



DATA FOR *PROGRESS*

MEDICARE FOR ALL

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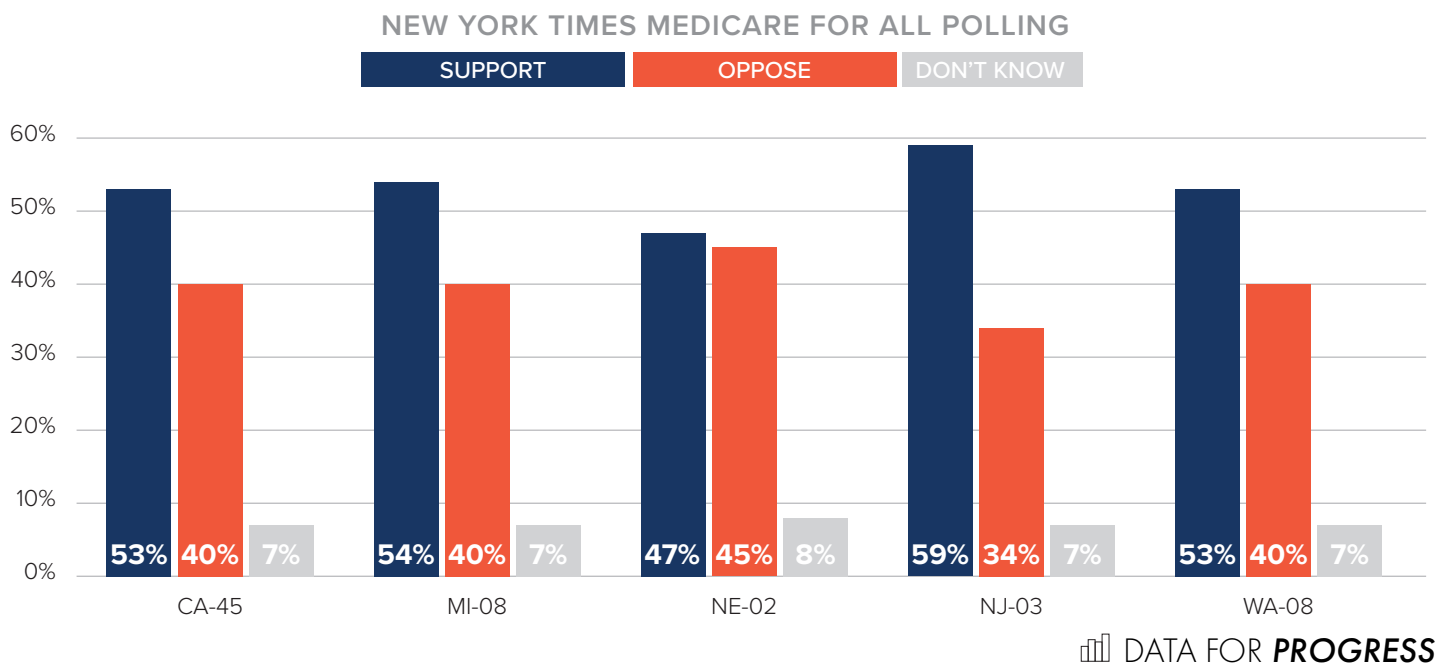


Throughout the primary, pundits and commentators have said that Medicare for All would be an albatross for Democrats in 2020. However, the polling evidence suggests a far more nuanced picture. Over the last several months, Data for Progress has been working to test Medicare for All in a wide range of electoral environments, using a range of different vendors and our analysis of the evidence suggests that Medicare for All will remain on net positive even after facing right-wing push-back.

