

Poll: Americans dislike GOP's, Trump's plan on health care

March 29 2017, by Alan Fram And Emily Swanson



President Donald Trump listens in the Cabinet Room of the White House in Washington, Wednesday, March 29, 2017. Sixty-two percent of Americans turned thumbs down on Trump's handling of health care during the initial weeks of his presidency, according to a poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. It was his worst rating among seven issues the poll tested, which included the economy, foreign policy and immigration. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

Note to President Donald Trump and House Republicans: People really

don't like your approach to overhauling America's health care. If you're hoping to revive the effort, you may want to try something different.

Sixty-two percent of Americans turned thumbs down on Trump's handling of health care during the initial weeks of his presidency, according to a poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research released Wednesday. It was his worst rating among seven issues the poll tested, including the economy, foreign policy and immigration.

Of six changes the failed House GOP bill would have made to President Barack Obama's law, five drew more negative than positive reviews.

An overwhelming 8 in 10 opposed the Republican proposal to let insurers boost premiums on older people. Seven in 10 disapproved of premium surcharges for people whose coverage lapses.

By wide margins, people also disliked proposed cuts in Medicaid, which helps lower-earning people cover medical costs, a halt in federal payments to Planned Parenthood and a transformation of the Obama law's subsidies—based on income and premium costs—into aid linked to age.

"His campaign promise was great health care for everyone, for all Americans at great prices," said Raymond Brown, 64, a Republican and retired truck driver from Rio Grande, New Jersey. "He isn't fulfilling his campaign promise."

Overall, just over half in the poll said they worry many Americans would have lost coverage had the GOP bill become law. Would their own families and average Americans have been better or worse off? More said worse.

The results underscore that annulling Obama's statute is not an issue to be trifled with. More people support than oppose that law by 45 percent to 38 percent, a slightly narrower margin than in January. And a slender majority say covering all Americans is a federal responsibility—a view embraced by Democrats but not Republicans, who instead focus on access and lower premiums.

The survey was conducted over five days preceding and following last Friday's withdrawal of the GOP health care bill. Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., short-circuited a House vote that would have spelled defeat for the Republican legislation because of opposition from conservative and moderate Republicans. It was a mortifying setback for Trump and his party.

The poll suggests that health care is damaging Trump's image.

Fifty-eight percent disapproved of his overall performance as president, not much different from his negative grade on health care. Even among those approving the job he's doing in office, about 1 in 5 was unhappy with his approach to health care.

The GOP bill scared off many Republican lawmakers after the Congressional Budget Office projected there would be 24 million more uninsured people over a decade and a boost in out-of-pocket costs for many, especially poorer people and Americans nearing retirement age.

The negative views in the poll make any new GOP effort embracing pieces of the crumbled legislation potentially perilous for the party.

Nearly all Democrats and most independents disapproved of Trump's performance on health care, but so did around 1 in 3 Republicans.

In addition, Republicans had mixed views on the collapsed House GOP

bill. Clear majorities of them opposed boosting premiums for older people and those who've had gaps in coverage. They were more likely to oppose than support cutting Medicaid and were divided over linking subsidies to age more than income.

Republicans did mostly back the Republican bill's blocking of federal payments to Planned Parenthood. And they were likelier to say their own families and average Americans would have been better off, not worse, under the legislation.

Rosiland Russell, 71, a retired apartment complex manager from Clifton, Texas, said she was glad to see the attempt to unravel Obama's law.

"It's not cheap, it's not what it's cracked up to be," Russell, a Republican, said of Obama's statute. "We've got to have change, it's ridiculous."

Of the proposed Republican changes examined by the poll, only one received a positive reception. That was its elimination of the tax penalty on people who don't buy coverage, though by a modest 48 percent to 35 percent margin.

Strong majorities backed two Obama requirements the GOP would have left in place: Insurers can't deny policies to sick people and must cover children up to age 26 under their parents' plans.

The AP-NORC poll of 1,110 adults was conducted March 23-27 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.0 percentage points.

Interviews were conducted online and using landlines and cellphones.

Online:

AP-NORC: www.apnorc.org/

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