Post Election Survey: Priorities for the 106th Congress
### MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS

Percent who say, in an open ended question, that each of the following issues needs to be addressed by the government...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>1/93</th>
<th>2/94</th>
<th>2/95</th>
<th>4/96</th>
<th>1/97</th>
<th>1/98</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy/Jobs</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime/violence</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal deficit</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Harris Polls.
### Chart 2

**Most Important Issue for President and New Congress to Address, by Party**

Percent, by party, who say in an open ended question that each of the following issues is the most important to address...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Total Voters</th>
<th>Voted Republican</th>
<th>Voted Democrat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton/Lewinsky impeachment</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy/jobs</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Policy/Iraq</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deficit/budget</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Top eight choices of voters.

## CHART 3

**VOTERS’ TOP PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT CONGRESS**

Percent who say each of the following issues is “A Top Priority”
(Issues receiving response of 50% or more).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL VOTERS</th>
<th>VOTED REPUBLICAN</th>
<th>VOTED DEMOCRAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make Social Security financially sound (80%)</td>
<td>Make Social Security financially sound (74%)</td>
<td>Make Social Security financially sound (86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make Medicare financially sound (73%)</td>
<td>Make Medicare financially sound (65%)</td>
<td>Make Medicare financially sound (79%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help uninsured get health insurance (61%)</td>
<td>Tougher anti-crime laws (60%)</td>
<td>Help uninsured get health insurance (73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tougher anti-crime laws (60%)</td>
<td>Cutting taxes (56%)</td>
<td>HMO/managed care reform (65%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal education standards for public schools (55%)</td>
<td>Ban late-term abortions (50%)</td>
<td>Federal education standards for public schools (63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMO/managed care reform (54%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tougher anti-crime laws (59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting taxes (50%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Raise minimum wage (58%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Passing tougher gun control laws (53%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VOTERS’ PREFERENCES ON HOW TO USE THE BUDGET SURPLUS

Percent who say surplus money should be used to...

- **Help make Social Security and Medicare programs financially sound**
  - Total Voters: 46%
  - Voted Republican: 38%
  - Voted Democrat: 52%

- **Pay off the national debt more quickly**
  - Total Voters: 21%
  - Voted Republican: 28%
  - Voted Democrat: 16%

- **Increase spending on domestic programs, such as health, education, and the environment**
  - Total Voters: 18%
  - Voted Republican: 12%
  - Voted Democrat: 23%

- **Cut taxes**
  - Total Voters: 14%
  - Voted Republican: 21%
  - Voted Democrat: 8%

Note: None/other (vol), Don’t know/refused not shown.

### Chart 5

**VOTERS’ TOP PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT CONGRESS**

Percent who say each of the following issues is “A Top Priority”

(Issues receiving response of less than 50%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL VOTERS</th>
<th>VOTED REPUBLICAN</th>
<th>VOTED DEMOCRAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raising the minimum wage (42%)</td>
<td>Help uninsured get health insurance (48%)</td>
<td>Stricter environmental regulations (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tougher gun control laws (41%)</td>
<td>Federal education standards for public schools (43%)</td>
<td>Cutting taxes (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ban late-term abortion (39%)</td>
<td>HMO/managed care reform (42%)</td>
<td>Anti-tobacco laws to reduce teen smoking (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stricter environmental regulations (37%)</td>
<td>Campaign finance reform laws (39%)</td>
<td>Laws to protect gays and lesbians from hate crimes (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign finance reform laws (37%)</td>
<td>Tougher gun control laws (29%)</td>
<td>Campaign finance reform laws (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-tobacco laws to reduce teen smoking (34%)</td>
<td>Anti-tobacco laws to reduce teen smoking (27%)</td>
<td>Ban late-term abortions (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws to protect gays and lesbians from hate crimes (28%)</td>
<td>Raise minimum wage (25%)</td>
<td>Limiting affirmative action (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limiting affirmative action (22%)</td>
<td>Stricter environmental regulations (25%)</td>
<td>Using tax money for school vouchers (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using tax money for school vouchers (20%)</td>
<td>Using tax money for school vouchers (25%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limiting affirmative action (24%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laws to protect gays and lesbians from hate crimes (15%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent who favor/oppose a proposal to allow people to invest some of their Social Security payroll contributions in the stock market, which means that when people retire, their benefits could either be higher or lower than expected depending on the stock market’s performance.
Percent who favor the following proposals to reform Medicare:

1. Reducing payments to doctors and hospitals for treating people covered by Medicare:
   - Total Voters: 59%
   - Voted Republican: 60%
   - Voted Democrat: 59%

2. Increasing the payroll taxes workers now pay to fund the Medicare program:
   - Total Voters: 41%
   - Voted Republican: 39%
   - Voted Democrat: 44%

3. Gradually raising the age of eligibility for Medicare from 65 to 67 for future retirees:
   - Total Voters: 33%
   - Voted Republican: 40%
   - Voted Democrat: 28%

4. Requiring seniors to pay a larger share of Medicare costs out of their own pockets:
   - Total Voters: 16%
   - Voted Republican: 19%
   - Voted Democrat: 13%

A majority of Americans initially support reducing payments to doctors and hospitals for treating Medicare patients, in an effort to help deal with Medicare’s financial problems.

