

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Geoff Garin
DATE: August 6, 2013
RE: Key Findings From National Voter Survey On The Affordable Care Act

On behalf of the Service Employees International Union, Hart Research conducted a national telephone poll among 1,205 likely 2014 voters to explore current attitudes toward the Affordable Care Act. Interviewing was conducted July 12-17, 2013, and the survey has an overall margin of error of ± 3 percentage points. This memo outlines the key findings and takeaways from this survey.

The key takeaway from this survey is that voters' main focus for the Affordable Care Act is now on improving it and implementing it effectively, rather than on repealing it.

After voting in favor of repeal for the 40th time last week, House Republicans' handling of the ACA puts them sharply out of step with most voters.

Strong majorities of voters reject Republicans who want to repeal the Affordable Care Act with no real alternative to replace it, and who would go back to letting insurance companies do and charge whatever they want.

By the same token, there is broad support for Democrats who want to improve the Affordable Care Act while making sure it is implemented effectively.

This contrast is a winning one for Democrats, and the best strategy for Democrats is to take the fight to Republicans in these terms.

- (1) Simply put, the large majority of voters do not want Congress to repeal Obamacare.** Only 36% of all voters say they would prefer Obamacare to be repealed, whereas a 40% plurality would prefer to leave the law as is (15%) or make just minor changes (25%). Another 18% of voters support making major changes in the ACA. Among the key group who are undecided in the 2014 generic Congressional ballot, only 39% want to repeal Obamacare. And although a 67% majority of likely Republican voters want to repeal Obamacare, that still leaves one-third of the GOP that does *not* want to repeal the law.
- (2) Republican efforts to repeal Obamacare now put them at an electoral disadvantage, and engaging on this issue actually improves the**

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standing of Democratic candidates. Our generic congressional trial heat shows a relatively narrow, three-point advantage for Democratic candidates (44%) over Republicans (41%) nationwide. However, when the choice in the 2014 election is presented as “a Democrat who favors fixing and improving Obamacare rather than repealing it altogether” versus “a Republican who wants to totally repeal Obamacare,” voters favor the Democratic candidate (51%) over the Republican candidate (36%) by 15 percentage points.

- Voters who support the Democratic candidate in the generic trial heat continue to support an anti-repeal Democratic candidate over a pro-repeal Republican by 89% to 3%.
- However, voters who are undecided in the generic trial heat prefer an anti-repeal Democrat (40%) to a pro-repeal Republican (30%) by 10 percentage points, and 14% of Republican voters in the generic trial heat say they favor the anti-repeal Democrat when the election is framed around candidates’ positions on Obamacare.

(3) Voters express overwhelmingly positive feelings toward Democrats who will work to improve Obamacare and facilitate its implementation, and help constituents understand how the new law will affect them.

- By a three to one margin, voters say they would be favorable (60%) rather than unfavorable (19%) toward “a Democrat who, as an elected official, wants to help individuals and small businesses in their state understand how best to deal with Obamacare and take advantage of its benefits.”
- By nearly a two to one margin, voters would be favorable (53%) rather than unfavorable (28%) toward “a Democrat who favors fixing and improving Obamacare rather than repealing it altogether.”

(4) Voters feel intensely negative toward Republican candidates who have worked to repeal or undermine the law, especially those who are unwilling to help their constituents take advantage of the benefits and protections available to them under the ACA.

- Seventy-one percent (71%) of voters express unfavorable feelings toward “a Republican who, as an elected official, refuses to help individuals and small businesses understand how best to deal with Obamacare and take advantage of its benefits.” Even among voters inclined to support a Republican candidate, three in five (61%) have a negative impression of incumbents who are making it harder to implement the law.
- Two-thirds of all voters (including 60% of undecided voters) have an unfavorable impression of “a Republican who repeatedly voted to cut the funding needed to effectively implement the law, and refuses to provide information to employers and individuals about it.”

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- A large majority of voters (62%) also feel negative toward “a Republican who favors totally repealing Obamacare and would go back to letting health insurance companies do whatever they want.”

(5) Voters outline several major concerns about the potential effect of Republican efforts to repeal Obamacare, and Democratic candidates should force their Republican opponents to own up to the consequences of their positions.

Voters’ most significant concerns about repealing Obamacare are the potential that people who are sick or have preexisting conditions could lose their insurance, that insurance companies could raise rates capriciously, that insurance companies would waste members’ premiums on bonuses and administration instead of care, and that insurance companies would be allowed to discriminate against women by charging them more for care.

- These changes are troubling, not only to large majorities of Democratic and independent voters, but also to nearly half of Republican voters.

Holding Republicans Accountable For Obamacare Repeal Votes <i>Proportion saying each gives them major concerns</i>		
	All Voters	Inde- pendents
	%	%
Insurance companies would be allowed to deny people coverage because of preexisting conditions or drop someone's coverage if they get sick.	70	73
Insurance companies would be allowed to raise rates without any justification, and would no longer be required to have their proposed rates reviewed by the appropriate regulatory bodies.	67	67
Insurance companies would no longer be required spend 80-85% of premiums on actual health benefits, and they would be free to spend more on bonuses and administrative costs instead.	66	54
Health insurance companies would be allowed to consider things that only apply to women, such as a pregnancy, as a pre-existing condition, and charge women more for their health care.	63	53