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AMERICANS OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORT HEALTH REFORM THAT PUTS THE CONSUMER IN CHARGE

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For the first time since President Clinton unveiled his health reform plan, polls now show that more Americans oppose the Clinton plan than support it. Meanwhile, large majorities have registered support for the central features of consumer choice health care reform, such as the bill introduced in the Senate by Don Nickles (R-OK) and in the House by Cliff Stearns (R-FL). A *Time/CNN* survey conducted March 2-3, 1994, found that opponents of the Clinton plan now outnumber its supporters by 45 percent to 41 percent. Other polls conducted since mid-February have identified a similar negative trend among ordinary Americans for Clinton's brand of health reform.

From Clinton's perspective, perhaps the worst news contained in these polls is the finding that Americans who understand the plan the best like it the least.

The ABC/Washington Post survey, for example, found that 51 percent agreed that "the more I hear about the Clinton plan, the less I like it." Similarly, a survey by Fabrizio, McLaughlin & Associates found a more than two-to-one ratio of disapproval among those who said they knew a "great deal" about the plan, considerably higher than the level of dissatisfaction among those who knew either a "fair amount" or "very little" about it:

From what you've read or heard, do you favor or oppose President's Clinton's health care plan?

Knowledge of Clinton Plan	Favor	Oppose
<i>Know a great deal</i>	28%	62%
<i>Know a fair amount</i>	42%	48%
<i>Know very little</i>	33%	42%

The movement away from Clinton's plan cuts across many politically important groups such as Independents, senior citizens, and Perot voters:

Group	Favor	Oppose
<i>Independents</i>	35%	45%
<i>Over age 65</i>	26%	47%
<i>Perot supporters</i>	25%	56%

Other notable findings are that groups that the Clintons clearly are counting on for a strong showing of support are lukewarm with respect to the plan. Examples include individuals with incomes below \$20,000—split 38 percent for and 38 percent against the plan—and the baby boomers, who oppose the plan 47 percent to 37 percent.

The Consumer Choice Alternative

With the Clinton plan unraveling both inside and outside the Washington Beltway, Capitol Hill is taking a closer look at approaches to health reform that enjoy broader support among the American people. One plan that, according to a recent poll, enjoys this sort of support is the Nickles-Stearns Consumer Choice and Health Security Act (S. 1743/H.R. 3698).

In October 1993, the polling firm of Fabrizio, McLaughlin & Associates conducted a survey on behalf of The Heritage Foundation that presented respondents with two starkly different approaches to health care reform—Plan A, a set of reforms modeled on the Clinton plan, and plan B, an alternative approach that closely resembles the Nickles-Stearns legislation. The results of that poll indicate that the American people overwhelmingly support health care reform that puts them—rather than the government—in control of their health care.

Respondents were asked the following five questions.

Question 1. Plan A does not provide tax breaks for out-of-pocket medical expenses. Plan B would allow tax breaks for out-of-pocket medical expenses and allow you to save money for future medical expenses tax-free. Knowing this, would you favor Plan A or Plan B?	Plan A — 12% Plan B — 82% Refused — 6%
Question 2. Plan A would require your employer to deduct monies from your paycheck to help pay for a health care plan designed by the federal government. Plan B would allow you to take the monies your employer now spends on your health care and allow you to spend as much as you want on whatever health plan you choose. Knowing this, would you favor Plan A or Plan B?	Plan A — 29% Plan B — 64% Refused — 7%
Question 3. Under Plan A, a government board would decide the services that are included in your health care plan, thereby forcing you to pay out of your pocket for additional medical expenses. Under Plan B, you would decide on your own health care plan, thereby determining the services you want included or excluded. Knowing this, would you favor Plan A or Plan B?	Plan A — 11% Plan B — 85% Refused — 4%
Question 4. Under Plan A, your employer would decide whether to provide you with health coverage or place you into a government-run health alliance. Under Plan B, you would decide whether to remain with your employer's health coverage or another group such as a union, church or farm bureau to obtain coverage. Knowing this, would you favor Plan A or Plan B?	Plan A — 12% Plan B — 83% Refused — 5%
Question 5. Now, having heard some of the differences between Plan A and Plan B, overall, would you say you favor Plan A or Plan B?	Plan A — 14% Plan B — 77% Refused — 9%

Overall, 77 percent chose the consumer choice plan over the President's approach. Significantly, a majority of every single voter group opted for the consumer choice approach, including strong support from the following groups:

Overall, do you prefer Plan A or Plan B?

