

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**  
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**But Has Strong Campaign Potential**

**SENATE TEST BAN VOTE LITTLE NOTICED, LESS UNDERSTOOD**

The U.S. Senate's rejection of the underground nuclear test ban treaty has gone unnoticed by half of the public, and only one-in-ten Americans say they have heard a lot about *why* some in the Senate backed the treaty, while others opposed it. Just about half of respondents (49%) polled in a Pew Research Center survey conducted October 15-19, 1999, were at all aware of the vote, and only 21% say they have heard a lot about it. Small percentages report hearing a lot (9%), or even something (29%) about reasons behind the vote.

Yet most Americans say it is very important to know what the presidential candidates have to say about the treaty. In fact only the issue of how to provide health insurance for the uninsured evokes significantly more public interest as a potential campaign issue in nationwide Center surveys. (See box).

**The Most Important Questions  
For Candidates\***

	<u>Very Important</u>
	%
How to provide health insurance to the uninsured	62
Whether U.S. troops should get involved in internal conflicts	56
<b>Whether the U.S. should participate in a nuclear test ban treaty</b>	<b>56</b>
How to fix Medicare	50
Whether to invest Social Security funds in market	46
How to reduce gap between rich and poor people	44
How to reduce gap between rich and poor school districts	41
Whether to ban soft money	35
How to make workplace more flexible for parents	34
How to reform intl. financial system	33
Whether U.S. has more responsibility for global clean-up	32
How to insure Internet access for poor	18

\* All items *except* nuclear test ban treaty are taken from an earlier Pew Research Center survey (October 7-11, 1999; N=1,032).

The new poll found a 47% to 26% plurality of all respondents opposing the Senate vote to reject the test ban treaty. However, people who have heard at least something about why the senators voted as they did are somewhat more supportive of the vote (35% good thing, 49% bad thing) than are those who have not heard the senators' reasons (21% to 45%).

Overall, men are more aware of the Senate's action on the treaty than women — 56% of men have heard at least something about the vote and 44% have heard about the reasons why senators voted for or against the treaty. By comparison, just 43% of women have heard that the treaty was rejected, and fewer than one-in-three (32%) have heard anything about the reasons for voting one way or the other.

Reaction to the vote is less positive among women than men (21% vs. 32%, respectively, say that rejecting the treaty was good). Opinion over the test ban vote splits along party lines. Among Democrats, a 57% majority opposes the vote and just 18% supports it, with opposition running nearly two-to-one among Independents (47% vs. 26%). By contrast, Republicans show more support for the GOP-led Senate decision, but are nonetheless divided — 37% say it was a good thing and 37% say it was a bad thing.

Interest in hearing presidential candidates discuss their positions on U.S. participation in a test ban treaty is particularly high among Democrats, 65% of whom think it is very important to hear the candidates' stands on the issue. Half of Republicans and Independents agree. Despite this fact, fewer Democrats (17%) than Republicans (28%) have heard a lot about the Senate vote.

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### **ABOUT THIS SURVEY**

Results for the survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates among a nationwide sample of 1,022 adults, 18 years of age or older, during the period October 15-19, 1999. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus 3.5 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.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**TEST-BAN TREATY**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**October 15 - 19, 1999**  
**N=1,022**

TB.1 On another subject... Now I'd like to ask you about the importance of some issues to next year's presidential campaign. The (first one/next one) is **(INSERT ITEM; ROTATE ITEMS)**. How important is it for you personally to hear what positions presidential candidates take on this issue— very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not too Important</u>	<u>Not at all Important</u>	<u>Don't know/ Refused</u>
a. How to provide health insurance to children and adults who can't afford it	69	21	5	3	2=100
b. Whether to invest a portion of Social Security funds in the stock market	39	25	15	17	4=100
c. Whether the U.S. should participate in a treaty to ban all underground nuclear tests	56	27	7	8	2=100

TB.2 Have you heard a lot, only something, or haven't you heard that the U.S. Senate voted against a treaty that would ban all underground nuclear testing?

21	Heard a lot
28	Only something
50	Haven't heard
<u>1</u>	<b>(DO NOT READ)</b> Don't know/ Refused
100	

TB.3 Do you think it was a good thing or a bad thing that the Senate voted against this treaty?

26	Good thing
47	Bad thing
12	<b>(DO NOT READ)</b> Neither/Other
<u>15</u>	<b>(DO NOT READ)</b> Don't know/ Refused
100	

TB.4 How much have you heard about the reasons WHY some U.S. Senators voted for the treaty and others voted against it — have you heard a lot, only something, or haven't you heard about this?

9	Heard a lot
29	Only something
61	Haven't heard
<u>1</u>	<b>(DO NOT READ)</b> Don't know/ Refused
100	