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# More Americans Disapprove Than Approve of Health Care Law

*Democrats increasingly say law has had a positive impact on U.S.*

**FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:**

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# More Americans Disapprove Than Approve of Health Care Law

*Democrats increasingly say law has had a positive impact on U.S.*

The public's views of the Affordable Care Act, which were evenly divided following the Supreme Court's ruling last summer upholding a key section of the law, are again more negative than positive. Currently, 44% approve of the 2010 health care law, compared with 54% who disapprove of the law.

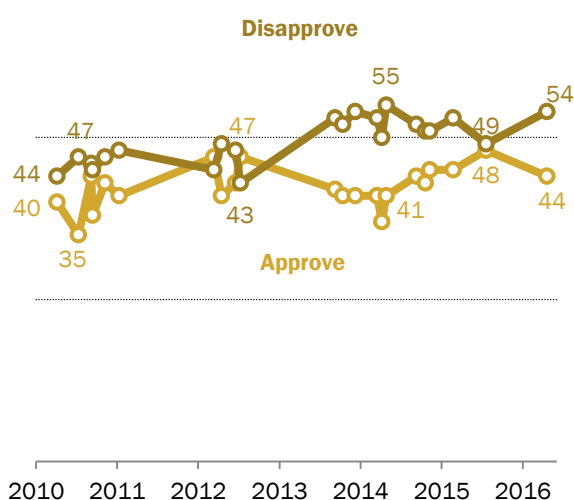
In July 2015, after the Supreme Court upheld the federal government's ability to provide insurance subsidies through federal exchanges, nearly equal shares approved (48%) as disapproved of the law (49%). Over the prior two years, somewhat more disapproved than approved of the law.

However, the balance of opinion about the law's impact on the country has grown less negative over the past three years, even as slightly more continue to see the impact as negative than positive. Currently, 44% say the law's impact on the country has been mostly negative, 39% say it has been mostly positive and 13% say it has not had much of an effect. In December 2013, amid the flawed rollout of the health exchanges, opinions about the law's impact on the country were much more negative than positive: 49% saw its impact as largely negative while fewer than half as many (23%) said it had had a positive effect on the country as a whole (22% said it hadn't had much of an effect).

Since that point, positive views of the law's impact on the country have increased 16 percentage points (from 23% to 39%), while there has been a modest decrease in negative views (49% then, 44% today).

## Modest changes in public's overall view of ACA since its passage in 2010

% saying they ... of the 2010 health care law



Source: Survey conducted April 12-19, 2016.

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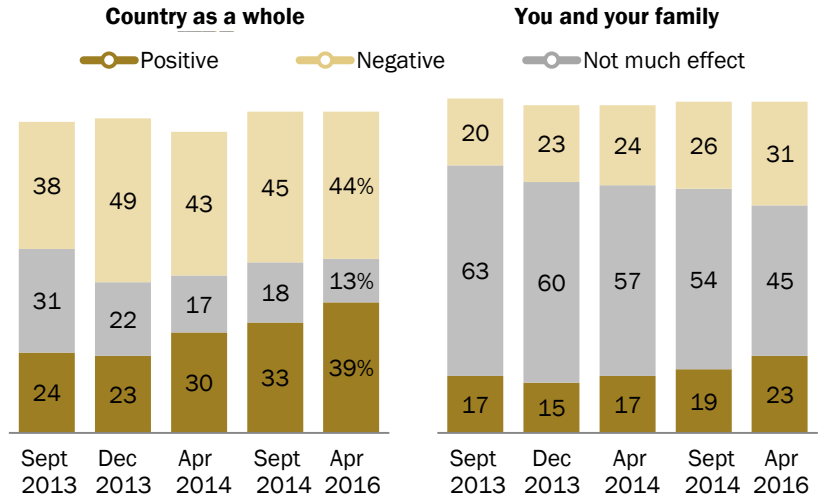
Most of the rise in positive views of the law's effect on the country has come among Democrats and independents. The share of Democrats who view the law's impact on the nation positively has risen 24 percentage points (from 42% in December 2013 to 66% today), while the share of independents who say it has had a positive impact has risen from 17% in December 2013 to 36% today. Only one-in-ten Republicans (10%) say the law has had a positive effect on the country, little changed since 2013.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted April 12-19 among 2,008 adults, finds that opinions about the law's personal impact – and its expected effects going forward – have shown modest changes over time.