SECTION 1: The Public Record on Medicare for All

Before exploring the work Data for Progress has done, it's worth reviewing the work of other pollsters. According to polling completed by the *New York Times* and [analyzed by](#) Data for Progress, single-payer healthcare has net-positive support in Washington's 8th, New Jersey's 3rd, Nebraska's 2nd, Michigan's 8th and California's 45th congressional districts. The massive [Cooperative Congressional Election Studies](#) (CCES) survey included a Medicare for All

question in 2018, and found that 69 percent of voters supported the policy—including 83 percent of Obama–Trump voters who supported Democrats in 2018, and 53 percent of those who supported Republicans in 2018. The Kaiser Family Foundation has consistently polled Medicare for All and found that it is above water every time, [most recently by a 10-point margin](#).



SECTION 2: A “Medicare for All” Candidate Beats Trump

As with any policy, Medicare for All will inevitably be attached to a Democratic candidate, not decided on its own merits. To test the electoral impact of Medicare for All, Data for Progress ran an experiment. We presented voters with the following prompt:

If the 2020 presidential election were being held today, and the candidates were Donald Trump, a Republican who supports repealing the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”) and a Democrat who supports [SPLIT], for whom would you vote for?

[Randomized]

<1> Donald Trump, Republican

<2> The Democrat

<3> Don’t know

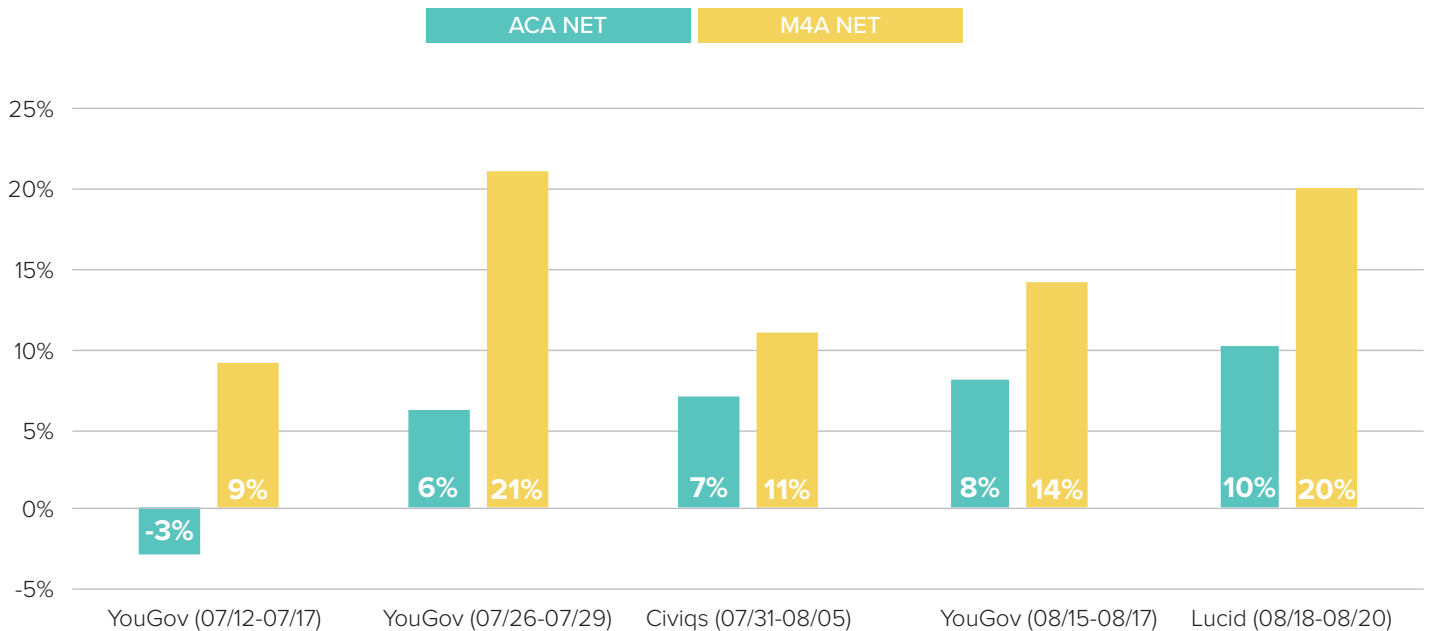
In the split, I tested two Democrats:

