

A decorative graphic consisting of a large, thin yellow arc that starts near the top right and curves down towards the bottom right. A horizontal black line is positioned below the arc, and a vertical black line is positioned to the right of the arc's end. A small yellow square is located at the intersection of these two lines. In the top left corner, there is a large green square with a smaller yellow square at its bottom right corner.

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

November 2009



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

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## **Acknowledgements**

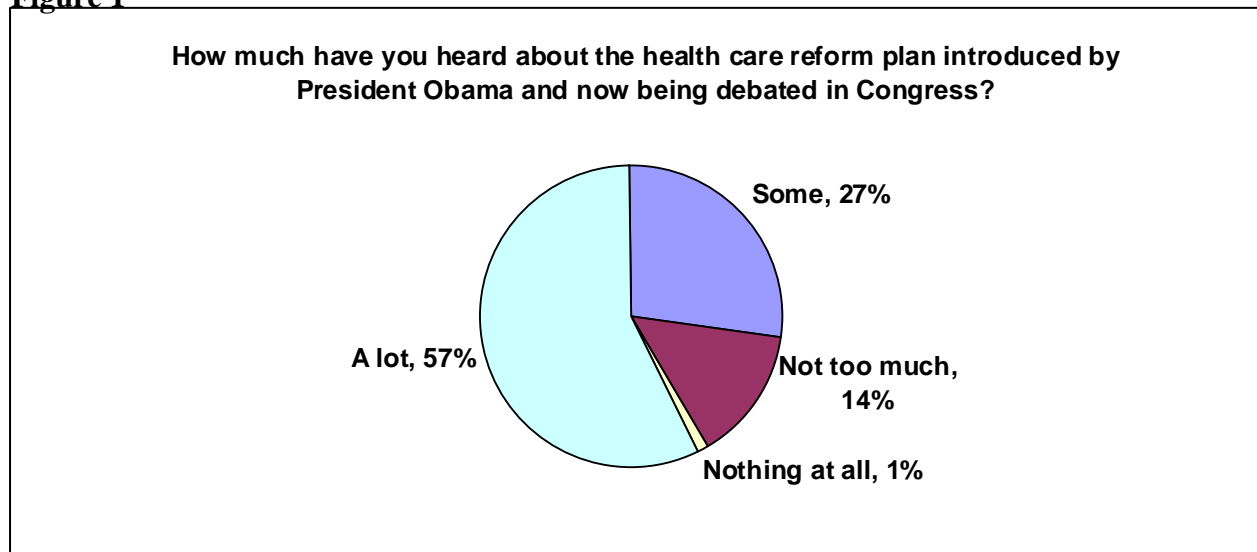
Woelfel Research, Inc. of Dunn Loring, VA conducted this study. All media inquiries about this report should be directed to AARP Media Relations at (202) 434-2560.

AARP surveyed its members from October 30 to November 8, 2009 about the current health care reform plan in the House of Representatives. This survey of 423 members is representative of AARP members in the state of Washington and has a margin of error of +/- 4.8%.

**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 57% of members have heard “a lot” and 27% 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**

