



**AARP National Member
Survey on the Health Care
Reform Plan in the House of
Representatives**

November 2009



**AARP National Member Survey
on the Health Care Reform Plan in the House of
Representatives**

**Copyright © 2009
AARP
Knowledge Management
601 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20049
<http://www.aarp.org/research>
Reprinting with permission**

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to either political campaigns or candidates. We produce AARP The Magazine, the definitive voice for 50+ Americans and the world's largest-circulation magazine with over 35.5 million readers; AARP Bulletin, the go-to news source for AARP's 40 million members and Americans 50+; AARP Segunda Juventud, the only bilingual U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to the 50+ Hispanic community; and our website, AARP.org. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Acknowledgements

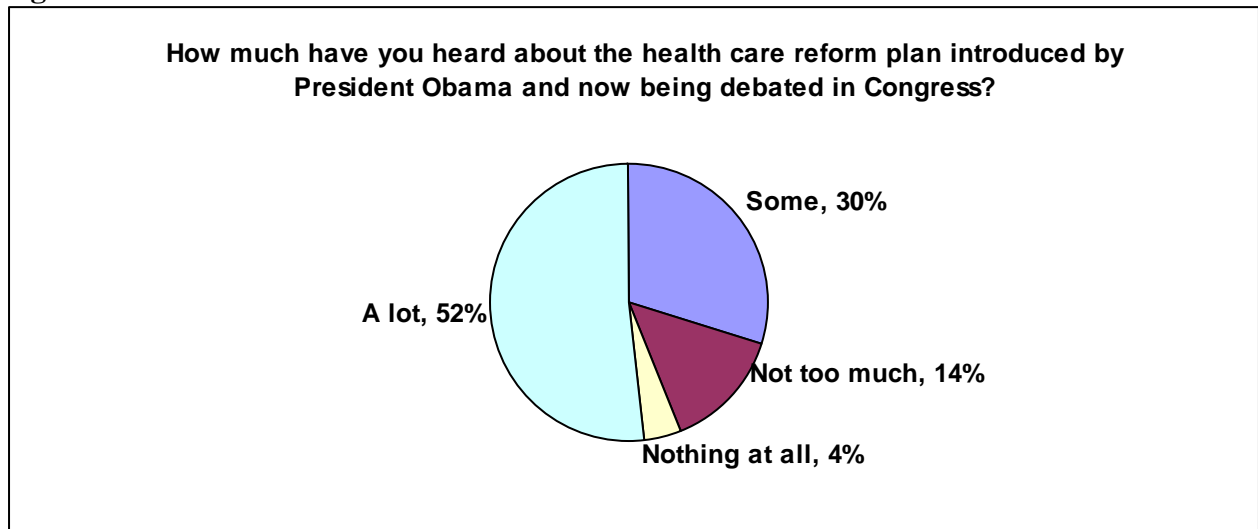
Woelfel Research, Inc. of Dunn Loring, VA conducted this study. All media inquiries about this report should be directed to AARP Media Relations at (202) 434-2560.

AARP surveyed its members from October 30 to November 8, 2009 about the current health care reform plan in the House of Representatives. This nationally representative survey sampled 803 members and has a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.5%.

Awareness

A majority of AARP members have heard either “some” or “a lot” about the health care reform plan introduced by President Obama and now being debated in Congress. Figure 1 below shows 52% of members have heard “a lot” and 30% of members have heard “some” about the health care reform plan introduced by President Obama.

Figure 1



Note: Total may be less than 100% due to responses of “don’t know” and “refused”

Elements of House Plan

A majority of AARP members find various elements of the health care reform plan passed in the House of Representatives on November 7, 2009 to be a convincing reason to support the plan. In fact, there is strong support across party and ideological lines for elements of the plan. Figure 2 shows the percent of AARP members who find each reason either “somewhat” or “very” convincing.

