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Anzalone Liszt Research

National Polling Summary

Friends,

Below you will find the weekly Anzalone Liszt Research National Polling Newsletter, which provides a pollster's take on data and trends that affect political campaigns.

This week we look at how voters feel about Medicare, what they want it to look like in the future, and what they think of Republican plans to privatize it.

Following our analysis are additional news items and data we thought you'd enjoy. Also, please check out two recent ALR poll releases linked at the end.

John Anzalone and Jeff Liszt

STORY THIS WEEK: Republicans' Dual Healthcare Problems: Medicare and Medicaid

Public Rejects Republicans' Medicare Privatization Schemes

When given two choices, [CBS found](#) a large majority of voters would rather keep Medicare the way it is than turn it into "a program that gives senior citizens payments towards the purchase of private insurance" (58% continue as is / 31% private insurance). A few key demographic breakdowns:

- Republicans are split (45% continue / 43% privatize), while Democrats (70% continue / 22% privatize) and Independents (58% continue / 29% privatize) strongly oppose Republicans' proposed changes.
- Only 23% of voters over 55 support privatization, but voters under 55 are not much more supportive: only 35% of them support privatization.

One thing Republicans do understand about Medicare: Americans believe something must change with it. CBS found [this week](#) that 53% of voters think it needs fundamental changes, 13% think it needs to be completely rebuilt, and 27% think it needs only minor changes. However, people fundamentally support Medicare and think they are getting good value for their money from the program. Voters overwhelmingly think Medicare is worth the cost to taxpayers (68% worth it / 21% not worth it), with only 10% of voters over 65 saying it isn't worth the money. This likely explains some of the broad resistance to Republican changes.

Republicans' problems on the issue will likely get worse before they get better, and Democrats and Obama may expand their current [double-digit advantages](#) on Medicare. Pew polling shows that the more people know about the

privatization proposal, [the more they dislike it](#): voters who have heard nothing at all about the plan are slightly in favor of it (37% favor / 31% oppose), while the 20% of voters who have heard a lot are much more opposed (36% favor / 56% oppose).

How should Democrats talk about Medicare? We found the following to be equally effective hits on the Ryan budget in our polling for the [Herndon Alliance and Know Your Care](#)-voters were equally nonplussed by turning Medicare into a voucher program as they were by cutting billions of dollars from it.

- 1) The budget cuts billions from Medicare and ends the program as we know it, while protecting billions in tax breaks for big oil companies (59% of people said it made them very concerned about the budget)
- 2) The budget cuts billions from Medicare and ends the program as we know it (55% very concerned)
- 3) The budget will privatize Medicare, ending Medicare as we know it (53% of people said it made them very concerned about the budget)

Data Looks Similar to Social Security Privatization in 2005

There's also a recent historical precedent to suggest Republicans may not have seen the worst of it yet: six years ago, many of the same Republicans in Congress worked with President Bush to try to repeal another major leg of seniors' social safety net, Social Security. During that political episode, polling went from bad to worse for Republicans as more specifics were rolled out and people became more aware of their plans.

- While a bare majority [approved of](#) Bush's plans for addressing Social Security (44% approve / 50% disapprove) when he rolled out his privatization scheme in January 2005, by July, his approval on Social Security had dropped to 29% approve / 62% disapprove. The Washington Post [also showed](#) a similar trend over time on thoughts about the plan.
- Initially, in Social Security polling like in Medicare polling, those that knew the most about privatization plans liked them the least. [Pew found](#) in March 2005 that those who had heard a lot or some about privatization opposed it (43% favor / 49% oppose), while those who had heard little or nothing about it favored it (49% favor / 30% oppose). This dynamic portended further slippage in support for privatization as people learned more about it.

Social Security and Medicare are two different things, but generally, the more the public learns about Republican plans to dismantle the social safety net, the more apprehensive they get about those plans.

Voters Also Soundly Reject Medicaid Cuts in Ryan Budget

The conventional wisdom about Medicare and Medicaid reads something like this:

"Voters love Medicare, which they see as health care for seniors. However, they view Medicaid as health care for low-income people, and they support it much less. Democrats win the publicly-funded health care debate by talking about Medicare, staying away from Medicaid, and hoping voters get confused between the two if they hear Medicaid at all."

However, this is wrong thinking. Democrats should strongly be making the case to support Medicaid by highlighting how it provides coverage for 80% of nursing-home residents, as well as millions of American children.

First, most people know the difference between Medicare and Medicaid. According to a [Kaiser Family Foundation poll](#), most Americans know generally which program does what:

- Most Americans (65%) understand that Medicare is the primary source of health insurance for seniors regardless of their income, while only 21% think that Medicaid is the primary source of health care for seniors.
- Americans also understand by a wide margin (56% Medicaid / 20% Medicare) that Medicaid is the primary source of health insurance coverage for many low-income families, regardless of their age.
 - 17% of people say this role is played by "some other program"-we don't have data, but we suspect many of these people are thinking of a state brand of S-CHIP or Medicaid (e.g. PeachCare in Georgia or BadgerCare in Wisconsin)
- Most voters (58%) know that Medicaid is paid for by a combination of federal and state governments. About a third combined think it is fully funded by one or the other (22% federal / 14% state).