Voter Group	Plan B (Consumer Choice Plan)	Plan A (Clinton Plan)
Uninsured	81%	15%
Blacks	76%	15%
Independents	76%	16%
Union Members	74%	15%
Income \$20,000 or Less	74%	14%
Not Satisfied With Quality of Health Care	73%	17%
Democrats	71%	18%
Clinton Supporters	67%	21%

Aside from traditional Republican and conservative voter groups, the groups recording the highest levels of support for the consumer choice approach were:

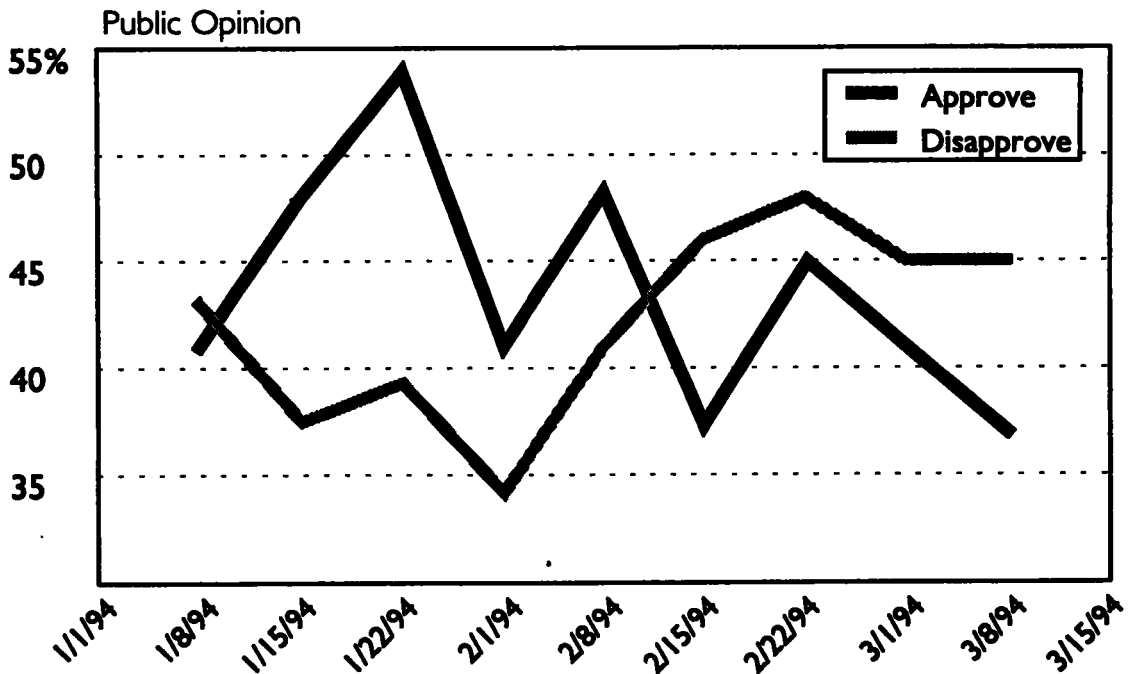
Voter Group	Plan B (Consumer Choice Plan)	Plan A (Clinton Plan)
Age 18 to 25	89%	9%
Married with Children	82%	12%
Women under age 40	84%	10%
Perot Supporters	82%	12%

While there was widespread support across all income groups for the consumer choice approach, respondents from households with incomes below \$40,000 were far more likely to support the key elements of the Nickles/Stearns legislation than were respondents with incomes over \$100,000:

Income Group	Plan B (Consumer Choice Plan)	Plan A (Clinton Plan)
Less than \$40,000	78%	13%
\$40,000 to \$100,000	80%	12%
Over \$100,000	61%	28%

Also, of all the groups surveyed, there was a near unanimous endorsement of the tax credit approach among those without health insurance (91 percent).

Public Approval of Clinton's Health Care Plan Drops as More Details Emerge



Note: Data represent a compilation of public opinion polls on Clinton's Health Care Plan.

When different polls took place on the same date, results were averaged.

Sources: See below.

APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF CLINTON'S HEALTH PLAN

1993				1994			
Date	Source	App.	Disapp.	Date	Source	App.	Disapp.
9/93	Yankelovich/Time/CNN	57%	31%	1/94	CBS Poll	41%	43%
9/93	Yankelovich/Time/CNN	57%	31%	1/15-19/94	LA Times Poll	47%	32%
9/10-12/93	Gallup Poll	54%	31%	1/17-18/94	Time/CNN (Yankelovich)	50%	33%
9/24-26/93	CNN/USA Today/Gallup	59%	33%	1/17/94	CNN/USA Today/Gallup	46%	44%
10/93	Yankelovich/Time/CNN	43%	36%	1/20-23/94	ABC/Washington Post	48%	39%
10/28-30/93	CNN/USA Today/Gallup	45%	45%	1/28-30/94	CNN/USA Today/Gallup	51%	40%
11/2-4/93	CNN/USA Today/Gallup	52%	40%	1/30/94	CNN/USA Today/Gallup	57%	38%
11/11-14/93	ABC/Washington Post	44%	44%	2/3-4/94	Newsweek/Princeton Ass.	41%	34%
				2/8/94	ABC/Washington Post	51%	41%
				2/10/94	Time/CNN (Yankelovich)	43%	42%
				2/15-17/94	CBS Poll	39%	46%
				2/18-19/94	Fabrizio	36%	46%
				2/24-27/94	ABC/Washington Post	44%	48%
				2/26-28/94	CNN/USA Today/Gallup	46%	48%
				3/2-3/94	Time/CNN (Yankelovich)	41%	45%
				3/4-8/94	WSJ/NBC (Hart Teeter)	37%	45%