

March 6, 2014

Number of Americans Saying ACA Has Hurt Them Inches Up

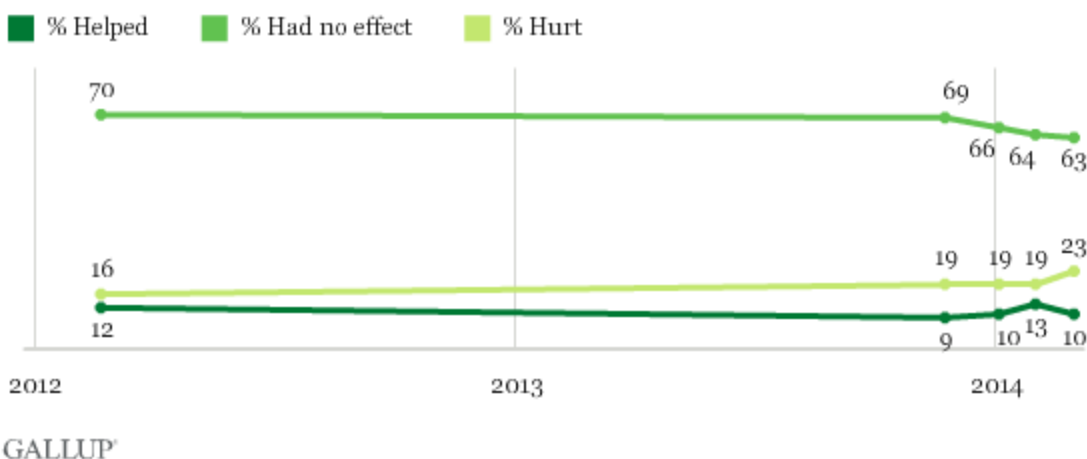
Stark contrast along party lines on whether the law has helped or hurt

by Justin McCarthy

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Although several parts of the Affordable Care Act have yet to be implemented, 23% of Americans say the healthcare law has hurt them or their families, while 10% say it has helped them so far. Still, the majority of Americans (63%) feel the law has had no impact on them or their families.

The Affordable Care Act's Perceived Effect on Families

As you may know, a few of the provisions of the healthcare law have already gone into effect. So far, has the new law helped you and your family, not had an effect, or has it hurt you and your family?



This update is from Gallup polling conducted between Feb. 28 and March 2, just prior to the Obama administration's announcement this week that insurance companies will be able to delay until next year the requirement that they cancel or replace policies that don't conform to the provisions of the law often referred to as "Obamacare."

The 23% who feel the law has hurt them is the highest percentage for the question since Gallup began asking Americans about it in 2012, and is up from 19% in previous polling.

Party Affiliation Plays a Big Role in Americans' Responses

When Americans answer the question about the law's impact on them and their families, their political orientation [substantially affects their responses](#). Republicans are more than five times as likely (39%) as Democrats (7%) to say the ACA has had a negative impact. One in four independents (25%) say the law has

hurt them or their families.

The Affordable Care Act's Perceived Effect on Families, by Party ID

As you may know, a few of the provisions of the healthcare law have already gone into effect. So far, has the new law helped you and your family, not had an effect, or has it hurt you and your family?

	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
	%	%	%
Helped	17	10	3
No effect	71	60	57
Hurt	7	25	39

Feb. 28-March 2, 2014

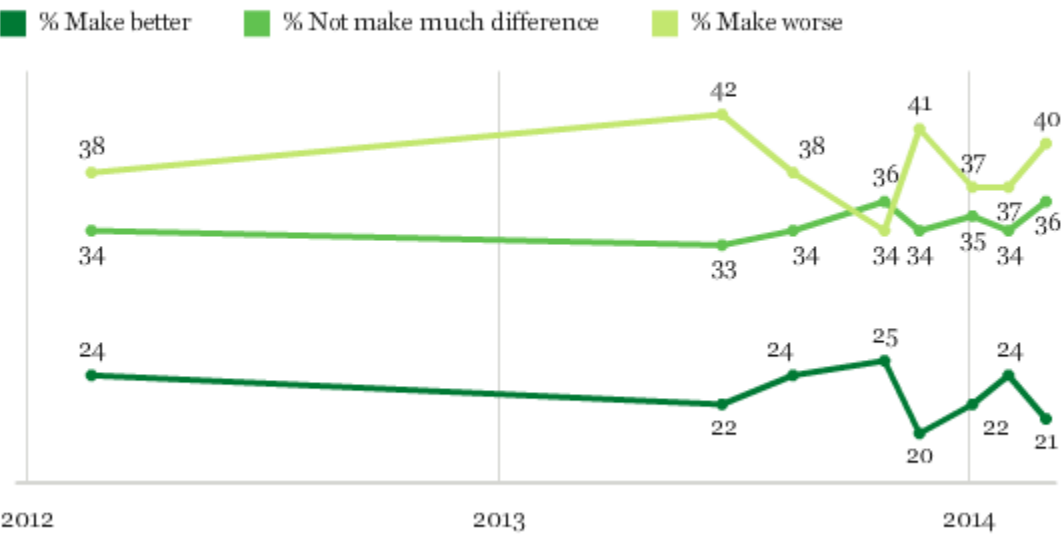
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A Divided, but Largely Negative Outlook for the Law's Long-Term Impact

Despite the extraordinary emphasis on fixing problems with the healthcare exchanges that marred the initial rollout of the law, and a national campaign to enroll more Americans through the exchanges, most Americans remain unconvinced that the law will be beneficial to their families in the long run. By 40% to 21%, Americans say the law is more likely to make their families' healthcare situations worse rather than better, with the rest saying it will make little difference.