Strengthening The Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”)

Medicare For All

In the split, we tested two Democrats, one who supported “Strengthening The Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”)” and one who supported Medicare for All. We asked three pollsters to test the split sample: Drew Linzer of Civiqs, Alissa Stollwerk of YouGov, and Brian Schaffner of Tufts University. The result was unanimous: In a randomized trial, the Democrat running on Medicare for All performed between 4 and 10 points better than a Democrat running on improving the ACA. In all cases, the Medicare for All Democrat easily defeated Trump.

MEDICARE FOR ALL DEMOCRATS CONSISTENTLY BEAT TRUMP



To test whether the phrase “Obamacare” was skewing results, we tested the YouGov panel with identical wording and without the phrase “Obamacare” in the August 15–17 version of the test—and as the chart shows, the result is similar to the other polls (54 percent supporting and 40 percent opposing).

Next, we ran another series of tests to see if different Medicare for All messages would make a difference. We ran a test using the Lucid panel with Tufts University, from November 20 to December 3, in which voters were given three different scenarios:

SOCIALISM: If the 2020 U.S. Presidential election was held today, who would you vote for if the candidates were a Democrat who supports Medicare for All and Republican Donald Trump, who says that Medicare for All is a socialist takeover of the healthcare system?

TAX HIKE: If the 2020 U.S. Presidential election was held today, who would you vote for if the candidates were a Democrat who supports Medicare for All and Republican

Donald Trump, who says that Medicare for All would require a massive \$15,000 a year tax increase on the middle class workers?

WAIT TIME: If the 2020 U.S. Presidential election was held today, who would you vote for if the candidates were a Democrat who supports Medicare for All and Republican Donald Trump, who says that Medicare for All would lead to people waiting months for routine procedures?

For all, the response options were:

[Randomized]

