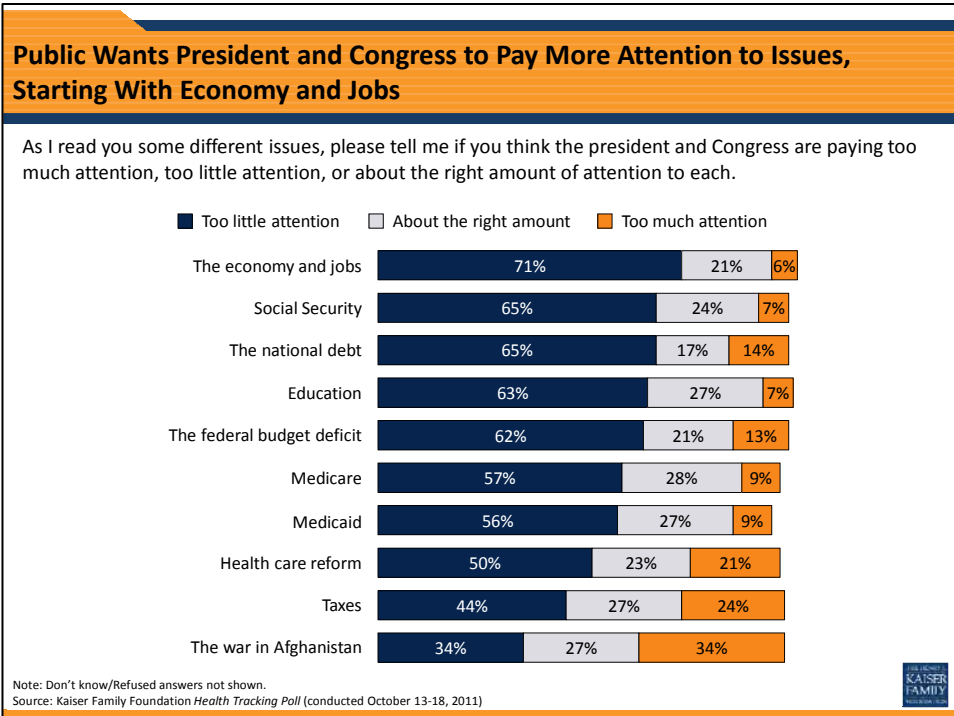
This month's Kaiser Health Tracking Poll finds a more negative overall public mood about the health reform law and its perceived impacts. Amidst heavy news media coverage of Occupy Wall Street and the Republican presidential primary debates, and at a time when a generally discontented public wants Washington to focus on the economy and jobs, roughly half the public now reports having an unfavorable view of the health reform law, while about a third say they have a favorable view, a low point in Kaiser polls since the law was passed. This month, Americans are also more than twice as likely to say the law won't make much difference for them and their families as they are to say they'll be better off under the law. While Democrats continue to be much more likely than independents or Republicans to support the law, the fall in favorability was largely driven by waning Democratic enthusiasm—the share of Democrats with a favorable view of the law dropped from nearly two-thirds in September to just over half in October. With Mitt Romney among the top candidates for the Republican presidential nomination, this month's poll also queried the public about their impressions of the Massachusetts health reform law that passed when Romney was governor there, and found that most Americans, including most likely Republican primary voters, say they don't know enough about the Massachusetts law to offer an opinion.