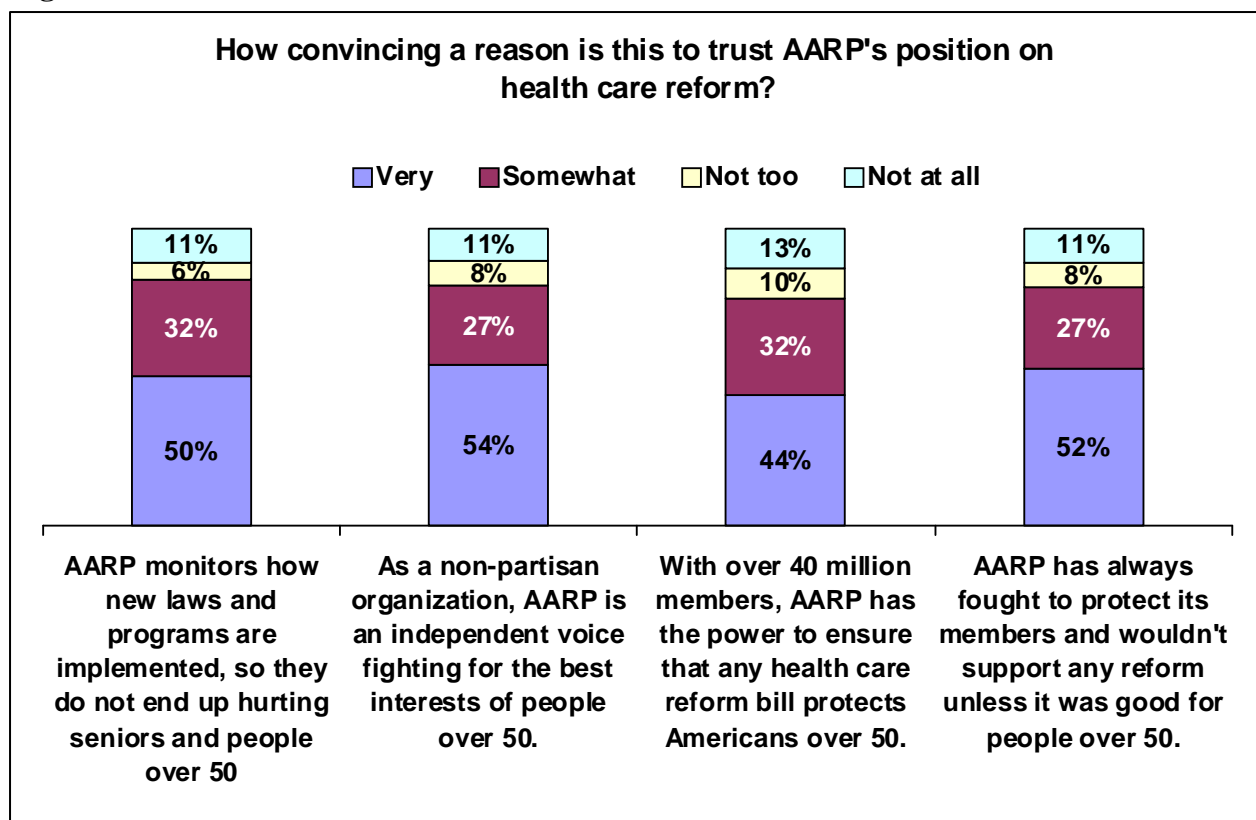
| <b>Elements of health care reform plan in the House of Representatives</b>                         | <b>Percent who find element a somewhat or very convincing reason to support the plan</b> |
|--|--|
| It would ensure that you can keep your current health insurance coverage if you are happy with it. | 78%  |
| It would ensure that people can see the doctor of their choice.                                    | 78%  |

| <b>Elements of health care reform plan in the House of Representatives</b>  | <b>Percent who find element a somewhat or very convincing reason to support the plan</b> |
|---|--|
| It requires insurance companies to cover routine checkups and preventive care, like screening for diabetes, prostate cancer, and osteoporosis, with no extra charges.                     | 75%  |
| It allows Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices with pharmaceutical companies.   | 75%  |
| It protects Medicare benefits for seniors.  | 75%  |
| It would prevent insurance companies from denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions.  | 72%  |
| It assures doctors that Medicare will compensate them fairly for treating seniors, so doctors don't stop seeing Medicare patients.  | 72%  |
| It ensures seniors aren't paying thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs and closes the Medicare doughnut hole.  | 70%  |
| 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.  | 69%  |
| It aggressively cracks down on waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicare  | 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. | 66%  |
| It provides a voluntary program to help people plan ahead so they can afford long-term care services and supports.  | 65%  |
| 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.  | 63%  |
| 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  | 52%  |