Figure 2

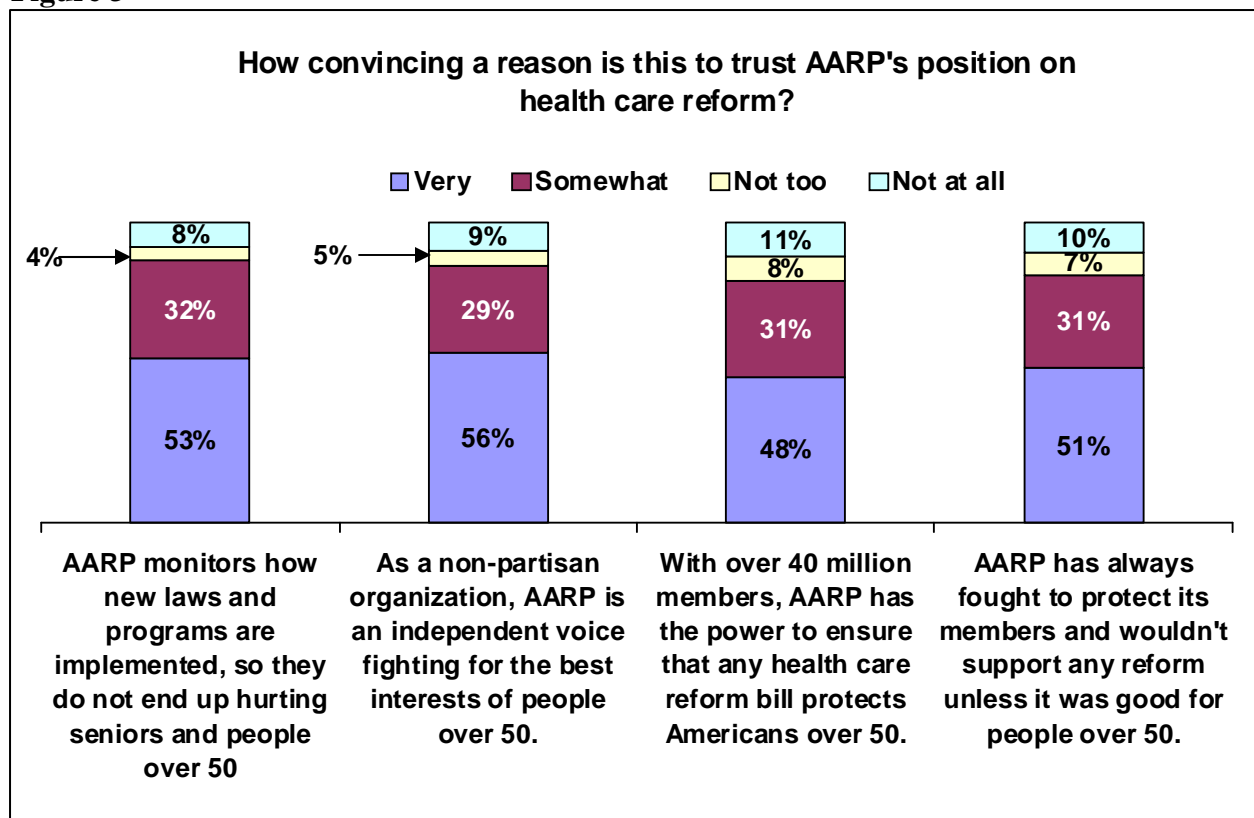
Elements of health care reform plan in the House of Representatives	Percent who find element a somewhat or very convincing reason to support the plan
It would ensure that you can keep your current health insurance coverage if you are happy with it.	78%

Elements of health care reform plan in the House of Representatives	Percent who find element a somewhat or very convincing reason to support the plan
It requires insurance companies to cover routine checkups and preventive care, like screening for diabetes, prostate cancer, and osteoporosis, with no extra charges.	77%
It would ensure that people can see the doctor of their choice.	76%
It would prevent insurance companies from denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions.	75%
It allows Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices with pharmaceutical companies.	73%
It assures doctors that Medicare will compensate them fairly for treating seniors, so doctors don't stop seeing Medicare patients.	72%
It protects Medicare benefits for seniors.	72%
It ensures seniors aren't paying thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs and closes the Medicare doughnut hole.	69%
It would stop insurance companies from charging you much higher premiums based on your age.	68%
It would require everyone to have some form of health insurance, with subsidies for those who can't afford it.	68%
It aggressively cracks down on waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicare	67%
It prevents insurance companies from putting a cap on the amount of health care you can receive in a given year or over the course of your life.	66%
It provides a voluntary program to help people plan ahead so they can afford long-term care services and supports.	66%
It would provide people a choice of affordable private insurance options and a public plan administered by the federal government if they don't have health insurance or can't afford it.	65%
It would be paid for in part by a tax on married couples who earn at least \$1 million a year or individuals who earn at least \$500,000 per year.	59%
It would reduce the federal budget deficit by \$104 billion over the next 10 years	54%

Trust in AARP

As shown in Figure 3, over three-quarters of AARP members consider various reasons to trust AARP's position on health care reform either "somewhat" or "very" convincing.

