

# Memorandum

**From:** Jan R van Lohuizen  
**To:** Interested Parties  
**Date:** 6/26/2017  
**Re:** West Virginia voter views of the House health care reform proposal

This memorandum summarizes key findings from a survey of 400 registered voters conducted in West Virginia. The interviews were conducted by telephone, 40% on cellphone, 60% on landlines. The interviews were conducted between 6/19/2017 and 6/22/2017. The margin of error associated with the findings is +/- 4.9%.

Key findings of the survey are the following:

**The proposed House legislation is more unpopular than Obamacare is.** We asked respondents for each program whether they thought it was a good idea or a bad idea:

	Good idea	Bad idea	No Opinion
Obamacare	34	43	22
Health care legislation recently passed by the House	19	42	38

These reflect mostly partisan views. People who think Obamacare is a good idea, also tend to think the House bill is a bad idea and are for the most part Democrats. Inversely Republicans tend to think Obamacare is a bad idea and are more likely to feel the House bill is a good idea. The main difference is that fewer Republicans think the House bill is a good idea and more have not formed an opinion, while Democrats have formed an opinion on both.

**Very few voters want to pass the House bill into law as is.** Most people want legislation adopted, but with changes; the number of people who want to leave Obamacare in place is also relatively small.

Specifically:

- ✓ 9% wants to pass the House bill as is
- ✓ 24% wants to pass it but with minor changes
- ✓ 25% wants to pass it but with major changes
- ✓ 25% does not want to pass any part of it, and keep Obamacare<sup>1</sup>

**Very few people want Medicaid funding to be cut.** Most people know someone enrolled in Medicaid, and a clear majority regards the program favorably. Only 39% don't know someone who is enrolled in Medicaid. 11% report being enrolled themselves, and 12% report someone in the household is enrolled;

<sup>1</sup> And additional 15% did not have an opinion

in addition, 46% know someone who is enrolled. Two measures suggest that people value the program. First, the entire sample rated Medicaid favorably (55%) while only 14% have an unfavorable impression of the program. Second, 60% the people who reported being enrolled in Medicaid themselves reported that the medical system is meeting their needs. As a result, very few people want to cut Medicaid funding. More feel that Medicaid funding ought to be increased (38%) than feel it ought to be cut (12%); 42% feels funding should be unchanged.

**Looking at the details of the House bill suggests many features are controversial, although a few are supported.** When we looked at the detail of the House proposal, in many cases West Virginia voters were quite divided. A few features of the proposal got clear majority support. Specifically:

- ✓ 84% supports allowing health insurance to be purchased across state lines (9% opposed)
- ✓ 52% supports changing Medicaid to a block grant program to allow states to decide how best to use federal funding (32% opposed)
- ✓ 51% supports funding to cover people with pre-existing conditions through high-risk insurance pools (33% opposed)

A few were opposed by a majority of the voters:

- ✓ 66% opposed eliminating the individual mandate, while allowing insurers to charge 30% higher premiums to people who have not had continuous coverage (26% supports)
- ✓ 60% opposed allowing insurers to charge more to people with pre-existing conditions who have not been covered for more than 63 days (32% supports)
- ✓ 55% opposed eliminating the funding West Virginia receives to expand Medicaid and fund efforts to fight opioid addiction (32% supports)
- ✓ 51% opposed federal subsidies to low-income people to purchase basic coverage, but without mandated coverage for preventive care, routine doctor visits, tests, and minor operations. (37% supports)

The remaining features we looked at generated closely divided opinions or were supported or opposed by less than 50% of the sample. These included:

- ✓ Eliminating federal subsidies for lower out of pocket policies sold to low-income people (45% favor / 43% opposed)
- ✓ Eliminating most of the Obamacare taxes on higher income families, insurers and medical device makers (38% favor / 46% opposed)
- ✓ Cutting the federal subsidy to expand Medicaid coverage to more low-income people (48% favor / 40% opposed)
- ✓ Providing federal subsidies to low income people dropped from Medicaid to assist their purchase of a private plan (48% favor / 39% opposed)