### **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"

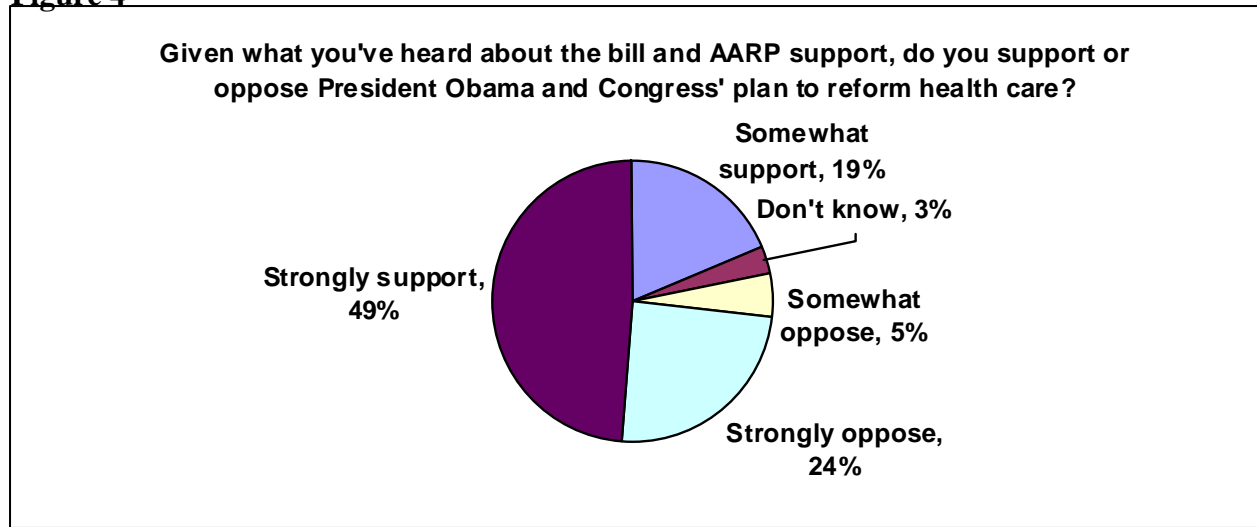
### Support for Plan

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, 49% of members "strongly" support the plan and 19% "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 roughly two to one.

**Figure 4**



*Note: Total may be less than 100% due to responses of "refused"*

**ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE**  
(N=423, sampling error = ±4.8%)

**Q1. Are you a member of AARP?**

| (N=423)<br>% | 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?**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 57           | A lot                   |
| 27           | Some                    |
| 14           | Not too much            |
| 1            | 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.**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 56           | Very convincing         |
| 22           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 6            | Not too convincing      |
| 15           | Not at all convincing   |
| 1            | Don't know              |
| -            | Refused                 |

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

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 51           | Very convincing         |
| 21           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 11           | Not too convincing      |
| 15           | 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.**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 55           | Very convincing         |
| 22           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 6            | Not too convincing      |
| 15           | Not at all convincing   |
| 1            | Don't know              |
| <0.5         | Refused                 |

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

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 48           | Very convincing         |
| 20           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 11           | Not too convincing      |
| 19           | Not at all convincing   |
| 2            | Don't know              |
| -            | 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.**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 42           | Very convincing         |
| 24           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 12           | Not too convincing      |
| 20           | Not at all convincing   |
| 2            | Don't know              |
| -            | 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.**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 52           | Very convincing         |
| 23           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 8            | Not too convincing      |
| 14           | Not at all convincing   |
| 3            | Don't know              |
| -            | Refused                 |

**g) It protects Medicare benefits for seniors.**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 56           | Very convincing         |
| 19           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 4            | Not too convincing      |
| 18           | Not at all convincing   |
| 3            | Don't know              |
| -            | Refused                 |

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

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 48           | Very convincing         |
| 18           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 11           | Not too convincing      |
| 21           | Not at all convincing   |
| 2            | Don't know              |
| <0.5         | 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.**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 47           | Very convincing         |
| 23           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 10           | Not too convincing      |
| 17           | Not at all convincing   |
| 3            | 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.**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 42           | Very convincing         |
| 21           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 15           | Not too convincing      |
| 18           | Not at all convincing   |
| 4            | Don't know              |
| <0.5         | Refused                 |

