

December 10, 2009

To: Communications Workers of America

Fr: John Anzalone and Matt Hogan

Re: Southern Voters are Strongly Opposed to Taxing High-Cost Insurance Plans

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As Congress deliberates over how to fund health insurance reform, new polling of 600 likely 2010 voters in Arkansas, Louisiana and Virginia, commissioned by the Communications Workers of America and conducted by Anzalone Liszt Research, finds that southern voters overwhelmingly oppose taxing high-cost health insurance plans as a way to help fund health insurance reform, but support raising taxes on the wealthy to accomplish the same goal.

Support for taxing high-cost insurance plans would have electoral implications as well, as 74% of southern voters say that it would make them less likely to re-elect their member of Congress in 2010. Conversely, a plurality of voters (48%) would be *more* likely to re-elect a member of Congress who supports raising taxes on the wealthy as a way to fund health insurance reform.

- **Strong opposition to taxing high-cost insurance plans across all three states.** At least 70% of voters in each of the three southern states surveyed oppose an excise tax, with 76% of Arkansas voters, 77% of Louisiana voters and 70% of Virginia voters rejecting such a proposal.
- **Southern voters are less likely to re-elect their member of Congress if they support taxing high-cost health insurance plans.** Southern voters are less likely to re-elect their member of Congress by a 44-point margin (66% less likely to 22% more likely) if they support taxing high-cost insurance plans. This opposition is not tepid, as 50% say that if their member of Congress supported an excise tax, it would make them *much* less likely to re-elect them.
- **Opposition to an excise tax on high-cost plans is even higher among Independents.** Independents in the South are more likely to both oppose an excise tax on health insurance plans (74%) and vote against a member of Congress that supports one (70%), than southern voters overall.
- **Southern voters support raising taxes on households earning over a million dollars a year to help pay for health insurance reform.** Voters here clearly prefer to fund health insurance reform by raising taxes on the wealthy than by taxing high-cost plans. By a 9-point margin (53% to 44%) they support raising taxes on the wealthy to help fund reform. The proposal was supported by strong majorities in both Arkansas (54%) and Virginia (57%), as well as by a plurality in Louisiana (49%).
- **A plurality is more likely to re-elect their member of Congress if they fund healthcare reform by raising taxes on the wealthy.** Unlike the risks inherent with supporting an excise tax, southern voters are more likely to re-elect their member of Congress by a 3-point margin (48% to 45%) if they support taxing the wealthy as a way to fund health insurance reform.