Figure 3



Note: Total may be less than 100% due to responses of “don’t know” and “refused”

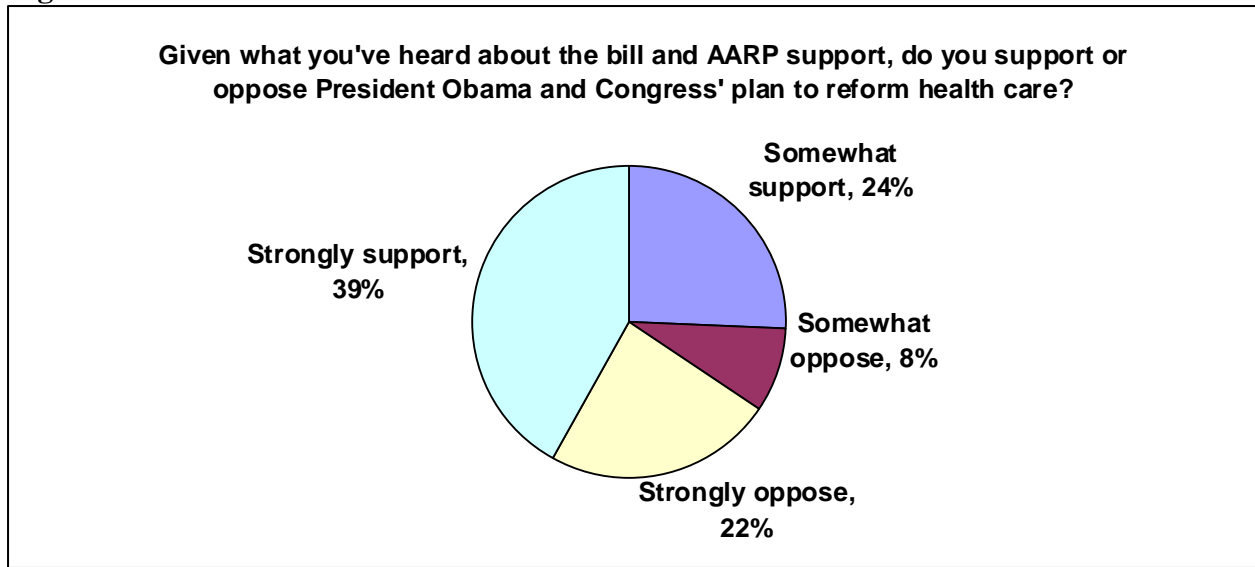
Support for Plan

After hearing the details of the House plan, as well as the statement below from AARP endorsing it, a majority of members support President Obama and Congress’ plan to reform health care.

In the health care debate, AARP has chosen a side – yours. That’s why we’re endorsing the health care reform plan in the House of Representatives. Because it ensures you’re not denied insurance because of pre-existing conditions or age. It ensures your health care doesn’t take a back seat to insurance companies and no one – not insurance companies or the government – comes between you and the doctors and specialists you choose. Most important, AARP endorses reform because it protects seniors’ benefits and Medicare – so it’s there for seniors now and for future generations. AARP is fighting for you – because your health is worth fighting for.

As Figure 4 shows, 39% of members “strongly” support the plan and 24% “somewhat” support it, after hearing the elements of the plan and the statement above. In fact, the percent of members who strongly support the plan exceeds the total percent who oppose it. While a partisan divide is evident when respondents are asked about the current plan in Congress, AARP members support the legislation by a margin of over two to one.

Figure 4



Note: Total may be less than 100% due to responses of “refused”

ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE
N=803, sampling error = ±3.5%

Q1. Are you a member of AARP?

%	Base: Total Respondents	
100	Yes	
-	No	TERMINATE

Q2. How much have you heard about the health care reform plan introduced by President Obama and now being debated in Congress?

%	Base: Total Respondents
52	A lot
30	Some
14	Not too much
4	Nothing at all
<0.5	Don't know
<0.5	Refused

Q3. I'm going to read you a list of things that the current health care reform plan in the House of Representatives does, and for each one, please tell me how convincing a reason it is to support the plan in Congress.

