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Nearly Half of Public Says ‘Right Amount’ of Malaysian Jet Coverage

*One-in-Three Thinks Coverage Has
Been Excessive*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
ON THIS REPORT:**

Carroll Doherty, Director of Political Research

Seth Motel, Research Assistant

202.419.4372

www.pewresearch.org

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One-in-Three Thinks Coverage Has Been Excessive

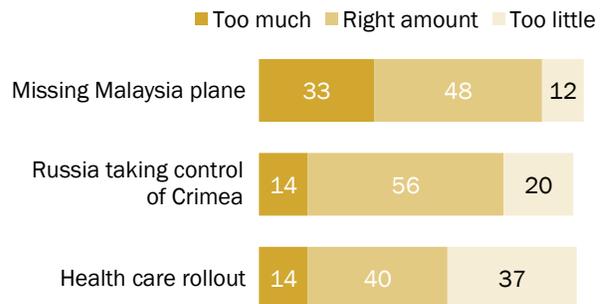
The public followed news about the missing Malaysia Airlines plane more closely than any other story last week. While the story has attracted extensive news coverage, especially from cable TV outlets, most Americans do not feel there has been too much coverage of the missing jetliner.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted March 20-23 among 1,002 adults, finds that 44% followed news about the missing Malaysian jetliner most closely, far surpassing interest in any other story. Russia’s annexation of Crimea was a distant second, with 15% following that news most closely.

Nearly half of Americans (48%) say news organizations are giving the right amount of coverage to the investigation into the missing jetliner; another 12% say there has been too little coverage of this story. A third (33%) think the investigation into plane’s fate has received too much coverage.

More See Right Amount than Too Much News Coverage of Missing Plane

% saying coverage by news organizations has been ...



Survey conducted March 20-23, 2014.

Don't know responses not shown.

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However, more people think that the missing jetliner has received too much news coverage than say that about two other stories last week – Russia’s actions in Crimea and the rollout of the 2010 health care law; just 14% each view those stories as over-covered. For the most part, the public sees the amount of coverage of Russia and Crimea as appropriate (56% right amount). But fewer (40%) say that news about the rollout of the health care law has gotten the right amount of coverage. Nearly four-in-ten (37%) say implementation of the health care law has been under-covered by news organizations – the highest percentage of the three stories asked about.

More women than men said they followed news about the missing plane very closely (45% vs. 32%). Women view the amount of coverage as appropriate; 54% say there has been the right amount of coverage, while just half as many (27%) see it as excessive. By comparison, men are more divided: about four-in-ten men each say there has been the right amount (42%) and too much (38%) coverage.

Opinions about the plane coverage vary by education level, as well, even though similar shares of each group closely followed the story.

Among adults with a college degree, about as many say there has been too much

coverage (45%) as say the right amount of coverage (46%). Among those with a high school degree or less, 23% see too much coverage and 52% say it is the right amount.

About four-in-ten Republicans (41%) say there has been too much coverage of the missing jetliner. That compares with 34% of independents and just 25% of Democrats.

College Graduates More Likely to Say Too Much Coverage of Investigation into Missing Plane

	-----Coverage by news organizations-----				Very closely following story
	Too much	Right amount	Too little	DK	
	%	%	%	%	%
Total	33	48	12	7=100	39
Men	38	42	12	7=100	32
Women	27	54	11	8=100	45
College grad+	45	46	5	4=100	41
Some college	35	44	14	7=100	42
HS or less	23	52	15	10=100	34
18-29	30	47	13	10=100	26
30-49	33	47	12	7=100	37
50-64	34	51	10	5=100	42
65 and older	31	50	11	8=100	50
Republican	41	46	9	4=100	43
Democrat	25	50	17	8=100	46
Independent	34	51	9	6=100	34

Survey conducted March 20-23, 2014. Figures may not to 100% because of rounding.