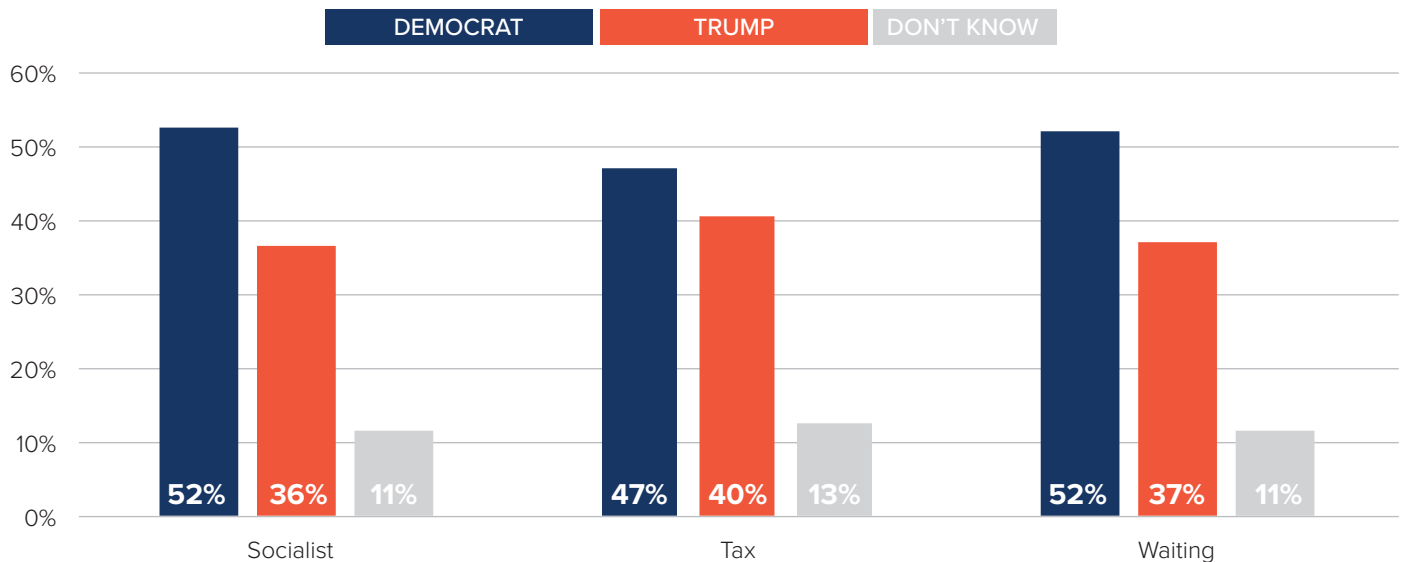
<1> *The Democratic candidate*

<2> *Donald Trump*

<3> *Don't know*

In every scenario, a Medicare for All Democrat still beat Donald Trump: in the “socialist” and “wait time” scenarios by double digits, and in the “middle-class tax hike” scenario by 7 points.

MEDICARE FOR ALL DEMOCRATS BEAT TRUMP EVEN WITH ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE POLICY



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SECTION 3: Stress Testing Medicare for All

What happens once people learn the costs associated with Medicare for All, and the issue becomes partisan? Using the Lucid panel with Tufts University, we fielded two possible funding routes: one that used payroll and income taxes, and one that used the tax on employers recently proposed by Senator Warren. We also included partisan cues and pro-con arguments.

Some Democrats in Congress are proposing a bill which would expand Medicare to every American, with the government providing health insurance to every American citizen. All out of pocket costs such as copays and premiums would be eliminated. This policy would change Americans' insurance provider but would not prevent them from accessing medical services already available to them under their current plan. Individuals could supplement the public plan with a private option if they wanted.

The policy would be paid for by increasing the payroll tax on earnings by 9 percentage points (half of which would be paid for by employers), an increase in income taxes on those earning more than \$200,000 by 9 percentage points, and a 2% tax on accumulations of wealth worth more than \$50 million.

Democrats say that this policy ensures that everyone in America has access to quality healthcare. They say this plan would save the average American money by eliminating their health care costs.

Republicans say this policy means a large tax increase for the average American and that Americans wouldn't be able to keep the health insurance they have and would have to go onto a one-size-fits-all government plan.

Do you support or oppose this policy?

[Randomized]

<1> Strongly support

<2> Somewhat support

<3> Somewhat opposed

<4> Strongly opposed

<5> Don't know

The other half of respondents were asked:

Some Democrats in Congress are proposing a bill which would expand Medicare to every American, with the government providing health insurance to every American citizen. All out of pocket costs such as copays and premiums would be eliminated. This policy would change Americans' insurance provider but would not prevent them from accessing medical services already available to them under their current plan. Individuals could supplement the public plan with a private option if they wanted.

The policy would be paid for by a 6 percent tax on the wealth of those with over \$50 billion in assets and a tax on companies for each employee they hire.

Democrats say that this policy ensures that everyone in America has access to quality healthcare. They say this plan would save the average American money by eliminating their health care costs.

Republicans say this policy means a large tax increase for the average American and that Americans wouldn't be able to keep the health insurance they have and would have to go onto a one-size-fits-all government plan.

Do you support or oppose this policy?

Individuals who were undecided for both were asked:

Given that you are undecided, do you lean towards or against supporting the policy?