IEWS ON THE ACA LESS FAVORABLE THIS MONTH

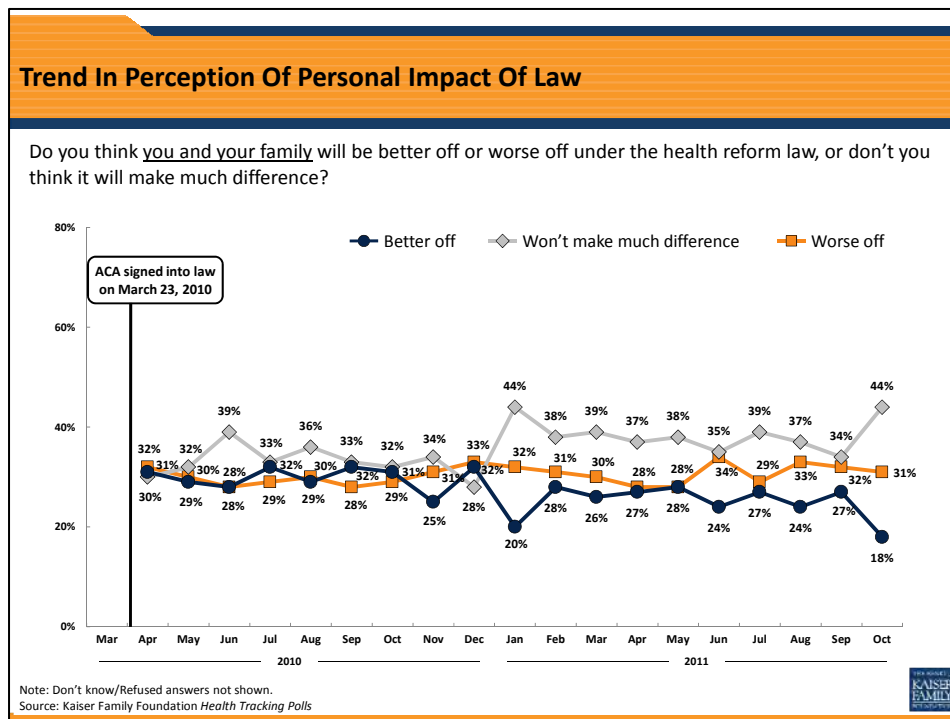
After remaining roughly evenly split for most of the last year and a half, the public's overall views on the health reform law were more negative this month. In October, about half (51 percent) say they have an unfavorable view of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), while 34 percent say they have a favorable view, a low point in Kaiser tracking polls since the law was passed.