More adults (31%) say the health care law has had a mostly negative effect on themselves and their families than say it has had a mostly positive one (23%), while 45% say it not has had much of an effect. The share saying the law has not has much an effect

### Views of ACA's impact on the country to date have modestly improved since late 2013

So far, health care law's effect on \_\_\_\_\_ has been ...

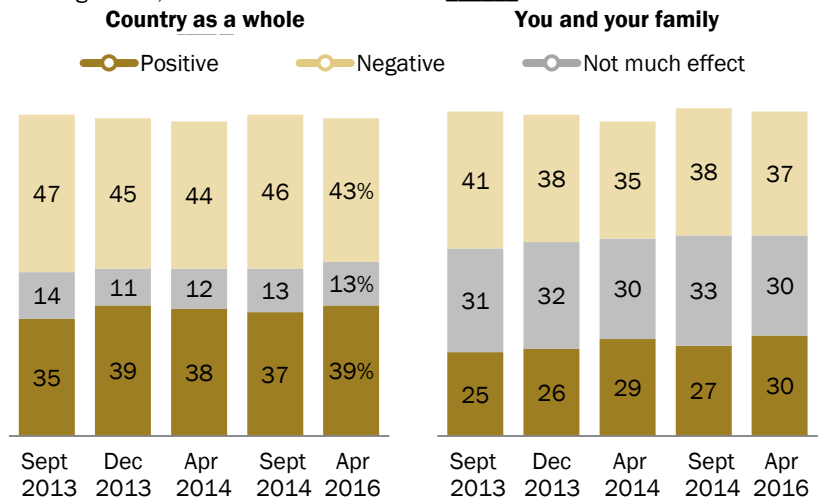


Source: Survey conducted April 12-19, 2016. Don't know responses not shown.

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### Little shift in views about the future impact of the ACA

Looking ahead, health care law's effect on \_\_\_\_\_ will be ...



Source: Survey conducted April 12-19, 2016. Don't know responses not shown.

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has declined over the past three years, but the balance of opinion about the law's personal impact has remained more negative than positive.

By roughly the same margin (37% to 30%), more say that, looking ahead, the health care law will have a mostly negative than a mostly positive personal impact, while 30% say it will not have much of an effect. This is little changed over the last few years.. This is little changed over the last few years.

Views of the law's future impact on the country are mixed (43% mostly negative, 39% mostly positive). Three years ago, 47% expected the law to have a mostly negative effect on the country, while 35% expected its impact to be mostly positive.

## Partisan views of the ACA

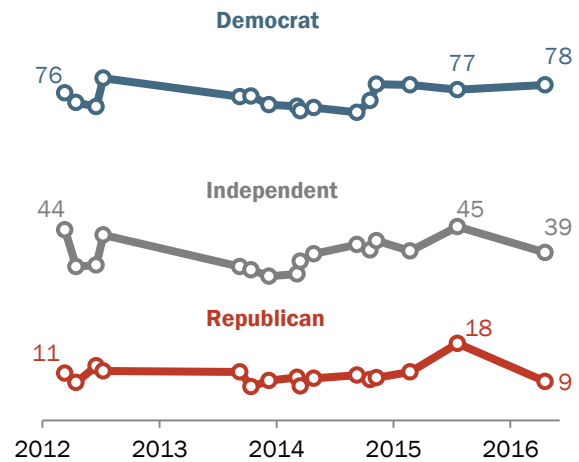
Currently, 78% of Democrats approve and just 19% disapprove of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), little changed in recent years.

Among Republicans, just 9% approve and 89% disapprove of the law. The share of Republicans who approve of the law rose from 11% in February 2015 to 18% last July, before falling back to 9% in the new survey.

