Missouri Foundation for Health

Views of Missouri Voters on Issues Relating to Health Care Reform

January 2011
Views of Missouri Voters

The Missouri Foundation for Health commissioned Lake Research Partners, a survey research company specializing in public policy, to assess the attitudes of the state’s residents on the health care issues related to the Patient Protection and Affordability Act. The survey reached a total of 800 likely General Election voters in Missouri. The survey was conducted November 15 through November 21, 2010. The margin of error for the sample is +/- 4.0%.
Key Findings

• Missouri’s voters (77%) show strong and broad public concern about the affordability of health care.

• In the November 2010 election cycle, a majority of Missourians (54%) indicated that health care was important to their vote.

• The gap between those who fear the system staying the same (25%) and those who fear the system changing too much (54%) increased since since the election.

• A majority of Missourians still oppose the law (50% oppose; 32% support) but opposition has softened since the summer (August 2010, 54% opposed).

• Missourians perceive few groups as being positively affected by the law. The more dominant perception is that most groups will be adversely affected, including middle class families, seniors, the state, and the country.
Key Findings

- Despite opposing the law overall, Missourians supported most of its individual components. The top reforms garner broad and intense support, regardless of gender, age, region, or party affiliation.

- The most popular reforms deal with prohibiting caps on coverage, allowing individuals to keep their health care plans, providing small businesses tax credits, and removing co-pays from preventative care.

- Fewer than one-in-four (22%) knew that all of those proposals were in the law.

- After voters learn of the proposals contained in the health care law, the gap between opponents and supporters narrows: 43% supporting and 45% oppose.
The Political Context for Health Care Reform in Missouri

Health care remains a particularly important issue for Missourians, informing voters’ behavior at the polls. While voters continue to be fearful of rising insurance costs, increasingly they are adverse to changes in the health care system.
While concerns about unemployment and job security unsurprisingly top voters’ issue agenda, rising health care costs are close behind.

**Top Economic Concern**

- Unemployment and lack of job security: 29%
- Rising health care costs: 18%
- The federal budget deficit and national debt: 14%
- Rising cost of daily expenses like food and gas: 10%
- Higher taxes: 9%
- A secure retirement: 6%
- Cost of education and rising college tuitions: 6%
- Falling home values: 3%
- Credit card debt & interest rates: 2%
- The stock market: 1%
- Other: 3%
- Don’t know: 1%

Now I am going to read you a list of economic concerns that some people have. Please tell me which one of these you personally are the MOST worried about.
Three-quarters of Missouri voters report that the candidates’ Positions on health care were important to their vote this past election, including a majority who say it was very important.

How Important was Health Care to Your Vote for Congress?

Among Supporters of HCR
- 79% Important
- 12% Less important
- 9% Did not vote

Among Opponents of HCR
- 79% Important
- 13% Less important
- 7% Did not vote

Darker colors indicate intensity.

How important was the candidates’ for Congress and U.S. Senate stance on health care in determining your vote—was it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all?
Missourians do not feel secure with the current health insurance system. More than three-quarters of voters are concerned about access to affordable health insurance.

**Concern About Affordable Health Insurance**

- **Great Deal**: 52%
- **Somewhat**: 25%
- **Just a Little**: 12%
- **Not At All**: 11%

How concerned would you say you are about affordable health insurance for you and your family? Would you say you are concerned a great deal, somewhat, just a little, or not at all?
Concerns over the affordability of health insurance have stayed elevated, and more or less constant, for the past several years.

Concerns About Affordable Health Insurance

- Great deal/somewhat
- Just a little/not at all

- Sep-06: 82%
- Jan-07: 80%
- May-07: 82%
- Sep-07: 75%
- Aug-08: 75%
- Oct-08: 76%
- Aug-10: 79%
- Nov-10: 77%

- Sep-06: 16%
- Jan-07: 19%
- May-07: 17%
- Sep-07: 24%
- Aug-08: 24%
- Oct-08: 21%
- Aug-10: 21%
- Nov-10: 23%
Though voters across party lines are concerned about the affordability of health care, Democrats are the most likely to be concerned a great deal, while Republicans are the least.

Concern about Health Care Affordability – Party Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Just a little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Darker Colors Indicate Intensity
Despite frustration with the lack of access to affordable health care, Missourians are becoming increasingly averse to change.

**Greater Health Care Concern: Change or Status Quo**

- **Keeping things as they are**: 25%
- **Changing things too much**: 54%
- **Both**: 11%
- **Don't know**: 10%

Overall, when you think about health care in Missouri today, which are you more worried about, keeping things as they are or changing things too much?
The gap between those who fear too much change and those who fear the status quo has widened significantly since the election.
A plurality of voters, including majorities of independents and Democrats, believes state government must act to guarantee access to affordable health care, even if this is accompanied by increased taxes.

