



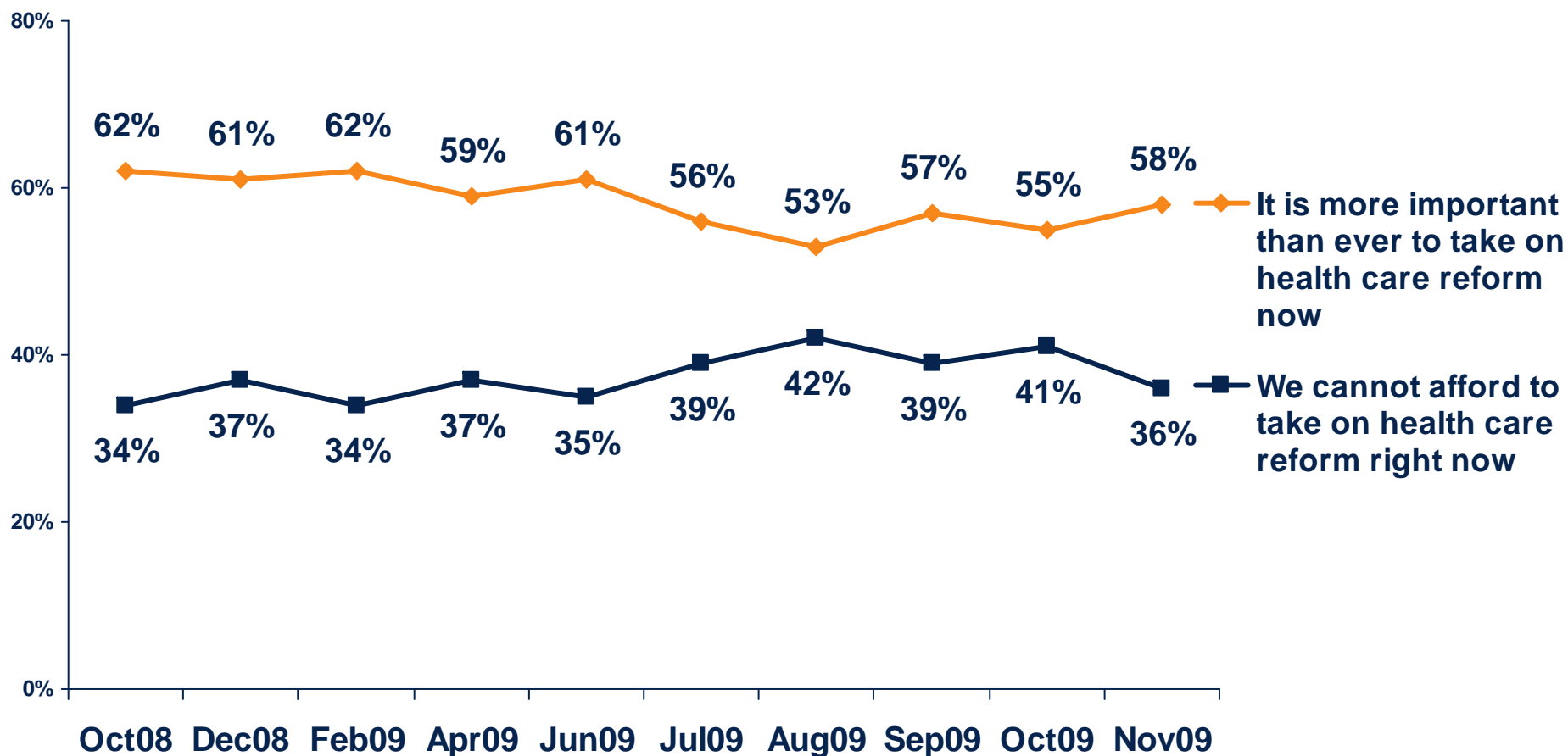
# **Tracking Public Opinion on Health Care Policy During a Year of Reform**

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December 10, 2009

# Where there's a will... (and there IS a will)

Which comes closer to describing your own views? Given the serious economic problems facing the country...

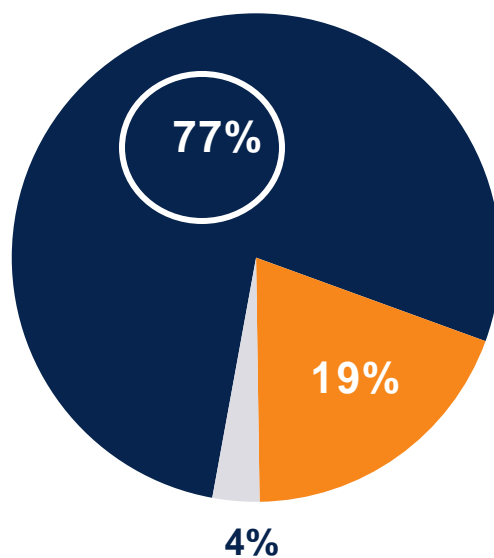


Note: Asked of half sample in Nov09. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.  
Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation polls

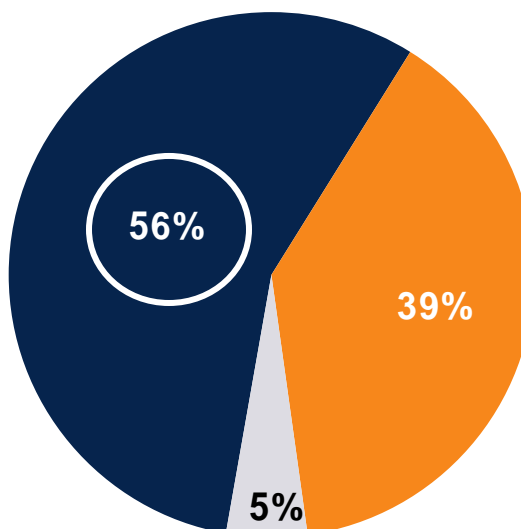
# The will differs, though

■ It is *more important than ever* to take on health care reform now

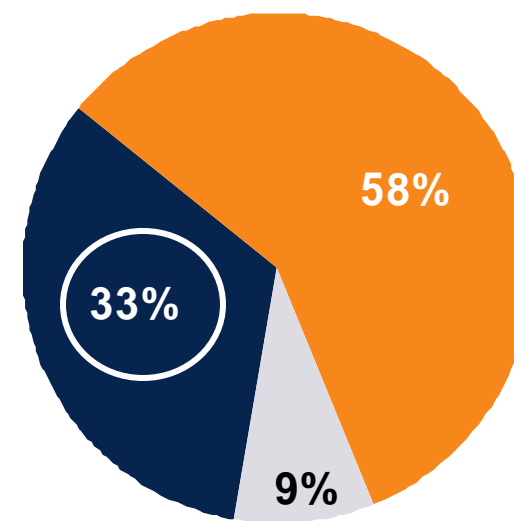
■ We *cannot afford to* take on health care reform right now



