

September 2023

## Using Different Language About American Health Care Reveals Broad Support in the Republican Base for Major Change

### Introduction

For decades Republican politicians have broadly opposed any measure, at the state and federal levels, to expand access to affordable health care. A new opinion survey done by the USA Health Care Framework Project of nearly 1000 Republicans in red and purple states shows strong support for major change to correct the injustices in American health care.

The USA Health Care Framework Project promotes a simple proposition: Americans should talk about health care with a simple acronym – **USA, Universal, Simple, Affordable**. Every other prosperous nation in the world already has Universal, Simple, and Affordable health care. Today American health care is none of these, but use of this language could help make it all.

*Historical Context:* The history of publicly funded health care in the US is instructive. The creation of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965, the single largest expansion of government-funded health insurance, was enacted with bipartisan support. But in 1993, when President Clinton attempted to reform health care, Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich successfully used his new “just say no” approach to kill the proposal before it could even come to a floor vote. A quarter of a century later, President Obama’s Affordable Care Act was enacted without any Republican votes. In 2017, President Trump’s effort to repeal the ACA was averted by John McCain and a few other courageous Republican Senators, including John McCain. This year, the Heritage Foundation is fundraising using a 75-year-old term to scare voters—“socialized medicine.”

### Findings

#### *Demographics*

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Geography	Household Income	Age
Respondents from 39 states	Under \$100 K 75%	15-55 78%
	Over \$100K 25%	Over 55 22%

#### *Experiences with Health Care*

Have you, a family member, or close friend had to deal with serious illness within the last five years?

Yes – 63%, No – 37%

Have you, a family member, or close friend avoided seeking medical attention for fear of its cost in the last five years?

Yes – 44%, No – 56%

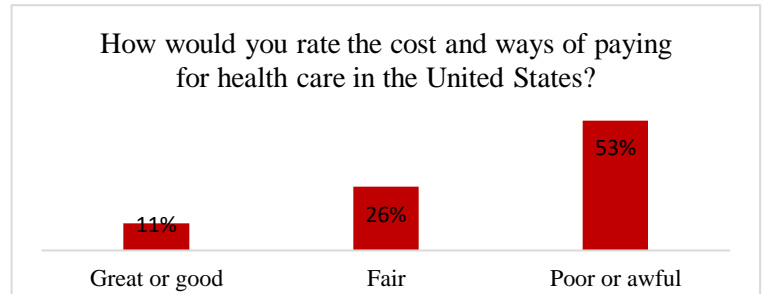
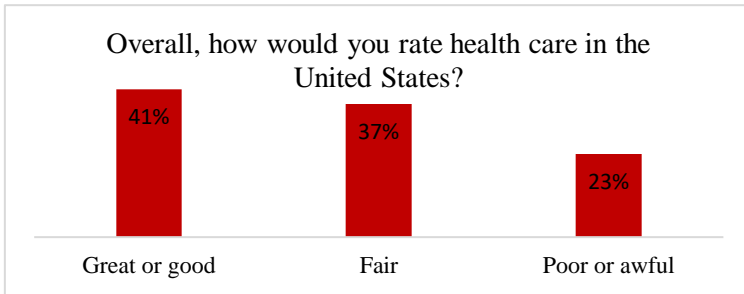
Have you, a family member, or close friend ever given up trying to get needed health care because it was too complicated to find/get the care?

Yes -- 31%, No – 69%

Have you consistently had health insurance over the last year?

Yes – 86%, No – 14%

**Views on American Health Care**



Which of these four issues is the biggest problem with American health care?

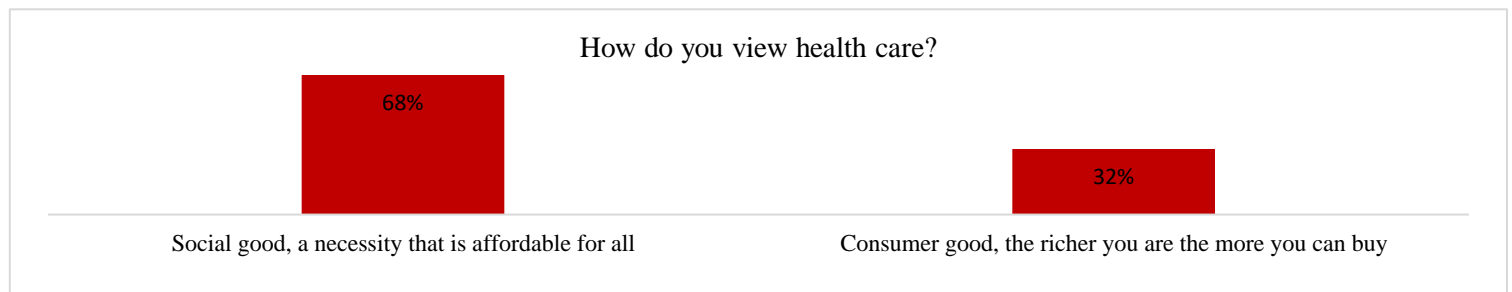
- Drugs and health care services are too expensive - 67%
- Insurance and out of pocket payments are too complicated – 24%
- It takes too long to get needed care – 6%
- There is a lack of health care providers in too many communities 3%

Does health care in the US need to change?