Now, thinking about the upcoming legislative session in Missouri state government, which of the following statements comes closest to your view? [IF CHOICE] And do you feel that way strongly or not-so-strongly?
Contours of Support for Health Care Reform

Half of the Missouri electorate opposes the national health care reform law, while less than one-third supports it. This gap narrows somewhat after voters hear individual components, which they overwhelmingly favor. At no point in the survey does support outweigh opposition.
The national health care reform law has more strong opponents in Missouri today than it has total supporters.

And do you favor or oppose the national health care reform law, or aren’t you sure? [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE: Is that strongly or not-so-strongly?]
Since August, opposition for the law has waned slightly and support increased.

**Initial: Support for National Health Care Reform**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Aug-10</th>
<th>Nov-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favor</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Favor: Support for National Health Care Reform.
- Oppose: Against National Health Care Reform.
- Don't know: Uncertain about National Health Care Reform.
While Republicans are almost perfectly unified against the law, opposing it by 72 points, Democrats are much more ambivalent. Independents oppose the law by a 20-point margin.

**Initial Ballot – Support for Health Care Reform Law**

**Democrats**
- Favor: 62%
- Oppose: 15%
- dk/ref: 23%

**Independents**
- Favor: 31%
- Oppose: 43%
- dk/ref: 21%

**Republicans**
- Favor: 80%
- Oppose: 69%
- dk/ref: 13%

Darker colors indicate intensity.
Opposition spikes in Central and Southwest Missouri. St. Louis is the only region supportive of the law.

Initial Ballot – Support for Health Care Reform Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
<th>Favor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central /Southwest</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Darker colors indicate intensity.
When proponents of the law are asked why they support it, most cite the basic moral principle of ensuring all Americans have health care. A much smaller number point to improving affordability as the central factor.

**Why Do You Favor Health Care Reform**

- Would expand insurance to more people: 29%
- Everyone deserves coverage / Right to health care / Fairness: 17%
- Costs getting out of hand / Make it affordable: 12%
- General positive / right direction: 9%
- Need to do something / System is broken / Reform needed: 7%
- I'm uninsured / My family is uninsured: 3%
- Too much power for insurance companies: 3%
- Will benefit seniors: 2%
- Will prohibit banning pre-existing conditions: 2%
- Better for middle class / Working people / Rich have health care: 2%
- Prescription drugs: 1%
- Other: 8%
- Don't know / refused: 5%
Those who oppose health care reform cite fears of the government gaining too much power and concerns over the federal deficit.

**Why Do You Oppose Health Care Reform**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oppose government run health care / Too much power for govt</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financially bad for country / deficits / will bankrupt our country</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many changes / No need for change / Need more info</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process was secretive, confusing / Don't trust politicians</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance costs will go up / I'll pay more</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many mandates / Forced to buy insurance</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-American / Socialized medicine / Unconstitutional</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will hurt seniors / Will hurt Medicare</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of care will go down</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General negative / wrong direction</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying health care for others / non-deserving</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not the answer / won’t work</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn't go far enough</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will hurt businesses / will hurt my business</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion being funded</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know / refused</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A plurality believes the health care reform law went too far, though one-in-four contend that the law did not go far enough.

**Did Health Care Go Too Far or Not Far Enough?**

*Among Supporters of HCR*
- 8% too far
- 50% not far enough
- 31% about right

*Among Opponents of HCR*
- 78% too far
- 10% not far enough
- 3% about right

Do you think the national health care reform law went too far, that it didn’t go far enough, or that it was about right?
Part of voters’ reluctance to support health care reform stems from their insistence that government has not provided enough information about it. Three quarters say the government hasn’t provided enough information, including two-thirds who feel this way strongly.

Has Government Provided Enough Info?

Darker colors indicate intensity.

Do you believe the government has provided enough information about the new health reform law for citizens to make an informed decision about the merits of the new law? [IF YES OR NO]
And do you feel that way strongly or not-so-strongly
Missourians see relatively few groups as being positively affected by the law. They believe children with pre-existing conditions, low-income families, and prescription drug companies will be better off under the law.

### Groups Missourians Think Will Be *BETTER* Off

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Will be better off</th>
<th>Will be worse off</th>
<th>Just a little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children with pre-existing conditions</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income families</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription drug companies</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now, I'm going to read you a list of people or programs that may be affected by the health care law. Regardless of whether or not you support the health care law, please tell me whether you think that group or program will be better off, worse off, or about the same with the new health care law.
The more dominant perception is that most groups will be adversely affected by the law. Respondents also believe Medicare participants will be impacted negatively.

Now, I'm going to read you a list of people or programs that may be affected by the health care law. Regardless of whether or not you support the health care law, please tell me whether you think that group or program will be better off, worse off, or about the same with the new health care law.
Voters are misinformed about the law’s specific reforms. Their opposition diminishes after being presented with a battery of (highly popular) individual reforms contained in the law.