**Democrats**



**Independents**



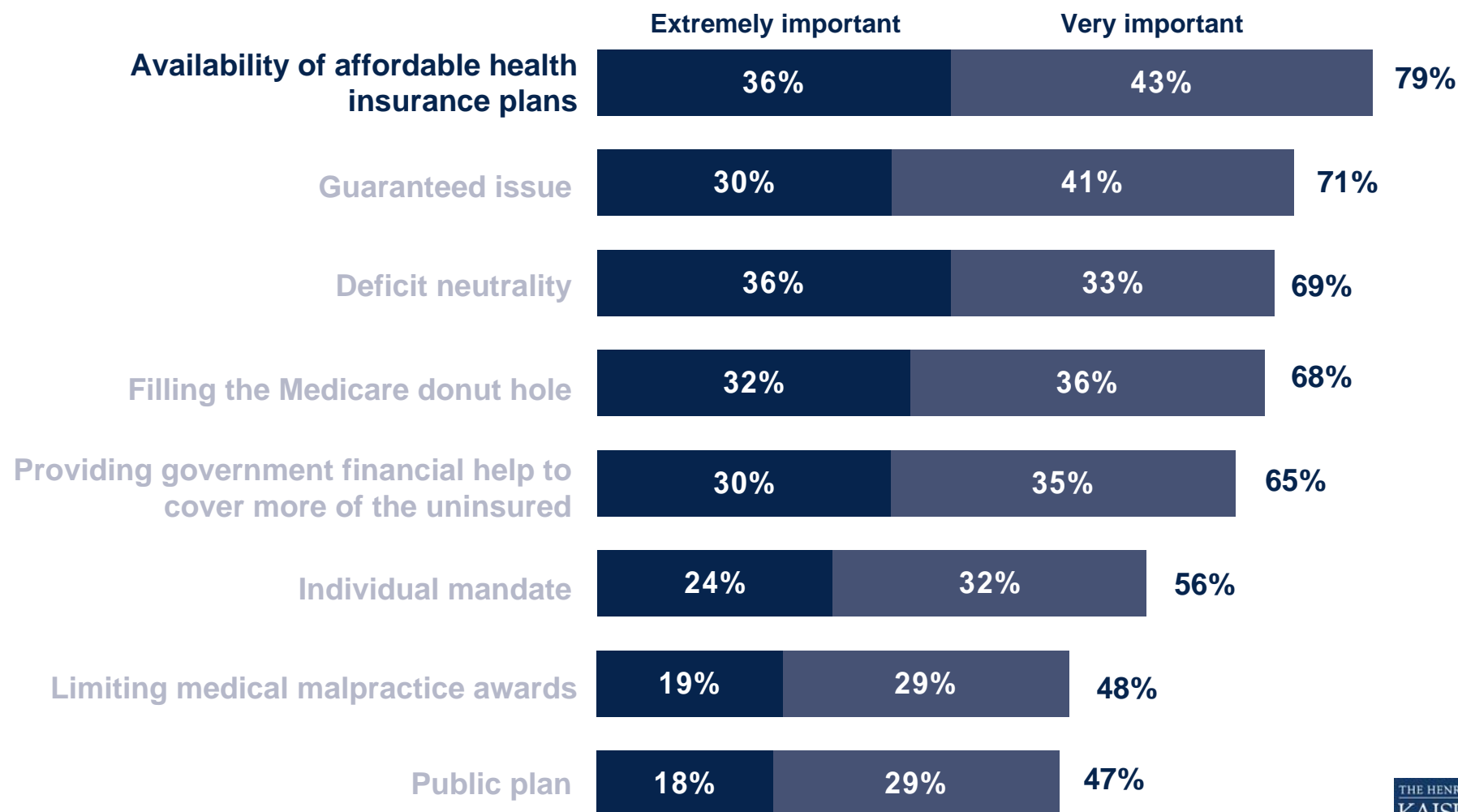
**Republicans**

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted November 5-12, 2009)

■ Don't know/Refused

# What Americans prioritize in a reform bill

Percent who say it is **EXTREMELY** or **VERY** important to them personally that each of the following be a feature of any final reform plan:



Note: Question wording abbreviated.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted November 5-12, 2009)

# Affordability in common

Percent who say it is **EXTREMELY** or **VERY** important to them personally that each of the following be a feature of any final reform plan:

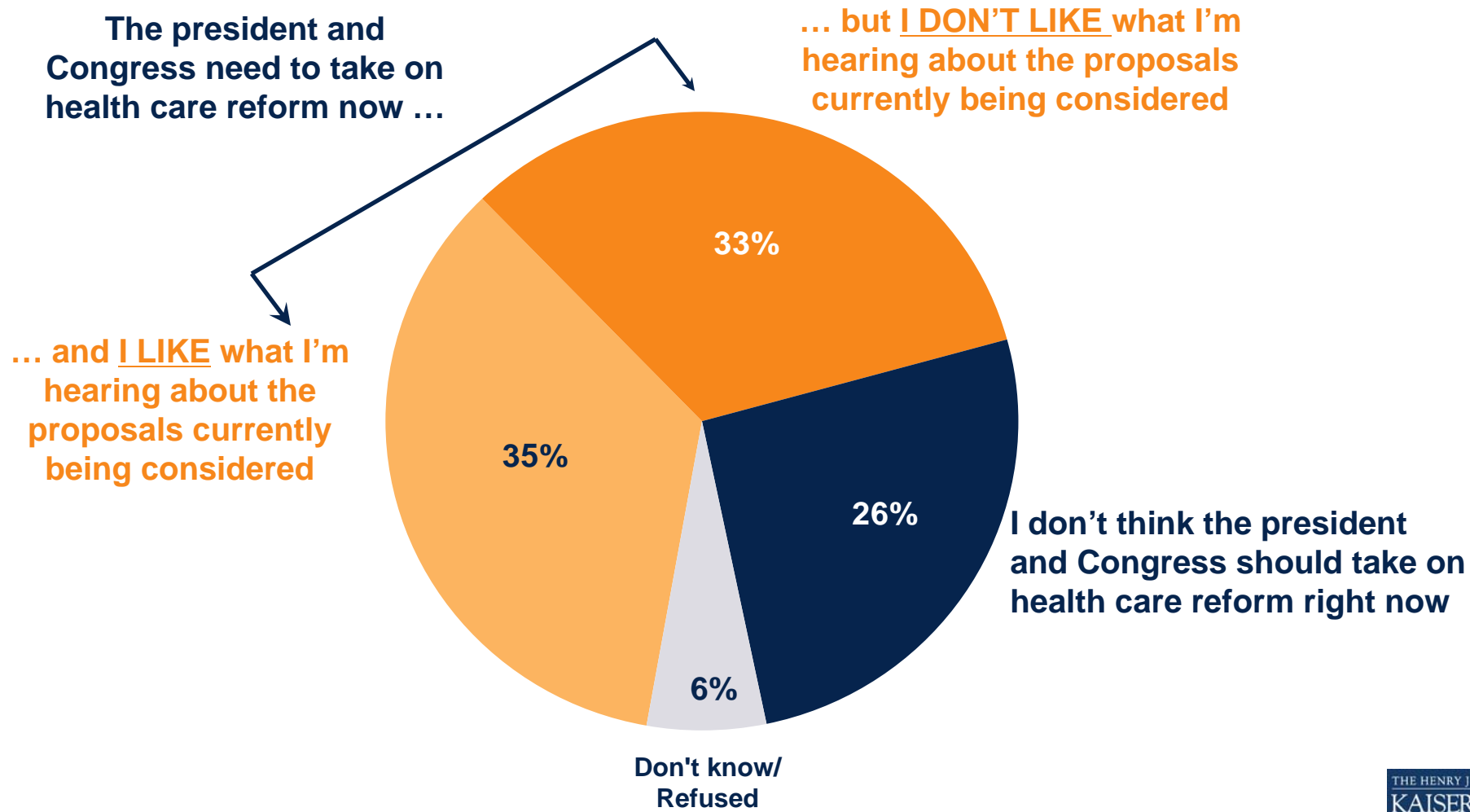
Rank	<i><b>Democrats</b></i>	<i><b>Independents</b></i>	<i><b>Republicans</b></i>
1	Affordable health insurance (87%)	Affordable health insurance (78%)	Deficit neutrality (77%)
2	Providing gov't \$ to help cover more of uninsured (82%)	Guaranteed issue (70%)	Affordable health insurance (72%)
3	Guaranteed issue (80%)	Deficit neutrality (69%)	Medicare donut hole (66%)