But, when given the pro and con arguments, support drops to less than half for reducing payments.

Favor reducing payments because doctors and hospitals are being paid too much and payments have been reduced before without affecting the quality of care.

Oppose reducing payments because it will cause the quality of care to go down, and many doctors might stop accepting Medicare patients.

IN FACT, PUBLIC SUPPORTS EXPANSIONS OF MEDICARE PROGRAM RATHER THAN REDUCTIONS

Percent of Americans who favor each proposal when arguments for and against are presented...

- Having Medicare cover long-term nursing home care “even if it means higher premiums or taxes”
  - 69%

- Having Medicare cover prescription drugs “even if it means higher premiums or taxes”
  - 68%

- Expansion of Medicare so that people aged 62-64 are able to buy into the program before they turn 65
  - 60%

When given a choice among the three, percent who choose each as the most preferred...

A new plan that would require businesses to offer private health insurance for their employees

- Total Voters: 38%
- Voted Republican: 35%
- Voted Democrat: 39%

A new plan that would offer low- and moderate-income uninsured Americans an income tax refund to help them purchase private health insurance

- Total Voters: 34%
- Voted Republican: 42%
- Voted Democrat: 28%

A national health plan, financed by taxpayers, in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan

- Total Voters: 21%
- Voted Rep: 15%
- Voted Democrat: 29%

Don't favor any

- Total Voters: 5%
- Voted Republican: 6%
- Voted Dem: 4%

Note: Don't know/refused not shown.

VOTERS’ WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE TO HELP UNINSURED AMERICANS

Percent who are willing to pay more in premiums or taxes to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance...

TOTAL VOTERS

- 49% No, not willing to pay more
- 5% Don’t know/refused
- 46% Yes, willing to pay more

VOTED REPUBLICAN

- 38% Yes, willing to pay more
- 57% No, not willing to pay more
- 3% Don’t know/refused

VOTED DEMOCRAT

- 38% Yes, willing to pay more
- 5% Don’t know/refused
- 57% No, not willing to pay more

VOTERS’ VIEWS ON HMO/MANAGED CARE REFORM

Percent who favor/oppose a proposed law requiring HMOs/managed care plans and health insurance companies to provide people with more information about their plan, make it easier for people to see specialists, allow appeals to independent reviewers, and give people the right to sue their health plan...

Favor this law even if it would increase health insurance premiums by about $20 per month (approx. $200 per year per family)...

VOTERS’ VIEWS ON PROPOSED LAW TO ALLOW PATIENTS TO SUE MANAGED CARE PLANS

Percent who favor/oppose proposed law that would allow patients to sue HMOs, managed care plans, and health insurance companies for malpractice, like they can now sue a doctor...

... even if it might increase the cost of people’s health insurance premiums

### VOTERS’ RANKINGS OF FOUR HEALTH ISSUES...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOR CONGRESS</th>
<th>FOR THEM AND THEIR FAMILY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent who say of the four, the one they would most like to see congress do...</td>
<td>Percent who say they are “very concerned” about each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make Medicare financially sound (37%)</td>
<td>Make Medicare financially sound (71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help uninsured get health insurance (31%)</td>
<td>Protect patients’ rights in HMO/managed care plans (69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect patients’ rights in HMO/managed care plans (23%)</td>
<td>Reduce smoking, especially among teens (68%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce smoking, especially among teens (6%)</td>
<td>Help uninsured get health insurance (56%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VOTERS’ ATTITUDES ABOUT ABORTION

Percent who say abortion should...

- Be generally available to those who want it:
  - Total Voters: 38%
  - Voted Republican: 25%
  - Voted Democrat: 50%

- Be available but under stricter limits than it is now:
  - Total Voters: 15%
  - Voted Republican: 18%
  - Voted Democrat: 12%

- Be against the law, except in cases of rape, incest, and to save a woman’s life:
  - Total Voters: 36%
  - Voted Republican: 42%
  - Voted Democrat: 29%

- Not be permitted at all:
  - Total Voters: 10%
  - Voted Republican: 15%
  - Voted Democrat: 8%

Note: Don’t know/refused not shown.

Voters’ Attitudes About Banning Late Term Abortions

Percent who favor/oppose a law which would make it illegal to perform a specific abortion procedure often referred to as a late term abortion, except when necessary to save the life of the mother.

**TOTAL VOTERS**

- Favor: 59%
- Oppose: 37%
- Don’t know/refused: 4%

**VOTED REPUBLICAN**

- Favor: 71%
- Oppose: 27%
- Don’t know/refused: 2%

**VOTED DEMOCRAT**

- Favor: 51%
- Oppose: 45%
- Don’t know/refused: 4%