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

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 53           | Very convincing         |
| 19           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 7            | Not too convincing      |
| 19           | Not at all convincing   |
| 2            | Don't know              |
| <0.5         | Refused                 |

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

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 50           | Very convincing         |
| 25           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 8            | Not too convincing      |
| 14           | Not at all convincing   |
| 3            | Don't know              |
| <0.5         | Refused                 |

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

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 35           | Very convincing         |
| 30           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 14           | Not too convincing      |
| 17           | Not at all convincing   |
| 4            | Don't know              |
| <0.5         | Refused                 |

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

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 35           | Very convincing         |
| 17           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 12           | Not too convincing      |
| 33           | 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.**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 44           | Very convincing         |
| 25           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 9            | Not too convincing      |
| 19           | 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.**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 37           | Very convincing         |
| 22           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 14           | Not too convincing      |
| 21           | Not at all convincing   |
| 5            | Don't know              |
| <0.5         | 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.**

**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 DO NOT READ  
 Refused 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.**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 50           | Very convincing         |
| 32           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 6            | Not too convincing      |
| 11           | Not at all convincing   |
| 3            | Don't know              |
| -            | Refused                 |

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

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 54           | Very convincing         |
| 27           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 8            | Not too convincing      |
| 11           | Not at all convincing   |
| -            | Don't know              |
| -            | Refused                 |

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

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 44           | Very convincing         |
| 32           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 10           | Not too convincing      |
| 13           | Not at all convincing   |
| 1            | Don't know              |
| <0.5         | Refused                 |

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

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 52           | Very convincing         |
| 27           | Somewhat convincing     |
| 8            | Not too convincing      |
| 11           | 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.***

**Q5. (continued) 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?**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 49           | Strongly support        |
| 19           | Somewhat support        |
| 5            | Somewhat oppose         |
| 24           | Strongly oppose         |
| 3            | Don't know              |
| 1            | Refused                 |

## DEMOGRAPHICS

**D1. What is your age as of your last birthday? \_\_\_\_\_ years**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents  |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| <b>44</b>    | <b>50 to 64 [NET]</b>    |
| 11           | ...50 to 54              |
| 15           | ...55 to 59              |
| 18           | ...60 to 64              |
| <b>53</b>    | <b>65 or older [NET]</b> |
| 17           | ...65 to 69              |
| 12           | ...70 to 74              |
| 24           | ...75+                   |
| <b>3</b>     | <b>Refused</b>           |

**D2. [RECORD GENDER]**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 43           | Male                    |
| 57           | 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]**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents                  |
|--------------|--|
| 2            | Not covered                              |
| 44           | Plan through your/your spouse's employer |
| 28           | Plan you purchased yourself              |
| 49           | Medicare                                 |
| 3            | Medicaid                                 |
| 7            | Some other government program            |
| 12           | [VOL] Something else                     |
| <0.5         | [VOL] Don't know                         |
| -            | [VOL] Refused                            |

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

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

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 3            | Yes                     |
| 96           | No                      |
| 1            | Refused                 |

**D5. What best describes your race?**

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 93           | White/Caucasian         |
| 1            | Black /African American |
| 1            | Asian American          |
| 1            | Native American         |
| 4            | Other: _____            |
| 2            | Refused                 |

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

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 4            | Less than \$10,000      |
| 9            | \$10,000 to \$19,999    |
| 11           | \$20,000 to \$29,999    |
| 10           | \$30,000 to \$39,999    |
| 11           | \$40,000 to \$49,999    |
| 16           | \$50,000 to \$74,999    |
| 24           | \$75,000 or more        |
| 2            | Don't know              |
| 12           | Refused                 |

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

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 20           | A Republican            |
| 41           | A Democrat              |
| 32           | An Independent          |
| 2            | Other                   |
| 2            | None                    |
| 4            | Refused                 |

