

Voters Find Serious Vulnerabilities in Democratic Health Care Proposals

Independents Side with Republicans on Budgetary Impact, Taxes and Threat to Private Coverage

Washington, D.C. (June 22, 2009) – Voters overwhelmingly agree that reforming health care is important but are concerned about Democratic proposals that increase federal debt, add new taxes and push those with private insurance to a public plan. The findings, according to a newly released Resurgent Republic survey, find Democrats on one side of the issue with Independents and Republicans on the other.

Fifty-eight percent of voters agree with the statement "Reforming health care is important, but it should be done without raising taxes or increasing the deficit," with 41 percent in strong agreement. A majority of Republicans (75 percent) and Independents (62 percent) are on one side in agreement, while only 38 percent of Democrats agreed. Raising taxes to ensure everyone has health insurance is a non-starter with voters. By a 13-point margin of 52-39 percent, respondents preferred a health care reform plan that does not provide health insurance to all Americans but keeps taxes at current levels over a reform plan that raises taxes in order to provide health insurance to all Americans. Republicans preferred the plan with taxes at current levels by a whopping 60 percentage points, while Independents were close to the mean with a 16-point preference. However, Democrats favored a plan that raises taxes by a 27-point margin.

"Concern about runaway federal spending and mounting federal debt is the Achilles heel of the Obama health care plan," said Resurgent Republic board member Ed Gillespie. "And offsetting the cost of more government coverage with higher taxes on existing private health insurance benefits runs smack into voters' principal concern about rising health care costs."

Asked whether they would prefer a system where most Americans get their health care coverage through the federal government or a private insurance company, voters favored a predominantly private insurance system by almost exactly two-to-one, 60-31 percent. The Republican margin was 87-11 percent and Independents 61-24 percent. Democrats diverged, favoring a system where most Americans get their coverage through the federal government by 15 points, 37-52 percent.

"There is a significant gap between those who say they prefer a system where most Americans get their health care coverage through private insurance and opposition to a public insurance plan, especially among critical Independent voters," said Resurgent Republic board member Whit Ayres. "Emphasizing how the public plan option would result in those with private insurance being moved into a government program is fertile ground for opponents. Combining these critiques with a positive message focused on addressing cost concerns and making health care more affordable could help lead to passage of a bipartisan health care reform bill in this Congress."

To see the survey's memo and complete poll, please visit www.resurgentrepublic.com.

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