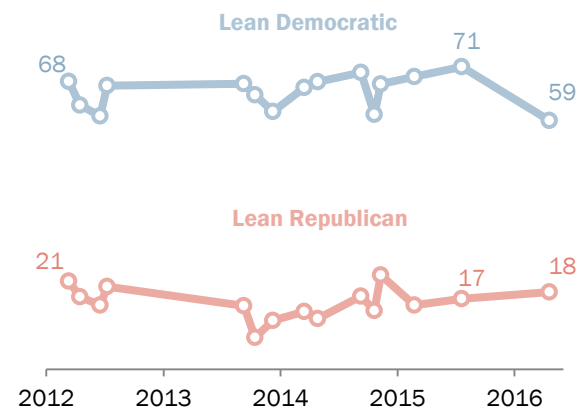
Independents' support for the law also has declined since July, from 45% to 39%. That change has come entirely among independents who lean toward the Democratic Party. Currently, 59% of Democratic-leaning independents approve of the health care law, compared with 71% last summer. Only about one-in-five Republican-leaning independents (18%) approve of the law, little changed since July (17%).

## Consistent partisan divisions in approval of health care law

% saying they approve of the 2010 health care law ...



Among independents who ...



Source: Survey conducted April 12-19, 2016.

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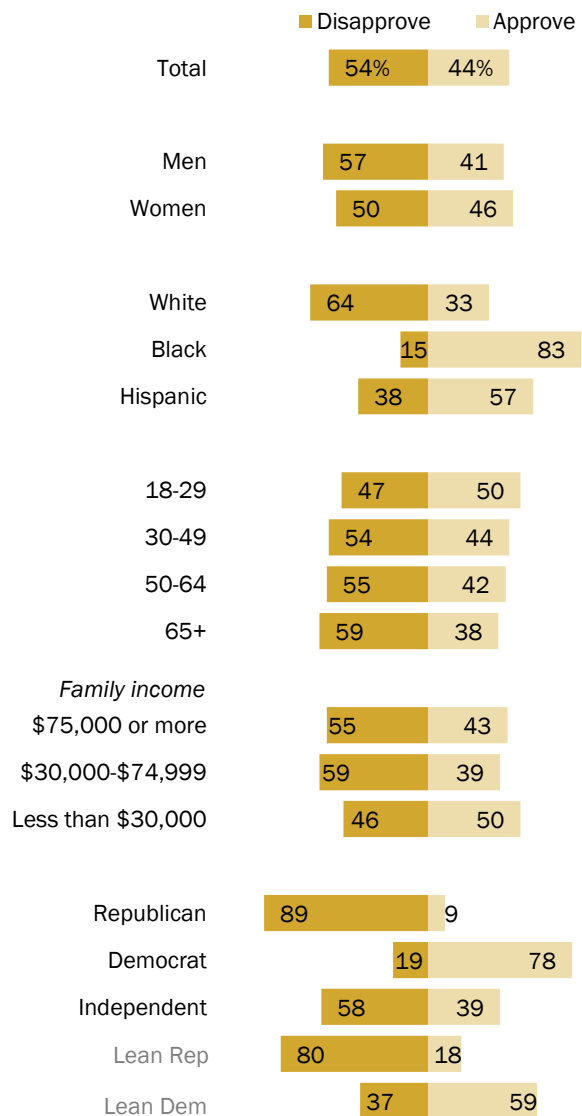
While approval of the health care law has slipped among Democratic-leaning independents, [in March](#) a large majority of Democratic leaners (73%) said it is the government's responsibility to make sure all Americans have health insurance coverage. The share of Democratic leaners saying the government has a responsibility to provide health coverage for all has ticked up since 2014 (67%).

Aside from the partisan divisions over the law, there continue to be wide racial and age differences in opinions about the ACA. Whites disapprove of the law by nearly two-to-one (64% vs. 33%). Conversely, blacks overwhelming support the law (83%), as do a majority of Hispanics (57%).

As in the past, young people view the ACA more positively than do older adults. Among those younger than 30, about as many approve (50%) as disapprove (47%) of the health care law. Among older age groups, more disapprove than approve.

## Continuing racial, age differences in views of health care law

% saying they... of the 2010 health care law



Source: Survey conducted April 12-19, 2016. Blacks and whites are non-Hispanics; Hispanics are of any race.

