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A Comprehensive Overview of Healthcare: *2006 Midterm Elections & Beyond*

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- **This presentation will focus on providing in-depth analysis on:**
 - 1) The public's views on the issue of healthcare today.**
 - 2) The public's views on politics today, as demonstrated in the 2006 Midterm Elections.**

$$J = \sum_i \sum_j \|x^i - u_j\|^2$$

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- The dominant healthcare-related issue that **candidates** talked about this election cycle was prescription drugs.



“The D in Medicare Part D stands for disgrace. . . Fixing the new Medicare prescription drug plan so that it helps people and not the drug companies.”

“For too long the HMO’s and drug companies have written our healthcare laws. Now we are all paying the price. It’s time to put people first.”



“I took on big drug companies to lower costs and save taxpayers millions... We need to put seniors before the big drug companies and special interests...”



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- However, prescription drugs was not a top-of-mind issue for **voters** and campaign rhetoric was often contrary to public opinion and experience.

- As recently reported in *The Washington Post*, the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit has actually been a very successful and popular government program.

“...a program that has proven cheaper and more popular than anyone every imagined.”

“Polls indicate that more than 80 of enrollees are satisfied...”

“The cost of the program has been lower than expected...”

The
Washington
Post

Article

“Success of Drug Plan Challenges Democrats:
Medicare Benefit’s Costs Beat Estimates.”

November 26, 2006

- The general public as well as program enrollees give Medicare Part D high marks. A recent *Wall Street Journal / Harris Interactive* poll found:
 - 75% of seniors enrolled in a Medicare Part D drug-benefit plan are **satisfied**
 - 70% of enrollees say the plan has **saved them money**
 - 82% of enrollees say the plan has been **easy to use**.

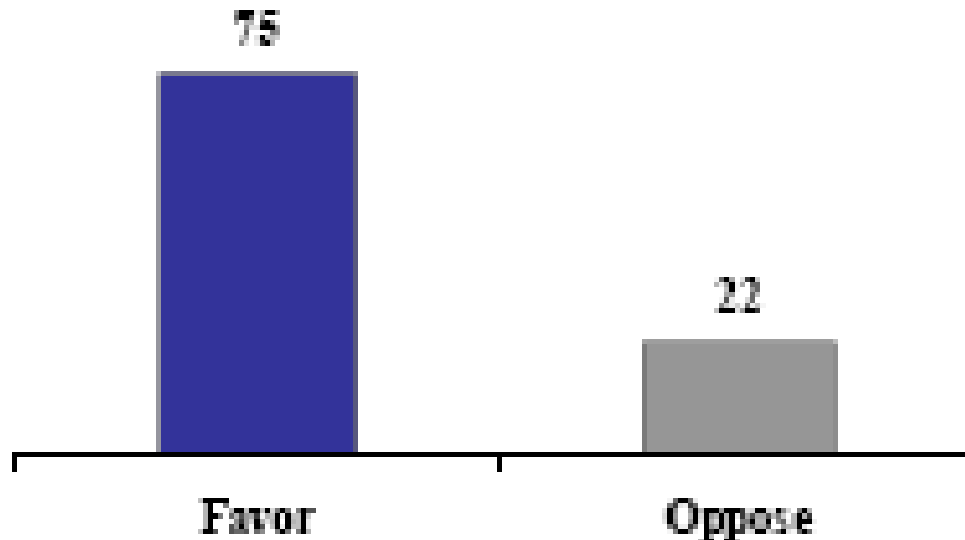


Article: "Medicare Drug Benefit Helps Most Enrollees Save, Poll Finds"

Wall Street Journal ; November 7, 2006

- On a surface level, voters offer top line support for Democrats' call to allow the government to negotiate prescription drugs costs, but there is much more to the story than that.