Note: Question wording abbreviated.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted November 5-12, 2009)

# Devilish details

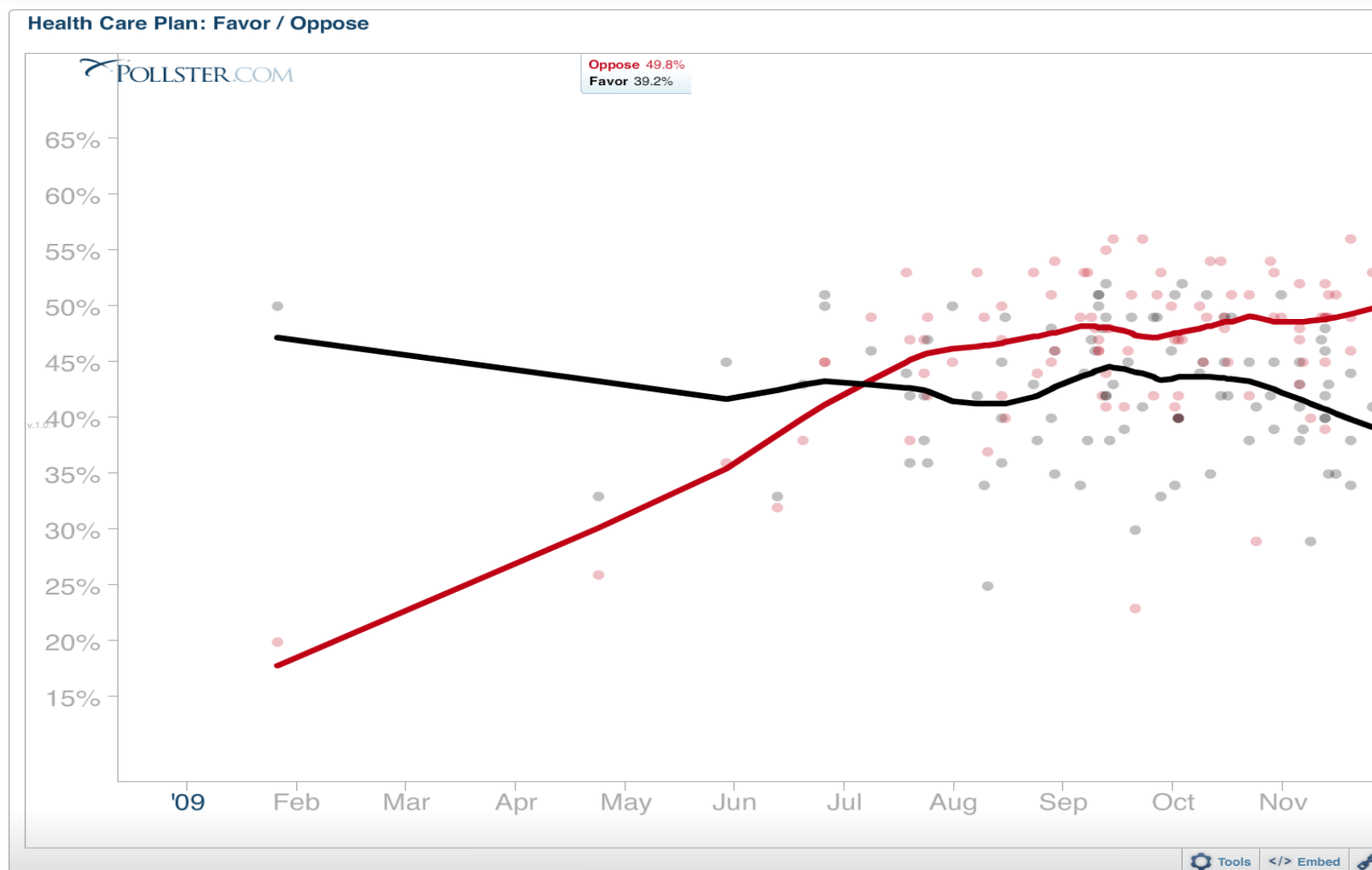
Which comes closer to describing your views?



Note: Asked of half sample.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted November 5-12, 2009)

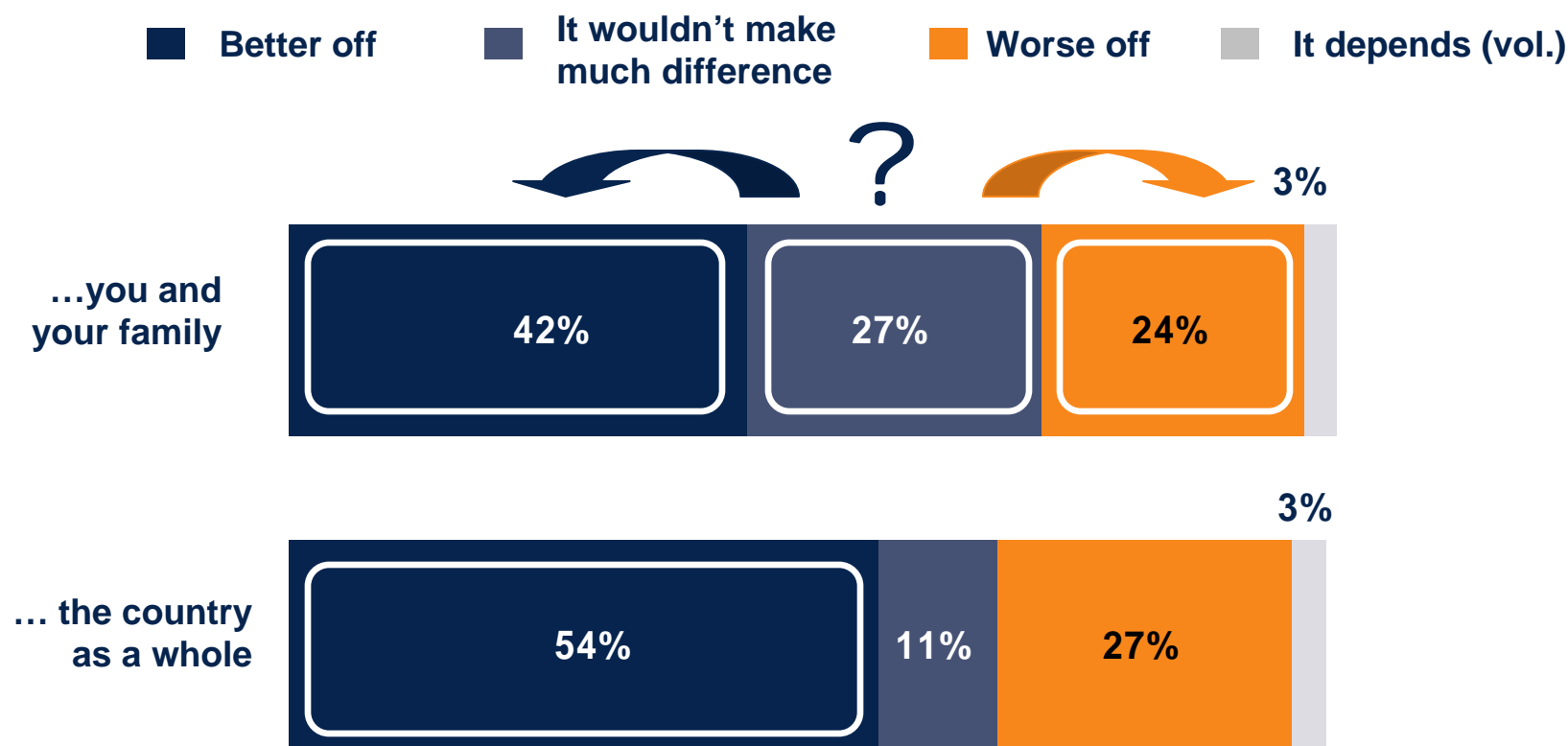
# Thumbs up/thumbs down: the aggregator's version



Pollster.com aggregation of support/oppose measures from various surveys accessed 12/1/09. Available at <http://www.pollster.com/polls/us/healthplan.php>

# Public's perceptions of personal, national impact

Do you think (you and your family/the country as a whole) would be better off or worse off if the president and Congress passed health care reform, or don't you think it would make much difference?



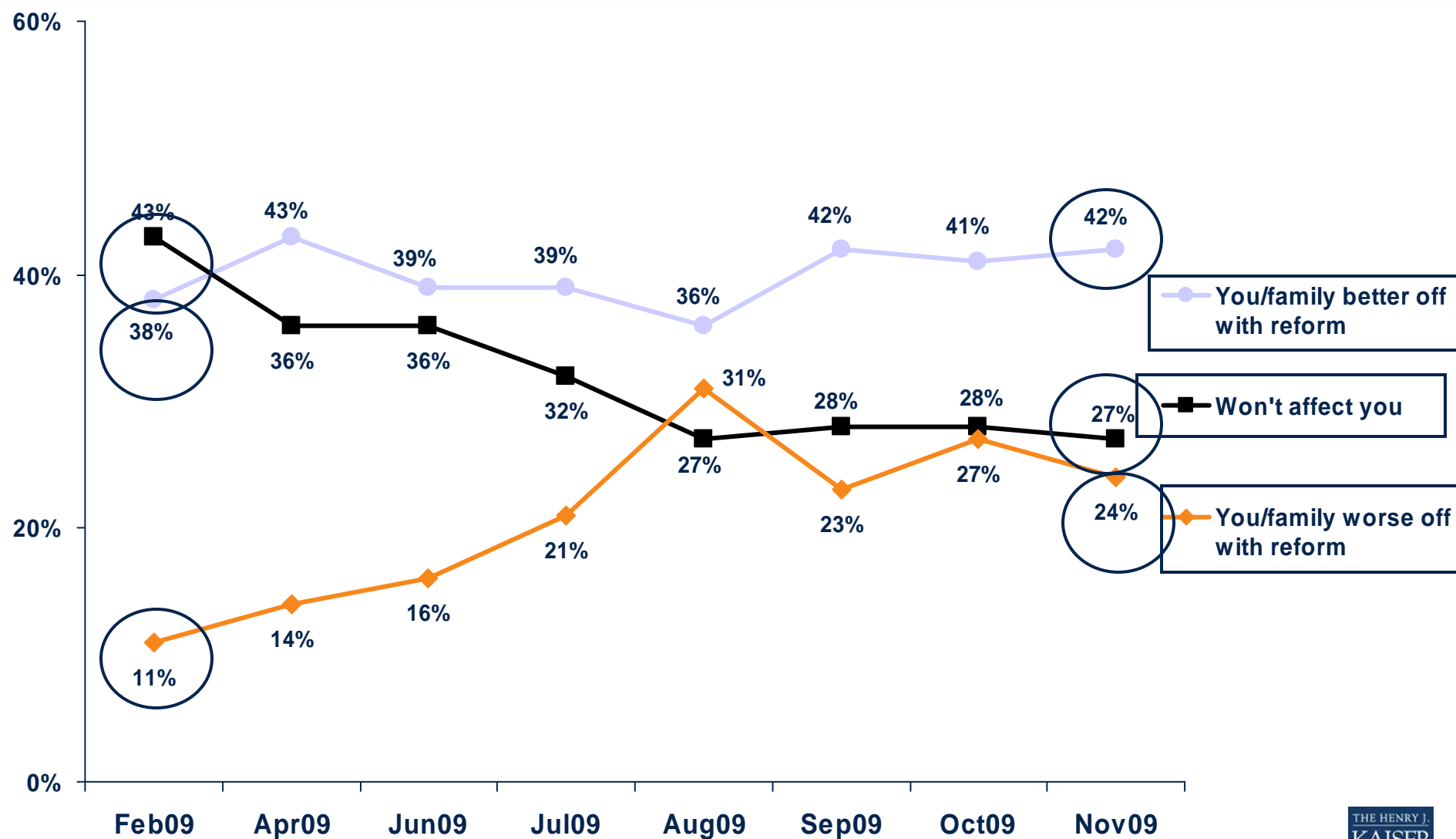
Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted November 5-12, 2009)



CHART 8

# Views of personal impact

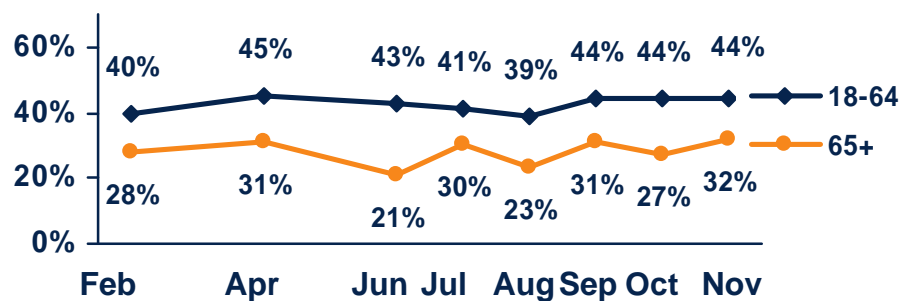


Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking* polls

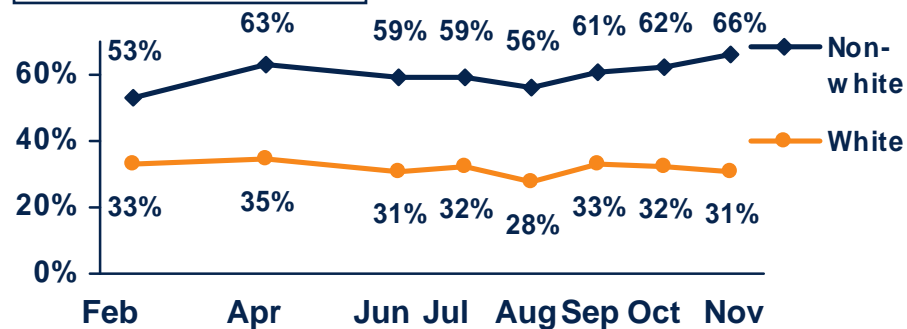
# Major differences across demographic groups

% who responded “you and your family would be BETTER off if the president and Congress passed health care reform”

