



To: Interested Parties  
Fr: Lake Research Partners & Hart Research Associates  
Re: Strong Support for Medicare Negotiation of Prescription Drug Prices  
Date: August 20, 2021

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**Our two firms recently conducted research that shows overwhelming support for giving Medicare the power to negotiate lower prescription drug prices.<sup>1</sup>**

Both surveys show Medicare negotiation of prescription drug prices is a winning issue for Democrats and highlight both seniors' and voters' intense support for government policies to address affordability, particularly on prescription drug prices, with support across demographics and political lines.

In addition to being immensely supportive of Medicare negotiating drug prices, seniors and voters are very sensitive to the price of prescription drugs and health care, the pharmaceutical industry's harmful drug price increases, and the difference in prices paid in the United States for health care compared to other industrialized nations.

As Congress debates ending the ban on Medicare negotiation in the budget reconciliation package, it is clear that Americans, including seniors, think allowing Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices is one of the best ways to address concerns about rising prices. They want Congress to act.

**Americans overwhelmingly support allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices with prescription drug corporations.**

- In the LRP survey of voters aged 65 or older, an 87 percent majority favor a proposal to “allow Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices with prescription drug corporations” including 48 percent who strongly favor (rate 10 on 0-10 scale). Strong support crosses party lines with support among 89 percent of Democratic seniors (58 percent rate 10), 87 percent of Republican seniors (42 percent rate 10), and 81 percent of independent seniors (38 percent rate 10). Seniors in rural areas favor with strong intensity as well (84 percent favor, 46 percent rate 10).

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<sup>1</sup> Lake Research Partners designed and administered a nationwide [survey](#) of N=800 voters over age 65 likely to vote in the 2022 election including oversamples of 100 voters over age 65 likely to vote in the 2022 election who live in rural areas, and 100 voters over age 65 who identify as Democrats and indicate they are less likely to vote in the 2022 election (“low propensity Democrats”). The survey was fielded online using an opt-in panel matched to the voter file, was conducted June 16th -21st, 2021, and has a margin of error of +/-3.5 percentage points for the total sample. Funding for this research was provided by the Alliance for Retired Americans and Retired Americans PAC.

Hart Research Associates designed and administered a nationwide [survey](#) of N=1200 voters conducted online from April 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> 2021 with a margin of error of +/-2.8 percentage points. The survey was conducted on behalf of Protect Our Care.

- In the Hart survey of voters, a 93 percent majority of voters want to “give Medicare the power to negotiate with drug companies for lower prices,” including 54 percent who strongly favor this proposal. By party, at least 90 percent of all Democrats, Republicans, and independents favor. Democrats have the most intense favorability at 66 percent and Independents and Republicans are 51 percent and 42 percent strongly favorable respectively. A sizable majority also supports the notion that Medicare prescription drug negotiation would be beneficial to all Americans regardless of their insurance provider (94 percent total favorability; 62 percent strong favorability).

**Republican opposition to Medicare prescription drug negotiation generates backlash, making this a voting issue.**

- In the Hart voter survey, a 61 percent majority is unfavorable toward congressional Republicans when told that nearly all Republicans in Congress oppose the proposal with only 39 percent viewing Republicans favorably.
- A third of Republicans are unfavorable toward Republicans in Congress who oppose this proposal while strong majorities of Democrats and independents hold unfavorable views toward congressional Republicans at 86 percent and 72 percent respectively.

**Seniors and voters would cross party lines on this issue, presenting both an opportunity for Democratic candidates who favor this proposal to win over voters as well as a threat that could erode their base of support if they oppose it.**

- In the LRP senior survey, majorities across party lines would be more likely to vote for a candidate who favored allowing Medicare to negotiate with prescription drug corporations to lower prescription drug prices (73 percent more likely) and less likely to vote for a candidate who opposed this policy (67 percent less likely).
- When we ask if a **Democratic** candidate favored allowing Medicare to negotiate with prescription drug corporations to lower prescription drug prices, 51 percent of seniors would be more likely to vote for them, including 78 percent of Democrats, 35 percent of independents, and even 31 percent of Republicans.<sup>2</sup>
- Medicare negotiation is a key voting issue for Democratic seniors, and one in which they would abandon the support of a Democratic candidate who opposed allowing Medicare to negotiate. In the LRP senior survey, if a Democratic candidate opposed allowing Medicare to negotiate with prescription drug corporations to lower prescription drug prices, 55 percent of seniors would be less likely to vote for them, including a 60 percent majority of Democratic seniors, 53 percent of Republican seniors, and 49 percent of independent seniors.
- In the Hart voter survey, respondents were asked whether they would vote for a Democrat who supported Medicare negotiation or a Republican who opposed it. A majority of voters say they would vote for the Democrat (53 percent), while 30 percent would vote for the

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<sup>2</sup> Half of Republicans (51 percent) say it would make no difference in their vote, and 9 percent say they are unsure.

