

June 1, 2011

To: Interested Parties

Fr: John Anzalone / Jeff Liszt / Matt Hogan

Re: New Poll Finds Voters Do Not Want ACA Repealed and Strongly Oppose Ryan Budget

A new national poll conducted by Anzalone Liszt Research on behalf of the Herndon Alliance and Know Your Care shows that most voters oppose efforts to repeal the new healthcare law. Even fewer want to prevent the law from going into effect by defunding it, and there is strong opposition to the Ryan plan's proposed changes to Medicare. But the risk to Congressmen who supported the Ryan budget is not confined to Medicare. Voters are just as concerned over proposed Medicaid cuts that would impact eighty percent of nursing home residents and the fact that the budget would allow insurance companies to continue to deny coverage for pre-existing conditions as they are over the proposed changes to Medicare.¹ After hearing about these changes proposed in the Ryan budget, voters also become more open to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), as their support for the law increases.

Below are some of the key findings from the poll on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the Ryan budget:

Findings on ACA

- **A majority of voters do not want the ACA repealed:** Just 42% of voters want to see the new healthcare law repealed, with 56% preferring to either give it a chance to work and make changes as needed (48%) or to keep it as is (8%).
- **Voters are even less supportive of defunding than repeal:** If efforts to repeal the law in Congress fail, voters disapprove of defunding it by a 16-point margin (39% approve / 55% disapprove).
- **Voters trust President Obama and Democrats more than Congressional Republicans on healthcare, Medicare and protecting the middle class.** On healthcare, voters trust President Obama (48%) over Republicans in Congress (41%) by a 7-point margin, and the President has an 8-point advantage on Medicare (47% Obama / 39% Republicans). Congressional Democrats enjoy similar margins of 6-7 points on healthcare and Medicare. And when it comes to protecting the middle class, the advantage for President Obama and Democrats in Congress grows even wider, as voters trust both over Republicans in Congress by a 15-point margin (51% President Obama or Democrats in Congress / 36% Republicans in Congress).

¹ Results are based on a poll conducted by Anzalone Liszt Research of n=800 likely 2012 voters (n=720 on landline / n=80 on cell phones). Live telephone interviews were conducted between May 18-24, 2011. Respondents were selected at random, and apportioned geographically based on past turnout. The poll has an expected margin of sampling error of $\pm 3.5\%$.

- **Support for healthcare reform is consistently understated by polls – 10 percent of voters both do not think the current law goes far enough and do not support the ACA.** Support for the ACA currently stands at 42% (with 50% opposed), but that does not take into account that among the 31% of voters who feel that the law *does not go far enough*, a third do not currently support it. That translates to 10% of the total electorate that does not support the law but also doesn't believe that it goes far enough. Overall, a plurality of 47% of voters believe that the new healthcare law made the right amount of changes (16%) or does not go far enough (31%), compared to 43% who say that it goes too far.
- **Even though there have been saturation-levels of coverage, 44% of voters say they need to know more about the ACA before they can take a firm position on it.** Despite being law for over a year now, a large segment of voters overall (44%) and a majority of independents (52%) and seniors (54%) say they still need to know more about the ACA before they can take a firm position on it, demonstrating that there is still an opportunity to increase support for the law.

Findings on Ryan

- **Voters overwhelmingly reject Ryan budget's proposed changes to Medicare.** After voters hear the following neutral description of the Ryan plan's proposed changes to Medicare, they oppose the budget by a 16-point margin (38% support / 54% oppose). Among seniors, opposition rises to 58%, and it reaches 60% among independents after they hear about the substance of the plan's proposed changes to Medicare.

The budget proposed by Republicans in Congress would generate much of its savings by making changes to Medicare. For anyone who is now fifty-five or over, traditional Medicare benefits would not change, but for everyone else, Medicare would be turned into a voucher program. This would mean that instead of the government paying doctors and hospitals directly for treating seniors as Medicare does now, the government would provide vouchers to help seniors buy their own private health insurance policy.
- **Voters are just as concerned about the impact of the Ryan budget on certain aspects of Medicaid and the ACA as they are about its changes to Medicare.** As concerned as voters are about the Ryan budget's proposed changes to Medicare, they are just as opposed to its proposed Medicaid cuts that would impact four-out-of-five of nursing home residents (63% *very concerned*). There is also strong concern that the budget would allow insurance companies to continue to deny coverage to people with pre-existing conditions (61% *very concerned*). This is even higher than the concern caused by the budget cutting billions from Medicare while protecting tax breaks for big oil (59% *very concerned*), or that it will privatize Medicare (55% *very concerned*).
- **The Ryan plan's over-reach on healthcare in this year's budget has the potential to increase support for the ACA.** Once voters hear about the Ryan plan's impact on healthcare in this country, support for the ACA rises 3 points to 45%.