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Poll: Majority favor abortion funding ban

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Washington (CNN) -- Six in 10 Americans favor a ban on the use of federal funds for abortion, according to a new poll.

The poll also indicates that the public might also favor legislation that would prevent many women from getting their health insurance plan to cover the cost of an abortion, even if no federal funds are involved.

A poll shows 61 percent oppose using public money for abortions, and 37 percent are in favor of allowing the use of federal funds.

A CNN/Opinion Research Corporation survey released Wednesday morning indicates that 61 percent of the public opposes using public

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

Poll shows public favors bill that would prevent insurers from covering cost of abortion

By a 51 percent to 45 percent margin, responders think patients should pay full costs

26 percent say abortion should be legal; 50 percent say it should be legal in certain circumstances

money for [abortions](#) for women who can not afford the procedure, with 37 percent in favor of allowing the use of federal funds.

And by a 51 percent to 45 percent margin, those questioned in the survey think that women who get abortions should pay the full costs out of their own pocket, even if they have private health insurance and no federal funds are involved. The 6-point difference is within the poll's sampling error.

[Full results \(pdf\)](#)

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The [health care reform](#) bill that narrowly passed in the House of Representatives on November 7 included tight restrictions on the use of federal money for [abortion coverage](#). Abortion rights activists strongly oppose such restrictions.

"Roughly one in five Americans who oppose the House health care bill do so because it is not liberal enough," said CNN polling director Keating Holland. "The abortion issue may be one reason why. But for

most Americans, potential restrictions on abortion may not be a deal-breaker."

A bill that passed last month in the Senate Finance Committee included less restrictive language. It's unclear what the abortion language will be in the full Senate bill that Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nevada, is expected to unveil this week.

The survey indicates that 26 percent say abortion should be legal in all circumstances, with half of those questioned saying it should be legal in certain circumstances, and just under one in four saying abortion should never be legal.

Lack of Democratic unity on a public option is another issue that has dogged health care reform. Republicans are united in opposition to the proposal. The bill that passed the House 220-215 included a version of the public option, an insurance plan administered by the federal government that would compete with plans offered by private health insurance companies. According to the poll, 56 percent favor the creation of a public option, with 42 percent opposed.

"Younger Americans like the public option," Holland said. "But a majority of senior citizens are opposed to that part of the House bill."

The Senate bill might include a provision that allows states to opt out of a government health insurance plan. Two-thirds of people questioned oppose that provision, with 28 percent saying they favor allowing states to opt out.

The poll also indicates that Americans like employer mandates and new restrictions on health insurance companies, expanding Medicaid and providing subsidies to low-income families. And they like a tax on millionaires to pay for it.

But according to the survey, Medicare cuts are not popular, and the public is split on a provision requiring all Americans to get health insurance.

"Generally speaking, Americans like the parts of the House bill that add new regulations to the health insurance industry and provide more coverage for people who can't afford health care," Holland said. "They also like language in the bill that requires companies to provide health insurance to their workers. But they're not so sure about requiring people to get health insurance on their own if they don't get it through another source."

Americans are also split over whether the near-unanimous GOP vote against the House bill indicates there is something wrong with the bill -- or something wrong with the Republican Party.

Looking ahead to the Senate debate, the public continues to approve of the Senate rules that allow filibusters, a move by the minority party in the Senate that can kill bills or nominations by bringing the chamber to a standstill. Sixty votes are needed to end a filibuster.

The CNN/Opinion Research Corporation poll was conducted November 13-15, with 1,014 adult Americans questioned by telephone. The survey's overall sampling error is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

CNN deputy political director Paul Steinhauser contributed to this report.

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