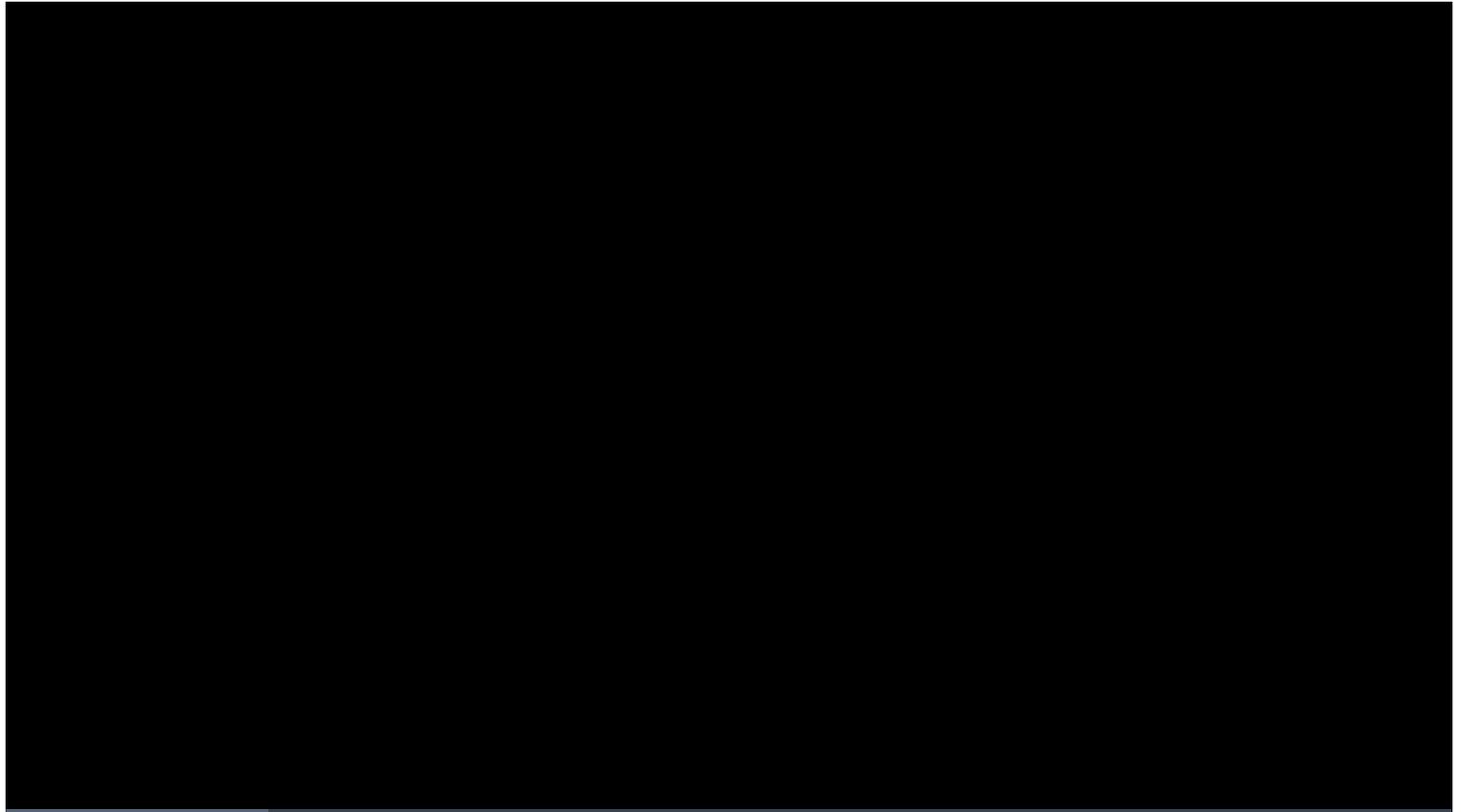


Floridians strongly oppose key parts of Republican plan to replace Obamacare, poll shows



Floridians are divided over Obamacare, split over whether it should be expanded or scrapped, and concerned that people could lose health insurance if the law is repealed, a FAU poll shows.



By **Anthony Man**
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Floridians overwhelmingly oppose key elements of the Republican plan to repeal and replace parts of **Obamacare**.

