



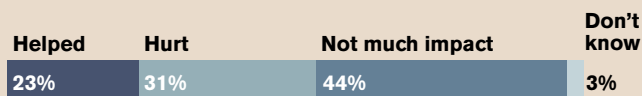
Political Insiders Poll



Would Democrats be helped or hurt politically if Congress enacts health care reform legislation containing abortion restrictions similar to those passed by the House?

Democrats (101 votes)

Republicans (100 votes)



Helped

"While the abortion provision would hurt with the base, the gains of comprehensive health insurance reform passing would outweigh any negatives."

"Personally, I'm 'pro-choice,' but taking this issue off the table for Democrats in tough congressional districts should be helpful."

"Let's be honest: Not to belittle the issue, but if the only thing that was compromised to get meaningful health care reform was abortion funding, the Democrats would be stunned to have been so lucky."

Hurt

"We will not get credit with 'pro-lifers,' but the 'pro-choice' folks will sit home."

"'Pro-choice' women, particularly Democratic 'pro-choice' women old enough to remember pre-Roe v. Wade, will have the same reaction that similar House Democratic women had this weekend: It's a big demoralizer."

"Denying poor women their reproductive right is not in Democrats' DNA."

"It won't make sense to women everywhere that with the majorities Democrats have they can't, at a minimum, do no harm to core rights for women—hard-fought rights that have taken decades to achieve. It's a setback, and makes Democrats look weak."

Not much impact

"Most women don't even know they have abortion coverage in their insurance plans. And they won't miss it."

"Providing millions of Americans with health care overshadows the abortion debate."

"Shocking: There will be compromises made to pass health care reform."

"The Democratic Party will survive in 2010 with the House abortion language. It will not survive if we fail to pass comprehensive health care reform."

"It is a sidebar to the bigger story. What we gain with the [Catholic] bishops we probably lose with some 'pro-choice' activists."

"As a 'pro-choice' consultant, I'd love to say it hurts, but I think it will likely have not much impact. Voters are disengaged on this issue, and base voters have nowhere to go."

Helped

"The package will be frightening enough without additional abortion baggage."

"[Rep.] Bart Stupak [D-Mich.] is doing his party a huge favor. Liberals have plenty of wins in the health care bill."

"They are already on record for voting for it and taking the hits, but getting something enacted will help show their base and independents that they can follow through on promises."

"It would show their intentions are more focused on actual health care as opposed to a narrow constituency."

Hurt

"It would be amazing if they alienate their most passionate supporters, 'pro-abortion' women, as they pass their most cherished legislative item. I think the whole bill will be bad for them, but adding this provision is just a cherry on top of the sundae."

"Some elements of the Democratic base are paying attention. And they will be really upset."

"Democrats are in a no-win situation: If it passes with restrictions, the liberal base will be unforgiving. If the Democrats strip the abortion restriction from the bill, they'll be perceived as caving in to the ideological special interests."

"The Democrat base would question the price Nancy Pelosi and Barack Obama were willing to pay, i.e., selling out to get health care reform."

"[Harry] Reid surely would have preferred Pelosi making a deal with some other devil."

"Internal Democratic politics would be set on fire."

Not much impact

"In some districts, it could hurt; and in others, help. The party, as a party, will not be impacted much, if at all."

"Members will undoubtedly think they will be hurt, but most voters are not nearly as 'pro-abortion' as the House Democratic Caucus."

"The Democrats know the 'pro-choice' base might be upset, but no one really thinks they will be flocking to the Grand Old Party, do they?"

NationalJournal.com

See how prominent bloggers answered these questions by visiting the Insiders Poll online.

—JAMES A. BARNES AND PETER BELL



Political Insiders Poll



In light of the off-year election results, what's the bigger political priority for your own party right now, motivating its base or winning independents?

Democrats (101 votes)

Motivating its base	26 percent
Winning independents	64 percent
Both (volunteered)	11 percent

Motivating its base

"Democrats need to motivate young people, African-Americans, and Latinos to vote in much larger numbers in 2010 than they did in 2009. If they don't, we will suffer some big-time losses."

"You need a foundation before you can add any independents."

"Will get killed in the midterm elections unless our base is fired up and engaged."

Winning independents

"The base will be motivated enough by the stranglehold the Far Right has on the Republican Party."

"Spin as much as you want, [but] Obama's policies are becoming increasingly wearisome for the great nonideological middle of the political spectrum, aka independents."

"With just 21 percent of the electorate self-identifying as liberal, Democrats must view moderate voters as their base. We did that successfully in '06 and '08. And we must keep it up, or we cannot maintain our majorities."

"The 'surge' voter phenomenon is over: time to rebuild the coalition of the base and independents."

"Holding independents who delivered a number of congressional seats will be critical for next year's congressional election."

"It will be a challenge to motivate the Democratic base in an off-year election, which will make reaching out to independents critical for success in 2010."

"Bases are wonderful. It's great when they are inspired to vote. They make us feel good. Voters in the middle do this little thing called deciding elections."

Both

"There isn't anything to win if we don't do both."

Republicans (100 votes)

Motivating its base	9 percent
Winning independents	89 percent
Both (volunteered)	2 percent

Motivating its base

"That's the difference in excitement and ultimately winning or losing."

"Fifty-eight million people voted for [John] McCain; 45 million votes would sweep the midterms. You do the math."

Winning independents

"We can pick up seats with a motivated base, but we can't get within shooting distance of a majority without winning over independents."

"The base couldn't be more energized. We need to win independents by running inclusive, solutions-oriented campaigns."

"It has been and continues to be all about winning independents. Carrying their votes 2-to-1 in both Virginia and New Jersey was a major political development and a sharp departure from 2006 and 2008."

"Obama will motivate the GOP base just fine by himself; party needs to appeal to the growing center."

"If we can convince independents that we have a jobs-creation plan that will work, we can win a lot of seats in 2010."

"Some Republicans are confusing buyer's remorse about the Democrats with liking the GOP."

"Not even close. As New York's 23rd Congressional District showed, even in safe-GOP areas, conservatives need moderate votes to win."

"If our party does not yet get the fact that the base is not going anywhere, God help us."

"The base is already motivated, if not rabid. But one of these days we're going to have to figure out how to talk to moderates."

Both

"For Republicans to have a strong year in 2010, they must mobilize their base to get out the vote while convincing independents that one-size-fits-all Democratic majority control is hurting the country."

—JAMES A. BARNES AND PETER BELL

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