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## Democrats increasingly say ACA has had mostly positive effect on country

Republicans and Democrats have largely opposing views about the impact of the health care law on the country so far.

Close to three-quarters of Republicans (72%) say the law has had a mostly negative effect thus far. Democrats offer more upbeat ratings of the law's national impact: About two-thirds of Democrats (66%) say it has had a mostly positive effect.

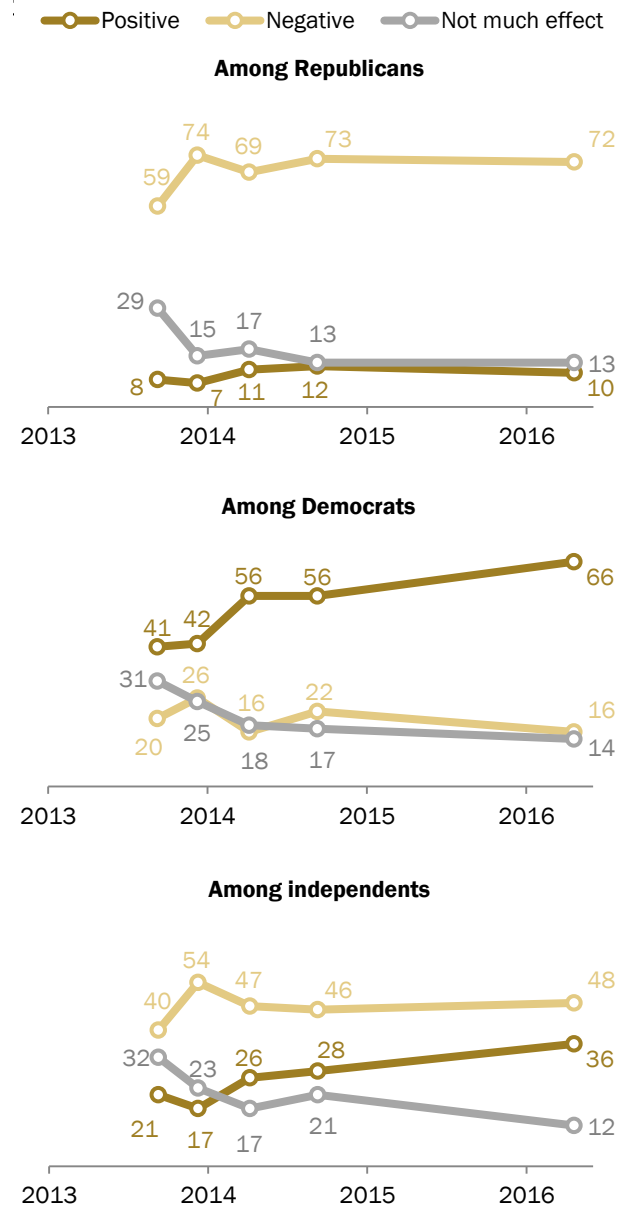
The percentage of Democrats who see the law's impact on the nation as mostly positive has increased 10 points (from 56% to 66%) since September 2014, and is up 25 points from a year before that (in September 2013, just 41% of Democrats said the law had had a positive impact).

Views among Republicans have shifted only modestly since December 2013. In the wake of the troubled rollout of Healthcare.gov as part of the Affordable Care Act, negative views of the law's impact among Republicans increased from 59% to 74%, and they have remained at similar levels since.

Among independents, about half (48%) say that the law has had a mostly negative effect on the country as a whole, little changed over the last few years. However, the share saying the impact is mostly positive has grown: 36% now say this, up from 28% in September 2014.

### Health care law's impact on the country

% saying the health care law has had a .... effect so far



Source: Survey conducted April 12-19, 2016. Don't know responses not shown.

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As with overall opinions about the ACA, views of its impact – on the country and personally – are divided along racial lines.

About half of whites (52%) say the law has had a mostly negative impact on the country, while just 31% view its effects as positive. A majority of blacks (64%) and about half of Hispanics (51%) say the law's effect on the country has been mostly positive.

And while about four-in-ten blacks (39%) and Hispanics (40%) say the law's personal impact has been mostly positive, just 16% of whites say the same.