Republican and 17 percent would remain unaffected. Almost half of independents (48 percent) would vote for the Democrat and 20 percent would vote for the Republican making this a mobilization as well as a persuasion issue. Voters of color would overwhelmingly select the Democrat at 73 percent, while only 14 percent would vote for the Republican.

### **Voters are not moved by drug company arguments that Medicare drug negotiation would limit the pharmaceutical industry's ability to research and find innovative cures for diseases.**

- In the Hart voter survey, only 20 percent of voters find the research and development argument very convincing.<sup>3</sup> After hearing arguments from both sides, an overwhelming majority of voters still support Medicare negotiation at 85 percent total favorability and 49 percent strong favorability. Across partisanship, majorities still favor this proposal with 99 percent of Democrats, 89 percent of independents, and 68 percent of Republicans in support.
- In the LRP senior survey, reminding seniors that taxpayer dollars fund pharmaceutical research through our National Institutes of Health beats back the industry messaging on innovation in a head-to-head by 20 points. Even after batteries of opposition messaging around the innovation argument, seniors still overwhelmingly support Medicare's ability to negotiate drug prices (82 percent favor; 15 percent neutral; 3 percent oppose).

### **The affordability of health care and prescription drugs is one of the most important issues on voters' and senior voters' minds.**

- In the Hart voter survey, lower health care costs, prescription drug costs, and affordable health insurance are the most important issues for the President and Congress to act on at 62 percent, including 65 percent with independents.
- Voters respond to messages that stress the difficulty of lower-income Americans affording their medicines amidst other necessary expenses while pharmaceutical companies rake in profits. An overwhelming 82 percent of voters find the following statement convincing, including 60 percent who find it very convincing: "Millions of Americans cannot afford their medicines while drug companies make huge profits. Americans should not have to choose between paying for the medicines they need and paying for their food and rent."
- In the LRP senior survey, prescription drug prices (83 percent important) are also an extremely important issue. Low propensity Democratic seniors are more likely than others to name prescription drug prices as a very important issue. A strong 84 percent of low-propensity Democratic seniors say prescription drug prices are a very important issue (rate 8-10 on 0-10 scale of importance), compared to 75 percent of likely Democratic senior voters, and 65 percent of all seniors.

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<sup>3</sup> Full message from Hart survey: "Americans depend on the pharmaceutical industry to develop new cures and treatments to save lives, just as it did in developing safe and effective coronavirus vaccines. Putting government price controls on medicines will reduce the ability of the drug companies to discover new life-saving cures and treatments for diseases including cancer and Alzheimer's."

**Voters believe that they are paying far too much for prescription drugs, and congressional action to lower drug prices will also address voters' overall concerns about rising costs.**

- As economists debate inflation, recent public polling from [Navigator polling](#) released on August 10<sup>th</sup> shows the most important costs voters want the government to take action on are health care costs like prescription drugs, health insurance premiums, or doctor visits (81 percent), a higher priority than utilities (71 percent), gas (68 percent), or groceries (67 percent).
- A strong 76 percent of voters in the Hart survey believe the amount pharmaceutical companies charge for drugs is unreasonable with 38 percent believing so with strong intensity.
- Messages that highlight how pharmaceutical companies arbitrarily raise drug prices even in times of crisis like the pandemic are very convincing to voters overall. A 79 percent majority of voters find the following statement convincing, including 55 percent who find it very convincing: “Drug companies raise the price of existing drugs like insulin year after year, with no reason other than that they can. Even during the pandemic and economic crisis, drug companies raised the prices of more than 1,000 medicines.”
- A sizable majority of voters in the Hart survey also believe that Americans should not pay three times more for medicines than people in other countries (84 percent total convincing; 64 percent very convincing).

**Seniors strongly support expanding Medicare coverage to include hearing vision, and dental benefits.**

- Seniors in the LRP survey indicate they want savings from allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices to expand Medicare coverage to include hearing, dental, and vision benefits (56 percent) over funding public research (15 percent) or lowering the Medicare eligibility age to 60 instead of 65 (9 percent).
- When considering each individual approach against another option, 71 percent of seniors prefer expanding Medicare coverage to include hearing, dental, and vision benefits while 12 percent prefer making Medicare available to Americans starting at age 60 instead of 65. A 65 percent majority of seniors prefer expanding Medicare coverage to include hearing, dental, and vision benefits while 19 percent prefer funding public research into new treatments and cures.

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