[Randomized]

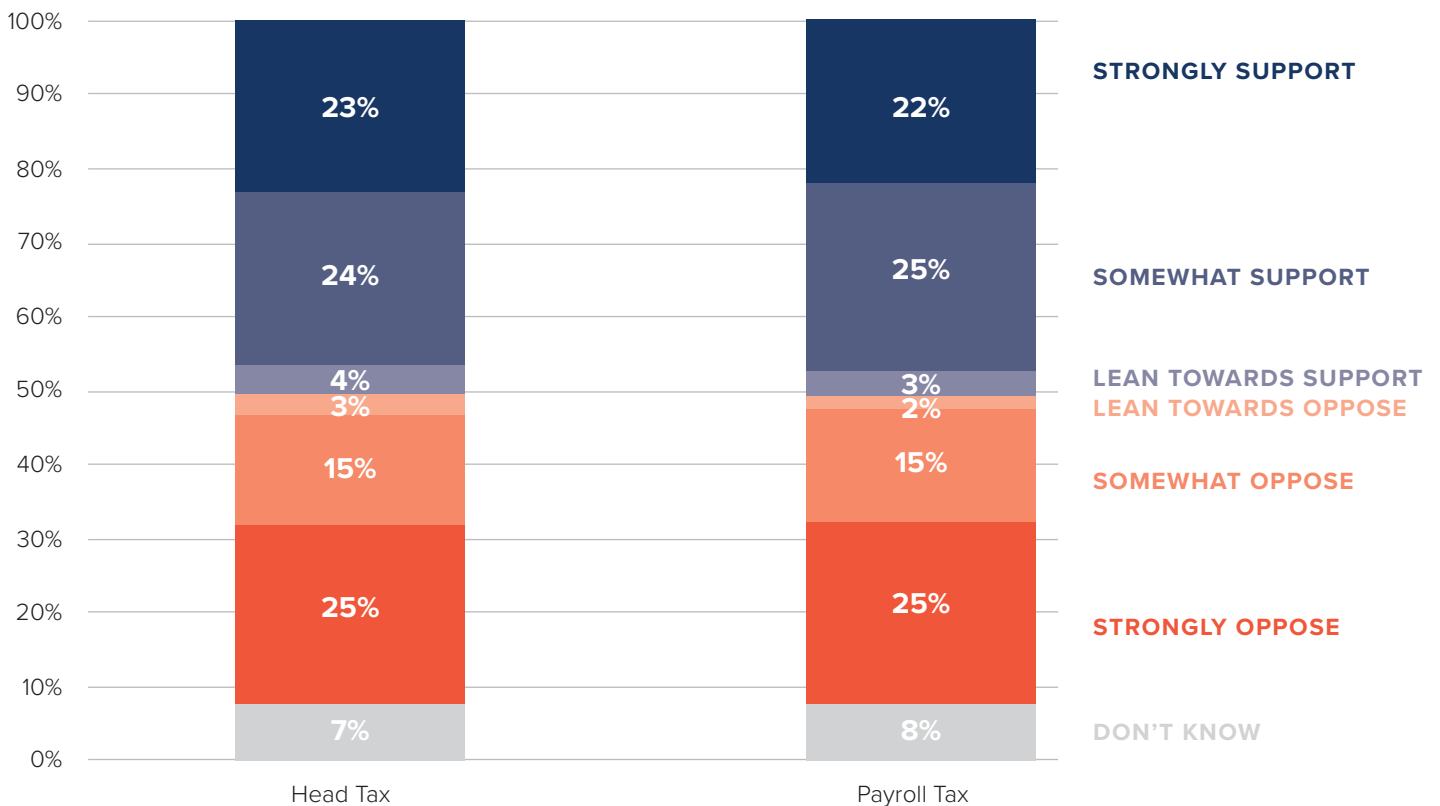
<1> Lean towards supporting

<2> Lean against supporting

<3> Don't know

With the "head tax" funding route, 51 percent of voters supported Medicare for All, with 42 percent opposed (net support of 9 points). With the "payroll and income tax" funding route, 47 percent supported the policy, with 42 percent opposed (net support of 6 points). Even after a partisan frame, it is unlikely that Medicare for All will see net opposition from voters, consistent with the fact that even after several months of negative ads and critical media coverage, the policy still has net positive support.