In fact, all of those reforms I just read you are included in the national health care reform law. Sometimes over the course of a survey like this, people change their minds. Knowing this, do you favor or oppose the national health care reform law, or aren’t you sure?
Individual Reforms and Health Care Funding Mechanisms

While voters tend to oppose the law overall, they support many of its individual components. This finding constitutes one of the greatest paradoxes to emerge from the data.
Now, I’m going to read you some reforms that have been proposed surrounding health care. Regardless of whether or not you support the health care law, please tell me whether you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the following suggested reforms. Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose, a reform that will . . .

Voters are supportive of individual reforms.

### TOP TIER Specific Reforms – All Voters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reform</th>
<th>Strongly Favor</th>
<th>Total Favor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protect against price-gouging by insurance companies</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibit hidden caps and cutting off coverage when you get sick</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow individuals to keep their current health care plans, no matter what</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give small businesses tax credits to purchase health care</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require coverage of preventative health care</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Even lower tier proposals are highly popular, including helping low-income Americans, prohibiting denial of coverage for pre-existing conditions, and expanding Medicaid.

### BOTTOM TIER Specific Reforms – All Voters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reform</th>
<th>Strongly Favor</th>
<th>Total Favor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide tax credits to small businesses w/ 50 employees or less</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary program to purchase insurance for personal care instead of nursing homes</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibit insurance companies denying based on pre-existing conditions</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide financial help to low income Americans who don’t get insurance through jobs</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand Medicaid to cover more children and low-income Missourians</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover 32 million additional Americans and 450K Missourians</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit future increases in Medicare payments to health care providers</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now, I’m going to read you some reforms that have been proposed surrounding health care. Regardless of whether or not you support the health care law, please tell me whether you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the following suggested reforms. Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose, a reform that will . . .
Voters are largely unaware of the fact that these reforms—all of which they support individually—are in the health care law.

**How Many Reforms Do You Think Are in the Law**

- **All of them**: 22%
- **Most of them**: 29%
- **Just a few of them**: 28%
- **None of them**: 3%
- **Don't know**: 18%

And if you had to say, how many of the reforms I just read are included in the national health care reform law—ALL of them, MOST of them, just a FEW of them, or none of them?
After learning that the proposals are included in the health care law, voter support and opposition reach near-parity.

In fact, all of those reforms I just read you are included in the national health care reform law. Sometimes over the course of a survey like this, people change their minds. Knowing this, do you favor or oppose the national health care reform law, or aren’t you sure?
When it comes to potential revenue streams for increasing access to health care for children and seniors in the state, voters are most supportive of raising the tobacco tax and income taxes on the highest income earners.

### Funding Mechanisms for State Health Care

Darker colors indicate intensity.

- **Raise the state tax on tobacco, which is currently the lowest in the nation**
  - Oppose: 24%
  - Favor: 60%
  - Total: 73%

- **Raise the state income tax by 1% on those making over 200K**
  - Oppose: 36%
  - Favor: 47%
  - Total: 61%

- **Raise the state income tax by 1% on those making over 100K**
  - Oppose: 39%
  - Favor: 42%
  - Total: 58%

- **Tax employers 1% of the amount they pay in payroll for state health care costs**
  - Oppose: 48%
  - Favor: 28%
  - Total: 45%

- **Tax employers a % of their payroll from 1/2 of 1% to 2% based on the size of their company to be used for state health care costs**
  - Oppose: 53%
  - Favor: 26%
  - Total: 42%

Now, for something a little different, I am going to read some specific proposals that are being considered to fund increased access to health care for children and seniors in the state of Missouri. Please tell me whether you would favor or oppose each one.
Voters also express strong support for raising taxes on those who make over $200,000 a year in order to ensure the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund. They are less likely to support decreasing the reimbursement which Medicare pays to hospitals.

Now, thinking specifically about reforms to help pay for Medicare, please tell me whether you would favor or oppose each the following.

**Funding Mechanisms for Medicare**

1. Raising taxes among those making over $200K by 1% to extend the Medicare Trust Fund, guaranteeing it will be there when you retire
   - Oppose: 31%
   - Favor: 52%

2.Decreasing the reimbursement Medicare pays to hospitals in order to keep the care already provided through Medicare to seniors
   - Oppose: 40%
   - Favor: 30%

Darker colors indicate intensity.
Survey Methods

• Lake Research Partners, jointly with the Tarrance Group, designed and administered this survey, which was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers. The survey reached a total of 800 likely 2012 General Election voters in Missouri, including oversamples of 100 voters in North Missouri and 100 voters in Southeast Missouri. The survey was conducted November 15 through November 21, 2010.

• Telephone numbers for the sample were generated from a file of registered voters. The sample was stratified geographically to reflect the expected turnout of voters in the 2010 General Election. The data were weighted slightly by age, education, gender, race, and party identification.

• The margin of error for the full sample is +/- 4.0%.