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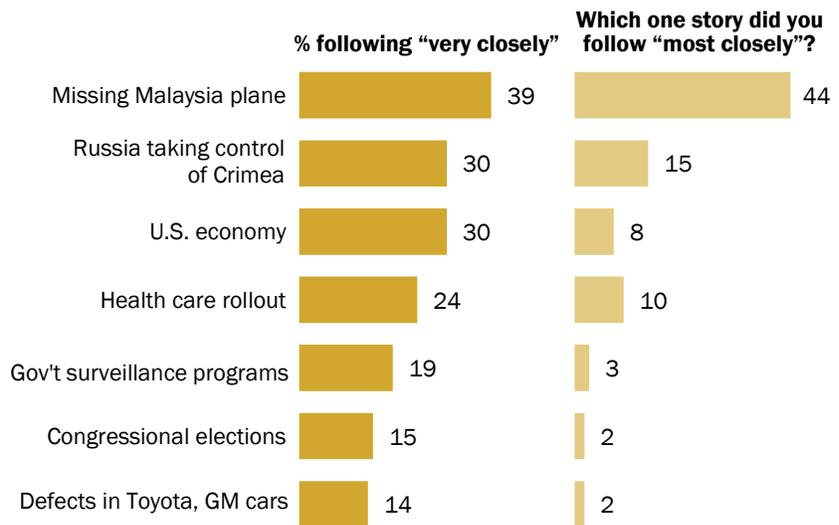
The Week's Top Stories

Malaysian Airline Flight 370 went missing on March 8. Since then, there has been intensive speculation about what might have happened to the plane. [Malaysia's prime minister, Najib Razak, announced March 24 that the flight went down in the Indian Ocean.](#)

The survey, conducted March 20-23, found that while nearly four-in-ten (39%) followed news about the investigation into the missing jetliner very closely, 30% each tracked news about Russia taking control of Crimea and the U.S. economy very closely.

But when people are asked which story they followed *most* closely, interest in the probe into the Malaysian plane's fate far exceeds interest in the week's other news stories.

Missing Plane Tops News Interest by Wide Margin



Survey conducted March 20-23, 2014.

"Most closely" is open-ended question; other responses not shown.

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As is typically the case, young people express less interest in most of this week's news stories than do older adults. Only about a quarter of those under 30 (26%) tracked news about the missing jetliner very closely, by far the lowest share of any age group.

When it comes to news about the government's phone and internet surveillance programs, however, young adults are about as interested as older people. Moreover, among young people interest in news about surveillance programs (14% very closely) is about on par with interest in news about Russia and Crimea (15%) and news about the rollout of the 2010 health care law (9%).

Young People Following News Much Less Closely, Except Surveillance News

% very closely following each story

	Total	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%
Missing Malaysia plane	39	26	37	42	50
Russia taking control of Crimea	30	15	26	39	43
U.S. economy	30	16	27	38	39
Health care rollout	24	9	25	30	29
Gov't surveillance programs	19	14	19	23	19
Congressional elections	15	4	15	19	22
Defects in Toyota, GM cars	14	9	13	14	18

Survey conducted March 20-23, 2014.

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About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted March 20-23, 2014 among a national sample of 1,002 adults, 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (501 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 501 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 299 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the 2012 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status, based on extrapolations from the 2013 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,002	3.6 percentage points
Republican	252	7.3 percentage points
Democrat	300	6.6 percentage points
Independent	364	6.0 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
March 20-23, 2014 OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,002

ASK ALL:

PEW.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy					
March 20-23, 2014	30	34	18	17	2
March 6-9, 2014	27	31	19	22	1
February 27-March 2, 2014	27	32	16	24	1
February 6-9, 2014	28	29	20	22	1
January 30-February 2, 2014	29	31	17	23	*
January 9-12, 2014	28	29	19	23	1
January 2-5, 2014	29	31	17	22	1
December 12-15, 2013	26	27	21	24	1
November 14-17, 2013	32	32	17	19	*
October 31-November 3, 2013	31	37	16	15	*
October 17-20, 2013	41	31	16	12	*
October 3-6, 2013	34	30	19	16	1
September 25-29, 2013	35	30	16	18	*
September 19-22, 2013	28	33	20	19	1
September 12-15, 2013	28	34	17	20	*
August 1-4, 2013	28	35	19	17	1
July 18-21, 2013	28	29	20	23	1
June 20-23, 2013	28	30	19	22	1
June 13-16, 2013	30	32	15	22	*
June 6-9, 2013	33	31	15	21	*
May 16-19, 2013	30	31	20	19	*
May 9-12, 2013	28	30	21	20	1
March 28-31, 2013	30	30	17	22	1
March 7-10, 2013	35	30	16	19	*
January 31-February 3, 2013	33	33	16	16	1
January 17-20, 2013	36	32	15	16	*
January 3-6, 2013	34	32	18	16	1