SUPPORT FOR MEDICARE FOR ALL AFTER PARTISAN FRAME AND PAY-FOR



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Section 4: Voters Trust Democrats on Medicare for All

Running a Medicare for All candidate could easily benefit the Democratic Party. As we've seen, the broad concept of "Medicare for All" is popular, and attacks against the policy will not push it underwater. There is also a strong affirmative case to be made for Medicare for All: it will allow Democrats to fight the 2020 election on favourable terrain. Ultimately, if the election hinges on a referendum on healthcare, Democrats will benefit because voters simply do not trust Republicans on this issue. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation polling, [voters overwhelmingly trust Democrats](#) best to handle healthcare and the future of Medicare. Other pollsters, such as [Politico/Morning Consult](#) and [WSJ/NBC](#), have confirmed this independently. We also added a question designed to test which party voters trust on the issue of Medicare for All and healthcare more broadly. We asked voters:

Thinking about politics these days, which party do you think would do a better job with...

- Expanding access to healthcare
- Medicare for All

[Randomize]

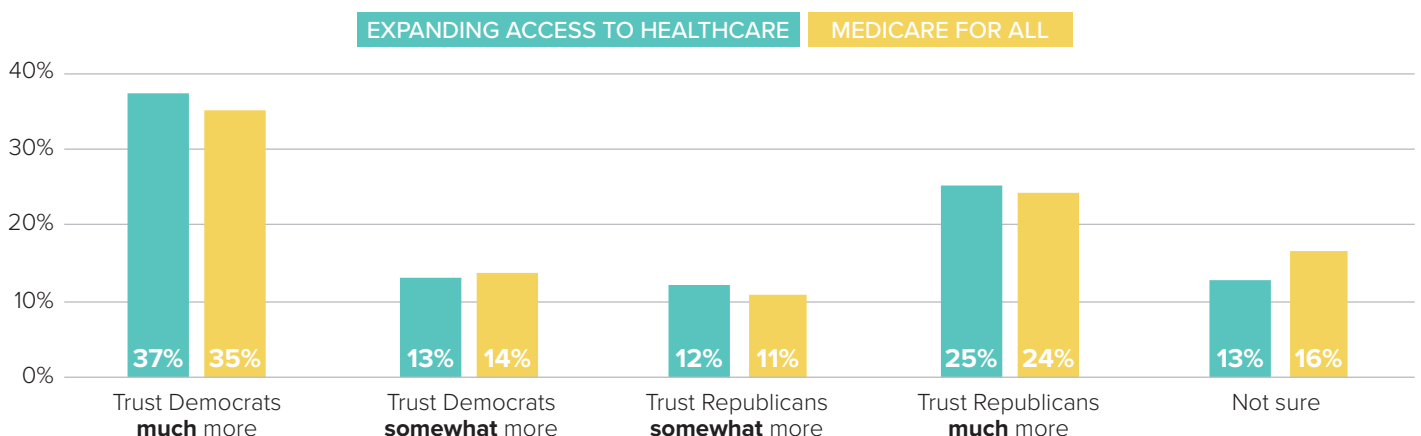
- <1> Trust Democrats much more
- <2> Trust Democrats somewhat more
- <3> Trust Republicans somewhat more
- <4> Trust Republicans much more
- <5> Not sure

Democrats had strong net-positive trust on both the "expanding healthcare" (50 percent to 37 percent) and on Medicare for All (49 percent to 35 percent).

Conclusion

A wide range of polling data as well as the electoral record of the 2018 midterms suggest that Medicare for All does not threaten the Democratic Party's electoral chances. Even when voters are presented with arguments for and against Medicare for All, they support the policy. A hypothetical Democratic candidate running on Medicare for All leads Trump, even with three separate Trump arguments tested.

TRUST ON THE HEALTHCARE ISSUES



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