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For The People & The Press

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Top One-Word Reactions – “Disappointed,”  
“Surprised”

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## Division, Uncertainty over Court’s Health Care Ruling

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## Top One-Word Reactions – “Disappointed,” “Surprised” Division, Uncertainty over Court’s Health Care Ruling

The public has long been divided in its opinions about the 2010 health care law. There is now a similar division of opinion over last week’s Supreme Court decision to uphold the law – 40% say they disapprove of the decision, while 36% approve and nearly a quarter (24%) offer no opinion.

Despite extensive public interest in the court’s ruling, just 55% of the public knows that the Supreme Court upheld most of the health care law’s provisions; 45% say either that the court rejected most provisions (15%) or do not know what the court did (30%). Among those aware that the court upheld most of the law, 50% approve of the decision while 42% disapprove.

The persistent partisan divisions over the law are reflected in the public’s reactions to the court’s June 28 decision. Seven-in-ten Republicans disapprove of the Court’s decision, while 66% of Democrats approve of it. About four-in-ten (42%) independents disapprove of the ruling while 32% approve.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted June 28 to July 1 among 1,006 adults, finds that the top single-word reactions to the court’s decision are “disappointed” and “surprised.” While “disappointed” is by far the top reaction among those who disapprove of the decision, “good,” “surprised” and “happy” are the top words among those who approve of the ruling.

### Public Split over Court Decision, Many Unsure How it Ruled

	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind
<i>Supreme Court’s decision on 2010 health care law ...</i>	%	%	%	%
Approve	36	13	66	32
Disapprove	40	70	15	42
Don’t know	<u>24</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>26</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Did court ___ most provisions in the health care law?</i>				
Uphold	55	56	64	56
Reject	15	19	11	13
Don’t know	<u>30</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>31</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 28-July 1, 2012.

### One-Word Reactions to Health Care Ruling

Total	View of decision	
	Approve	Disapprove
65 Disappointed	40 Good	57 Disappointed
65 Surprised	31 Surprised	25 Surprised
46 Good	28 Happy	22 Disgusted
28 Happy	17 Great	15 Shocked
23 Disgusted	15 Satisfied	12 Disapprove
19 Shocked	12 Fair	10 Appalled
17 Great	11 Approve	8 Sucks

PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 28-July 1, 2012.  
NOTE: These are the numbers of respondents who offered each response. These are **NOT** percentages. Top responses shown; for complete list, see survey topline.

The survey finds that 45% followed news about the court's decision very closely, making it the second most closely followed story of 2012 (52% tracked news about rising gas prices in March).

Among those who tracked news about the health care decision very closely, 50% approve of the decision while 45% disapprove. Among those who followed this news less closely, just 24% approve, 37% disapprove, with 39% offering no opinion.

There are substantial age differences in news interest in the decision, as well as in awareness of what the court decided. Only about quarter of those younger than 30 (24%) followed news about the court's health care decision very closely. That compares with 42% of those 30 to 49 and majorities of those 50 to 64 (56%) and 65 and older (62%).

Just 37% of those younger than 30 know that the court upheld most of the law's provisions; majorities of older age groups know that the court upheld most provisions. Majorities of those who have attended college answered this correctly, compared with 44% of those with a high school education or less.

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### Awareness of Health Care Ruling

<i>Did court ___ most provisions in the health care law?</i>	<b>Uphold</b>	<b>Reject</b>	<b>DK</b>
	%	%	%
Total	55	15	30=100
18-29	37	20	43=100
30-49	54	15	31=100
50-64	67	12	22=100
65+	62	15	23=100
College grad+	72	8	20=100
Some college	56	14	30=100
HS or less	44	20	36=100
Republican	56	19	25=100
Democrat	64	11	25=100
Independent	56	13	31=100
<i>Following court decision ...</i>			
Very closely	77	13	11=100
Less closely	37	17	46=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 28-July 1, 2012.

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## Health Care Ruling Is June's Top Story

The Supreme Court's health care decision is the month's most closely followed story, surpassing the economy and the presidential election. (Public interest in stories earlier in June can be found [here](#) and [here](#)).

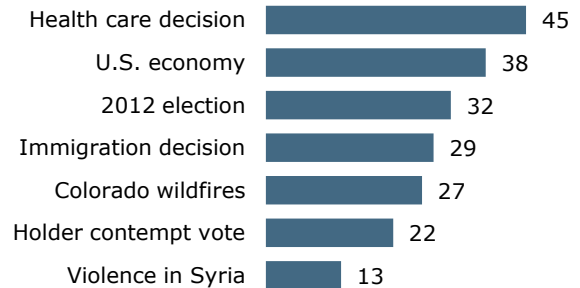
This week, there also was more interest in the court's ruling on health care than in its decision on Arizona's immigration law (29% very closely) and the House vote holding Attorney General Eric Holder in contempt for not sharing documents related to a gun-trafficking investigation (22% very closely).

Interest in the presidential election has remained fairly stable over the past few weeks. From June 28-July 1, 32% tracked news about the election very closely.

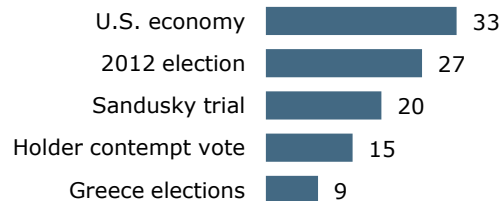
### Interest in Health Care Ruling Surpasses Other Recent News

% following each story very closely

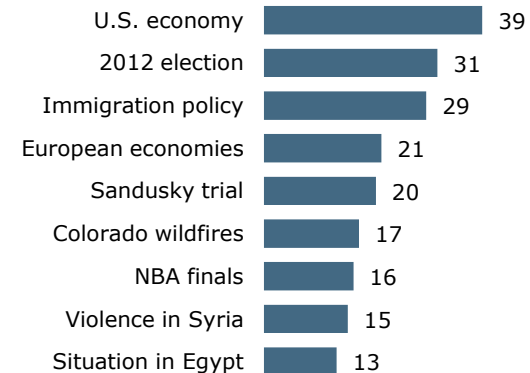
#### June 28-July 1



#### June 21-24



#### June 14-17



PEW RESEARCH CENTER June 14-17, 2012; June 21-24, 2012; June 28-July 1, 2012.

## About the News Interest Index

The *News Interest Index* is a weekly survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press aimed at gauging the public's interest in and reaction to major news events. The News Interest Index survey collects data from Thursday through Sunday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Most of the analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted June 28-July 1, 2012, among a national sample of 1,006 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (627 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 379 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 185 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted 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. 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.

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 March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status based on extrapolations from the 2011 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 within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,006	3.6 percentage points
Republicans	297	6.6 percentage points
Democrats	286	6.8 percentage points
Independents	322	6.4 percentage points

Additional analysis based on telephone interviews conducted June 21-24, 2012, among a national sample of 1,002 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (600 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 402 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 192 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted 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. 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.

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 March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status based on extrapolations from the 2011 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 within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,002	3.6 percentage points
Republicans	270	6.9 percentage points
Democrats	334	6.2 percentage points
Independents	296	6.6 percentage points

Analysis also included a survey based on telephone interviews conducted June 14-17, 2012, among a national sample of 1,002 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (601 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 401 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 187 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted 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. 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.

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 March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status based on extrapolations from the 2011 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 within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Plus or minus ...</b>
Total sample	1,002	3.6 percentage points
Republicans	264	7.0 percentage points
Democrats	319	6.4 percentage points
Independents	307	6.5 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.

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