A Florida Atlantic University Poll scheduled for release Thursday found that the least popular element of the plan, supported by President **Donald Trump** and crafted by U.S. House Republican leaders, is the provision that would allow sharply higher insurance premiums for older people. Obamacare limits premiums for seniors to three times the amount charged to younger people. The Republican plan would allow premiums five times the amount paid by younger people.

An overwhelming 76 percent of Floridians oppose that idea, with 8 percent in support and 16 percent undecided.

More than three quarters of survey respondents said they were concerned or very concerned that people “could lose health insurance” if Obamacare is repealed. The pollsters reported 23 percent weren’t concerned about that possible outcome.

Another area of broad agreement: A large majority — 64 percent — said the government “should be responsible for ensuring all Americans have health care coverage.” Government shouldn’t be responsible said 19 percent, and 17 percent weren’t sure.

The survey by the Florida Atlantic University Business and Economics Polling Initiative was conducted as Trump and the **Republicans** who control Congress wrestle with the Affordable Care Act, the formal name for Obamacare. They promised during their election campaigns to repeal and replace it with something better. The proposed Republican replacement, formally called the **American Health Care Act**, is being called Trumpcare by critics.

It has drawn criticism from conservative Republicans as not going far enough toward eliminating Obamacare and from Democrats and moderate Republicans for policies that would end health insurance for millions of Americans and make coverage more expensive for seniors.

Floridians aren’t sold on the idea of repealing Obamacare, the poll shows. The survey found 39 percent of Florida residents think the law should be expanded, 14 percent said it should be kept as is, 18 percent want it partially repealed and 29 percent want a complete repeal.

There’s a similar lack of consensus in overall opinion of the law: 46 percent of Floridians approve of Obamacare, 39 percent disapprove and 14 percent are undecided.

The state numbers are in line with national public opinion. The latest RealClearPolitics average of nationwide polls shows 48 percent of Americans favor the law and 42 percent oppose it, which represents a major shift. Three years ago, 39 percent of Americans supported Obamacare and 54 percent opposed it.

People’s perspectives on the health law are intertwined with their overall political perspectives. The poll found 36 percent of Floridians approve of Trump’s performance as president, 38 percent disapprove and 26 percent are undecided.

Among people who approve of Trump’s performance, 73 percent disapprove of Obamacare. Among people who disapprove of Trump’s performance, 75 percent approve of Obamacare.

The pollsters attempted to present neutral questions by referring to “the 2010 Affordable Care Act, sometimes referred to as Obamacare.” They didn’t refer to the proposed replacement by name, instead asking a series of six questions about elements of the plan.

Other elements:

- Repealing the 3.8 percent tax on investment income levied on households that make more than \$250,000 had 31 percent support and 40 percent opposition.
- Replacing health insurance subsidies with refundable tax credits was supported by 26 percent and opposed by 38 percent.
- Reducing federal funding for the **Medicaid** program which covers health expenses for the poor was supported by 16 percent and opposed by 74 percent.
- Allowing a 30 percent premium surcharge for people who let their insurance lapse was supported by 15 percent and opposed by 60 percent.
- Permitting people to put more pre-tax money into flexible spending accounts to pay for out-of-pocket healthcare expenses was supported by 43 percent and opposed by 29 percent. It was the only one of the six Republican plan ideas that more Floridians approved than disapproved.

A nationwide Public Policy Polling survey released Wednesday found 24 percent of voters support the American Health Care Act and 49 percent are opposed. Trump's approval rating was 43 percent positive and 50 percent negative in the national poll.

PPP said its survey of 808 registered voters from Friday through Sunday has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. The sample was a combination of automated telephone calls and an interactive Internet survey.

The FAU survey of 500 Florida residents, which was conducted entirely online, has a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points. Differences less than the margin of error are statistically insignificant, and the margin of error for subgroups, such as people who approve or disapprove of Trump's performance, is larger because the sample size is smaller.

Public opinion experts have mixed views about online polls. Some warn that the entire population doesn't have an equal chance of participating, since some people don't have Internet access or won't participate in online surveys. Others argue that research shows that doesn't necessarily produce different results and plenty of people won't respond to telephone surveys.

Monica Escaleras, director of FAU's Business and Economics Polling Initiative, said the survey is far different from something that pops up on a computer screen and asks people to answer a question. FAU uses the firm Survey Sampling International, which generates seeks participation from participants via email, text and alerts from apps. Escaleras said the responses are then weighted so that they match the state's population by gender, race, region, education and age.

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