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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
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Stable Views of Stem Cell Research
SUPPORT FOR HEALTH CARE OVERHAUL, BUT IT'S NOT 1993

Most Americans believe that the nation's health care system is in need of substantial changes. But there is less support for completely rebuilding the health care system than there was in April 1993, during the early stage of the Clinton administration's unsuccessful effort to revamp health care.

Still, the public continues to favor the government guaranteeing health insurance for all citizens, even if it means raising taxes. About six-in-ten (61%) favor a government guarantee of health insurance, which is little changed from last August (63%).

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted March 9-12 among 1,308 adults reached on landlines and cell phones finds that a large majority of Americans support sweeping changes in health care. Four-in-ten (40%) say the health care system needs to be completely rebuilt, while 36% think it needs fundamental changes. Only about one-in-five (21%) believe that the health care system works pretty well and needs only minor changes. In April 1993, a majority of Americans (55%) said the health care system needed to be completely rebuilt.

While there is less support across the board for completely rebuilding the system than in 1993, the pattern of opinion is similar. As was the case 16 years ago, far more Democrats and independents than Republicans say wholesale changes are needed. About half of Democrats (49%) say the system needs to be completely rebuilt, compared with 39% of independents and 25% of

	April 1993	March 2009
<i>Health care system needs to be...</i>	%	%
Completely rebuilt	55	40
Fundamental changes	26	36
Only minor changes	15	21
Don't know	4	3
	100	100

<i>Health care system needs to be completely rebuilt</i>	April 1993	March 2009
<i>Men</i>	52	41
<i>Women</i>	59	38
<i>18-29</i>	53	39
<i>30-49</i>	54	41
<i>50-64</i>	66	43
<i>65+</i>	51	34
<i>College grad</i>	36	29
<i>Some college</i>	56	35
<i>HS or less</i>	64	48
<i>Republican</i>	41	25
<i>Democrat</i>	70	49
<i>Independent</i>	55	39

Republicans. People with no more than a high school education (48%) also are far more likely to favor a complete overhaul than are those with some college education (35%) or college graduates (29%).

During the Clinton administration, support for completely rebuilding the health care system peaked in the spring of 1993 and declined subsequently. By June 1994, just 37% said the health care system needed to be completely rebuilt.

Guaranteeing Health Insurance

Opinions about whether the government should guarantee health insurance for all citizens have changed little since last summer. But partisan differences over this issue have increased, as Republican support for this proposal has declined. Just 32% of Republicans now favor providing a government guarantee of health insurance if it means raising taxes, down 11 points since last August. Opinion among independents (60% favor) and Democrats (82%) has remained relatively stable.

People 65 and older also are less supportive of providing a government guarantee for health insurance if it means that taxes would increase (50% now vs. 58% last August). By contrast, African American support for this proposal has increased over this period, from 66% to 78%.

<i>Guarantee health ins. for all even if it means raising taxes</i>	Aug 2008 %	March 2009 %	Change
Total	63	61	-2
Men	60	58	-2
Women	66	63	-3
White	60	57	-3
Black	66	78	+12
18-29	64	66	+2
30-49	64	60	-4
50-64	64	63	-1
65+	58	50	-8
Republican	43	32	-11
Conserv Rep	38	26	-12
Mod/Lib Rep	54	47	-7
Democrat	79	82	+3
Cons/Mod Dem	75	78	+3
Liberal Dem	86	91	+5
Independent	63	60	-3

Views of Stem Cell Research

Last week, President Obama signed an executive order reversing the Bush Administration's limits on federal funding for human embryonic stem cell research. Currently, 54% think it is more important to conduct embryonic stem cell research that might result in new medical cures than it is to avoid destroying the potential life of embryos involved in

	Mar 2002 %	Aug 2004 %	Dec 2004 %	July 2005 %	July 2006 %	Aug 2007 %	Mar 2009 %
<i>More important to...</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Conduct research	43	52	56	57	56	51	54
Not destroy embryos	38	34	32	30	32	35	32
Don't know	19	14	12	13	12	14	14
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Question wording: "All in all which is more important, conducting embryonic stem cell research that might result in new medical cures OR not destroying the potential life of human embryos involved in this research?"

this research. About a third (32%) favor protecting the potential life of embryos over pursuing new medical research.

Opinions about stem cell research have been fairly stable in recent years. However, since 2006, when President Bush issued his first presidential veto to block legislation providing for expanded funding for stem cell research, partisan and ideological divisions over the issue have grown substantially.

In 2006, Republicans were evenly divided over whether it is more important to conduct stem cell research (45%) or more important to not destroy the potential life of human embryos involved in this research (43%). A year later, 37% of Republicans favored stem cell research while 50% were opposed. The balance of opinion is similar currently; 36% of Republicans place a greater priority on conducting stem cell research while a majority (53%) say it is more important to not destroy the potential life of embryos.

The proportion of conservative Republicans who support stem cell research declined from 38% in 2006 to 29% in 2007 and 24% currently. By contrast, the opinions of moderate and liberal Republicans have been stable (58% in 2006, 58% in 2007, 62% currently).

Support for stem cell research fell among independents between 2006 and 2007 (from 65% to 55%); today, 53% of independents support stem cell research. Most Democrats have continued to support this research; 69% now say it is more important to conduct embryonic stem cell research that might result in medical cures, up nine points from two years ago.