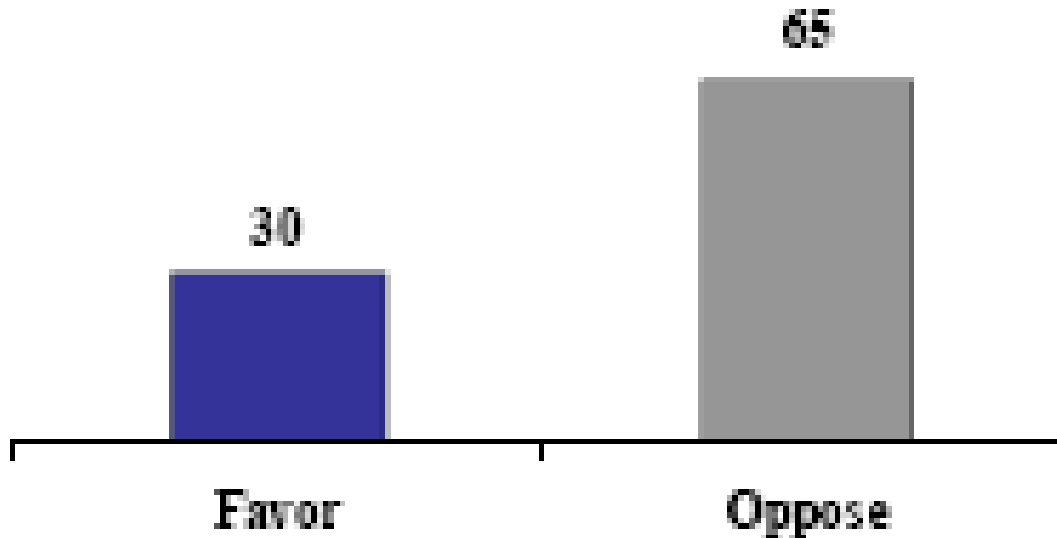
Allowing the Federal Government to Negotiate Lower Prices for Medicare Prescription Drugs



Question: "Some have proposed allowing the government to negotiate directly with pharmaceutical companies to get lower Medicare prescription drug prices. What about you, would you favor or oppose having the government negotiate for lower prices?" Source: Dutko Research, 12/6/06

- However, support drops when voters hear more details, with just 30% in favor and 65% opposed.

After Hearing about the Possible Negative Impacts of the Proposal



Question: “What if you knew that this proposal would mean you would only be able to choose from a limited list of government-approved prescription drugs. Knowing this, would you favor or oppose the plan?” Source: Dutko Research, 12/6/06

Setting Prices vs. Competition

- In fact, when it comes to setting prescription costs, voters actually prefer market forces over government intervention and regulation.

I would rather see . .	
The federal Government set prices on prescription drugs	44%
The government allow market forces to create the best prices	56%

Setting Prices vs. Competition

- Republicans and Independents are most supportive of market forces.

I would rather see . .				
	Nat'l	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
The federal Government set prices on prescription drugs	44%	53%	33%	45%
The government allow market forces to create the best prices	56%	47%	67%	55%

Setting Prices vs. Competition

- Swing states and swing district polling also showed strong support for market forces over government intervention.

Setting Prices vs. Competition

- In 3 out of the 4 swing races we polled in, voters preferred market forces by higher margins than the national average.
- The change in Rhode Island is within the margin of error.

I would rather see . .				
	Ohio	RI	CT-05	FL-22
The federal Government set prices on prescription drugs	36%	42%	26%	25%
The government allow market forces to create the best prices	62%	53%	61%	63%

Q) *I would rather see...*

- PSB's 2006 nationwide exit poll, the findings were also clear and unambiguous:
 - 1) Prescription drugs were NOT a central issue in election for voters.
 - 2) Medicare Part D is a net positive issue.

3) Moving forward, voters want action on a whole range of cost containment issues, most specifically coverage for uninsured.

4) People are looking for a politics of bipartisanship and conciliation, as opposed to confrontation and division in making health care policy.

- ***This applies to Democrats and Republicans dealing with each another, as well as with the healthcare industry itself.***

- **The top 5 issues that were on the minds of voters were:**
 - **Iraq (22%)**
 - **Values / Morality (14%)**
 - **Terrorism / National Security (14%)**
 - **Economy (12%)**
 - **Healthcare (9%)**

- **Prescription drugs were clearly not a voting issue in the midterm elections.**

Which of following issues was most important to you in determining who you voted for in the race for United States Congress? SELECT FROM CHOICES	
	National
War in Iraq	22%
Values / Morality	14%
Terrorism / National Security	13%
Economy	12%
Healthcare	9%
Corruption and scandals in politics	8%
Reducing taxes	7%
Protecting Social Security	5%
Medicare Prescription Drugs	2%
Other Issue	8%
Don't know	.%

Ballot By Most Important Issue

- Voters who indicated that Healthcare was their most important issue, supported Democrats by a 3:1 margin.

