



Voters Favor Tort Reform by Two-to-One Margin

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Fifty-seven percent (57%) of voters nationwide favor limiting the amount of money a jury can award a plaintiff in a medical malpractice lawsuit. The latest Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey finds that only 29% disagree and 14% are not sure.

Forty-seven percent (47%) believe that restricting jury awards for medical malpractice lawsuits will significantly reduce the cost of health care in the United States. Twenty-eight percent (28%) disagree, and 25% are not sure.

These figures come at a time when most voters believe the health care plan proposed by President Obama and congressional Democrats, which does not include limits on such lawsuits, will raise the cost of health care. Sixty percent (60%) also believe the plan will increase the budget deficit, and an even larger number believe it will lead to higher middle-class taxes.

Most voters believe that cost is the biggest problem with our nation's health care system and getting costs down is the key to reform. Overall, 49% rate the current system as good or excellent. At the same time, however, 53% say major changes are needed.

Support for so-called "tort reform" has changed little since September. But there has been a six-point decline in the percentage who believe it will significantly reduce the cost of care.

Forty-eight percent (48%) believe it is too easy to sue for medical malpractice while 19% believe it is too hard.

Republicans overwhelmingly favor limiting jury awards for medical malpractice lawsuits. That view is shared by 51% of the nation's Democrats and 49% of unaffiliated voters. Republicans strongly believe it will reduce health care costs and a modest plurality of Democrats agree. Those not affiliated with either major party are essentially evenly divided on the question of cost savings.

Other popular reform items include removing the anti-trust exemption enjoyed by health insurance companies and allowing people to purchase policies across state lines. Two-out-of-three Americans believe that free market competition is better than government regulation when it comes to controlling costs.

Overall, just over half the nation's voters have consistently opposed the health care plan proposed by the president and congressional Democrats.