



A not-for-profit health and tax policy research organization

Galen Institute Releases Poll Showing Overwhelming Opposition to the Individual Mandate and Other Key Components of Congressional Health Reform Proposals

Seventy-one Percent Are Concerned Their Health Insurance Will Change if Congress Passes Health Reform Legislation

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ALEXANDRIA, VA. OCTOBER 19, 2009 – The Galen Institute today released new survey results showing overwhelming opposition to the individual mandate and other key components of health reform legislation Congress is considering.

“These findings illustrate strong opposition to fundamental aspects of the bills moving through Congress,” said Galen Institute President Grace-Marie Turner. “People don’t want to be forced to buy insurance they can’t afford or that might not fit their needs, yet the proposals would slap a tax on them if they don’t. And people overwhelmingly oppose reducing seniors’ health benefits or raising taxes on the working and middle class in order to expand coverage to some of the uninsured, yet many in Congress continue to push exactly that.”

“What the public does favor is a targeted approach to solving problems in our health sector, but not a complete Washington-style overhaul of one-sixth of our economy. Washington’s failure to listen is causing great apprehension and concern among the public,” added Turner.

The nationwide random survey of 510 adults was conducted October 8-11, 2009 and has a +/- 4.34 margin of error. International Communications Research (ICR), a non-partisan research firm based in Pennsylvania, conducted the survey.

More Than Seven in Ten Oppose the Individual Mandate

Seventy-one percent of those surveyed said they would oppose “a new law saying that everyone either would have to obtain private or public health insurance approved by the government or pay a tax of \$750 or more every year.” Only 21 percent said they would support the law. More than half (54 percent) of all respondents indicate a “strong” opposition to the individual mandate, including 58 percent of those 45-54 years of age and 58 percent of those 55 years and older.

More Than Two-Thirds Oppose Reducing Seniors' Health Benefits to Pay for Covering the Uninsured

More than two-thirds (68 percent) oppose reducing “some health insurance benefits for senior citizens in order to expand health insurance for some people who are uninsured,” while 28 percent support the idea. Opposition is spread across political party lines as 86 percent of Republicans, 66 percent of Independents, and 59 percent of Democrats oppose this idea.

Opposition to Raising Taxes on the Working and Middle Class to Cover the Uninsured

Fifty-eight percent disagree, most of them “strongly” (44 percent), with the following statement: “I would support an increase in taxes on the working and middle class if it would help provide health insurance to more Americans.” Only 39 percent support the position.

Seventy-one Percent Are Concerned Current Health Insurance Will Change if Congress Passes Health Reform

Seventy-one percent said they were concerned that their current health insurance would change if Congress passes health reform legislation. One-quarter (25 percent) said they were not concerned. Groups with the highest level of concern include: people 55 years and older (84 percent), those aged 45-54 (80 percent), Republicans (82 percent), and Independents (78 percent). Almost half (47 percent) of all respondents indicate they are “very concerned.” Sixty-two percent of people aged 55 years and older are “very concerned,” along with 61 percent of Republicans, 63 percent of those in the South, and 54 percent of Independents.

Support for a Targeted Approach to Addressing Health Care

Forty-nine percent support, “A targeted approach that addresses a few problems at a time.” Forty-one percent support, “A comprehensive approach that makes significant changes to our current health care system.”

Here are Details of the Survey's Results

Question: Let's say that Congress passed a new law saying that everyone either would have to obtain private or public health insurance approved by the government or pay a tax of \$750 or more every year. Would you support or oppose this law?

STRONGLY SUPPORT	13%
SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	8%
SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	17%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	54%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	8%

Question: Which of the following approaches to health care reform do you favor?

A comprehensive approach that makes significant changes to our current health care system?	41%
A targeted approach that addresses a few problems at a time?	49%
NEITHER	4%
DON'T KNOW	5%

Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "I would support an increase in taxes on the working and middle class if it would help provide health insurance to more Americans."

STRONGLY AGREE	18%
SOMEWHAT AGREE	20%
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	14%
STRONGLY DISAGREE	44%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	4%

Question: How concerned are you that your current health insurance will change if Congress passes health reform legislation? Are you ...?

VERY CONCERNED	47%
SOMEWHAT CONCERNED	24%
NOT VERY CONCERNED	9%
NOT CONCERNED AT ALL	17%
NOT APPLICABLE/ I CURRENTLY DO NOT HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE	3%
DON'T KNOW	1%

Question: Let's say Congress proposed a bill that would reduce some health insurance benefits for senior citizens in order to provide health insurance for some people who are uninsured. Would you support or oppose this bill?

STRONGLY SUPPORT	13%
SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	15%
SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	20%
STRONGLY OPPOSE	48%
DON'T KNOW	4%

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