People with lower family incomes also express more positive views of the ACA's effects than do those with higher incomes. About a third (34%) of those with family incomes of \$30,000 or less say the law's effect on themselves and their families has been mostly positive, compared with just 18% of those with higher family incomes.

## Minorities, adults with low incomes more likely than others to say ACA has had positive personal impact

% saying impact of 2010 health care law on \_\_\_\_\_ has been ...

	The country as a whole			You and your family		
	Mostly positive	Mostly negative	Not much effect	Mostly positive	Mostly negative	Not much effect
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	39	44	13	23	31	45
Men	36	44	17	19	30	50
Women	41	43	10	27	32	40
White	31	52	13	16	36	46
Black	64	16	16	39	8	51
Hispanic	51	28	14	40	22	36
18-29	43	38	15	23	28	49
30-49	39	44	11	25	32	41
50-64	39	46	13	25	36	38
65+	34	45	15	18	25	57
<i>Family income</i>						
\$75,000 or more	39	47	12	19	31	49
\$30,000-\$74,999	35	49	12	18	36	46
Less than \$30,000	44	36	15	34	27	39
Republican	10	72	13	6	52	41
Democrat	66	16	14	40	11	48
Independent	36	48	12	21	34	44
Lean Rep	19	67	10	12	50	37
Lean Dem	55	27	16	29	22	49
<i>Approve/disapprove of health care law</i>						
Approve	76	7	13	48	3	49
Disapprove	9	74	13	3	55	41

Source: Survey conducted Apr. 12-19, 2016.

Don't know responses not shown. Percentages read across.

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Those who approve of the law overwhelmingly say the law's impact on the country has been mostly positive, while about half (48%) view its personal impact positively. Opinions among those who disapprove of the law are almost the reverse: 74% say it has had a mostly negative impact on the country while 55% say the law's impact on them has been mostly negative.

For the most part, opinions about the law's future effects follow similar patterns. About seven-in-ten Republicans (71%) say the law will have a mostly negative impact on the country, while 61% expect it will have a largely negative effect on themselves and their families. Two-thirds of Democrats (67%) view the law's future impact on the country positively, while 51% say it will have a positive personal impact.



## Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted April 12-19, 2016 among a national sample of 2,008 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (505 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,503 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 879 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted under the direction of Abt SRBI. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2014 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cell phone only, or both landline and cell phone), based on extrapolations from the 2015 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 combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. The margins of error reported and statistical tests of significance are adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, a measure of how much efficiency is lost from the weighting procedures.

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

<b>Group</b>	<b>Unweighted sample size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	2,008	2.5 percentage points
Republican	546	4.8 percentage points
Democrat	611	4.5 percentage points
Independent	752	4.1 percentage points
Lean Republican	339	6.1 percentage points
Lean Democrat	333	6.1 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

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.

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER  
APRIL 2016 POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY SURVEY  
FINAL TOPLINE  
APRIL 12-19, 2016  
N=2,008**

**QUESTIONS 1-2, 6-7, 10-11, THOUGHT, 16-17, 21, 25-31, 34, 36-37, 40-42, 45, 47-48, 52-53  
HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**NO QUESTIONS 3-5, 8-9, 12-15, 18-20, 22-24, 32-33, 35, 38-39, 43-44, 46, 49-51**

**ASK ALL:**

On another subject ...

Q.54 Do you approve or disapprove of the health care law passed by Barack Obama and Congress in 2010?

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<b>(VOL.)</b> <u>DK/Ref</u>
Apr 12-19, 2016	44	54	3
Jul 14-20, 2015	48	49	3
Feb 18-22, 2015	45	53	3
Nov 6-9, 2014	45	51	4
Oct 15-20, 2014	43	51	5
Sep 2-9, 2014	44	52	4
Apr 23-27, 2014	41	55	4
Apr 3-6, 2014 (U)	37	50	12
Feb 27-Mar 16, 2014	41	53	5
Dec 3-8, 2013 (U)	41	54	5
Oct 9-13, 2013	41	52	7
Sep 4-8, 2013 (U)	42	53	5
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012 <sup>1</sup>	47	43	9
Jun 7-17, 2012	43	48	9
Apr 4-15, 2012	41	49	10
Mar 7-11, 2012	47	45	8
Jan 5-9, 2011	41	48	11
Nov 4-7, 2010	43	47	10
Sep 9-12, 2010	38	45	17
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	44	46	10
Jul 8-11, 2010	35	47	17
Apr 1-5, 2010	40	44	16

**ASK ALL:**

Q.55 So far, that is up until today, has the health care law had a mostly positive, mostly negative, or not much of an effect on you and your family?