SEE TREND FOR PREVIOUS YEARS: <http://www.people-press.org/files/2014/01/NII-Economy-trend.pdf>

b. Russia taking control of Ukraine's Crimea region					
March 20-23, 2014	30	33	14	21	1
March 6-9, 2014: <i>Russia sending troops into Ukraine's Crimea region in response to a new Ukrainian government</i>	28	31	17	23	1
February 27-March 2, 2014: <i>Political violence and a new government in Ukraine</i>	19	28	21	31	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
August 29-31, 2008: <i>The ongoing hostilities between Russia and the Republic of Georgia</i>	22	31	26	20	1
August 22-25, 2008	27	39	22	12	*
August 15-18, 2008	35	35	15	15	*
August 8-11, 2008: <i>Russia sending troops into the Republic of Georgia</i>	17	22	23	37	1

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
c. The investigation into a missing Malaysia Airlines plane					
March 20-23, 2014	39	33	18	9	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
July 11-14, 2013: <i>A plane crash in San Francisco</i>	24	32	21	22	1
November 16-19, 2009: News about a US Airways flight crashing into the Hudson River	44	34	14	8	*
May 15-18, 2009: <i>The investigation into a February plane crash in Buffalo, New York</i>	17	26	25	33	*
February 13-16, 2009: <i>A plane crashing into a house near Buffalo, New York, killing 50 people</i>	32	39	16	13	*
August 22-28, 2008: <i>A plane crash in Madrid, Spain</i>	8	22	32	37	1
July 20-23, 2007: <i>A plane crash in Brazil that killed nearly 200 people</i>	13	28	27	31	1
November, 2001: <i>The recent crash on an American Airlines plane near Kennedy Airport in New York</i>	48	34	13	4	1
February, 2000: <i>Crash of an Alaskan Airlines jet near Los Angeles</i>	35	40	17	8	*
December, 1999: <i>The crash of an EgyptAir plane off the coast of New England and the investigation into what happened</i>	30	44	15	10	1
July, 1999: <i>Crash of an American Airlines flight in Arkansas</i>	19	38	25	17	1
July, 1996: <i>The crash of a Paris-bound TWA plane off the coast of New York</i>	69	23	6	2	*
February, 1990: <i>Crash of Colombian airliner near JFK airport in New York</i>	33	39	18	10	0
d. Reports about the U.S. government's phone and internet surveillance programs					
March 20-23, 2014	19	23	26	30	1
October 31-November 3, 2013	22	29	26	24	*
September 12-15, 2013: <i>The government collecting information about telephone calls, e-mails and other online communications as part of efforts to monitor terrorist activity</i>	23	32	18	27	*
July 18-21, 2013: <i>Debate over government phone and internet surveillance programs</i>	19	26	21	34	1
July 11-14, 2013: <i>Efforts by Edward Snowden, who leaked information about government surveillance secrets, to gain asylum in another country</i>	16	27	25	30	1
June 27-30, 2013: <i>U.S. efforts to apprehend Edward Snowden, who leaked government surveillance secrets</i>	20	30	20	30	1
June 20-23, 2013: <i>Debate over government phone and internet surveillance programs</i>	23	30	17	29	1

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
June 13-16, 2013: <i>The government collecting information about telephone calls, e-mails and other online communications as part of efforts to monitor terrorist activity</i>	35	27	15	21	1
June 7-9, 2013: <i>The government collecting emails and other online activities directly from large internet companies to track foreign suspects in terror investigations</i>	26	24	17	33	1
June 6-9, 2013: <i>The government collecting records about Verizon phone calls for national security purposes</i>	27	21	17	35	*
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
December 2-5, 2010: <i>The release of classified documents about U.S. diplomatic relations by the Wikileaks website</i>	30	23	20	25	2
May 12-22, 2006: <i>Reports that the National Security Agency has been collecting telephone records of millions of American citizens</i>	33	28	22	16	1
e. News about this year's congressional elections					
March 20-23, 2014	15	22	22	39	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
October 28-November 1, 2010	29	30	17	23	1
October 27-30, 2010: <i>News about candidates and election campaigns in your state and district</i>	27	35	17	20	1
October 21-24, 2010: <i>News about this year's congressional elections</i>	30	28	18	23	1
October 13-18, 2010: <i>News about candidates and election campaigns in your state and district</i>	24	34	22	19	1
October 14-17, 2010: <i>News about this year's congressional elections</i>	33	25	19	23	*
October 7-10, 2010	23	27	19	30	1
September 30-October 3, 2010	25	34	19	21	1
September 23-26, 2010	25	33	23	18	1
September 16-19, 2010	23	26	23	27	1
September 9-12, 2010	22	23	21	34	1
September 2-6, 2010	26	24	23	26	1
August 26-29, 2010	20	27	23	28	1
August 19-22, 2010	19	23	24	33	1
August 12-15, 2010	20	22	19	38	1
July 29-August 1, 2010	29	34	22	14	*
July 15-18, 2010	17	23	26	33	1
June 16-20, 2010: <i>News about candidates and election campaigns in your state and district</i>	15	33	31	20	*
June 10-13, 2010: <i>News about this year's congressional elections</i>	20	29	24	27	1
May 20-23, 2010	23	25	24	27	*
April 23-26, 2010	20	25	19	35	*
March 5-8, 2010	25	27	21	26	1
January 8-11, 2010	20	24	26	29	1

