



The End of Trumpcare?

July 18th, 2017

Friends,

Below you will find the ALG Research National Polling Summary, which provides a pollster's take on data and trends that affect political campaigns. This week we take a look at the Republican attempt to pass the American Healthcare Act (AHCA) and Better Care Reform Act (BCRA) into law.

With majorities in both houses of Congress and a Republican president, Republicans planned to repeal Obamacare within their first month in office. Instead, nearly six months later, we've just witnessed the rejection of yet another version of their replacement plan. Within a day of the defection of both conservative and moderate Republicans on BCRA, it appears that the backup plan to repeal without a replacement is dead as well.

Of course, AHCA appeared dead in the House, before Speaker Ryan managed to resurrect and pass it. The same could happen in the Senate, though the odds appear long.

Today we explore how Republicans wound up in this position, and public opinion on healthcare.

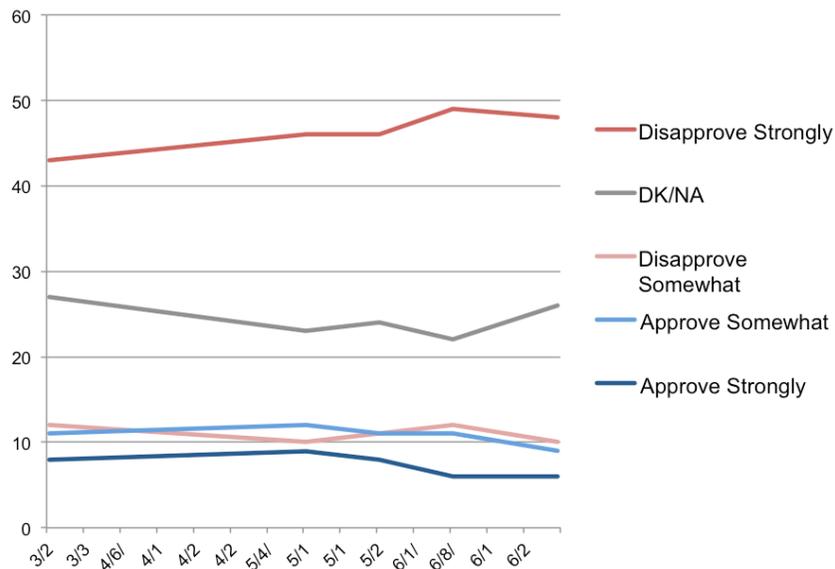
First Things First: This Bill is Historically Unpopular

When first released the AHCA/ BCRA garnered little support. Despite changes and amendments that moved AHCA through the House, there's been little shift in public perception of the bill.

According to a [Quinnipiac](#) tracking poll conducted at the end of June, just 16% of registered voters approved of the Republican plan to repeal and replace Obamacare, while 58% disapproved. What is astonishing however is how strong that disapproval is. Of those 58% who disapprove of the bill, 48% disapprove strongly. Only 6% of voters approve of the bill strongly, and 26% don't know or couldn't say whether they approve of the bill or not.

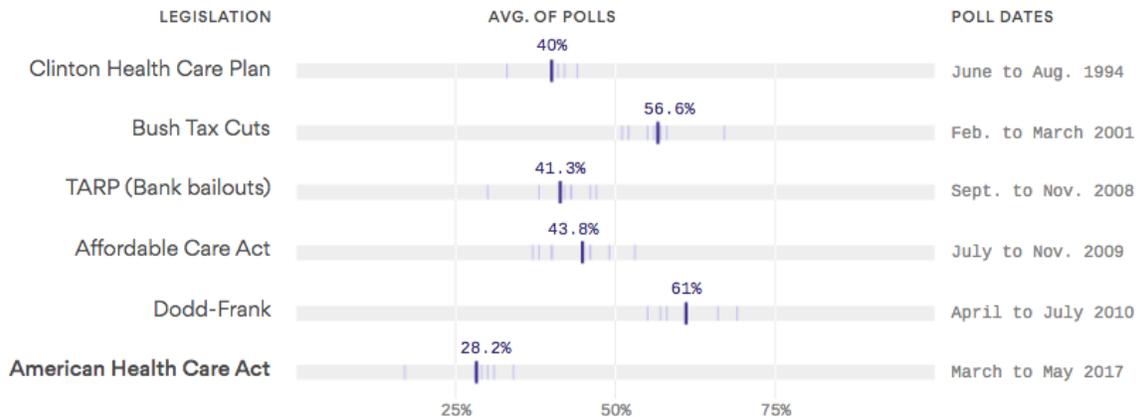
As seen below, this latest tracking poll is very consistent with prior surveys. Voters' opinions of Republican healthcare efforts have been stable since the House released its original plan to replace Obamacare, and there have been no significant changes in support for the bill since it was first announced in March.