How convincing a reason is this to support the health care reform plan in Congress? Is it?

For all:

- Very convincing
- Somewhat convincing
- Not too convincing
- Not at all convincing
- Don't know DO NOT READ
- Refused DO NOT READ

[RANDOMIZE ORDER]

a) It would ensure that people can see the doctor of their choice.

%	Base: Total Respondents
58	Very convincing
18	Somewhat convincing
8	Not too convincing
14	Not at all convincing
1	Don't know
1	Refused

b) It would prevent insurance companies from denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions.

%	Base: Total Respondents
55	Very convincing
21	Somewhat convincing
8	Not too convincing
14	Not at all convincing
2	Don't know
<0.5	Refused

c) It would ensure that you can keep your current health insurance coverage if you are happy with it.

%	Base: Total Respondents
56	Very convincing
21	Somewhat convincing
6	Not too convincing
14	Not at all convincing
2	Don't know
<0.5	Refused

d) It would stop insurance companies from charging you much higher premiums based on your age.

%	Base: Total Respondents
47	Very convincing
21	Somewhat convincing
11	Not too convincing
18	Not at all convincing
2	Don't know
<0.5	Refused

e) It would provide people a choice of affordable private insurance options and a public plan administered by the federal government if they don't have health insurance or can't afford it.

%	Base: Total Respondents
35	Very convincing
30	Somewhat convincing
11	Not too convincing
21	Not at all convincing
3	Don't know
<0.5	Refused

f) It requires insurance companies to cover routine checkups and preventive care – like screening for diabetes, prostate cancer and osteoporosis – with no extra charges.

%	Base: Total Respondents
53	Very convincing
24	Somewhat convincing
8	Not too convincing
13	Not at all convincing
2	Don't know
1	Refused

g) It protects Medicare benefits for seniors.

%	Base: Total Respondents
53	Very convincing
19	Somewhat convincing
8	Not too convincing
17	Not at all convincing
3	Don't know
1	Refused

h) It aggressively cracks down on waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicare.

%	Base: Total Respondents
50	Very convincing
16	Somewhat convincing
11	Not too convincing
19	Not at all convincing
3	Don't know
1	Refused

i) It ensures seniors aren't paying thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs and closes the Medicare doughnut hole.

%	Base: Total Respondents
46	Very convincing
23	Somewhat convincing
11	Not too convincing
16	Not at all convincing
4	Don't know
<0.5	Refused

j) It prevents insurance companies from putting a cap on the amount of health care you can receive in a given year or over the course of your life.

%	Base: Total Respondents
43	Very convincing
23	Somewhat convincing
12	Not too convincing
17	Not at all convincing
4	Don't know
1	Refused

k) It assures doctors that Medicare will compensate them fairly for treating seniors, so doctors don't stop seeing Medicare patients.

%	Base: Total Respondents
49	Very convincing
23	Somewhat convincing
10	Not too convincing
15	Not at all convincing
3	Don't know
1	Refused

l) It allows Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices with pharmaceutical companies.

%	Base: Total Respondents
51	Very convincing
22	Somewhat convincing
9	Not too convincing
15	Not at all convincing
3	Don't know
1	Refused

m) It provides a voluntary program to help people plan ahead so they can afford long-term care services and supports.

%	Base: Total Respondents
34	Very convincing
31	Somewhat convincing
13	Not too convincing
17	Not at all convincing
4	Don't know
1	Refused

n) It would reduce the federal budget deficit by \$104 billion over the next 10 years.

%	Base: Total Respondents
35	Very convincing
18	Somewhat convincing
13	Not too convincing
30	Not at all convincing
3	Don't know
<0.5	Refused

o) It would require everyone to have some form of health insurance, with subsidies for those who can't afford it.

%	Base: Total Respondents
39	Very convincing
29	Somewhat convincing
12	Not too convincing
17	Not at all convincing
3	Don't know
<0.5	Refused

p) It would be paid for in part by a tax on married couples who earn at least a million dollars a year or individuals who earn at least five-hundred thousand dollars per year.