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
Early November, 2006: <i>News about candidates and election campaigns in your state and district</i>	27	37	18	17	1
Late October, 2006 (RVs)	27	45	17	11	*
Early October, 2006	21	38	25	15	1
Early September, 2006	16	32	28	23	1
August, 2006	20	29	28	22	1
June, 2006	18	30	29	21	2
May, 2006	18	28	30	23	1
Early November, 2002 (RVs)	27	46	18	9	*
Late October, 2002 (RVs)	28	34	24	13	1
Early October, 2002 (RVs)	21	46	22	10	1
Early September, 2002	17	29	29	24	1
Late October, 1998 (RVs)	26	45	20	9	*
Early October, 1998 (RVs)	21	43	24	11	1
Early September, 1998	17	32	28	23	*
Early August, 1998	13	30	28	23	1
June, 1998	9	27	33	30	1
April, 1998 ¹	16	33	24	27	*
November, 1994	18	42	25	15	*
Late October, 1994	14	38	31	16	1
Early October, 1994	23	34	23	19	1
September, 1994	19	34	29	18	*
November, 1990	38	34	17	11	*
October, 1990	18	32	28	22	*
f. News about how the rollout of the 2010 health care law is going					
March 20-23, 2014	24	25	22	27	2
March 6-9, 2014	23	27	18	31	2
February 6-9, 2014	23	24	23	30	1
January 2-5, 2014	30	24	18	27	2
December 12-15, 2013	26	26	22	25	1
November 14-17, 2013	37	28	16	19	*
October 31-November 3, 2013: <i>News about health insurance exchanges opening around the country as part of the 2010 health care law</i>	32	32	19	17	*
October 17-20, 2013	33	28	22	17	*
October 3-6, 2013	33	24	22	20	1
August 29-September 1, 2013: <i>News about parts of the health care law that are about to take effect</i>	23	25	21	30	*
July 18-21, 2013	25	25	19	30	*
June 28-July 1, 2012: <i>The Supreme Court decision on the 2010 health care law</i>	45	21	14	19	*
March 29-April 1, 2012: <i>Supreme Court hearings about the 2010 health care reform law</i>	29	27	17	27	*
November 17-20, 2011: <i>The U.S. Supreme Court agreeing to hear legal challenges to last year's health care reform law</i>	18	24	24	33	1
February 3-6, 2011: <i>A federal judge ruling that part of the new health care law is unconstitutional</i>	25	28	19	28	1

¹ In April 1998, September 1994 and October 1990, story was listed as "Candidates and election campaigns in your state." In November 1990, story was listed as "Candidates and elections in your state."