Trend Shows No Significant Changes in Support for AHCA/BCRA

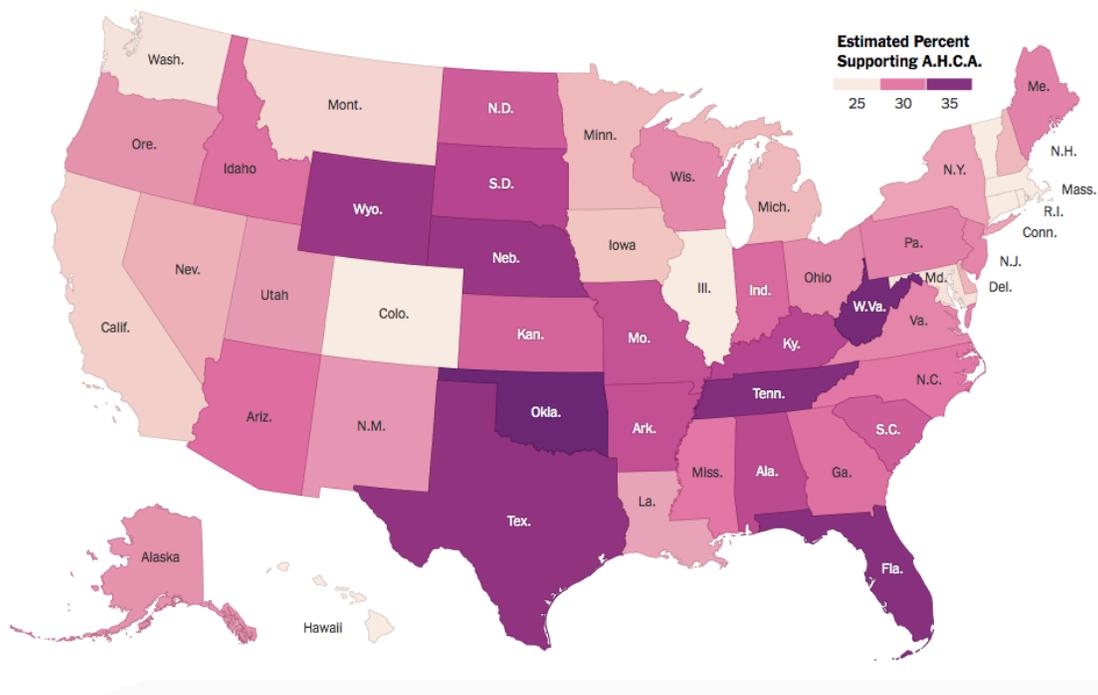


This level of disapproval of a bill in Congress is truly extraordinary. According to an [Axios](#) compilation of Roper Center data on all major legislative proposals introduced since 1990, the AHCA is the most historically unpopular bill of the last three decades. With an average approval rating of just 28.2%, it is less popular than both the infamous TARP bailouts and the '94 Clinton Health Care Plan.

Polling averages of major legislation



Many Republicans have argued that the political price of doing nothing is higher than the price of passing AHCA/BCRA. Given that argument, you might expect replacement to be popular in key states. While few state level polls have been done, the [New York Times](#) last month used multi-level regression and post-stratification analysis of polling averages to estimate the statewide popularity of the bill and found that in not one single state does a majority approve of the bill.