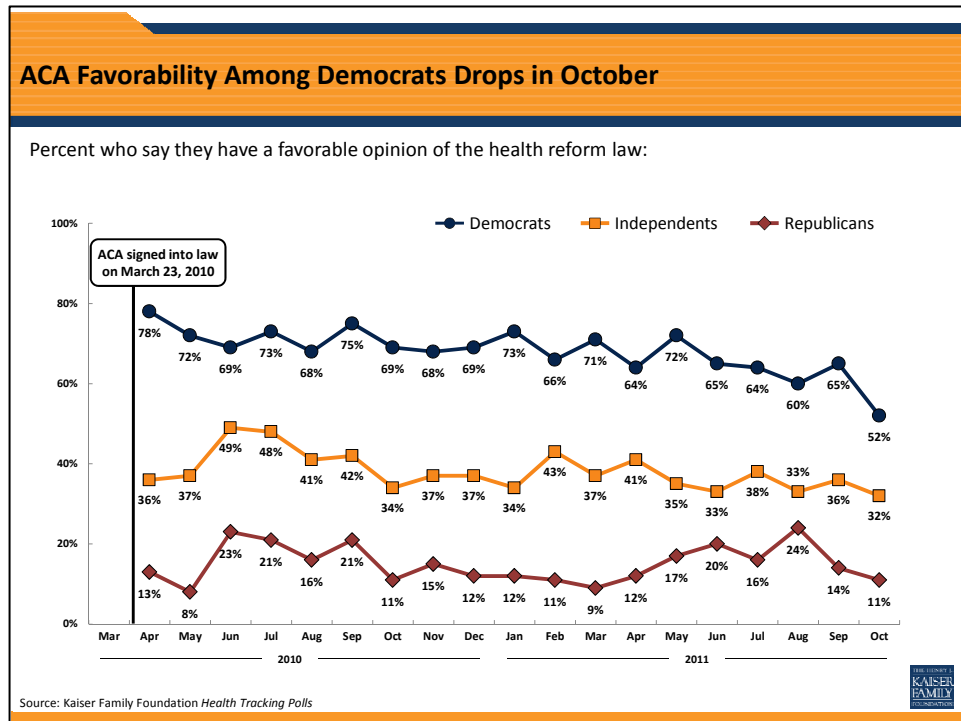
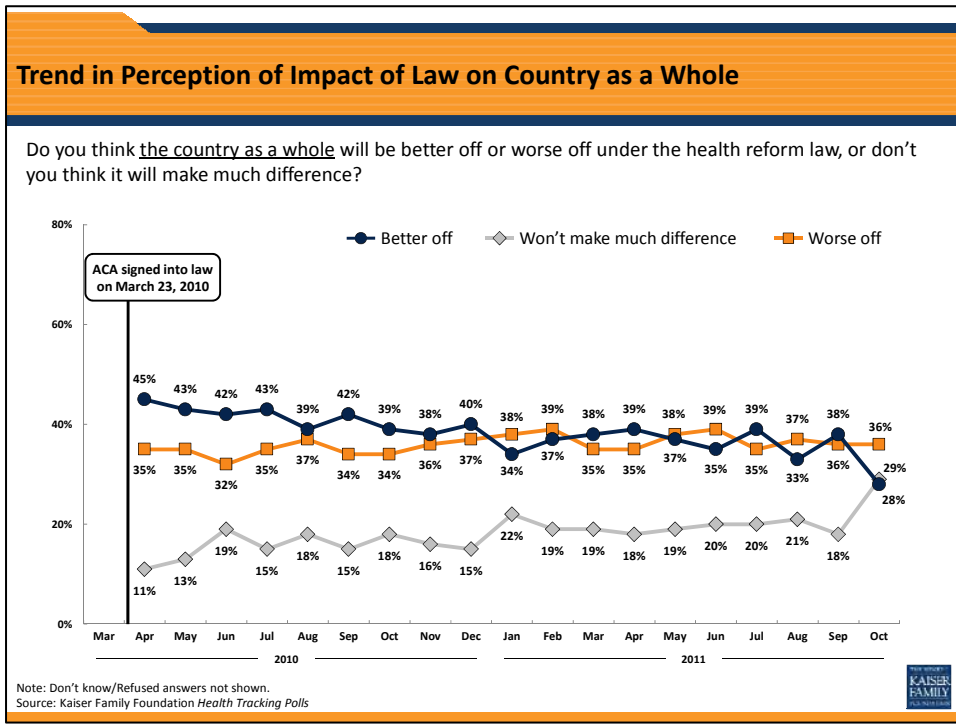
This month's findings come at a time when Republican presidential candidates have continued to level heavy criticism at the law during recent debates, and when the nation's attention has been riveted by news of the flailing economy and the Occupy Wall Street protests. It's not surprising, then, that the October poll finds the economy and jobs at the top of a long list of issues the public thinks are getting "too little attention" from the president and Congress.



Consistent with the overall decline in favorability of the ACA, the public is less likely to think the law will make things better for themselves personally, and more likely to say it won't make a difference. This month, 18 percent say they and their families will be better off under the law (down from 27 percent in September), while 44 percent say it won't make much difference for them (up from 34 percent last month). The share who thinks they'll personally be worse off has remained steady at around three in ten since the law was passed.

