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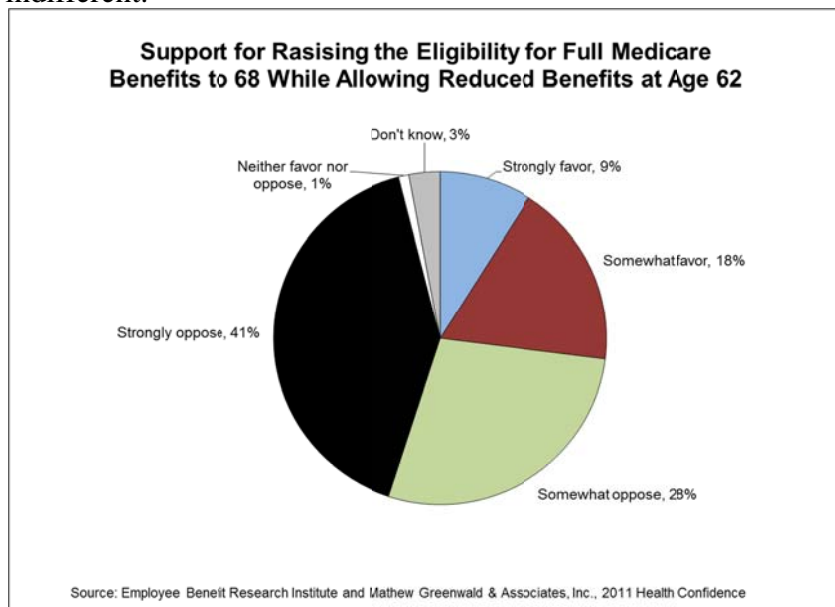
Public Opinion on Raising the Medicare Eligibility Age

WASHINGTON—The recent deal to raise the debt ceiling and reduce the deficit did not include any direct cuts to the Medicare program, but it does open the door to further cuts through the so-called “super committee.” Raising the Medicare eligibility age has been proposed in the past and is one option that the committee will likely consider.

One idea could be to increase the eligibility age for full Medicare benefits to 68 (it is currently 65). At the same time, the age for partial benefits could be lowered to 62—although the level of benefits would be permanently reduced for those taking partial benefits at 62. This would bring the eligibility for the Medicare program more in line with eligibility for Social Security.

According to the 2011 Health Confidence Survey, recently released by the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, the public does not support such a change to the program:

- 9 percent strongly favor the plan.
- 18 percent somewhat favor it.
- 1 percent is indifferent.
- 28 percent somewhat oppose it.
- 41 percent strongly oppose it.



The 2011 Health Confidence Survey (HCS) is the 14th annual wave of this survey to assess the American public’s attitudes regarding the U.S. health care system. It was conducted by the nonpartisan Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Inc., a Washington, D.C.-based market research firm. The full report is published in the September *EBRI Notes*, online at www.ebri.org

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