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To be or not to be?

That is the question for the health reform law. While the House passed a bill to repeal the health reform law, it has almost no chance of passing in the Democrat-controlled Senate. (See [Russ Douthat's excellent editorial in the New York Times, "Reforming Reform"](#) January 23, 2011.)

Republicans, especially newly elected ones, point to a public outcry to repeal health reform. There is indeed an outcry for repeal and it is as loud as the competing outcry to move forward with reform or even to expand the law. As recently as December 2010, 42 percent of Americans had a favorable view of health reform and 41 percent want to keep the law or expand it. (Kaiser Family Foundation's Public Opinion, January 2011 [The Public, Healthcare Reform, and Views on Repeal](#).) On the other hand, 41 percent have an unfavorable view and 45 percent want to repeal parts or all of the law.

With this virtually even, party-line split, neither side can muster a groundswell of support. The most likely result is the health reform moves forward, perhaps hindered somewhat by being starved for funds but moves forward nevertheless.

Meanwhile, the law itself has already brought some changes that people are enjoying: coverage for children up to age 26 is one example. Since the economy is still struggling, new college graduates are not finding the proverbial "good jobs with benefits"; allowing them to stay on their parents' health plan is keeping at least some of them from being uninsured. It is much too early to estimate how many adult children are using this new opportunity. Some states already had laws offering adult children coverage, so the effect nationally is uneven.

Reversing the changes that health reform has already made would likely be seen as taking away a benefit.

So, for health reform 2011, "to be" seems to be the only viable choice. For 2012 and forward, well, we shall see what unfolds.

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