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

| (N=423)<br>% | Base: Total Respondents |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| 35           | Conservative            |
| 37           | Moderate                |
| 19           | Liberal                 |
| 6            | Don't know              |
| 3            | Refused                 |

**Additional Data Tables for Washington State**  
(n=423)

**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=423 | N=188     | N=222   | N=83 | N=172 | N=137 |
| It would ensure that you can keep your current health insurance coverage if you are happy with it.  | 78%   | 76%       | 79%     | 57%  | 96%   | 69%   |
| It requires insurance companies to cover routine checkups and preventive care, like screening for diabetes, prostate cancer, and osteoporosis, with no extra charges.                     | 75%   | 75%       | 75%     | 53%  | 91%   | 69%   |
| It would ensure that people can see the doctor of their choice.   | 78%   | 73%       | 82%     | 57%  | 95%   | 70%   |
| It would prevent insurance companies from denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions.  | 72%   | 72%       | 71%     | 49%  | 86%   | 67%   |
| It allows Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices with pharmaceutical companies.   | 75%   | 72%       | 77%     | 55%  | 91%   | 69%   |
| It assures doctors that Medicare will compensate them fairly for treating seniors, so doctors don't stop seeing Medicare patients.  | 72%   | 69%       | 74%     | 49%  | 87%   | 67%   |
| It protects Medicare benefits for seniors.  | 75%   | 72%       | 77%     | 47%  | 95%   | 67%   |
| It ensures seniors aren't paying thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs and closes the Medicare doughnut hole.  | 70%   | 67%       | 93%     | 45%  | 88%   | 66%   |
| It would stop insurance companies from charging you much higher premiums based on your age.   | 68%   | 68%       | 69%     | 47%  | 85%   | 62%   |
| It would require everyone to have some form of health insurance, with subsidies for those who can't afford it.  | 69%   | 66%       | 70%     | 35%  | 88%   | 63%   |
| It aggressively cracks down on waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicare  | 66%   | 61%       | 70%     | 43%  | 83%   | 56%   |
| 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.  | 63%   | 61%       | 65%     | 38%  | 79%   | 59%   |
| It provides a voluntary program to help people plan ahead so they can afford long-term care services and supports.  | 65%   | 64%       | 64%     | 44%  | 83%   | 56%   |
| 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. | 66%   | 66%       | 66%     | 37%  | 90%   | 55%   |
| 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%   | 56%       | 61%     | 33%  | 79%   | 48%   |
| It would reduce the federal budget deficit by \$104 billion over the next 10 years  | 52%   | 51%       | 53%     | 27%  | 74%   | 38%   |

**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=423 | N=188     | N=222   | N=83 | N=172 | N=137 |
| AARP monitors how new laws and programs are implemented, so they do not end up hurting seniors and people over 50.        | 81%   | 80%       | 81%     | 71%  | 94%   | 73%   |
| As a non-partisan organization, AARP is an independent voice fighting for the best interests of people over 50.           | 81%   | 77%       | 84%     | 69%  | 93%   | 73%   |
| With nearly 40 million members, AARP has the power to ensure that any health care reform bill protects Americans over 50. | 76%   | 76%       | 76%     | 60%  | 89%   | 70%   |
| AARP has always fought to protect its members and wouldn't support any reform unless it was good for people over 50.      | 79%   | 78%       | 79%     | 67%  | 88%   | 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=423 | N=188     | N=222   | N=83 | N=172 | N=137 |
| Strongly support   | 49%   | 47%       | 48%     | 11%  | 80%   | 33%   |
| Somewhat support   | 19%   | 15%       | 22%     | 20%  | 15%   | 24%   |
| Somewhat oppose    | 5%    | 5%        | 5%      | 11%  | 2%    | 4%    |
| Strongly oppose    | 24%   | 30%       | 22%     | 57%  | 2%    | 34%   |
| Don't know/refused | 3%    | 4%        | 3%      | 1%   | 2%    | 5%    |