	July 2006	Aug 2007	Mar 2009	07-09 change
<i>Percent who favor stem cell research...</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	
Total	56	51	54	+3
Republican	45	37	36	-1
Cons Rep	38	29	24	-5
Mod/Lib Rep	58	58	62	+4
Democrat	62	60	69	+9
Cons/Mod Dem	59	52	66	+14
Lib Dem	73	77	80	+3
Independent	65	55	53	-2
White Protestant	57	44	47	+3
Evangelical	44	31	29	-2
Attend weekly	33	23	23	0
Less often	65	47	41	-6
Mainline	73	58	64	+6
White non-Hisp Cath	58	59	46	-13
Attend weekly	50	46	36	-10
Less often	65	67	55	-12
Unaffiliated	72	68	71	+3

The issue of stem cell research also continues to divide along religious lines. Just 29% of white evangelical Protestants now say it is more important to conduct embryonic stem cell research than to not destroy the potential life of embryos involved in the research; that is little changed from 2007 (31%), but is far lower than percentage of white evangelicals expressing this view in 2006 (44%).

For the first time since 2002, fewer than half of white non-Hispanic Catholics (46%) favor stem cell research; in 2006 and 2007, solid majorities of white Catholics said it was more important to conduct this research than to avoid destroying the potential human life of embryos involved in stem cell research (58% in 2006, 59% in 2007). Far fewer white Catholics who attend church at least weekly support stem cell research than do those who attend less frequently; this also is the case among white evangelical Protestants.

More Aware, More Supportive

As in recent years, those who say they have heard a lot about the issue of stem cell research are more likely to support it than those who say they are less aware of the subject.

Overall, 43% of the public says they have heard a lot about the stem cell issue, close to half (47%) have heard a little and 9% have heard nothing at all. Among the most attentive group – those who have heard a lot – 62% support stem cell research, compared with 51% of those who have heard a little about the issue and just 36% of those who have heard nothing about it.

Roughly equal proportions of Republicans, Democrats and independents and those who attend worship services weekly or less often have heard a lot about the issue.

	<i>More important to...</i>		
	<u>Conduct research</u>	<u>Not destroy embryos</u>	<u>DK</u>
	%	%	%
Total	54	32	14=100
<i>Heard about stem cell research...</i>			
A lot	62	30	8=100
A little	51	35	14=100
Nothing at all	36	35	29=100

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 1,308 adults, 18 years of age or older, from March 9-12, 2009 (982 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 326 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 104 who had no landline telephone). Both the landline and cell phone samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race/ethnicity, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2007 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2007 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the sample.

The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Sample Size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	1,308	3.0 percentage points
Republicans	359	6.0 percentage points
Democrats	444	5.5 percentage points
Independents	432	5.5 percentage points

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of seven projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MARCH 2009 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
 March 9-12, 2009
 N=1308

QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 31 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

QUESTIONS 32 THROUGH 33 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Q.34 Now, I'd like to get your views on some issues that are being discussed in this country today. All in all, do you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE]? Do you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose [NEXT ITEM]?

	-----FAVOR-----			-----OPPOSE-----			(VOL.) DK/Ref
	Total	Strongly Favor	Favor	Total	Strongly Oppose	Oppose	
a. The U.S. government guaranteeing health insurance for all citizens, even if it means raising taxes							
March, 2009	61	26	35	35	13	22	4=100
August, 2008	63	30	33	34	13	21	3=100
August, 2007	63	26	37	32	13	19	5=100
Early January, 2007	66	27	39	29	11	18	5=100
July, 2005	64	25	39	30	10	20	6=100
December, 2004	65	31	34	30	10	20	5=100
Early September, 2004	66	30	36	26	11	15	8=100
August, 2003	67	23	44	29	10	19	4=100

QUESTIONS 34B THROUGH 34D HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Q.35 How much, if anything, would you say you have heard about the issue of embryonic stem cell research? [READ]

- 43 A lot
- 47 A little [OR]
- 9 Nothing at all
- 1 Don't know/Refused (VOL. DO NOT READ)
- 100

ASK ALL:

Q.36 All in all, which is more important... [READ, IN ORDER]

	Conducting embryonic stem cell research that might result in <u>new medical cures</u>	Not destroying the potential life of human embryos involved <u>in this research</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
March, 2009 ¹	54	32	14=100
August, 2007	51	35	14=100
July, 2006	56	32	12=100
July, 2005	57	30	13=100

¹ Prior to March, 2009 the question asked about "Conducting stem cell research..." instead of "Conducting embryonic stem cell research." In July 2005, we conducted an experiment comparing the two different wordings of this option and found no difference in the balance of opinion.

Q.36 CONTINUED...

	Conducting embryonic stem cell research that might result in <u>new medical cures</u>	Not destroying the potential life of human embryos involved <u>in this research</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
December, 2004	56	32	12=100
August, 2004	52	34	14=100
March, 2002	43	38	19=100

Thinking about the health care system in general...

ASK ALL:

Q.37 Do you think the health care system in this country works pretty well and requires only minor changes, do you think it needs fundamental changes, or do you think it needs to be completely rebuilt?

		June <u>1994</u>	Jan <u>1994</u>	April <u>1993</u>
21	Only minor changes	28	21	15
36	Fundamental changes	32	33	26
40	Completely rebuilt	37	42	55
<u>3</u>	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
100		100	100	100

NO QUESTIONS 38 THROUGH 42

QUESTIONS 43 THROUGH 49 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

QUESTION 50 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE