

Jennifer Cummings
jcummings@harrisinteractive.com

Low Levels of Public Trust and Confidence in President Bush's Ability to Improve the U.S. Healthcare System

U.S. adults' confidence and trust levels differ on these issues by party

5 Volume
5 Issue
March 13

2006

A new Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Poll shows U.S. adults in general have lackluster confidence and trust in the president when it comes to improving the healthcare system as we know it today. Large majorities say they are not very or not at all confident that President Bush can improve various aspects of the healthcare system, including the quality of healthcare and the percentage of Americans without health insurance. As expected, the poll finds that adults are deeply divided along party lines about the president's ability to make the needed changes and about who they would trust to develop good policies to improve and reform the U.S. healthcare system.

These are some of the results of a Harris Interactive online survey of 2,426 U.S. adults conducted between February 23 and 27, 2006 for The Wall Street Journal Online's Health Industry Edition.

Trust in policy makers

When looking to develop good policies to improve and reform the U.S. healthcare system, U.S. adults are somewhat more likely to say they trust¹ the Democrats (45%) and potential 2008 presidential candidate Senator Hillary Clinton (41%) than the Republicans (31%) and President Bush (30%) to do so. A partisan divide is easily seen here.

- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of Republicans say they trust President Bush to do this, compared to 26 percent of Independents and six percent of Democrats.
- Similarly, three-quarters (74%) of Democrats say they trust Senator Clinton to do this, compared to 45 percent of Independents and 12 percent of Republicans.

Confidence in President Bush

The president garners low levels of confidence from the American public when it comes to his ability to accomplish particular healthcare objectives. Expectedly, Republicans are more confident than Democrats or Independents in his abilities, however, the president does not achieve majority support from his party on any of the initiatives measured in this poll.

¹ Respondents were asked to rate how much they trusted various groups or individuals. The percentages apply to those saying they trust the group or individual "to some extent" or "a great deal."

Health-Care Poll

- One-quarter (25%) of adults are somewhat or very confident that President Bush can reduce the percentage of Americans without health insurance. About half (49%) of Republicans express this level of confidence, while only seven percent of Democrats and 19 percent of Independents feel the same.
- Similarly, about one in four (26%) adults is somewhat or very confident that the president can improve the quality of healthcare. Again, about half (49%) of Republicans feel this way, compared to 10 percent of Democrats and 23 percent of Independents.
- One in five (20%) adults is somewhat or very confident that the president can reduce Americans' out-of-pocket costs for healthcare and slow the increase in healthcare costs for the United States as a whole (20%). Approximately two in five Republicans expressed this level of confidence (40% and 39%, respectively), compared to fewer Democrats (5% each) and Independents (19% and 16%, respectively).
- Nineteen percent of U.S. adults are somewhat or very confident that the president can reduce Americans' out-of-pocket costs for health insurance (19%), with Republicans (38%) being more likely than Democrats (7%) or Independents (16%) to feel this way.

TABLE 1A
Trust in Healthcare Policy Makers

"How much do you trust each of the following to come up with good policies for improving and reforming the U.S. healthcare system?"

Base: All Adults

		A Great Deal/To Some Extent (Net)	A Great Deal	To Some Extent	Not Much/Not At All (Net)	Not Much	Not At All	Not Sure
President Bush	%	30	11	18	65	18	46	6
The Republicans	%	31	10	21	61	27	34	8
The Democrats	%	45	16	29	47	25	22	9
Senator Hillary Clinton	%	41	17	24	51	18	34	8

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

Health-Care Poll

TABLE 1B

Trust in Healthcare Policy Makers – by Party ID

“How much do you trust each of the following to come up with good policies for improving and reforming the U.S. healthcare system?”

Summary of A Great Deal/To Some Extent

Base: All Adults

	Total	Party ID		
		Republican	Democrat	Independent
	%	%	%	%
The Democrats	45	16	80	48
Senator Hillary Clinton	41	12	74	45
The Republicans	31	67	10	23
President Bush	30	63	6	26

TABLE 2

Familiarity with President Bush’s Healthcare Plans – by Party ID

“In his State of the Union speech this past January, the president referred briefly to his plans for healthcare. Since then the White House has provided more details on his proposals. How familiar are you with Bush’s new healthcare proposals?”

Base: All Adults

	Total	Party ID		
		Republican	Democrat	Independent
	%	%	%	%
Very Familiar/Somewhat Familiar (Net)	40	41	47	44
Very familiar	7	6	9	8
Somewhat familiar	34	35	38	36
Not Very Familiar/Not At All Familiar (Net)	54	55	49	53
Not very familiar	32	38	28	34
Not at all familiar	22	18	21	18
Not Sure	5	4	4	3

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

Health-Care Poll

TABLE 3A

Confidence in President Bush

“Even if you are not sure what his proposals are, how confident are you that President Bush can do the following?”

Base: All Adults

		Very Confident/ Somewhat Confident (Net)	Very Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Very Confident/ Not At All Confident (Net)	Not Very Confident	Not At All Confident	Not Sure
Reduce the percentage of Americans without health insurance	%	25	5	19	70	29	42	5
Slow the increase in healthcare costs for the U.S. as a whole	%	20	4	16	75	32	44	5
Improve the quality of healthcare	%	26	5	21	69	28	41	5
Reduce Americans' out-of-pocket costs for healthcare	%	20	4	16	75	32	43	5
Reduce Americans' out-of-pocket costs for health insurance	%	19	4	16	76	32	44	5

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

Health-Care Poll

TABLE 3B

Confidence in President Bush – by Party ID

“Even if you are not sure what his proposals are, how confident are you that President Bush can do the following?”

Summary of Very/Somewhat Confident

Base: All Adults

	Total	Party ID		
		Republican	Democrat	Independent
	%	%	%	%
Improve the quality of healthcare	26	49	10	23
Reduce the percentage of Americans without health insurance	25	49	7	19
Reduce Americans’ out-of-pocket costs for healthcare	20	40	5	19
Slow the increase in healthcare costs for the U.S. as a whole	20	39	5	17
Reduce Americans’ out-of-pocket costs for health insurance	19	38	7	16

Downloadable PDFs of Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Polls are posted at http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_wsj.asp.

Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted this online survey within the United States between February 23 and 27, 2006 among a national cross section of 2,426 adults, ages 18 years and over. Figures for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, income and region were weighted where necessary to align with population proportions. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

In theory, with probability samples of this size, one could say with 95 percent certainty that the overall results have a sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points of what they would be if the entire U.S. adult population had been polled with complete accuracy. Sampling error for the sub-samples of Republicans (729), Democrats (663) and Independents (614) is higher and varies. Unfortunately, there are several other possible sources of error in all polls or surveys that are probably more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. They include refusals to be interviewed (non-response), question wording and question order, interviewer bias, weighting by demographic control data and screening (e.g., for likely voters). It is impossible to quantify the errors that may result from these factors. This online sample is not a probability sample.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

Health-Care Poll

About the Survey

The Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Poll is an exclusive poll that is published in the award-winning Health Industry Edition of The Wall Street Journal Online at www.wsj.com/health.

About The Wall Street Journal Online

The Wall Street Journal Online at WSJ.com, published by Dow Jones & Company (NYSE: DJ; www.dowjones.com), is the largest paid subscription news site on the Web. Launched in 1996, the Online Journal continues to attract quality subscribers that are at the top of their industries, with 768,000 subscribers world-wide as of Q4, 2005.

The Online Journal provides in-depth business news and financial information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with insight and analysis, including breaking business and technology news and analysis from around the world. It draws on the Dow Jones network of nearly 1,900 business and financial news staff—the largest network of business and financial journalists in the world. The Online Journal also features exclusive content, including interactive graphics on business and world news, and online-only columns about the automotive industry, technology, personal finance and more.

The Online Journal offers three industry-specific verticals: the award-winning Health, Media & Marketing and now Law. Health offers authoritative analysis, breaking news and commentary from top industry journalists. Media & Marketing is designed for professionals in the advertising, marketing, entertainment and media industries. Law is designed to provide law firms and attorneys timely information on events and trends important to the legal market. Subscribers to all also get access to the full content of the Online Journal.

In 2005, the Online Journal was awarded a Codie Award for Best Online News Service for the second consecutive year, and its Health Industry Edition was awarded Best Online Science or Technology Service for the third consecutive year. In 2004, the Online Journal received an Eppy Award for Best Internet Business Service over 1 million monthly visitors.

The Wall Street Journal Online network includes CareerJournal.com, OpinionJournal.com, StartupJournal.com, RealEstateJournal.com and CollegeJournal.com.

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive Inc. (www.harrisinteractive.com), based in Rochester, New York, is the 13th largest and the fastest-growing market research firm in the world, most widely known for *The Harris Poll* and for its pioneering leadership in the online market research industry. Long recognized by its clients for delivering insights that enable confident business decisions, the Company blends the science of innovative research with the art of strategic consulting to deliver knowledge that leads to measurable and enduring value.



THE
WALL
STREET
JOURNAL
ONLINE

Health-Care Poll

5 | Volume
5 | Issue
March 13
2006

Harris Interactive serves clients worldwide through its United States, Europe (www.harrisinteractive.com/europe) and Asia offices, its wholly-owned subsidiary Novartis in Paris, France (www.novartis.com), and through an independent global network of affiliate market research companies. EOE M/F/D/V

To become a member of the Harris Poll OnlineSM and be invited to participate in future online surveys, go to www.harrispollonline.com.

Get Smart!

Did you know that Harris Interactive conducts up to five free webinars a month? Spanning a variety of business issues facing a handful of industries, these one-hour interactive sessions allow you to catch up on the latest research advancement, propriety industry findings, and best practices. Register for one or more sessions at <http://harrisinteractive.webex.com>. Visit often as our schedule changes weekly.

For a complete list of events, including webinars, where Harris Interactive thought leaders are presenting, exhibiting and sponsoring, visit <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/events.asp>.

To Subscribe

Please submit your contact information online at <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/healthcaresubscribe.asp>.

To Unsubscribe

Please send an email to Health_Care_News@harrisinteractive.net requesting to be removed from this newsletter distribution list.

For more information, please contact us at:

877.919.4765

or visit our healthcare webpage

www.harrisinteractive.com/healthcare

Media inquiries, contact:

Jennifer Cummings 585.214.7720

[jcummings@harrisinteractive.com](mailto:jcumings@harrisinteractive.com)

©2006, Harris Interactive Inc. All rights reserved.
Other product and/or company names used herein
are trademarks of their respective owners.