



at the UNIVERSITY of CHICAGO

55 East Monroe Street
30th Floor
Chicago IL 60603
office (312) 759-4000
fax (312) 759-4004
www.norc.org

For Immediate Release:

Press contact: Eric Young, young-eric@norc.org, 301-634-9536 or cell: 703-217-6814

NORC at University of Chicago releases Election Survey Addressing Americans' Views on Role of Government in Health Care, Entitlement Reform and Partisanship

1/18/2013, Bethesda, MD. – Today, the independent research organization NORC at the University of Chicago released the new report, *2012 NORC Presidential Election Study: American's Views on Entitlement Reform and Health Care*. Results from this survey suggest that substantial majorities of the American public prefer the status quo on most provisions in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and on entitlements such as Social Security and Medicare. However, most Americans are not in favor of the status quo on partisanship and prefer that their own representatives work with others and make compromises, even those that include policies respondents dislike.

Health Care

“Even though we found that senior citizens tended to be ‘health-care conservatives’ I was surprised that they are not that enthusiastic about the government’s role in their own existing government-provided health insurance programs,” said Dr. Andrea Campbell, political science professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. “Only 60 percent of seniors say the government should pay for health care for all Americans over 65, compared to three-quarters of those under 65. Only 53 percent of seniors said the government should cover drug bills for senior citizens. Even two-thirds to three-quarters of younger respondents surveyed think the government should cover senior citizens drug bills.”

The report also addressed specific provisions in the ACA. Almost 70 percent of respondents favor the requirement that insurance companies cover children on their parent’s insurance plans through age 25. A majority support the government requiring states to expand Medicaid, a provision of the ACA that the Supreme Court struck down. On the other hand, only 39 percent of Americans support the requirement that all people buy health insurance. Republicans are less supportive than Democrats of all provisions of the ACA.

Entitlement Reform

On the issue of entitlement reform, the survey found that approximately 60 percent of respondents favor traditional Social Security over a program that would allow workers to invest the taxes themselves. More than 65 percent favor traditional Medicare over a program that would give workers a specific amount of money to spend on either private or government health insurance.

The survey results found that 76 percent of self-identified Democrats strongly support Social Security, and 77 percent of self-identified Democrats support Medicare, both in their traditional forms. On the other side of the aisle, 60 percent of Republicans, favor replacing Social Security with a defined contribution plan and 44 percent favor changing Medicare to a system supporting the purchase of private or government health insurance.

“Democrats as a group are a lot more committed to preserving Social Security and Medicare in their current forms than Republicans as a group are committed to changing them, and so the balance of

public opinion is on the side of the policy status quo,” said Dr. Mark Hansen, Hutchinson Professor in Political Science and Senior Advisor to the President at the University of Chicago.

Partisanship

“As our research around the 2012 presidential election comes to a close, we can see that even though the country is divided along partisan lines on many ideas and issues, there is reason for hope,” said Kirk Wolter, Senior Fellow and Executive Vice President, Survey Research with NORC at the University of Chicago. “On the eve of the Presidential Inauguration a strong majority of the American people want to see cooperation as our leaders deal with our most pressing problems.”

Background and Methodology

This nationally representative survey of 1,125 adults was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago in partnership with the following experts:

- Professor Mark Hansen, University of Chicago
- Professor Andrea Campbell, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Professor Stephen Ansolabehere, Harvard University
- Professor Benjamin Page, Northwestern University

For the full report, please go to: <http://tinyurl.com/aqq3elf>

About NORC at the University of Chicago

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research organization with more than 70 years of leadership and experience in data collection, analysis, and dissemination. NORC supports a national field staff and international research operations collaborating with governments, educational and nonprofit organizations, and businesses to provide data and analysis that support informed decision making in health, education, economics, crime, justice, energy, security, and the environment.