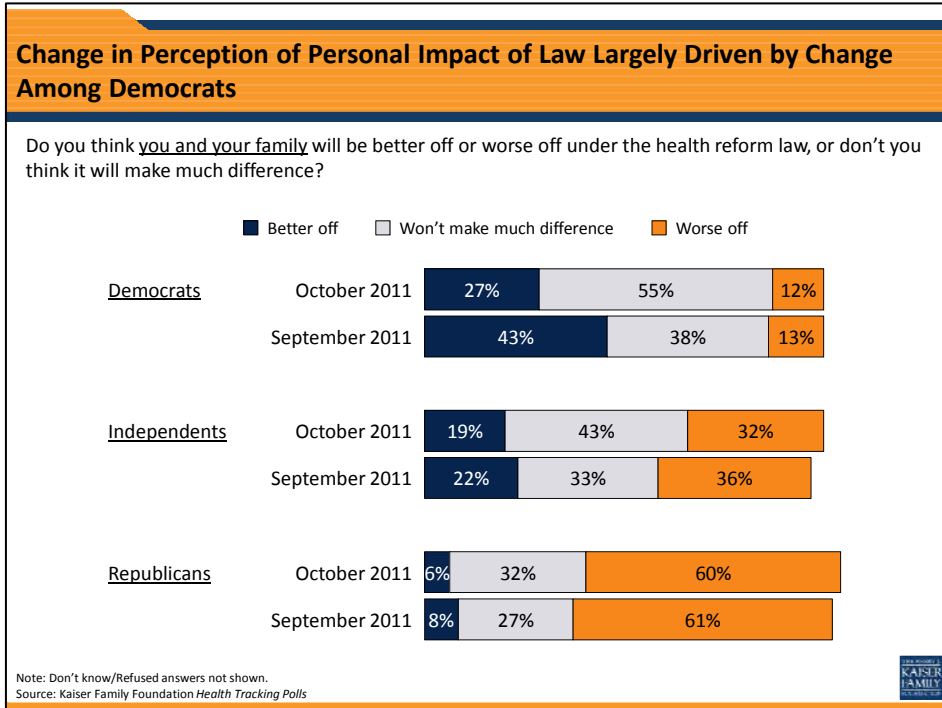
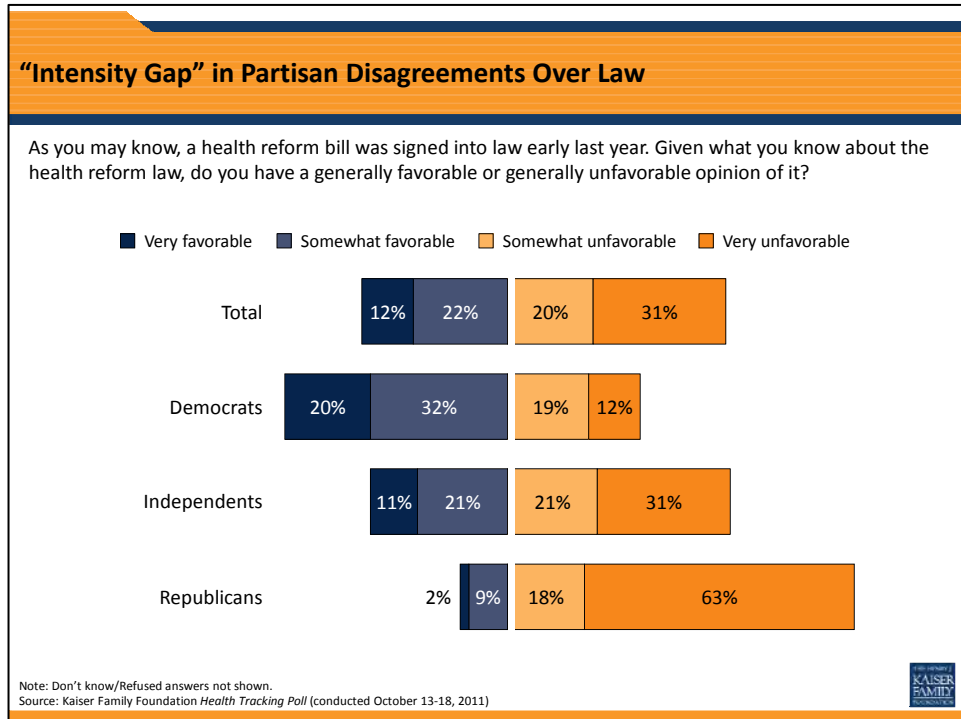


Similarly, between September and October the share saying the country as a whole will be better off dropped from 38 percent to 28 percent, while the share saying the law won't make much difference for the country rose from 18 percent to 29 percent. The share thinking the country will be worse off has remained steady at just over a third since the law was passed.