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
January 20-23, 2011: <i>News about Republican efforts to repeal last year's health care law</i>	29	29	20	21	1
December 16-19, 2010: <i>A federal judge ruling that parts of the new health care law are unconstitutional</i>	28	24	17	30	1
September 23-26, 2010: <i>News about portions of this year's health care reform law beginning to take effect</i>	37	31	17	14	1
April 16-19, 2010: <i>News about the new health care reform law</i>	40	30	16	14	*
April 9-12, 2010	46	27	15	12	*
April 1-5, 2010	42	27	14	16	*
March 26-29, 2010: <i>Debate over health care reform</i>	49	29	12	10	*
March 19-22, 2010	51	24	11	14	*
March 12-15, 2010	40	31	16	13	*
March 5-8, 2010	42	27	17	15	*
February 26-March 1, 2010	29	29	19	22	*
February 19-22, 2010	33	28	19	19	*
January 29-February 1, 2010	39	27	16	17	*
January 22-25, 2010	41	32	15	11	*
January 15-18, 2010	37	27	19	18	*
January 8-11, 2010	39	26	20	15	*
December 18-21, 2009	42	27	16	14	*
December 11-14, 2009	42	30	15	14	*
December 4-7, 2009	42	28	15	14	1
November 20-23, 2009	42	29	14	15	*
November 13-16, 2009	38	26	17	17	1
November 6-9, 2009	35	28	15	22	1
October 30-November 2, 2009	32	26	19	23	*
October 23-26, 2009	40	27	16	17	1
October 16-19, 2009	36	28	15	21	*
October 9-12, 2009	37	29	14	19	1
October 2-5, 2009	39	29	16	16	*
September 25-28, 2009	45	31	12	12	0
September 18-21, 2009	44	26	19	11	*
September 11-14, 2009	44	27	14	15	*
September 3-6, 2009	40	26	16	17	0
August 28-31, 2009	40	28	17	14	1
August 21-24, 2009	49	24	12	15	1
August 14-17, 2009	39	31	15	15	1
August 7-10, 2009: <i>Debate in Washington over health care reform</i>	40	27	17	15	1
July 31-August 3, 2009	47	26	14	13	1
July 24-27, 2009	44	28	15	13	*
July 17-20, 2009	33	31	13	21	2
July 10-13, 2009	24	29	20	27	*
June 26-29, 2009	29	26	20	25	1
June 19-22, 2009	28	28	20	23	*
June 12-15, 2009	29	26	18	26	*
May 15-18, 2009: <i>Debate over Barack Obama's health care plans</i>	25	30	20	24	*
March 6-9, 2009: <i>Obama proposing a \$630 billion fund for overhauling health care</i>	41	32	13	14	*
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
October, 1994: <i>The debate in Congress about health care reform</i>	32	37	18	12	1

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
September, 1994: <i>The Clinton administration's health care reform proposals</i>	32	41	18	9	*
June, 1994	34	40	19	7	*
May, 1994	37	37	16	9	1
January, 1994	38	38	15	9	*
Early January, 1994	40	40	14	6	*
December, 1993	45	35	12	7	1
October, 1993	44	32	17	6	1
September, 1993	49	34	11	6	*
August, 1993: <i>Reports about the White House task force on health care reform headed by Hillary Clinton</i>	27	32	25	15	1
June, 1993	28	38	19	15	*
May, 1993	30	30	25	14	1
g. Reports about safety defects in cars made by Toyota and General Motors					
March 20-23, 2014	14	23	25	37	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
January 29-February 1, 2010: <i>Toyota's recall and temporary halt of sales of many cars and trucks because of problems with sudden acceleration</i>	21	30	22	26	1
Early October, 2000: <i>The recall of defective Firestone tires</i>	42	34	16	8	*

ASK ALL:

PEW.2 Which ONE of the stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following MORE closely? **[DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.]**

Mar 20-23

2014

44	The investigation into a missing Malaysia Airlines plane
15	Russia taking control of Ukraine's Crimea region
10	News about how the rollout of the 2010 health care law is going
8	Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy
3	Reports about the U.S. government's phone and internet surveillance programs
2	Reports about safety defects in cars made by Toyota and General Motors
2	News about this year's congressional elections
1	Reports about immigration
5	Some other story (VOL.)
10	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK ALL:

PEW.2a Do you think news organizations are giving too much coverage, too little coverage or the right amount of coverage to each of the following? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**

	<u>Too much coverage</u>	<u>Too little coverage</u>	<u>Right amount of coverage</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
a. Russia taking control of Ukraine's Crimea region				
March 20-23, 2014	14	20	56	10
b. The investigation into a missing Malaysia Airlines plane				
March 20-23, 2014	33	12	48	7

PEW.2a CONTINUED...

	<u>Too much coverage</u>	<u>Too little coverage</u>	<u>Right amount of coverage</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
c. News about how the rollout of the 2010 health care law is going				
March 20-23, 2014	14	37	40	9
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:				
April 1-5, 2010: <i>News about the new health care reform law</i>	17	30	46	7
March 12-15, 2010: <i>Debate over health care reform</i>	14	36	46	4
January 22-25, 2010	11	38	47	3
October 16-19, 2009	16	36	46	2
October 2-5, 2009	21	35	40	4
July 17-20, 2009: <i>Debate in Washington over health care reform</i>	6	45	44	6

QUESTIONS PEW.3-PEW.7 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE