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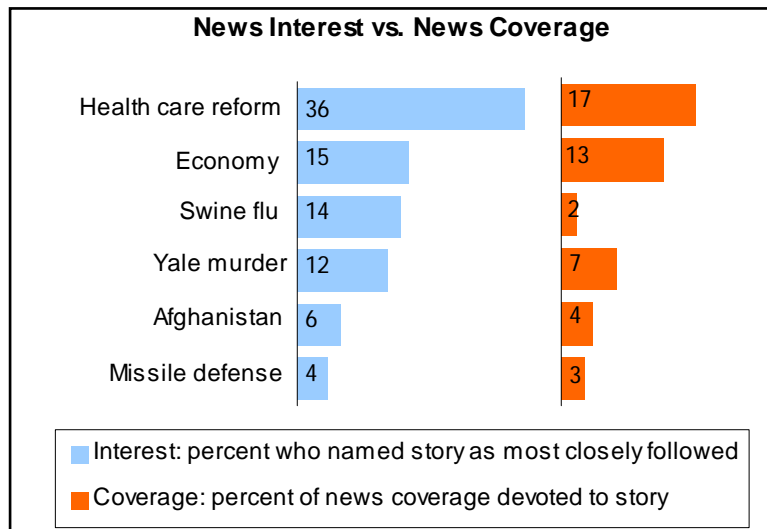
Republicans Focus on ACORN Scandal
NO INCREASE IN “TOO MUCH” OBAMA DESPITE MEDIA BLITZ

The number of Americans who say they are hearing too much about President Obama has not increased since mid-summer, despite the president’s high media visibility. Still, 37% say they are hearing too much about Obama.

Hearing _____ about Obama					
	Aug 1-4 <u>2008</u>	Oct 24-27 <u>2008</u>	Mar 27-30 <u>2009</u>	July 24-27 <u>2009</u>	Sept 18-21 <u>2009</u>
Too much	48	41	34	40	37
Too little	10	10	8	12	12
Right amount	41	47	54	46	47
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
Q1.	100	100	100	100	100

Since Labor Day, Obama has addressed a joint session of Congress about health care legislation, spoken to the nation’s school children and appeared on five Sunday news talk shows in one day. According to the latest weekly News Interest Index survey, conducted Sept. 18-21 by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, a plurality (47%) say they are hearing the right amount about Obama and another 12% say they are hearing too little.

In the survey, which was in the field as Obama appeared on the Sunday talk shows on Sept. 20, Americans continue to say they are highly interested in the health care debate: 36% say it was the story they followed most closely last week, more than double the percentage for any other major story. But despite that interest, relatively few (19%) say they heard a lot last week about Senate Finance Chairman Max Baucus unveiling details of his health care proposal.



The debate over health care reform got more media coverage than any other story, taking up 17% of the newshole analyzed by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism. That was down from 32% of coverage the previous week when Obama delivered his address to Congress. The president also continued to be the top newsmaker as measured by PEJ.

Not surprisingly, Republicans are much more likely than Democrats to say they have been hearing too much about Obama. Close to six-in-ten Republicans (58%) say they have been hearing too much about the president, while 30% say they have been hearing the right amount and 9% say they have been hearing too little. Among Democrats, 20% say they have been hearing too much about the president, while 58% say they have been hearing the right amount; 17% say they have been hearing too little. Independents are more like the public as a whole: 40% say they have been hearing too much, 48% say they have been hearing the right amount and 9% say they have been hearing too little about Obama.

<i>How much have you been hearing about Barack Obama?</i>	<u>Total</u> %	<u>Rep</u> %	<u>Dem</u> %	<u>Ind</u> %
Too much	37	58	20	40
Too little	12	9	17	9
Right amount	47	30	58	48
Don't know	4	3	4	4
	100	100	100	100

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. Q1.

In late July, 66% of Republicans said they were hearing too much about Obama, compared with 25% of Democrats and 36% of independents. Just 23% of Republicans then said they were hearing the right amount, compared with 58% of Democrats and 51% of independents. Obama was also the dominant figure in the news at that point as he pushed lawmakers to act on health care legislation and made a controversial comment at a July 22 news conference about the arrest of prominent African American scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr.

Most Know of Charges about Race Playing Role in Obama Criticism

Three-quarters of the public say they have heard either a lot (40%) or a little (35%) about charges that racism has been a factor in criticisms of President Obama and his policies. Awareness of these allegations registers equally across partisan groups: 41% of Republicans, 40% of Democrats and 41% of independents say they have heard a lot about claims that criticism of Obama has been driven by race. There is no

	<u>A lot</u> %	<u>A little</u> %	<u>Nothing/Don't know</u> %
Charges that racism is a factor in criticisms of Obama	40	35	24=100
ACORN employees giving advice to a "pimp" and "prostitute"	31	25	43=100
Sept. 12th protests in Washington	23	37	40=100
Sen. Max Baucus unveiling his health care reform proposal	19	36	45=100

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. Q4a-d.

significant difference between whites and blacks in terms of how many say they have heard a lot about this story line.

Other political stories of the week resonated less widely with the public. About three-in-ten (31%) say they heard a lot about employees of the community organizing group ACORN appearing to give advice to a couple posing as a pimp and a prostitute. Somewhat fewer (23%) heard a lot about the Sept. 12 rally in Washington to protest government spending and policies. For both stories, Republicans were far more likely than Democrats to have heard a lot about them. Almost half of Republicans (47%) heard a lot about the ACORN scandal compared with only 21% of Democrats. Similarly, Republicans were about twice as likely as Democrats to have heard a lot about the Sept. 12th rally (31% Republicans, 16% Democrats).

The gap between Republicans and Democrats hearing a lot about the ACORN scandal is relatively large when compared with other recent stories. There also were sizable partisan differences in attentiveness to the recent resignation of White House adviser Van Jones, with more than twice as many Republicans (35%) as Democrats (15%) hearing a lot about this story.

<i>% hearing a lot about</i>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<i>R-D gap</i>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	
September 18-21				
ACORN scandal	31	47	21	+26
September 12 protests	23	31	16	+15
Charges race is a factor in Obama criticisms	40	41	40	+1
September 11-14				
White House adviser Van Jones resigning	22	35	15	+20
Joe Wilson shouting at Obama	55	56	64	-8
Obama's speech to students on education	57	57	66	-9
August 14-17				
Talk of death panels	41	46	37	+9
August 7-10				
Health care protests at town hall meetings	49	58	43	+15
July 31-August 3				
Claims Obama not born in the U.S.	31	35	24	+11

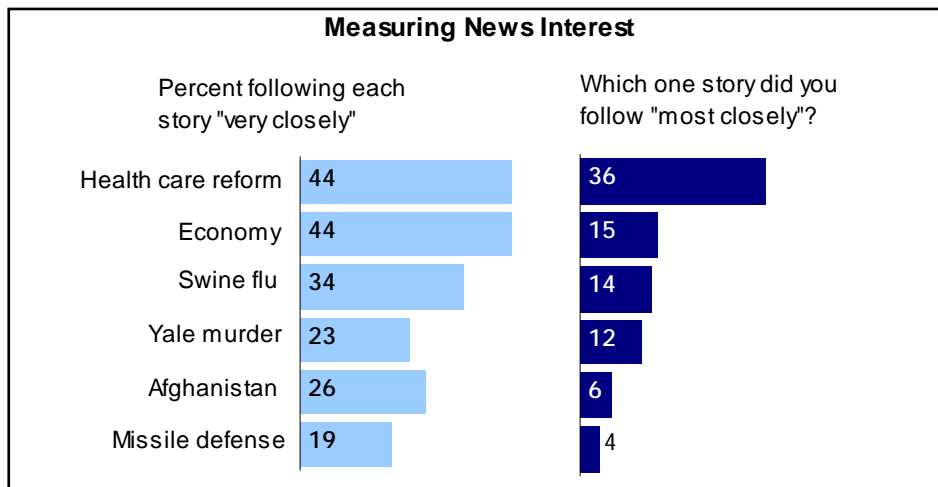
But the gap in attentiveness between Republicans and Democrats was more modest regarding health care protests at town hall meetings (15 points), claims that Barack Obama was not born in the United States (11 points) and reports that health care legislation included so-called “death panels” (nine points).

Democrats were somewhat more likely than Republicans to say they heard a lot about Obama’s back-to-school speech on education (by nine points) and Rep. Joe Wilson shouting “You lie” at Obama during his health care speech before Congress (eight points).

Top Stories of the Week

For yet another week, health care remained at the top of the public's news agenda with 36% naming it their top story and 44% saying they followed the debate over health care reform very closely. The story accounted for 17% of coverage.

Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy were also followed very closely by 44% of the public, though far fewer (15%) name it the one story they followed more closely than any other. Coverage of the economy took up 13% of the newshole measured by PEJ.



Interest in reports about swine flu and the availability of a vaccine was steady last week with 34% following the story very closely and 14% saying it was their top story of the week – roughly the same levels of interest as a week earlier. Swine flu stories made up 2% of coverage.

The murder of Yale graduate student Annie Le was followed very closely by about a quarter of the public (23%), while 12% say they followed this story more closely than any other. Interest was somewhat higher in the Northeast than it was in the West or Midwest. The murder – and arrest of a suspect – accounted for 7% of coverage.

Relatively modest attention was paid to the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan (26% very closely, 6% top story) and to news about Obama cancelling a planned missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic (19% very closely, 4% top story). News out of Afghanistan accounted for about 4% of coverage last week, while planned changes to the missile defense system accounted for 3%.

These findings are based on the most recent installment of the weekly News Interest Index, an ongoing project of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The index, building on the Center's longstanding research into public attentiveness to major news stories, examines news interest as it relates to the news media's coverage. The weekly survey is conducted in conjunction with The Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, which monitors the news reported by major newspaper, television, radio and online news outlets on an ongoing basis. In the most recent week, data relating to news coverage were collected from September 14-20, 2009 and survey data measuring public interest in the top news stories of the week were collected September 18-21, 2009 from a nationally representative sample of 1,001 adults.

About the News Interest Index

The *News Interest Index* is a weekly survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press aimed at gauging the public's interest in and reaction to major news events.

This project has been undertaken in conjunction with the Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, an ongoing content analysis of the news. The News Coverage Index catalogues the news from top news organizations across five major sectors of the media: newspapers, network television, cable television, radio and the internet. Each week (from Monday through Sunday) PEJ compiles this data to identify the top stories for the week. The News Interest Index survey collects data from Friday through Monday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for the weekly surveys are based on landline telephone interviews among a nationwide sample of approximately 1,000 adults, 18 years of age or older, conducted under the direction of ORC (Opinion Research Corporation). For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling 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, and that results based on subgroups will have larger margins of error.

For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to www.journalism.org.

About the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press

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
September 18-21, 2009 NEWS INTEREST INDEX OMNIBUS SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1001

Q.1 All things considered... these days have you been hearing too much, too little, or the right amount about Barack Obama?

		July 24-27 <u>2009</u>	Mar 27-30 <u>2009</u>	Oct 24-27 <u>2008</u> ¹	Aug 1-4 <u>2008</u>
37	Too much	40	34	41	48
12	Too little	12	8	10	10
47	Right amount	46	54	47	41
4	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	2	4	2	1

Q.2 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, [INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>
a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy	44	34	15	7	*
September 11-14, 2009	45	32	14	9	*
September 3-6, 2009	41	31	15	13	*
August 28-31, 2009	45	30	13	12	1
August 21-24, 2009	50	27	13	10	1
August 14-17, 2009	41	37	11	12	*
August 7-10, 2009	42	34	13	10	*
July 31-August 3, 2009	46	34	11	8	*
July 24-27, 2009	45	35	12	8	*
July 17-20, 2009	43	35	11	11	1
July 10-13, 2009	37	38	13	11	*
July 2-5, 2009	38	35	15	12	*
June 19-22, 2009	42	33	15	10	*
June 12-15, 2009	41	35	12	12	*
June 5-8, 2009	41	34	11	14	*
May 29-June 1, 2009	43	37	11	8	*
May 21-24, 2009	44	35	13	9	*
May 15-18, 2009	44	35	12	8	*
May 8-11, 2009	42	34	12	12	*
May 1-4, 2009	47	36	11	5	1
April 17-20, 2009	52	30	10	7	1
April 9-13, 2009	48	29	13	10	0
March 27-30, 2009	48	32	10	10	*
March 20-23, 2009	52	34	8	6	*
March 13-16, 2009	48	33	9	10	*
February 27-March 2, 2009	56	30	8	6	*
February 13-16, 2009	55	29	10	6	*
January 30-February 2, 2009	52	31	12	5	*
January 23-26, 2009	57	30	8	5	0
January 16-19, 2009	43	35	13	9	*

¹ For Aug. 1-4 and Oct. 24-27, 2008, the question was preceded by "Thinking about the presidential campaign. Also, the question then was asked about both Obama and John McCain, in random order."

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
January 2-4, 2009	42	36	15	7	*
December 12-15, 2008	51	33	9	7	*
December 5-8, 2008	42	38	13	7	*
November 21-24, 2008	59	24	9	8	*
November 14-17, 2008	56	29	9	6	*
November 7-10, 2008	54	31	8	7	*
October 31-November 3, 2008	63	27	6	4	*
October 24-27, 2008	52	35	7	5	1
October 17-20, 2008	62	29	6	3	*
October 10-13, 2008	65	25	7	3	*
October 3-6, 2008	69	23	5	3	*
September 26-29, 2008	70	22	5	3	*
September 19-22, 2008	56	27	12	5	*
September 5-8, 2008	44	33	16	7	*
August 29-31, 2008	41	34	13	11	1
August 15-18, 2008	39	36	15	10	*
August 8-11, 2008	39	35	16	10	*
August 1-4, 2008	47	34	11	8	0
July 25-28, 2008	46	32	10	12	*
July 18-21, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
July 11-14, 2008	44	33	12	10	1
June 27-30, 2008	49	31	12	7	1
June 13-16, 2008	42	33	14	11	*
May 9-12, 2008	45	31	13	11	*
May 2-5, 2008	43	31	15	10	1
April 18-21, 2008	41	35	13	10	1
April 4-7, 2008	39	37	12	12	*
March 28-31, 2008	42	36	14	8	*
March 20-24, 2008	45	33	13	9	*
February 29-March 3, 2008	38	35	15	11	1
February 15-18, 2008	37	36	11	16	8
February 1-4, 2008	40	37	14	8	1
January 18-21, 2008	42	31	16	11	*
January 11-14, 2008	36	32	15	16	1
November 2-5, 2007	27	37	16	19	1
October 19-22, 2007	25	34	20	21	*
August 10-13, 2007	28	36	18	18	*
Mid-November, 2006	31	40	17	11	1
December, 2005	35	35	18	11	1
Early November, 2005	35	39	17	9	*
Mid-May, 2005	30	39	19	11	1
January, 2005	35	41	17	7	*
Mid-October, 2004	30	43	16	10	1
Early September, 2004	39	34	15	11	1
Mid-January, 2004	37	41	15	7	*
December, 2003	35	38	14	11	2
November, 2003	40	34	15	10	1
October, 2003	32	39	16	12	1
September, 2003	39	30	18	12	1
March, 2003	40	35	16	8	1
February, 2003	42	33	15	10	*
January, 2003	40	35	13	11	1
December, 2002	38	34	17	10	1

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
February, 2002	35	40	15	9	1
January, 2002	30	44	16	9	1
December, 2001	37	40	13	8	2
Mid-November, 2001	41	36	15	7	1
June, 2001	24	41	18	16	1
May, 2001	34	36	15	15	0
April, 2001	36	34	16	13	1
February, 2001	30	39	18	12	1
January, 2001	32	38	17	11	2
June, 1995	26	41	22	11	*
March, 1995	27	45	19	9	*
February, 1995	23	41	22	13	1
December, 1994	28	43	20	9	*
October, 1994	27	40	20	12	1
June, 1994	25	42	23	10	*
May, 1994	33	40	16	10	1
January, 1994	34	39	16	10	1
Early January, 1994	36	44	13	7	*
December, 1993	35	41	15	8	1
October, 1993	33	38	20	9	*
September, 1993	37	40	14	8	1
Early September, 1993	39	39	14	9	*
August, 1993	41	36	14	9	*
May, 1993	37	38	18	6	1
February, 1993	49	36	10	5	*
January, 1993	42	39	12	7	*
September, 1992	43	37	13	6	1
May, 1992	39	39	15	6	1
March, 1992	47	38	11	4	*
February, 1992	47	37	10	6	*
January, 1992	44	40	11	5	*
October, 1991	36	38	16	9	1
b. Debate over health care reform	44	26	19	11	*
September 11-14, 2009	44	27	14	15	*
September 3-6, 2009	40	26	16	17	0
August 28-31, 2009	40	28	17	14	1
August 21-24, 2009	49	24	12	15	1
August 14-17, 2009	39	31	15	15	1
TREND FOR COMPARISON:²					
August 7-10, 2009: <i>Debate in Washington over health care reform</i>	40	27	17	15	1
July 31-August 3, 2009	47	26	14	13	1
July 24-27, 2009	44	28	15	13	*
July 17-20, 2009	33	31	13	21	2
July 10-13, 2009	24	29	20	27	*
June 26-29, 2009	29	26	20	25	1

² June 12-15, 2009 to August 7-10, 2009 asked about: "Debate in Washington over health care reform." May 15-18, 2009 asked about: "Debate over Barack Obama's health care plans." March 6-9, 2009 asked about: "Barack Obama proposing a \$630 billion fund for overhauling the U.S. health care system." September, 1993 through September, 1994 asked about: "The Clinton Administration's health care reform proposals." May, 1993 through August, 1993 asked about: "Reports about the White House task force on health care reform headed by Hillary Clinton."

