



The American Panel Survey

**Notes on Public Attitudes toward Health Care Reform
and the Supreme Court**

June 25, 2012

1. A majority of Americans now say that they disapprove of the 2010 health care reform law

	Percent
Strongly Approve	8.53
Approve	14.13
Neither Approve nor Disapprove	11.35
Disapprove	27.55
Strongly Disapprove	35.00
Don't know	2.98
Refused	0.46
Total	100.00

2. The balance of opinion is against the 2010 law, even among Democrats and Obama supporters

	Percent			
	Democrat	Independent	Republican	Total
Approve	35.77	65.40	7.19	23.11
Neither Approve nor Disapprove	14.63	11.86	9.57	12.25
Disapprove	44.88	22.74	80.92	61.10
Don't Know/Refused	4.72	0.00	2.32	3.54
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

	Percent			
	Refused	Barack Obama Supporters	Mitt Romney Supporters	Total
Approve	18.74	36.51	5.64	22.66
Neither Approve nor Disapprove	12.05	14.15	7.82	11.35
Disapprove	52.18	45.37	84.50	62.55
Don't Know/Refused	17.03	3.98	2.04	3.44
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

3. A large percent of Americans do not have an opinion about whether the health insurance mandate is constitutional. The balance of opinion is that the mandate is unconstitutional, even among Democrats and Obama supporters.

	Percent			
	Democrat	Independent	Republican	Total
Constitutional	26.09	15.52	12.42	19.62
Unconstitutional	43.02	26.65	65.95	53.30
Don't Know	30.24	57.83	21.16	26.53
Refused	0.65	0.00	0.46	0.55
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

	Percent			
	Refused	Barack Obama Supporters	Mitt Romney Supporters	Total
Constitutional	10.76	26.17	10.40	18.95
Unconstitutional	21.05	44.21	67.60	53.84
Don't Know	59.06	29.30	20.55	26.19
Refused	9.13	0.32	1.45	1.02
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

4. Democrats and Republicans, and Obama and Romney supporters, do not differ much in response to the question, "How often does the Supreme Court make the wrong decision?"

	Percent			
	Democrat	Independent	Republican	Total
Never	0.97	0.00	0.18	0.59
Rarely	15.49	2.34	15.51	15.28
Sometimes	51.00	74.87	57.24	54.28
Often	10.85	3.03	11.58	11.05
Most of the Time	5.16	10.79	2.40	3.98
Don't Know	15.33	6.64	12.71	13.98
Refused	1.20	2.34	0.39	0.85
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

	Percent			
	Refused	Barack Obama Supporters	Mitt Romney Supporters	Total
Never	0.00	0.56	0.39	0.47
Rarely	3.99	15.81	15.41	15.36
Sometimes	64.82	52.58	58.39	55.40
Often	0.76	11.49	11.90	11.41
Most of the Time	1.01	3.20	3.92	3.46
Don't Know	13.46	15.91	9.44	13.03
Refused	15.96	0.46	0.56	0.87
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

5. Personal Observations

- a. In the period since health care reform was enacted in the winter of 2010, Republicans maintained a strong public relations effort against the law, arguing about the heavy-hand of government and the constitutionality of the mandate. Democrats, including the administration, have remained quiet and moved to other matters.
- b. The conjecture that the public will “go ballistic” by a Supreme Court ruling that the mandate is unconstitutional is not supported by survey evidence. Surely, liberals who support the law will mobilize against the Court, but it is not clear that the majority of Americans will find the such a ruling surprising or inappropriate.

6. Survey Details

Survey conducted online during the month of May

N = 1216

Margin of Error = +/- 2.81%

Party categories: The partisans include strong, weak, and leaning categories; Independents are respondents who say that they are independents and do not lean to one party

URL: taps.wustl.edu

Source: TAPS, May 2012

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About TAPS

A project of the Weidenbaum Center on the Economy, Government, and Public Policy of Washington University, *The American Panel Survey* (TAPS) provides one of the best research platforms in the social sciences. TAPS is a monthly online survey of a national probability sample of about 2,000 adults in the United States, selected as a national probability sample. Most studies concern the economic and political attitudes and behavior of the American public. TAPS surveys are conducted for the Weidenbaum Center by Knowledge Networks, a leading online survey research firm located in Palo Alto, California.