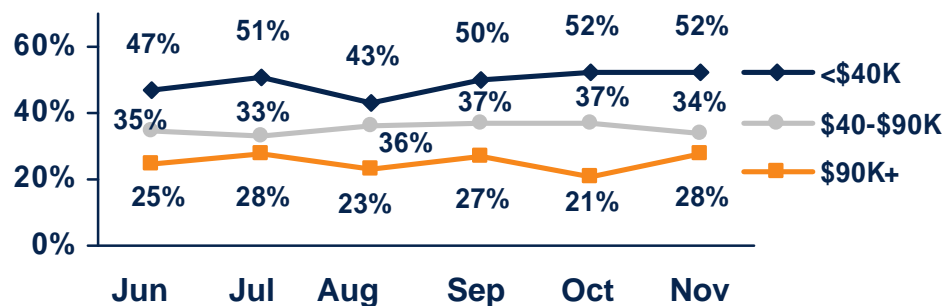
By age



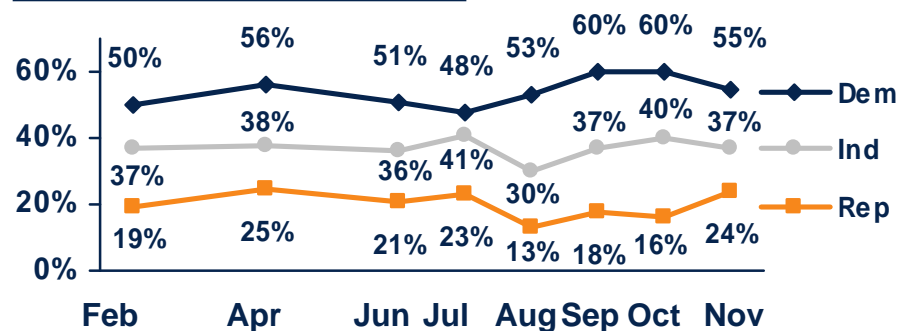
By race/ethnicity



By income



By party identification

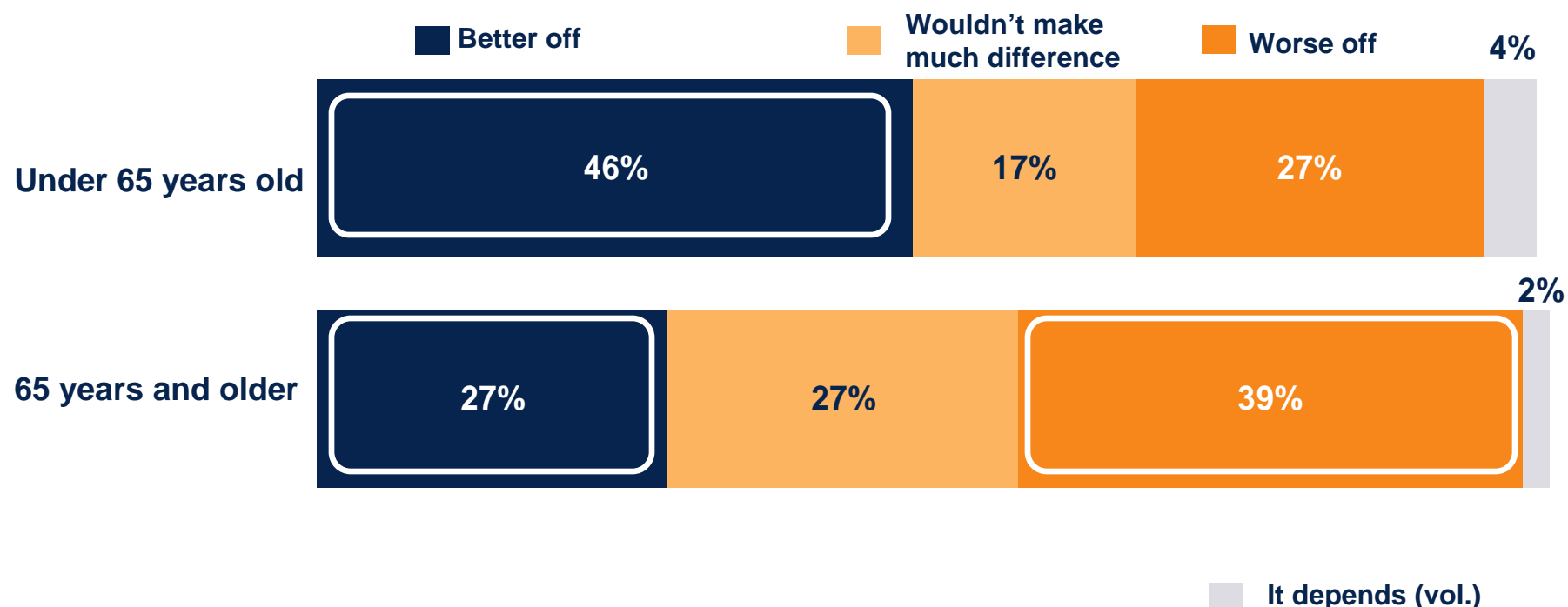


Asked of half sample in Nov09.

Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking* polls

# Seniors less convinced reform will benefit them

Do you think seniors, that is those 65 years and older would be better off or worse off if the president and Congress passed health care reform, or don't you think it would make much difference?

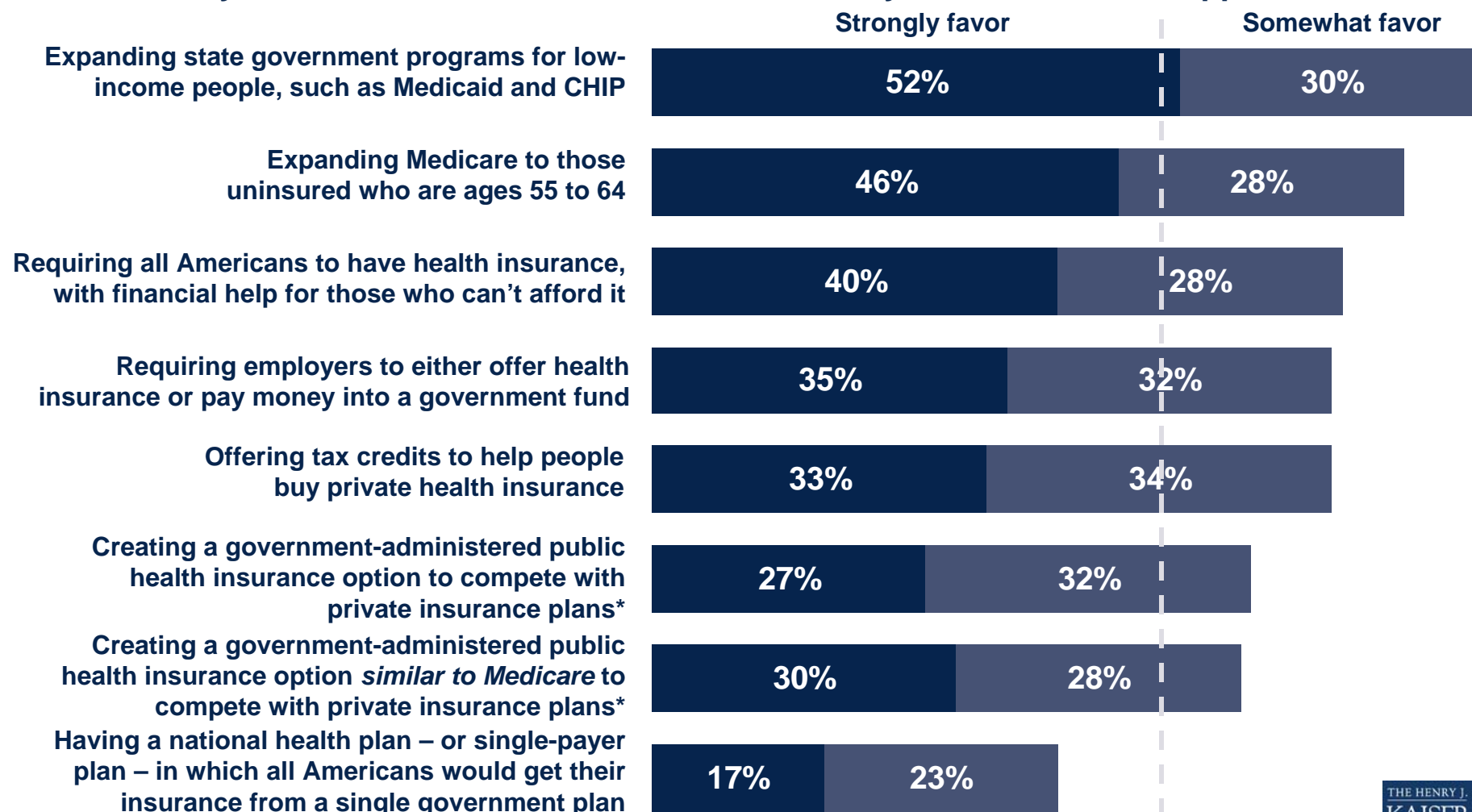


Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted November 5-12, 2009)