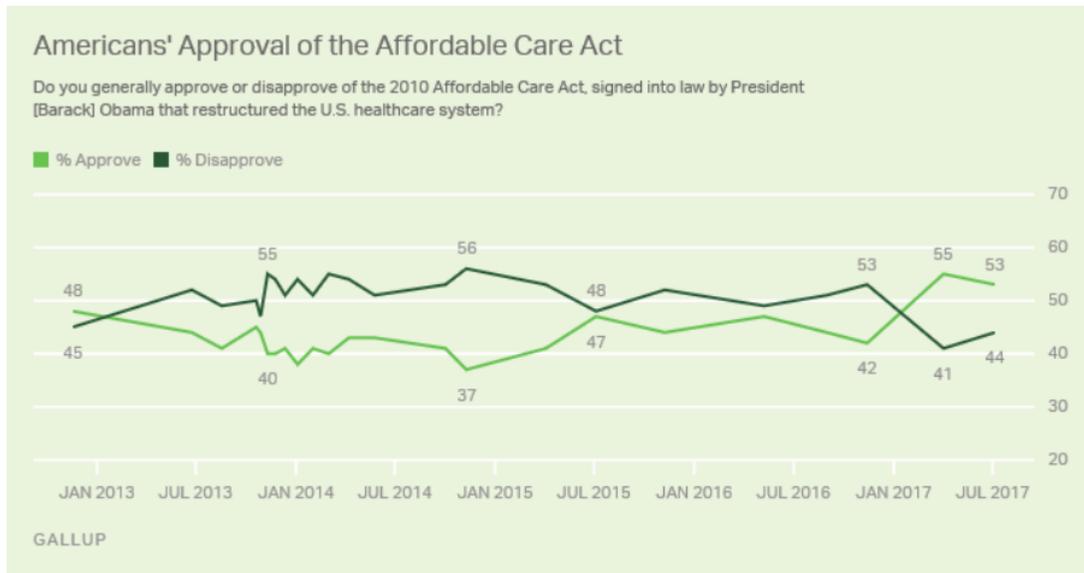


Even when looking at states carried by Trump in the 2016 election, popularity of the bill rarely surpasses 35%. It's popularity peaks in Oklahoma, where 38% of voters approve of the proposed law, still resulting in a negative 7% net approval rating given the 45% who disapprove.

Newfound Popularity for the Affordable Care Act

As repeal efforts have proceeded, the popularity of the ACA has increased. Amid debate over pre-existing conditions, the ACA is more popular than ever.

In a [Gallup](#) track of the law's popularity, the ACA's popularity fluctuated between 37% and 48% approval during Obama's time in office. In April 2017 support for the bill finally crossed the 50% threshold, with 55% of respondents reporting that they supported the bill. In the most recent tracking poll, 53% said they support the law, showing support for the law is holding steady.



It's also worth remembering that despite the fact that disapproval of the ACA has been a talking point for years, a majority of all Americans supported healthcare legislation in 2009 while the ACA was being written and debated. As of this point [8 years ago](#), 53% of Americans supported passing major healthcare reform by the end of the year, a far cry from the low approval we are seeing for current Republican efforts.

Most Americans Support Medicaid

Even when public opinion around ACA was at its lowest ebb, many of its component parts (e.g. protections for people with pre-existing conditions) tested well. Even the individual mandate had 68% support in September 2009 [Kaiser polling](#). In contrast, central pillars of AHCA/BCRA like cutting Medicaid face broad opposition.

The [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) found that a majority of Americans also hold positive views of Medicaid, with 74% reporting that they view the program favorably. Support for the program does vary by party affiliation, with Democrats being the most supportive, followed by independents. However even though Republicans show the lowest level of support for Medicaid a majority of 61% still view the program favorably.

Regardless of political affiliation, a majority of Americans also agree that the program is working well for most low-income people covered by the program and very few Americans want to see it cut. Just 12% of people want to see funding decreased and that opposition crosses party lines, with only 7% of Democrats, 9% of Independents, and 22% of Republicans supporting cutting funding for Medicaid. A slight majority of Democrats want to see Medicaid funding increased, while for Independents and Republicans, majorities want to see funding levels remain the same.

Support for Single Payer Healthcare is Growing, But How Much?

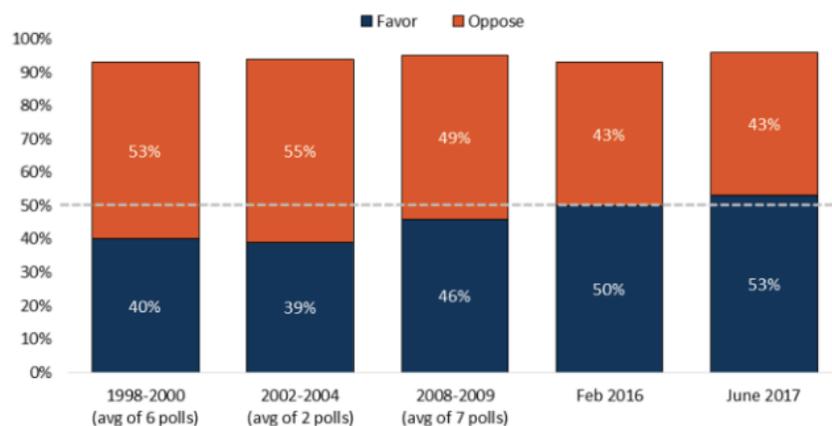
As we move further into the 2018 cycle you may start to hear the phrase "single-payer" more and more frequently. However, the polling on single payer is mixed and recent Kaiser Family Foundation and Pew polls show the sensitivity of the issue to question wording.