%	Base: Total Respondents
35	Very convincing
24	Somewhat convincing
14	Not too convincing
22	Not at all convincing
4	Don't know
1	Refused

Q4. Now I'd like to read you some reasons that people might give for trusting AARP about health care reform. For each one, please tell me if you believe it is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, not that convincing, or not at all convincing reason to trust AARP's position on health care reform.

Q4. (continued)

How convincing a reason is this to trust to AARP's position on health care reform?

Is it: READ LIST

Very convincing

Somewhat convincing

Not too convincing

Not at all convincing

Don't know

Refused

DO NOT READ

DO NOT READ

a) AARP monitors how new laws and programs are implemented, so they do not end up hurting seniors and people over 50.

%	Base: Total Respondents
53	Very convincing
32	Somewhat convincing
4	Not too convincing
8	Not at all convincing
2	Don't know
<0.5	Refused

b) As a non-partisan organization, AARP is an independent voice fighting for the best interests of people over 50.

%	Base: Total Respondents
56	Very convincing
29	Somewhat convincing
5	Not too convincing
9	Not at all convincing
1	Don't know
<0.5	Refused

c) With nearly 40 million members, AARP has the power to ensure that any health care reform bill protects Americans over 50.

%	Base: Total Respondents
48	Very convincing
31	Somewhat convincing
8	Not too convincing
11	Not at all convincing
2	Don't know
-	Refused

d) AARP has always fought to protect its members and wouldn't support any reform unless it was good for people over 50.

%	Base: Total Respondents
51	Very convincing
31	Somewhat convincing
7	Not too convincing
10	Not at all convincing
2	Don't know
<0.5	Refused

Q5. Now I'm going to read you a statement you might hear from AARP about health care reform and get your opinion on it.

In the health care debate, AARP has chosen a side – yours. That's why we're endorsing the health care reform plan in the House of Representatives. Because it ensures you're not denied insurance because of pre-existing conditions or age. It ensures your health care doesn't take a back seat to insurance companies and no one – not insurance companies or the government – comes between you and the doctors and specialists you choose. Most important, AARP endorses reform because it protects seniors' benefits and Medicare – so it's there for seniors now and for future generations. AARP is fighting for you – because your health is worth fighting for.

Given what you've heard about the bill and AARP support, do you support or oppose President Obama and Congress's plan to reform health care? [Then ask] Is that strongly or somewhat?

%	Base: Total Respondents
39	Strongly support
24	Somewhat support
8	Somewhat oppose
22	Strongly oppose
7	Don't know
<0.5	Refused

DEMOGRAPHICS

D1. What is your age as of your last birthday? _____ years

%	Base: Total Respondents
46	50 to 64 [NET]
12	...50 to 54
17	...55 to 59
18	...60 to 64
52	65 or older [NET]
17	...65 to 69
14	...70 to 74
21	...75+
3	Refused

D2. [RECORD GENDER]

%	Base: Total Respondents
44	Male
56	Female

D3. What best describes your current healthcare coverage? Are you not covered by health insurance, covered by health insurance through you or your spouse's current or former employer, covered by a private health insurance plan you purchased yourself, covered by Medicare, covered by Medicaid, or covered by some government program other than Medicare?

[Programming Note: Make this a multiple response question]

%	Base: Total Respondents
3	Not covered
48	Plan through your/your spouse's employer
25	Plan you purchased yourself
50	Medicare
2	Medicaid
6	Some other government program
10	[VOL] Something else
<0.5	[VOL] Don't know
1	[VOL] Refused

**Note - Percentages total to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed*

D4. Are you Hispanic, of Spanish descent, or Latino?

%	Base: Total Respondents
2	Yes
97	No
<0.5	Refused

D5. What best describes your race?

%	Base: Total Respondents
90	White/Caucasian
6	Black /African American
1	Asian American
<0.5	Native American
2	Other: _____
1	Refused

D6. Households are sometimes grouped according to income. Please indicate which group best estimates your annual household income before taxes in 2008.

%	Base: Total Respondents
4	Less than \$10,000
9	\$10,000 to \$19,999
11	\$20,000 to \$29,999
13	\$30,000 to \$39,999
10	\$40,000 to \$49,999
17	\$50,000 to \$74,999
21	\$75,000 or more
2	Don't know
14	Refused

D7. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as...?

%	Base: Total Respondents
23	A Republican
37	A Democrat
33	An Independent
2	Other
2	None
3	Refused

D8. Generally speaking, would you characterize your political views as being...?