# Many approaches to coverage expansion popular

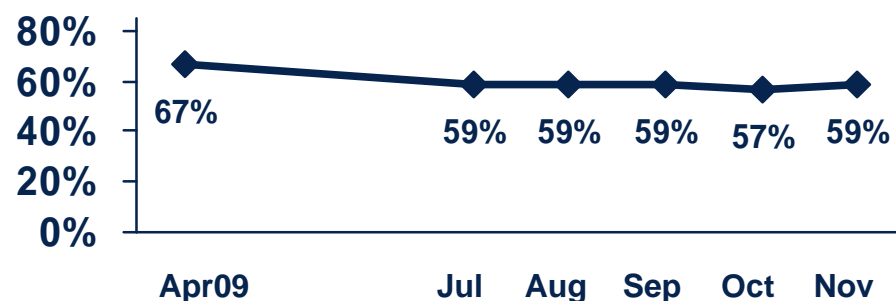
Now I'm going to read you some different ways to increase the number of Americans covered by health insurance. Please tell me whether you would favor or oppose it.



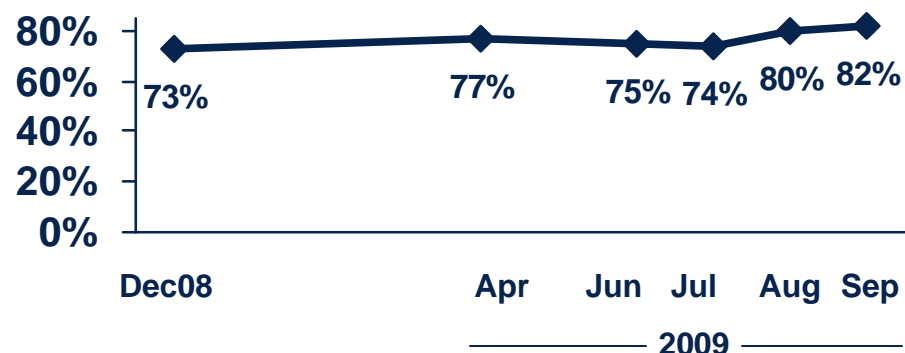
Note: Various items based on half samples. Items marked with an asterisk (\*) asked of separate half samples as a wording experiment.  
 Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted September 11-18, 2009)

# Examples of continuing support

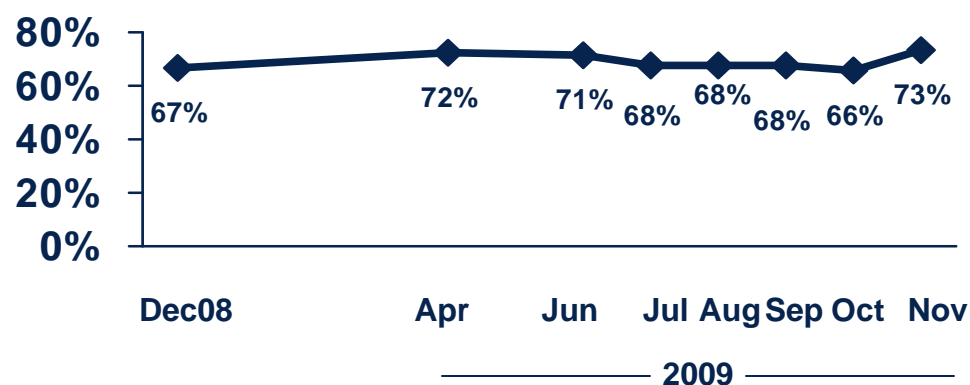
Percent who favor a public option\*:



Percent who favor expansion of state programs:



Percent who favor an individual mandate:



\* Note wording has changed slightly over time. Source: Kaiser Family Foundation surveys

## Opinions on a range of topics malleable (i.e., public plan)

Would you favor or oppose creating a government-administered public health insurance option similar to Medicare to compete with private health insurance plans?



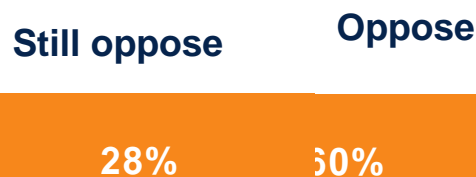
### PRO CHALLENGE:

What if you heard that a public health insurance option was a fallback that would only kick in if not enough people had affordable health plans available through the private marketplace?



### CON CHALLENGE:

What if you heard that a public health insurance option could give the government an unfair advantage over private insurance companies?



Note: Follow up questions asked of those who initially opposed. Responses shown on all graphs are based on total; on bottom graphs, "favor" includes those who initially favored and those who favored after hearing the follow up. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted October 8-15, 2009)

# One (guaranteed) issue where that trick doesn't work...

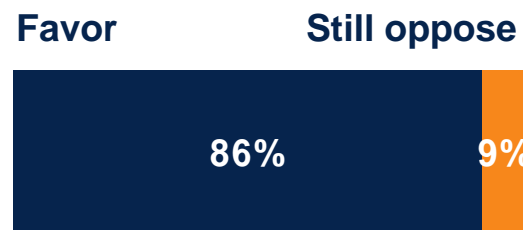
Do you favor or oppose the federal government requiring health insurance companies to cover anyone who applies, even if they have a prior illness?



**Supporters were asked:** What if you heard this requirement might mean that healthier people would end up paying somewhat more for their health insurance than they do now, while sicker people would pay somewhat less?



**Opponents were asked:** What if you heard that some people with very expensive illnesses like cancer would have no way of getting insurance otherwise?