Americans' Views of the ACA's Ability to Improve Families' Healthcare Situations

In the long run, how do you think the healthcare law will affect your family's healthcare situation?



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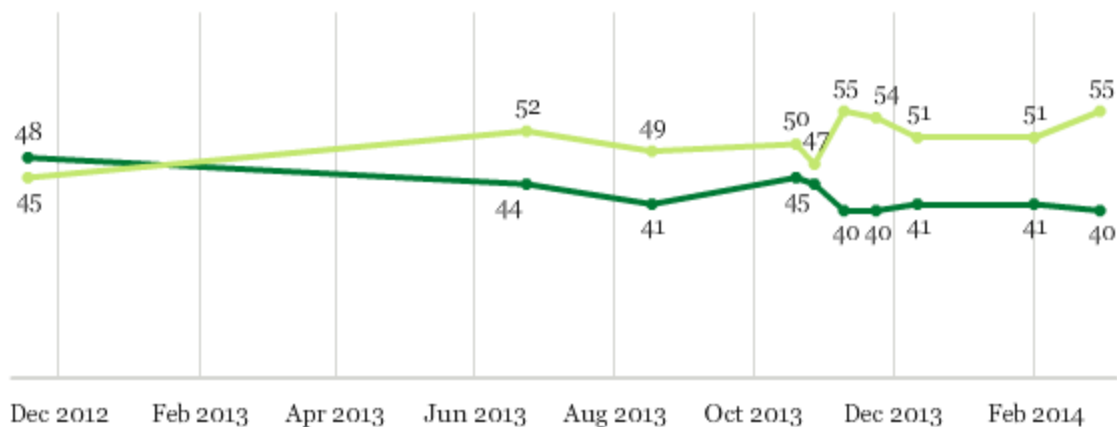
Americans Continue to Disapprove Rather Than Approve of Law

Americans continue to be more negative than positive when asked about their overall attitudes toward the law. Approval has hovered around the 40% mark in recent months, down from as high as 48% just after the November 2012 election, reflecting the problems with the healthcare exchanges, and the widespread and highly publicized policy cancellations Americans received as the law began to take effect. Disapproval of the ACA has hovered at or slightly above the 50% mark since last summer, with some survey-to-survey fluctuations.

Americans' Views of the Affordable Care Act

Do you generally approve or disapprove of the 2010 Affordable Care Act, signed into law by President Obama that restructured the U.S. healthcare system?

■ % Approve ■ % Disapprove



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Bottom Line

For a White House that has made healthcare reform one of its core missions, the relatively low approval ratings for the Affordable Care Act are surely disappointing, though they are certainly nothing new. What may be more disappointing is the growing percentage of Americans who feel the law has already hurt them and their families, though, at 23%, this remains relatively small in absolute terms. Additionally, it is not clear whether some of these, particularly Republicans, have actually been harmed by the law or are more generally expressing their disapproval of it.

Open enrollment for healthcare ends later this month, and the ACA's legacy will likely be judged in the long term rather than by Americans' initial reactions to its implementation. So, low approval ratings and a compromised rollout could be a thing of the past if Americans covered under the ACA ultimately like their healthcare once the law goes into full effect.

Survey Methods

Results for this Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted Feb. 28-March 2, 2014, on the Gallup Daily tracking survey, with a random sample of 1,533 adults, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia.

For results based on the total sample of national adults, the margin of sampling error is ± 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Interviews are conducted with respondents on landline telephones and cellular phones, with interviews conducted in Spanish for respondents who are primarily Spanish-speaking. Each sample of national adults includes a minimum quota of 50% cellphone respondents and 50% landline respondents, with additional minimum quotas by time zone within region. Landline and cellular telephone numbers are selected using random-digit-dial methods. Landline respondents are chosen at random within each household on the basis of which member had the most recent birthday.

Samples are weighted to correct for unequal selection probability, nonresponse, and double coverage of landline and cell users in the two sampling frames. They are also weighted to match the national demographics of gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education, region, population density, and phone status (cellphone only/landline only/both, and cellphone mostly). Demographic weighting targets are based on the most recent Current Population Survey figures for the aged 18 and older U.S. population. Phone status targets are based on the most recent National Health Interview Survey. Population density targets are based on the most recent U.S. census. All reported margins of sampling error include the computed design effects for weighting.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

[View survey methodology, complete question responses, and trends.](#)

For more details on Gallup's polling methodology, visit www.gallup.com.

[Back to Top](#)

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