DECLINE IN POSITIVE VIEWS OF LAW LARGELY DRIVEN BY DEMOCRATS
While Democrats continue to be more likely to support the law compared with independents and Republicans, the uptick toward negative views this month was largely driven by a decline in enthusiasm among Democrats. For example, while about half (52 percent) of Democrats currently have a favorable view of the law, that share is down 13 percentage points from last month's poll (65 percent).

Since the law’s passage, Kaiser tracking polls have always measured a partisan “intensity gap,” with a higher share of Republicans expressing a “very unfavorable” view of the law compared with the share of Democrats expressing a “very favorable” view, but this intensity gap grew even larger this month. Currently, one in five Democrats (20 percent) have a very favorable view of the ACA, down from 31 percent in September, while more than six in ten Republicans (63 percent) express a very *unfavorable* view.



Changes in views among Democrats also appear to be driving the national trend in the public’s perception of the law’s impact on them and their families. In September, Democrats were about equally likely to say they’d be better off under the law (43 percent) as to say it wouldn’t impact them (38 percent). This month, however, Democrats are about twice as likely to say they law won’t impact them (55 percent) as they are to think they’ll be better off (27 percent).

FEW HAVE AN OPINION ON THE MASSACHUSETTS HEALTH REFORM LAW

With former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney among the top candidates for the GOP presidential nomination, the health reform law that passed in the state of Massachusetts when Romney was governor has been a mainstay topic at recent Republican presidential primary debates. Still, among the public at large, and even among likely Republican primary voters, few say they know enough about the Massachusetts law to form an opinion about its merits. Overall, nearly three-quarters of the public (74 percent) say they don't know enough about the Massachusetts law to have either a favorable or an unfavorable opinion of it, a share that is similar among those who say they plan on voting in their state's Republican presidential primary (70 percent). Further, eight in ten say they don't know enough about the Massachusetts law to rate whether the law is working well and seven in ten (71 percent) cannot say whether the law is similar or different from the national health reform law.

VIEWS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS HEALTH REFORM LAW BY PARTY AFFILIATION					
	Total	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Likely GOP Primary Voters
As you may know, the state of Massachusetts passed a health reform law in 2006 [<i>one half of respondents were read</i> : when Mitt Romney was the state's governor]. Given what you know about it, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of the Massachusetts health reform law, or do you not know enough to say?					
Favorable	11%	16%	11%	3%	8%
Unfavorable	12	5	12	23	19
Don't know enough to say	74	76	75	70	70
From what you have heard, do you think the Massachusetts health reform law is working well, not working well, or do you not know enough to say?					
Working well	8	11	8	3	6
Not working well	11	5	10	18	15
Don't know enough to say	80	82	81	77	77
How similar or different do you think the Massachusetts law is from the national health reform law passed last year?					
Similar	17	15	18	17	18
Different	11	8	12	14	11
Don't know enough to say	71	76	70	68	69

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 Liz Hamel, Sarah Cho, and Theresa Boston. The survey was conducted October 13 through October 18, 2011, among a nationally representative random sample of 1,223 adults ages 18 and older. Telephone interviews conducted by landline (718) and cell phone (505, including 290 who had no landline telephone) were carried out in English and Spanish by Princeton Survey Research Associates.

The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For results based on 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 and methodology of the poll can be viewed online at <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8251.cfm>.

This publication (#8251-F) is available on the Kaiser Family Foundation's website at www.kff.org.