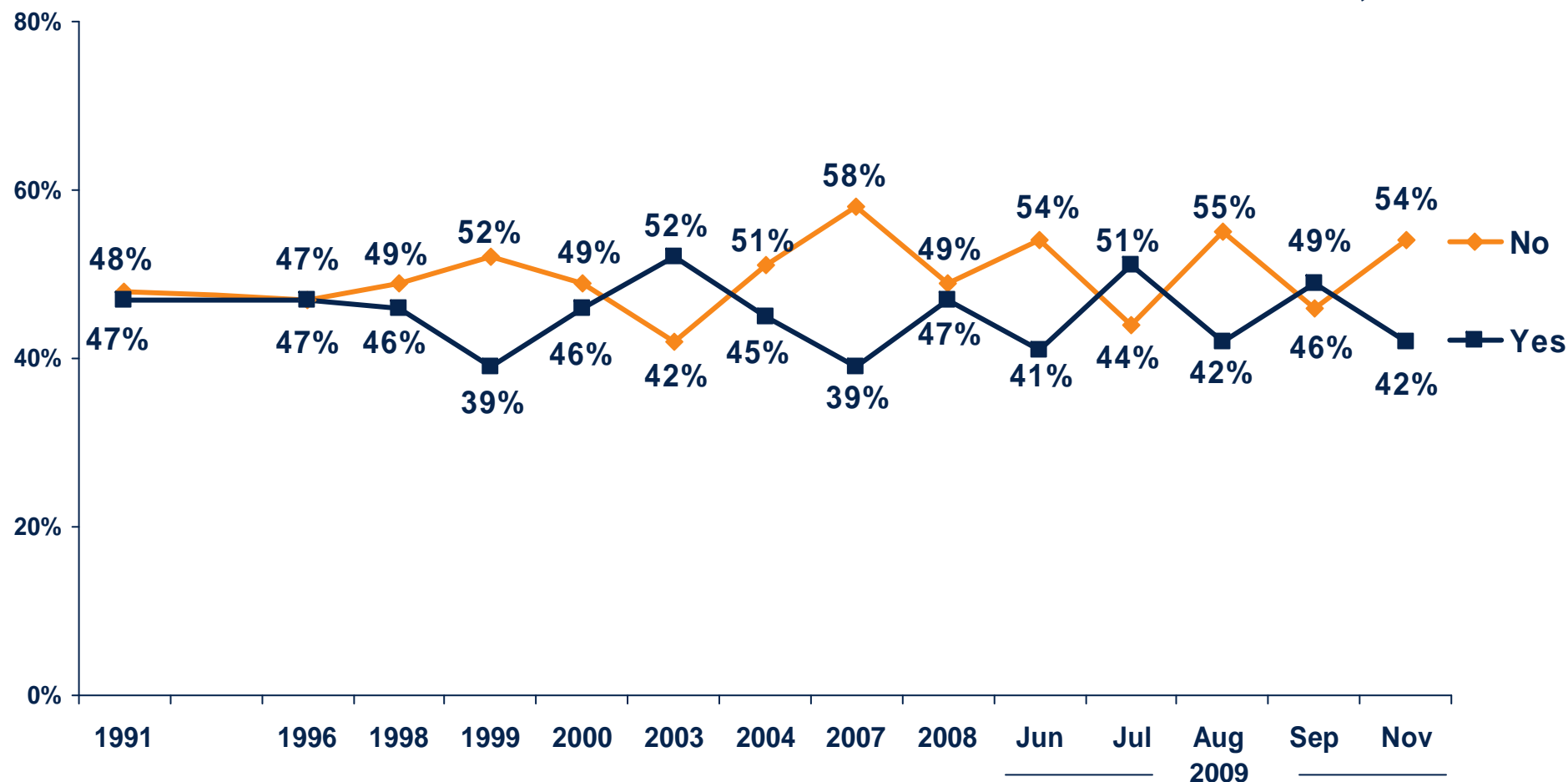


Note: Follow up question on left asked of those who initially favored. Graph below it based on total, where "oppose" includes those who initially opposed along with those who opposed after hearing the follow up. Follow up question on right asked of those who initially opposed. Graph below it based on total, where "favor" includes those who initially favored along with those who favored after hearing the follow up. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted September 11-18, 2009)

# Willingness to pay

Would you be willing to pay more -- either in higher health insurance premiums or higher taxes -- in order to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance, or not?



Note: Asked of half sample July - November 2009. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.

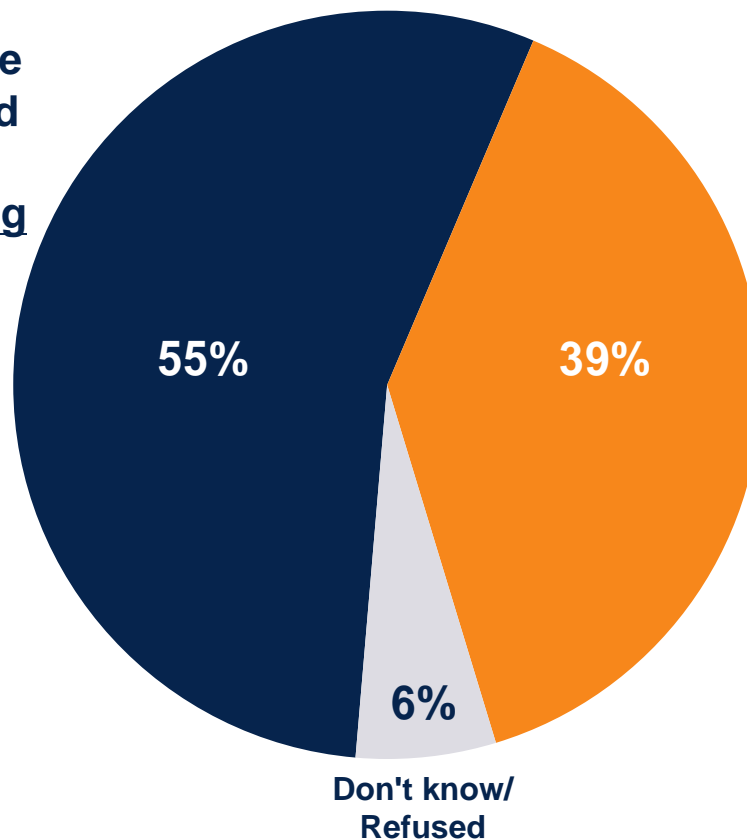
Sources: NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll (Jun. 1991), KFF/HSPH Polls (Nov. 1996; Nov. 1998; Oct. 1999; Nov. 2000; Feb. 2003; and Nov. 2004), Washington Post/KFF/HSPH Survey (May 2007), KFF/HSPH *The Public's Health Care Agenda for the New President and Congress* (Dec. 2008); Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, and Nov 2009)



# Many say reform can happen without spending

Which comes closer to your opinion:

If policymakers make the right changes they could reform the health care system without spending more money to do it



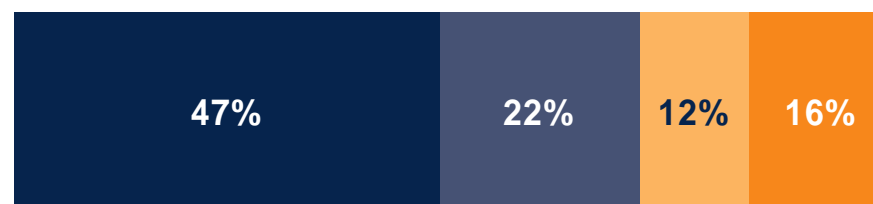
To make any real reforms to the health care system, policymakers will need to spend more money, either by raising some taxes, taking from other programs or increasing the deficit

# Some tax options

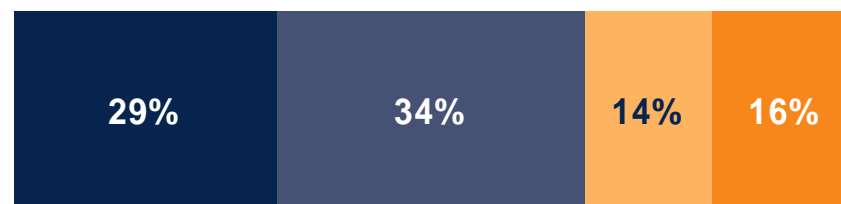
Please tell me if you would favor or oppose each of the following to help pay for health care reform and provide coverage for more of the uninsured.