Second, not only do voters understand Medicaid, but they also support it. Voters back current levels of spending for Medicaid almost as much as they do for Medicare, according to the same Kaiser Family Foundation poll:

For each area, please tell me if you would support major spending reductions, minor spending reductions, or no reductions as a way to reduce the federal deficit

	Medicaid	Medicare
Major Reductions	13%	10%
Minor reductions	30%	29%
No Reductions	53%	59%
Don't know	3%	2%

Similarly, when the [Washington Post](#) gave a two-way choice of if they support or oppose cuts to each health care plan, they found people opposed cutting Medicare 78% to 21% and opposed cutting Medicaid 69% to 30%.

Medicaid cuts in the Ryan Budget are a massive overall drag on voters' support of that budget when they find out about them. Our [recent polling](#) for the Herndon Alliance and Know Your Care illustrates this: when given information about the Ryan budget and its impact on health care, 63% of voters said they were very concerned by the budget's cuts to Medicaid that would impact 4/5 of nursing home residents, more than the 55% that said they were very concerned about the fact that the budget would privatize Medicare.

Why are voters so supportive of Medicaid? For one, Medicaid usage is widespread-69 million people were on Medicaid at some point in 2011, compared to 48 million on Medicare. A majority of Americans also benefit from Medicaid over their lives: in 2006, the Kaiser Family Foundation [found that](#) 57% of people under 65 years old had either been part of Medicaid in the last 20 years or had a member of their household who had. Kaiser also found that a 59% majority said in January 2011 that Medicaid was very or somewhat important to them and their family-simply put, Medicaid is widely used and relied upon.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE POLLING AND POLITICAL WORLD

Obama maintains lead over Romney, other Republicans: Romney trails Obama in two new polls, one by [Fairleigh Dickenson University](#) showing Obama up by six points (in a poll that shows him beating Chris Christie by 16 points), and another by [Fox News](#) that shows him besting Romney by seven.

Birthers, meet "alivers": [CNN finds](#) that 11% of Americans think that Osama Bin Laden is still alive, while 86% think he is dead.

Opposition to war in Afghanistan tied with all-time high: The same poll shows opposition for the war in Afghanistan at 62% oppose / 36% support, back up to its mid-December high since CNN started asking the

question in 2006. Opposition for the war had softened to 52% in the immediate aftermath of Bin Laden's death.

Voters eschew Santorum in Pennsylvania: Voters aren't buying what Rick Santorum is selling in his home state: he trails Obama 49%-38% in Pennsylvania in a matchup for President, [according to Quinnipiac](#). This is a common thread in presidential polling of real or hypothetical Republican candidates in their home states (we left out real or hypothetical candidates that are not well known or are from deeply red or blue states):

- PPP sees Texas governor Rick Perry in a [virtual dead heat](#) with President Obama in the Republican-heavy state.
- Zogby International [found](#) New Jersey governor Chris Christie trailing President Obama 51%-34% among New Jersey voters.
- [PPP also has](#) Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty and Congresswoman Michele Bachmann trailing in their state, 51%-43% and 56%-35% respectively.

PUBLIC POLLING

CONGRESSIONAL REPUBLICANS' JOB RATING				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
Daily Kos/SEIU	6/2-5/11	Registered voters	28%	57%
AP-GfK	5/5-9/11	Adults	32%	66%
ABC/Washington Post	4/14-17/11	Adults	34%	63%
Gallup	3/25-27/11	Adults	31%	63%
CNN/Opinion Research Corp.	3/18-20/11	Adults	34%	64%

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
Fox	6/5-7/11	Registered voters	48%	43%
CBS	6/3-7/11	Adults	48%	43%
CNN/ORC	6/3-7/11	Adults	48%	48%
Ipsos/Reuters	6/3-6/11	Adults	50%	46%
Daily Kos/SEIU	6/2-5/11	Registered voters	46%	48%
Rasmussen	5/31-6/2/11	Likely voters	49%	50%
Gallup	5/31-6/2/11	Adults	51%	42%
YouGov/Polimetrix	5/28-31/11	Adults	45%	46%

PARTY SELF ID					
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep	Ind / other
Pollster.com Trend	6/14/11	Adults	32.5%	25.4%	37.0%

GENERIC HOUSE BALLOT					
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep	Unsure
Democracy Corps	5/21-25/11	Likely voters	46%	45%	7%
GWU/Politico Battleground	5/8-12/11	Likely voters	42%	41%	16%
CNN/Opinion Research Corp.	4/29-5/1/11	Registered voters	50%	46%	1%
Quinnipiac	3/22-28/11	Registered voters	37%	40%	20%

DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Right Direction	Wrong Track
YouGov/Polimetrix	6/4-7/11	Adults	25%	59%
CBS	6/3-7/11	Adults	31%	60%
Ipsos/Reuters	6/3-6/11	Adults	35%	60%
ABC/Post	6/2-5/11	Adults	32%	66%
Daily Kos/SEIU	6/2-5/11	Registered voters	29%	62%
YouGov/Polimetrix	5/28-31/11	Adults	24%	58%
Rasmussen	5/23-29/11	Likely voters	26%	66%

CONGRESSIONAL DEMOCRATS' JOB RATING				
Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
Daily Kos/SEIU	6/2-5/11	Registered voters	33%	54%
AP-GfK	5/5-9/11	Adults	43%	56%
ABC/Washington Post	4/14-17/11	Adults	36%	60%
Gallup	3/25-27/11	Adults	32%	64%
CNN/Opinion Research Corp.	3/18-20/11	Adults	35%	62%