Apr 12-19 <u>2016</u>		Sep 2-9 <u>2014</u>	(U) Apr 3-6 <u>2014</u>	(U) Dec 3-8 <u>2013</u>	(U) Sep 4-8 <u>2013</u>
23	Mostly positive	19	17	15	17
31	Mostly negative	26	24	23	20
45	Not much of an effect	54	57	60	63
1	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	1	2	2	1

<sup>1</sup> Prior to September 2013, the question asked about "the health care legislation." In addition, the reference to when the law was passed has changed over time: January 2011 referenced the legislation passed "last year," November 2010 used "earlier this year," September through July, 2010 used "in March," and April 2010 used "last month."

**ASK ALL:**

Q.56 And looking ahead, do you think the overall effect of the health care law on you and your family over the coming years will be mostly positive, mostly negative, or will it not affect you much either way?

Apr 12-19 <u>2016</u>		Sep 2-9 <u>2014</u>	(U) Apr 3-6 <u>2014</u>	(U) Dec 3-8 <u>2013</u>	(U) Sep 4-8 <u>2013</u>
30	Mostly positive	27	29	26	25
37	Mostly negative	38	35	38	41
30	Not much of an effect	33	30	32	31
3	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	3	6	4	4

**ASK ALL:**

Now thinking about the effect of the 2010 health care law on the country as a whole...

Q.57 So far, that is up until today, has the health care law had a mostly positive, mostly negative, or not much of an effect on the country as a whole?

Apr 12-19 <u>2016</u>		Sep 2-9 <u>2014</u>	(U) Apr 3-6 <u>2014</u>	(U) Dec 3-8 <u>2013</u>	(U) Sep 4-8 <u>2013</u>
39	Mostly positive	33	30	23	24
44	Mostly negative	45	43	49	38
13	Not much of an effect	18	17	22	31
4	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	5	10	6	7

**ASK ALL:**

Q.58 And looking ahead, do you think the overall effect of the health care law on the country as a whole over the coming years will be mostly positive, mostly negative, or will it not affect the country much either way?

Apr 12-19 <u>2016</u>		Sep 2-9 <u>2014</u>	(U) Apr 3-6 <u>2014</u>	(U) Dec 3-8 <u>2013</u>	(U) Sep 4-8 <u>2013</u>
39	Mostly positive	37	38	39	35
43	Mostly negative	46	44	45	47
13	Not much of an effect	13	12	11	14
5	Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>	3	6	4	4

**NO QUESTIONS 59-63, 65-67, 69-72, 77-78**

**QUESTIONS 64, 68, 73-76, 79 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**

**ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

**ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):**

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean Rep	Lean Dem
Apr 12-19, 2016	25	32	37	3	1	2	16	17
Mar 17-26, 2016	25	31	38	3	*	2	15	20
Jan 7-14, 2016	24	30	38	5	1	2	14	17
Dec 8-13, 2015	26	31	37	4	*	2	16	15
Aug 27-Oct 4, 2015	24	29	41	4	*	2	17	17
Sep 22-27, 2015	26	30	40	2	*	2	15	16
Jul 14-20, 2015	22	32	41	4	*	1	15	19
May 12-18, 2015	24	32	38	3	1	2	15	18
<b>Yearly Totals</b>								
2015	23.7	30.4	40.1	3.6	.4	1.8	16.4	17.3
2014	23.2	31.5	39.5	3.1	.7	2.0	16.2	16.5
2013	23.9	32.1	38.3	2.9	.5	2.2	16.0	16.0
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

**Key to Pew Research trends noted in the topline:**

(U) Pew Research Center/USA Today polls