%	Base: Total Respondents
38	Conservative
40	Moderate
16	Liberal
4	Don't know
3	Refused

Additional Data Tables

Q3. I'm going to read you a list of things that the current health care reform plan in the House of Representatives does, and for each one, please tell me how convincing a reason it is to support the plan in Congress.

Percentages of respondents who found the element a "very" or "somewhat" convincing reason to support the plan in Congress.

	Total	Age 50-64	Age 65+	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
	N=803	N=368	N=414	N=183	N=299	N=261
It would ensure that you can keep your current health insurance coverage if you are happy with it.	78%	79%	76%	72%	91%	69%
It requires insurance companies to cover routine checkups and preventive care, like screening for diabetes, prostate cancer, and osteoporosis, with no extra charges.	77	79	75	64	90	73
It would ensure that people can see the doctor of their choice.	76	79	75	64	92	71
It would prevent insurance companies from denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions.	75	80	71	66	87	72
It allows Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices with pharmaceutical companies.	73	75	71	64	87	67
It assures doctors that Medicare will compensate them fairly for treating seniors, so doctors don't stop seeing Medicare patients.	72	73	70	61	85	67
It protects Medicare benefits for seniors.	72	75	70	58	89	66
It ensures seniors aren't paying thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs and closes the Medicare doughnut hole.	69	71	66	59	85	62
It would stop insurance companies from charging you much higher premiums based on your age.	68	72	65	61	83	60
It would require everyone to have some form of health insurance, with subsidies for those who can't afford it.	68	71	65	55	84	59
It aggressively cracks down on waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicare.	67	67	67	55	82	61
It prevents insurance companies from putting a cap on the amount of health care you can receive in a given year or over the course of your life.	66	69	64	55	83	59
It provides a voluntary program to help people plan ahead so they can afford long-term care services and supports.	66	69	63	58	79	60
It would provide people a choice of affordable private insurance options and a public plan administered by the federal government if they don't have health insurance or can't afford it.	65	72	59	51	85	58
It would be paid for in part by a tax on married couples who earn at least \$1 million a year or individuals who earn at least \$500,000 per year.	59	64	55	49	75	53
It would reduce the federal budget deficit by \$104 billion over the next 10 years	54	55	53	41	71	45

Q4. Now I'd like to read you some reasons that people might give for trusting AARP about health care reform. For each one, please tell me if you believe it is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, not that convincing, or not at all convincing reason to trust AARP's position on health care reform. How convincing a reason is this to trust to AARP's position on health care reform?

Percentages of respondents who consider AARP reputational statements a convincing reason to trust AARP's position on health care reform

	Total	Age 50-64	Age 65+	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
	N=803	N=368	N=414	N=183	N=299	N=261
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AARP monitors how new laws and programs are implemented, so they do not end up hurting seniors and people over 50.	85	88	83	81	93	81
As a non-partisan organization, AARP is an independent voice fighting for the best interests of people over 50.	85	89	82	82	93	81
With nearly 40 million members, AARP has the power to ensure that any health care reform bill protects Americans over 50.	79	81	78	76	88	73
AARP has always fought to protect its members and wouldn't support any reform unless it was good for people over 50.	82	84	81	80	91	75

Q5. Now I'm going to read you a statement you might hear from AARP about health care reform and get your opinion on it.

In the health care debate, AARP has chosen a side – yours. That's why we're endorsing the health care reform plan in the House of Representatives. Because it ensures you're not denied insurance because of pre-existing conditions or age. It ensures your health care doesn't take a back seat to insurance companies and no one – not insurance companies or the government – comes between you and the doctors and specialists you choose. Most important, AARP endorses reform because it protects seniors' benefits and Medicare – so it's there for seniors now and for future generations. AARP is fighting for you – because your health is worth fighting for.

Given what you've heard about the bill and AARP support, do you support or oppose President Obama and Congress's plan to reform health care?

Percentages of respondents who support or oppose President Obama and Congress' plan to reform health care

	Total	Age 50-64	Age 65+	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
	N=803	N=368	N=414	N=183	N=299	N=261
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Strongly support	39	41	36	12	66	31
Somewhat support	24	27	20	26	20	27
Somewhat oppose	8	6	11	14	6	7
Strongly oppose	22	20	24	40	4	27
Don't know/refused	7	5	9	8	5	8