- Yes, definitely or probably – 93%
- No definitely or probably – 7%

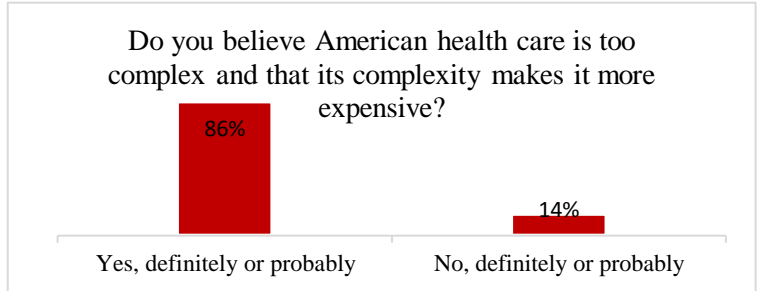
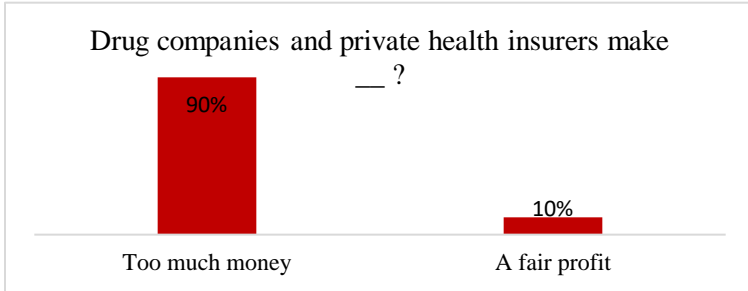
What is the biggest barrier to changing American health care?

- People worry they will have to pay more, yet receive lower quality care - 38%
- People think that health care corporations and professional associations have too much money and political power- 36%
- People don't want to pay for health care for people they believe don't deserve it - 18%
- People fear governments getting too powerful – 8%



Can the United States afford to make high quality health care affordable for all Americans?

- Yes, definitely or probably – 68%
- No, definitely or probably – 32%



**Views on Universal, Simple, Affordable – USA**

Do you believe American health care should become **universal**?

**Yes, definitely or probably – 54%**

No, definitely or probably – 46%

Do you believe American health care should be **simplified** (few plans, straightforward bills, less paperwork)?

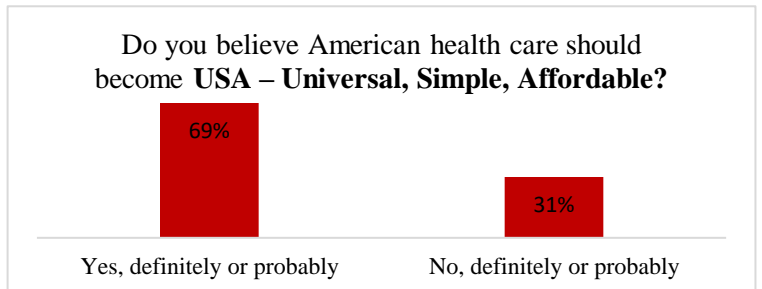
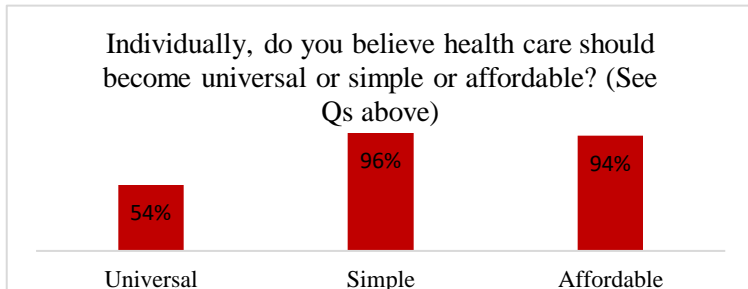
**Yes, definitely or probably – 96%**

No, definitely or probably – 4%

Do you believe American health care should become **affordable** for everyone?

**Yes, definitely or probably – 94%**

No, definitely or probably – 6%



Would health care that is **Universal, Simple, and Affordable** help you and your family?

**Yes, definitely or probably – 70%**

No, definitely or probably – 30%

In talking with friends and family about health care issues, would you use USA – Universal, Simple, Affordable – framework?

**Yes – 63%**

No -37%

## Comments and Implications for Health Care Justice Advocacy

The survey is a strong affirmation of the USA Health Care Framework Project's key assertion – that **Universal, Simple, Affordable** resonates with Republicans as well as Democrats; 69% think that American health care should become USA and 70% think it would help their families.

To our surprise, 68% see it as a “social good, a necessity,” while only 32% view it as a “consumer good, the richer you are, the more you can buy.” We believe that this view of health care as a social good is the core foundation of the support for the USA Framework.

Universal, Simple and Affordable Care is far from coming to fruition. When asked about the individual components of the USA Framework, only 54% of Republicans think that health care should be universal, while 96% think it should be simple and 94% think it should be affordable. Many policy experts understand that to make health care simpler and more affordable it must be universal. To activists who want to use the USA Framework, we recommend to first focus on Americans' frustrations with the costs and complexity of our care and then make the connections between those issues and the need for universality.

Republicans with household incomes over \$100,000 were more skeptical about the USA Framework than those with incomes under \$100,000. Sub analyses showed they were 7% less likely to see health care as a social good, 10% less likely to think that America can afford health care for all, and 10% less likely to think that American health care should be universal. The most striking contrast was that while 74% of Republicans with incomes under \$100,000 thought that USA health care would help their families, only 59% with higher incomes felt that way. In an inversion of past decades, Republican politicians are now popular with lower education working class voters. Debates about the future of American health care may impact this alignment.

We also need a better understanding of the obstacles and barriers to reform that worry Republicans.

We encourage organizations and individuals working for health care reform to use the Universal, Simple, Affordable Framework on a regular basis. It can be used in speech or writing. It can be used both for large transformational proposals and for smaller steps that address health care injustices, such as price-gouging, profiteering, underinsurance, medical debt, etc. Use your own creativity.

**Please share this with friends who care about health care justice.**

**Please share your successes, failures, and questions with us at [www.usahealthcareframework.org](http://www.usahealthcareframework.org) and be sure to follow our socials!**

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