Poll: 47% Disapprove of Health Care Law

By Dalia Sussman

More Americans continue to disapprove of the federal health care legislation than support it, with a deep partisan divide underscoring their views, according to a New York Times/CBS News poll.

Passed in 2010, the Affordable Care Act has never won the support of most Americans in surveys by The Times and CBS News, highlighting the Obama administration’s lack of success in winning over the general public to its signature domestic accomplishment.

Republicans have maintained a steady drumbeat against the law on Capitol Hill and on the campaign trail. Some of the legislation’s most contentious provisions will be under scrutiny this week at the Supreme Court where 26 states are challenging the law’s constitutionality in three days of arguments.

The new poll, conducted last Wednesday through Sunday, finds that 36 percent of Americans approve of the health care law, while 47 percent are opposed. By nearly 2 to 1, those who say they strongly disapprove of the law outnumber those who strongly approve of the legislation. Sixteen percent have no opinion.

Views reflect the respondents’ partisanship. A majority of Democrats in the poll approve of the law, though not overwhelmingly so - 56 percent approve, including 28 percent who strongly approve. Approval peaks among self-described liberals, at nearly two-thirds.

But intensity of sentiment is much stronger on the other side of the political divide, with most Republicans not only opposed to the law’s provisions, but strongly so.

About three-quarters of Republicans disapprove, with more than 6 in 10 expressing strong disapproval, according to the survey. Results are similar among respondents who support the Tea Party movement. Disapproval peaks among people who call themselves very conservative, with more than
8 in 10 opposing the law.

More independents agree with Republicans about the law than with Democrats, with 51 percent of these important swing voters saying they disapprove of it.

The nationwide poll is based on telephone interviews conducted March 21-25 on landlines and cellphones with 986 adults and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points.

Additional results from this poll will be available Monday evening at NYTimes.com.