



# Political Insiders Poll



**Given the outcome of the Massachusetts Senate race, what would be best politically for your party on health care reform?**

## Democrats (102 votes)

House approves Senate bill	29 percent
Congress adopts significantly scaled-back bill	36 percent
Congress passes compromise between House, Senate bills	24 percent
Health care reform is shelved for 2010	8 percent

*Volunteered responses: Congress adopts any of the bills, 2 percent; GOP kills health care reform, 1 percent.*

### House approves Senate bill

"Stop talking and pass a bill and move on to jobs ASAP."

"This is the high-water mark for Democrats. It ain't going to get better."

"It is even more important now that Obama flexes his muscles and gets a bill he wants. To scale back is a defeat and will embolden the GOP."

"It's the only realistic and possible policy path left at this moment. Any time you have an opportunity to pass a bill of this magnitude, you always take it: You may simply not get another chance."

### Congress adopts significantly scaled-back bill

"A scaled-back bill is the only way out of this mess."

"Congress and the administration need to say, 'We heard you,' pass a modified bill, and move on!"

"As much as it pains me to say it, I think a significantly scaled-back bill that shows Congress is listening to folks and moves us on to dealing with jobs and the economy is what we need to do."

"There is no appetite among independent voters for health care reform that costs \$100 billion a year."

"Get the tree up with GOP help. Ornaments can be rearranged [later]."

### Congress passes House/Senate compromise

"Go big or go home. Democrats aren't going to be able to make a strong job-creation case nor reduce the deficit by midterms, so we need to follow through on our health care promise."

"We lost one seat, not the responsibility to govern."

"A stripped-down bill has most of the same negatives for independents and would not excite the base."

### Health care reform is shelved

"A compromise will be seen as flawed, so the depressing but true answer: We Democrats are much better off with nothing at all."

"Making 2010 a referendum on 'Do we or do we not want health care reform?' is much better than making it a referendum on a compromise so watered down that no one likes it."

## Republicans (95 votes)

House approves Senate bill	41 percent
Congress adopts significantly scaled-back bill	14 percent
Congress passes compromise between House, Senate bills	4 percent
Health care reform is shelved for 2010	36 percent

*Volunteered responses: None of the above, 3 percent; Any of the above, 2 percent.*

### House approves Senate bill

"If they're dense enough to do this, we'll ride it all the way to November. Unfortunately, won't happen. Blue Dogs won't let it; they're scared."

"Not best for the country, but best for us politically: It would be a full-scale swan dive off a very high cliff instead of a stumble down a rocky path."

"Democrats stifling the direct message of the voters creates potential for monumental tidal wave."

"If the House acts now to approve the Senate bill, they are all stuck with it."

"Electoral anger would take back the House and put us at 45 in Senate."

"Go ahead, Democrats, everybody vote for the Cornhusker Kickback."

### Congress adopts significantly scaled-back bill

"I view this as a start-over option, whereby the priorities are covering the uninsured, addressing pre-existing conditions, and curbing frivolous lawsuits. This would be a moral Republican victory."

"Republicans must show results of a conservative reform agenda and the humility of a party that has yet to earn its swagger."

### Congress passes House/Senate compromise

"It drags this monster out another nine months."

### Health care reform is shelved

"That is the win for Republicans, who will have stopped an unpopular proposal."

"First, it is best for the country. And gives Republicans a much-needed victory, and a base from which to build a better health care solution."

"Take no chances and put an end to it now following the Massachusetts results. On this issue, the political reward will be long-lasting: We have the Democrats on a recorded vote."

"The Republicans need to be viewed as the adults in Washington, D.C. And stopping health care and offering alternative solutions to the budget and deficit reduction play a role in that perception."

**NationalJournal.com**

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

—JAMES A. BARNES AND PETER BELL



Political Insiders Poll



Which legislation, if enacted, would help Democrats' political prospects in the midterm elections?

Democrats (102 votes)

Table with 2 columns: Issue and Percentage. Issues include Job creation (83%), Health care reform (37%), Deficit reduction (32%), Financial regulation (32%), Tax on big banks (28%), Immigration reform (5%), and Climate change (4%).

Job creation

"Who cares about the climate or taxing big banks if I'm unemployed? Give me a job, and I'll get health care."

"Make people feel good, and they are more likely to resist the sky-is-falling propaganda."

"Virtually nothing is more important to the American voter than having a job or job security."

"Real unemployment is over 17 percent, and people don't think Washington gets it. Democrats need to get off health care and focus on jobs, jobs, jobs."

Health care reform

"If health care goes down, the Obama agenda goes down the drain—and many Democrats with it."

"Midterms are about your base. You have to move them to vote."

Deficit reduction

"Independent voters think Democrats in Washington are spending like, well, out-of-control Democrats. If they don't wake up to reality, we're doomed."

Financial regulation

"Democrats need to ride the populist rage by cracking down on Wall Street."

Tax on big banks

"Voters are mad about the big bonuses and want the geniuses that caused the meltdown to pay and feel the pain they created."

Republicans (91 votes)

Table with 2 columns: Issue and Percentage. Issues include Job creation (65%), Deficit reduction (56%), Financial regulation (16%), Tax on big banks (9%), Health care reform (8%), None of the above (volunteered) (7%), Immigration reform (3%), and Climate change (1%).

Job creation

"If Democrats aren't at least seen trying to grow the economy, they could run the table on everything else on this list and it still wouldn't matter."

"Unemployment at or above 10 percent is a death knell for Democrats in November."

"Democrats are on the brink of political suicide by ignoring job creation in favor of any other issue. I mean, seriously, climate change? Taxing banks? These guys are on crack."

"So long as it's not in the form of a Spending Stimulus II."

Deficit reduction

"Stopping the runaway spending will send the message to people that there is some control in Washington."

"Only if it means cutting spending: If they turn it into more taxing, they might as well lie down and let us run them over—because we will."

Financial regulation

"Wall Street is an increasingly attractive bipartisan boogeyman."

Tax on big banks

"Only issue that will fire up both their base and independents."

Health care reform

"But only if it were bipartisan will it help."

—JAMES A. BARNES AND PETER BELL

Democrat Political Insiders: Jill Alper, Brad Bannon, Dave Beattie, Andy Bechhoefer, Cornell Belcher, Matt Bennett, Mitchell W. Berger, Mike Berman, Stephanie Bosh, Paul Brathwaite, Donna Brazile, Mark Brewer, Ed Bruley, George Bruno, Deb Callahan, Bonnie Campbell, Bill Carrick, Guy Cecil, Martin J. Chavez, Tony Coelho, Jerry Crawford, Stephanie Cutter, Jeff Danielson, Peter Daou, Howard Dean, Jim Demers, Tad Devine, David Di Martino, Debbie Dingell, Monica Dixon, Patrick Dorton, Anita Dunn, Jeff Eller, Steve Elmendorf, Carter Eskew, Eric Eve, Vic Fazio, Peter Fenn, Scott Ferson, Jim Fleischmann, Tina Flournoy, Don Foley, Don Fowler, Vincent Frillici, Gina Glantz, Niles Godes, John Michael Gonzalez, Joe Grandmaison, Anna Greenberg, Stan Greenberg, Pat Griffin, Larry Grisolano, Michael Gronstal, Lisa Grove, Marcia Hale, Jill Hanauer, Dick Harpoolian, Paul Harstad, Laura Hartigan, Mike Henry, Karen Hicks, Leo Hindery, Jr., Harold Ickes, Marcus Jadotte, John Jameson, Steve Jarding, Jonathon Jones, Jim Jordan, Gale Kaufman, Lisa Kountoupes, Kam Kuwata, Celinda Lake, David Lang, Penny Lee, Chris Lehane, Jeff Link, Bill Lynch, Bob Maloney, Steve Marchand, Jim Margolis, Paul Maslin, Keith Mason, Terry McAuliffe, Susan McCue, Gerald McEntee, Tom McMahon, Phil McNamara, David Medina, Mark Mellman, John Merrigan, Steve Murphy, Janet Napolitano, David Nassar, Marcia Nichols, John Norris, Tom Ochs, Tom O'Donnell, Scott Parven, Jeffrey Peck, Debora Pignatelli, Tony Podesta, Jack Quinn, Larry Rasky, Bruce Reed, Mame Reiley, Steve Ricchetti, Will Robinson, Steve Rosenthal, David Rudd, John Ryan, Wendy Sherman, Terry Shumaker, Sean Sinclair, Phil Singer, Erik Smith, Doug Sosnik, David Sragow, Ken Strasma, Katrina Swett, Sarah Swisher, Jeffrey Trammell, Ed Turlington, Mike Veon, Rick Wiener, Bridgette Williams, James Williams, JoDee Winterhof, Brian Wolff, and Jim Zogby.

GOP Political Insiders: Dan Allen, Stan Anderson, Gary Andres, Saulius (Saul) Anuzis, Rich Ashooh, Whit Ayres, Brett Bader, Mitch Bainwol, Gary Bauer, David Beckwith, Clark Benson, Wayne Berman, Brian Bieron, Charlie Black, Kirk Blalock, Carmine Boal, Jeff Boeyink, Ron Bonjean, Jeff Buley, Luke Byars, Nick Calio, Danny Carroll, Ron Christie, Jim Cicconi, Cesar Conda, Jake Corman, Scott Cottingham, Charlie Crist, Greg Crist, Diane Crookham-Johnson, Fergus Cullen, Tom Davis, Mike Dennehy, Ken Duberstein, Steve Duprey, Debi Durham, Frank Fahrenkopf, John Feehery, Don Fierce, Mindy Finn, Mindy Fletcher, Carl Forti, Alex Gage, Sam Geduldig, Adam Geller, Benjamin Ginsberg, David Girard-diCarlo, Bill Greener, Jonathan Grella, Lanny Griffith, Janet Mullins, Grissom, Doug Gross, Todd Harris, Steve Hart, Christopher Healy, Ralph Hellmann, Chris Henick, Terry Holt, David Iannelli, Barry Jackson, Clark Judge, David Keating, David Kensingler, Bruce Keough, Bob Kjellander, Ed Kutler, Chris Laciwita, Jim Lake, Steve Lombardo, Kevin Madden, Joel Maiola, Gary Maloney, David Marin, Mary Matalin, Dan Mattoon, Brian McCormack, Mark McKinnon, Kyle McSarrow, Ken Mehlman, Jim Merrill, Tim Morrison, Mike Murphy, Phil Musser, Ron Nehring, Terry Nelson, Neil Newhouse, David Norcross, Ziad Ojaki, Jack Oliver, Todd Olsen, Connie Partoyan, Dana Perino, Van B. Poole, Tom Rath, Scott Reed, David Rehr, Steve Roberts, Jason Roe, David Roederer, Dan Schnur, Russ Schriefer, Rich Schwarm, Brent Seaborn, Rick Shelby, Andrew Shore, Kevin Shuvalov, Don Sipple, Fred Steeper, Bob Stevenson, Eric Tanenblatt, Sara Taylor, Richard Temple, Heath Thompson, Jay Timmons, Warren Tompkins, Ted Van Der Meid, Dirk van Dongen, Jan van Lohuizen, Stewart Verdery, Dick Wadhams, John Weaver, Lezlee Westine, Tom Wilson, Dave Winston, Ginny Wolfe, and Fred Wszolek.