■ Strongly favor
■ Somewhat favor
■ Somewhat oppose
■ Strongly oppose

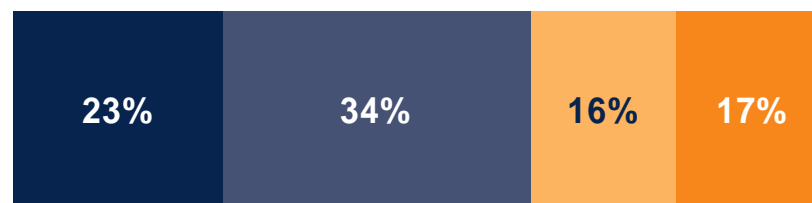
Increasing income taxes for people from families making more than \$1 million a year and individuals making more than \$500,000



Having health insurance companies pay a tax for offering very expensive policies



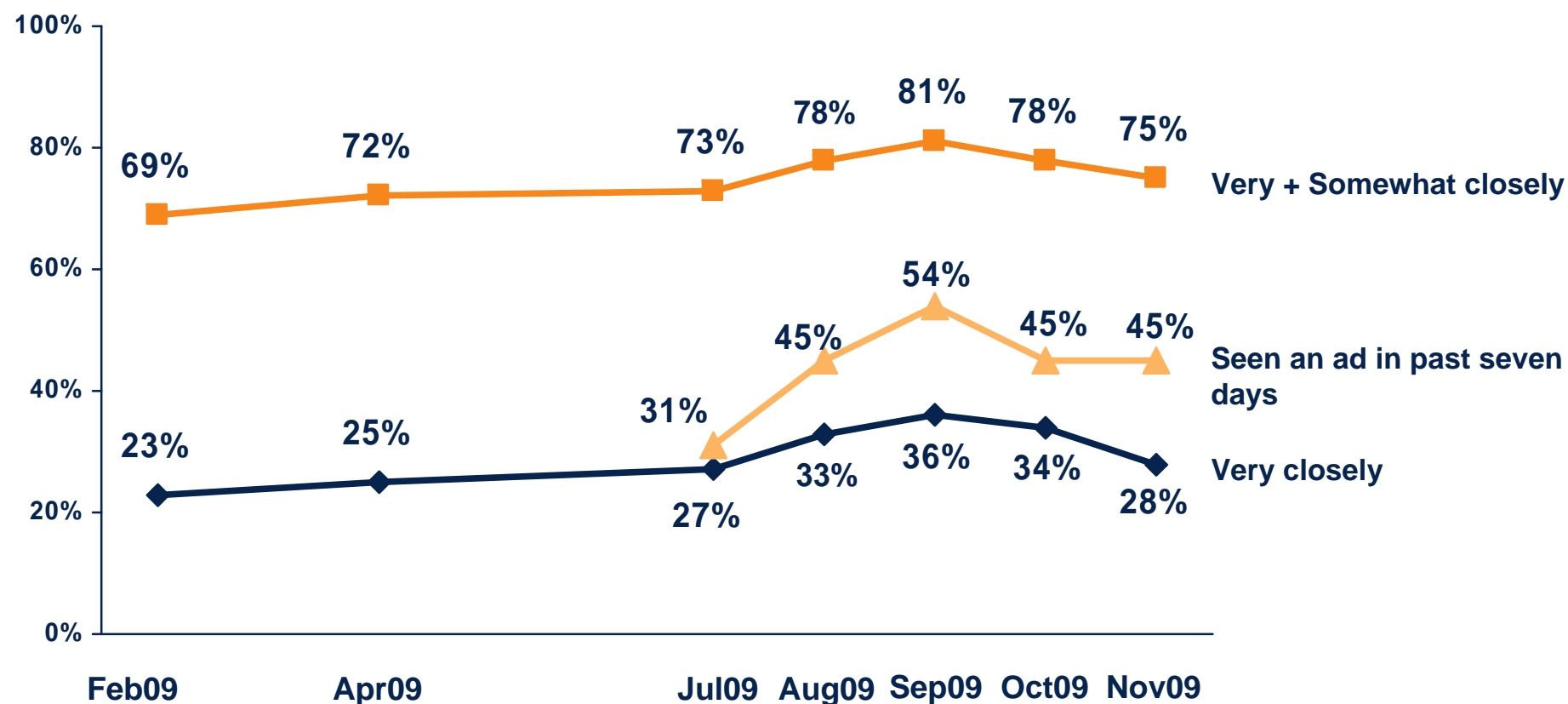
Having health insurance companies pay a fee based on how much business they have



Note: Based on half sample. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.  
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking Poll* (conducted November 5-12, 2009)

# Public attention: Reform often top story

How closely have you been following discussions in Washington about health care reform?

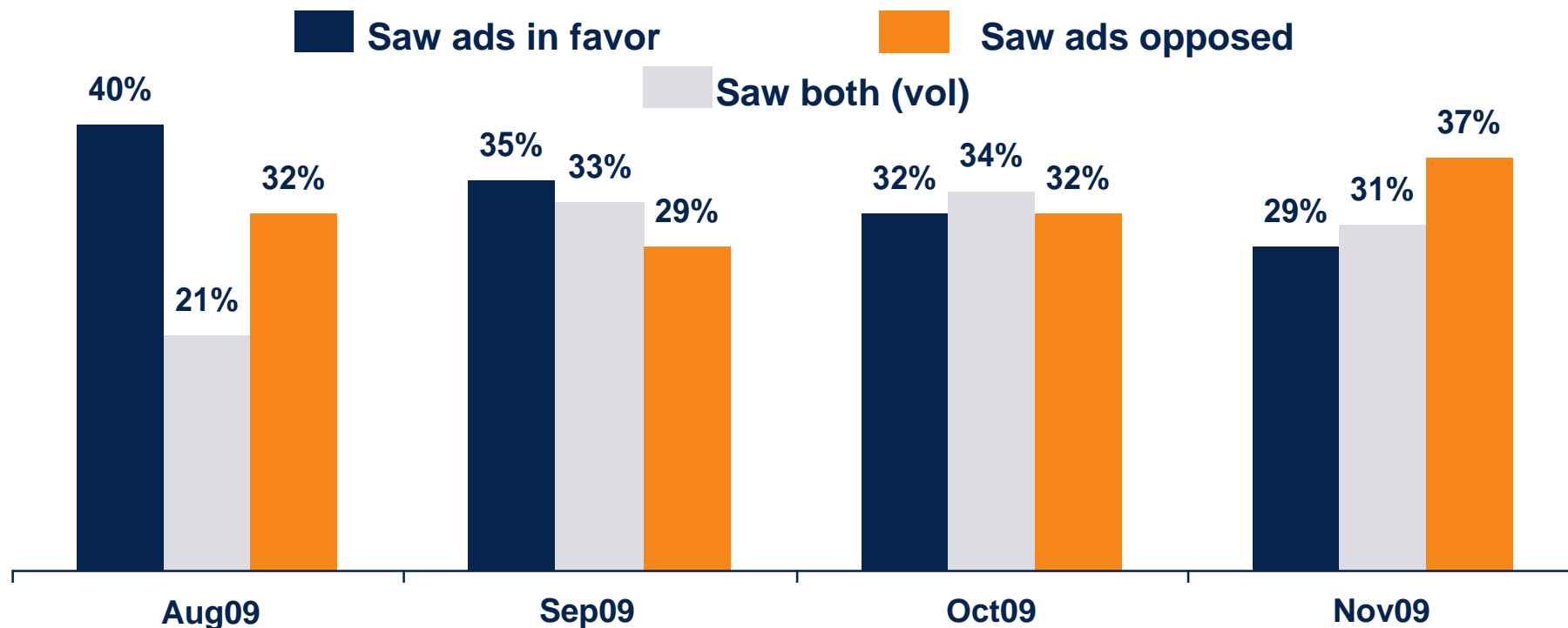


Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking* polls

# Balance tilts somewhat to ads opposed

BASED ON THOSE WHO REPORT HAVING SEEN OR HEARD A HEALTH REFORM AD IN THE PAST SEVEN DAYS (45 percent of the adult population in November)\*

As far as you could tell, were those ads in favor of or opposed to passing some sort of health care reform this year?



\*Note: Based on 45 percent of the population in Aug. and Oct., and 54 percent in Sep. "Don't know/Refused" responses not shown.  
Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation *Health Tracking* polls