The June tracking poll from the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) found that a majority of Americans, 53%, now support a single-payer healthcare system. This appears to be part of a slow and steady increase in favorability for a single-payer plan that has occurred over the past 20 years. This shift in attitudes appears to have been driven by changing attitudes amongst independent voters. While Democrats have consistently supported a single payer option and Republicans have consistently opposed one, independents have shifted from having minority support for single payer healthcare in 2008-2009 when just 42% of independents supported a single payer plan, to today when a 55% majority of independents said they would support single payer.

Figure 1

Modest Increase in Support for Single Payer Health Care in 2017

Percent who favor or oppose a national health plan in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan



NOTE: Question wording varied slightly over time. See topline for full question wording.
SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation Polls



In contrast, a recent Pew poll found that just 33% of voters support a single payer plan. Much of the difference in support for this proposal that you see across polls seems tied to how the proposal was defined and what response options respondents were given. The Kaiser Family Foundation poll asks respondents whether or not they would support, “a national healthcare plan, in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan.” Pew asked two separate questions. First, they asked whether respondents believed it was the government’s responsibility to make sure all American’s have healthcare coverage, to which 60% of respondents answered yes. Respondents were then asked whether Americans should have a single government plan (single payer), a mix of public and private plans, if America should just continue to offer Medicare and Medicaid, or if there should be no government involvement in healthcare whatsoever.

In response to this only 33% of respondents said that they would support a single payer healthcare plan, while 25% supported a mix of government and private programs. 33% of respondents just wanted to continue to offer Medicare and Medicaid coverage. Only 5% wanted no government involvement of any kind.

At the very least it is clear that Americans agree that the government should be involved in providing citizens healthcare. A majority believe the government has a responsibility to make

sure everyone has access to healthcare and Americans are open to this being done through a single-payer plan or a mix of public and private options.

Voters Are Ready to Oust Representatives Who Support the Bill

Recent polls have shown that voters are much less likely support their representative or Senator's re-election bid if they support the AHCA or BCRA. In a June [Quinnipiac](#) poll, 46% of voters said a vote for the bill would make them less likely to vote to re-elect their representative, a number that has held steady since they first posed the question in March. Additionally, in a poll conducted in May of voters across 15 Republican held congressional seats, 52% of voters who know that their Representative voted for the bill said they would prefer to elect a Democrat in 2018, while just 40% said they would prefer to re-elect their current representative.

A July Bloomberg News poll also found that 35% of Americans believe healthcare is the most important challenge currently facing the country. This marks the first time since Bloomberg began asking this question in its current form that respondents have said that healthcare is the most pressing issue facing the country and the first time since healthcare was first included as an option beginning in 2010 that more than 20% of Americans have said that it was the most important issue facing the country.

While BCRA may yet pass the Senate in some revised form, it appears the politics of repeal are as daunting as the Republican caucus dynamics in the Senate.

Other News from the Polling & Political World

Keep an eye on [North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper](#) and his plan to take back the state legislature in the 2018 election cycle.

A fascinating read from the [New York Times](#) breaks down the party affiliation of various religious leaders.

A [poll of German voters](#) in June found that just 21% of voters think the United States could be trusted as an ally... ironically the same as the percentage of voters who said Russia could be trusted as an ally as well.

Track Trump's historic disapproval ratings over at [538](#) with this handy tool where they don't just average publically available polls, but also compare his approval and disapproval ratings to other past Presidents.

This [NBC](#) poll explored Trump's approval in the counties that fueled his Electoral College win, and broke down how his approval rate differs across "flip" and "surge" counties.

Been drinking more since January to cope with the realities of a Trump presidency? Read more [here](#) to see if you agree with the 73% of Democrats surveyed who would give up alcohol forever if it meant Trump would be impeached tomorrow.

Already thinking about 2020? Have some fun with this [poll](#) detailing Iowan's attitudes towards health care reform.