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
June 19-22, 2009	28	28	20	23	*
June 12-15, 2009	29	26	18	26	*
May 15-18, 2009: <i>Debate over Obama's health care plans</i>	25	30	20	24	*
March 6-9, 2009: <i>Obama proposing a \$630 billion fund for overhauling health care</i>	41	32	13	14	*
September, 1994: <i>The Clinton administration's health care reform proposals</i>	32	41	18	9	*
June, 1994	34	40	19	7	*
May, 1994	37	37	16	9	1
January, 1994	38	38	15	9	*
Early January, 1994	40	40	14	6	*
December, 1993	45	35	12	7	1
October, 1993	44	32	17	6	1
September, 1993	49	34	11	6	*
August, 1993: <i>Reports about the White House task force on health care reform headed by Hillary Clinton</i>	27	32	25	15	1
June, 1993	28	38	19	15	*
May, 1993	30	30	25	14	1
c. Reports about swine flu and the availability of a vaccine					
	34	31	25	9	*
September 11-14, 2009	30	36	21	12	*
September 3-6, 2009	26	32	25	17	0
August 28-31, 2009	26	33	22	18	*
TREND FOR COMPARISON:³					
May 21-24, 2009	30	39	21	11	*
May 8-11, 2009	34	36	19	11	*
May 1-4, 2009	43	37	15	4	1
April 25-27, 2009	25	30	19	26	*
d. The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan					
	26	33	25	16	*
September 11-14, 2009	25	35	22	18	1
September 3-6, 2009	23	33	23	21	0
August 21-24, 2009 ⁴	14	32	26	28	1
August 7-10, 2009	24	32	23	21	1
March 20-23, 2009	24	32	22	22	*
February 20-23, 2009	27	29	24	19	1
January 30-February 2, 2009	26	34	24	16	*
January 2-4, 2009	22	33	23	21	1
October 24-27, 2008	28	32	22	17	1
October 10-13, 2008	19	34	29	18	*
September 12-15, 2008	21	34	25	19	1
August 29-31, 2008	18	27	32	23	*

³ May 21-24, 2009 and May 8-11, 2009 asked about: "Reports about swine flu in the U.S. and elsewhere." For May 1-4, 2009 the story was listed as: "The outbreak of swine flu in different parts of the world." For April 25-27, 2009 the story was listed as: "Reports of swine flu in Mexico and the U.S."

⁴ August 21-24, 2009 asked about "Afghanistan's presidential election." February 20-23, 2009 asked about "The Obama administration's decision to send 17,000 additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan." From June 20-23, 2008 to October 10-13, 2008 the story was listed as "The military effort in Afghanistan against Taliban fighters."

Q.2 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>
July 18-21, 2008	27	33	24	16	*
July 11-14, 2008	19	28	29	23	1
July 3-7, 2008	19	28	32	21	*
June 20-23, 2008	20	30	30	20	*
Late July, 2002	41	38	13	7	1
June, 2002	38	32	20	9	1
April, 2002	39	39	13	8	1
Early April, 2002	45	37	12	5	1
February, 2002	47	39	8	5	1
January, 2002	51	35	9	4	1
December, 2001	44	38	12	5	1
Mid-November, 2001	49	36	11	3	1
Early November, 2001	45	36	12	6	1
Mid-October, 2001	51	35	10	3	1
e. Obama cancelling a planned missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic	19	19	25	36	*
f. The murder of Yale graduate student Annie Le in a campus lab building	23	29	26	23	0
TREND FOR COMPARISON:					
March 14-17, 2008: <i>The murder of a female student at the University of North Carolina</i>	17	31	27	25	*

Q.3 Which ONE of the stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following MORE closely? [**DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.**]

- 36 Debate over health care reform
- 15 Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
- 14 Reports about swine flu and the availability of a vaccine
- 12 The murder of Yale graduate student Annie Le in a campus lab building
- 6 The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan
- 4 Obama cancelling a planned missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic
- 6 Some other story (VOL.)
- 8 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

Q.4 How much if anything, have you heard about each of the following? Have you heard a lot, a little or nothing at all? [**READ AND RANDOMIZE**]

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Nothing at all</u>	<u>DK/Refused</u>
a. Senator Max Baucus unveiling his health care reform proposal	19	36	45	*
b. Employees of the community organizing group "ACORN" appearing to give advice to a couple posing as a pimp and prostitute	31	25	43	*
c. Charges that racism is a factor in criticisms of President Obama and his policies	40	35	24	*
d. A September 12 th rally in Washington to protest government spending and policies	23	37	40	*