In the recent election for United States Congress, did you vote for...					
By Most Important Issue	IRAQ (22%)	VALUES (14%)	TERROR (14%)	ECON. (12%)	HEALTH CARE (9%)
The Republican candidate	16%	64%	83%	33%	24%
The Democratic candidate	82%	35%	17%	66%	74%
Other	2%	1%	0%	1%	2%

Q) In the recent election for United States Senate, did you vote for...

$$J = \sum_i \sum_j \|x_i - u_j\|^2$$

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- **Prescription drugs were not a voting issue in any of the swing Senate or House races we polled in either.**

Most Important Issue

Which of following issues was most important to you in determining who you voted for in the race for United States Senate/ Congress?

	Ohio	RI	CT-05	FL-22
War in Iraq	19%	27%	33%	33%
Values / Morality	15%	14%	7%	6%
Terrorism / National Security	12%	8%	15%	14%
Economy	18%	13%	9%	7%
Healthcare	6%	9%	7%	3%
Corruption and scandals in politics	13%	5%	8%	8%
Reducing taxes	8%	9%	2%	7%
Protecting Social Security	3%	2%	3%	5%
Medicare Prescription Drugs	1%	5%	3%	4%
Other Issue	6%	5%	12%	11%
Don't know	1%	4%	2%	2%

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- **Even when we specifically asked what was the most important HEALTH issue facing America today, only 4% said prescription drugs.**

What is the most important HEALTH issue facing the country at this time?

	National
Health Costs / Affordable Health Insurance	47%
Uninsured / Too many people without insurance / Access to care	24%
Medicare / Seniors / Healthcare for seniors	7%
Obesity	6%
Medicare prescription drugs	4%
Cancer	3%
AIDS / HIV	2%
Quality of healthcare/ medical errors	2%
Heart disease	1%
None	1%
Other	3%

Returning to the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Benefit...

- **56% of voters have a favorable impression of the program**
- **53% of voters believe people are saving money**
- **75% of voters were more likely to vote for their member of Congress if they voted to create the program.**

Favorable Impression

- Nationally, 56% of voters have a favorable impression of the program.

How favorable would you say your impressions are of the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Benefit program?	
	Overall
Favorable	56%
Unfavorable	44%

Q) How favorable would you say your impressions are of the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Benefit program?

Saving Money in Medicare Rx

- Nationally, 53% of voters believe that people enrolled in the Medicare Part D prescription drug plan are saving money.

Do you believe that people who are enrolled are saving money with the Medicare Part D prescription drug plan compared with what they had before?

Yes	53%
No	46%
Don't Know	1%

Q) Do you believe that people who are enrolled are saving money with the Medicare Part D prescription drug plan compared with what they had before?

- Nationally, 75% of voters are more likely to vote for their congress member if they voted for the Medicare prescription drug program.

If you knew that your Member or Congress had voted for creating the Medicare prescription drug benefit would you have been . . .

	Overall
More Likely	75%
Less Likely	24%
Don't Know	1%

- In the swing areas, while lower than the national average, voters are still more likely to vote for their congress member if they voted for the program.

If you knew that your Member or Congress had voted for creating the Medicare prescription drug benefit would you have been . . .

	Ohio	RI	CT-05	FL-22
More likely to vote for them	69%	62%	42%	46%
Less likely to vote for them	23%	22%	35%	26%
Don't Know	8%	16%	23%	28%

Q) How favorable would you say your impressions are of the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Benefit program?

- If the Congress takes up the issues of healthcare and prescription drugs, the data clearly demonstrates that voters are looking for:
 - A politics of bipartisanship, consensus and conciliation.
 - A Congress that works with the pharmaceutical industry, not that fights it. People want results.

Working Across Party Lines

- 85% of voters want their member of Congress to work across party lines on issues like improving healthcare.

I would rather see . .	
My Member of Congress cross party lines to improve healthcare	85%
My Member of Congress be in line with other members of his or her party	15%

Working Across Party Lines

- Democrats, Republicans, and especially Independents prefer their Member of Congress to cross party lines

I would rather see . . .				
	Nat'l	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
My Member of Congress cross party lines to improve healthcare	85%	81%	81%	94%
My Member of Congress be in line with other members of his or her party	15%	19%	19%	6%

- Nearly 7 in 10 voters want their member of Congress to work in a conciliatory and consensus-building fashion, rather than a politics of confrontation and partisan fighting.

I would rather see . .

My member of Congress talk about working with the pharmaceutical industry	68%
My member of Congress talk about fighting the pharmaceutical industry	32%

- Once again, this sentiment crosses party lines.

I would rather see . . .

	Nat'l	Dem.	Rep.	Ind.
My member of Congress talk about working with the pharmaceutical industry	68%	63%	77%	65%
My member of Congress talk about fighting the pharmaceutical industry	32%	37%	23%	35%

What the Election Was Really About

- This election was in large part a reaction to dissatisfaction with the War in Iraq and the performance of President Bush.

1) The War in Iraq

- *56% disapprove of the war in Iraq*

2) President Bush

- *60% disapprove of the job Bush is doing*

- **As expected, President Bush proved to be a very polarizing figure in the elections.**
 - **81% of voters who disapproved of Bush voted for the Democratic candidate**
 - **84% of voters who approved of Bush voted for the Republican candidate**

- **Nevertheless, despite dissatisfaction with President Bush and the Republican Congress, it is clear that there was a very high degree of voter dissatisfaction with both parties.**

- **Nearly half the country still believes that:**
 - 1) **Republicans don't share their values (53%)**
 - 2) **Democrats don't share their values (47%)**

Democrats Share My Values

Agree	53%
Disagree	47%

Republicans Share My Values

Agree	47%
Disagree	53%

- **45% of voters said they “Don’t like either Democrats or Republicans and we need an independent third party to clean up Washington, D.C.”**

**I don't like either Democrats or Republicans.
We need an independent third party to clean
up Washington, D.C.**

Agree	45%
Disagree	55%

Q) I don't like either the Democrats or Republicans. We need an independent third party to clean up Washington DC.

- *73% of independent voters said they “Don’t like either Democrats or Republicans and we need an independent third party to clean up Washington, D.C.”*

I don't like either Democrats or Republicans. We need an independent third party to clean up Washington, D.C.

By Party	DEM	GOP	IND
Agree	34%	38%	73%
Disagree	66%	62%	27%

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- **Other public polling data on Healthcare and Medicare Part D...**

Kaiser Family Foundation (May 2006)	
Most urgent health problem facing the nation today	
	Total
Cancer	34%
Heart disease	18%
AIDS/HIV	17%
Healthcare costs	14%
Lack of good nutrition / junk food	13%
Obesity / weight disorder	13%
Health insurance / uninsured	10%
Diabetes	10%
Healthcare - access	5%
Smoking	5%
Drugs	5%
Elderly	3%
STDs	3%

- A recent column by Karlyn Bowman in Roll Call cited public polling that Medicare Part D is getting a positive reaction.
 - **ABC/Washington Post Poll**
 - 74% of Seniors felt it was very or somewhat easy to sign up.
 - 63% are saving a lot or some money on the plan
 - It “ranked last of eight items in terms of importance as a national voting issue”
 - **Kaiser Family Institute**
 - Overall, 86% are either very or somewhat satisfied with the plan
 - 74% would pick the same plan again

ROLL  CALL



$$\mu_j = \frac{1}{N_j} \sum_{n \in S_j} x^n$$

$$J = \sum_{j=1}^K \sum_{n \in S_j} \|x^n - u_j\|^2$$

End

$$E = \frac{m}{\pi} [1 + (1-t)k]$$

$$p(c_i | C) = \frac{\exp(U(c_i))}{\sum_{j=1}^m \exp(U(c_j))}$$