

# WONKBLOG

## The politics of the GOP's 'repeal and replace'

Posted by Sarah Kliff at 02:55 PM ET, 12/26/2011

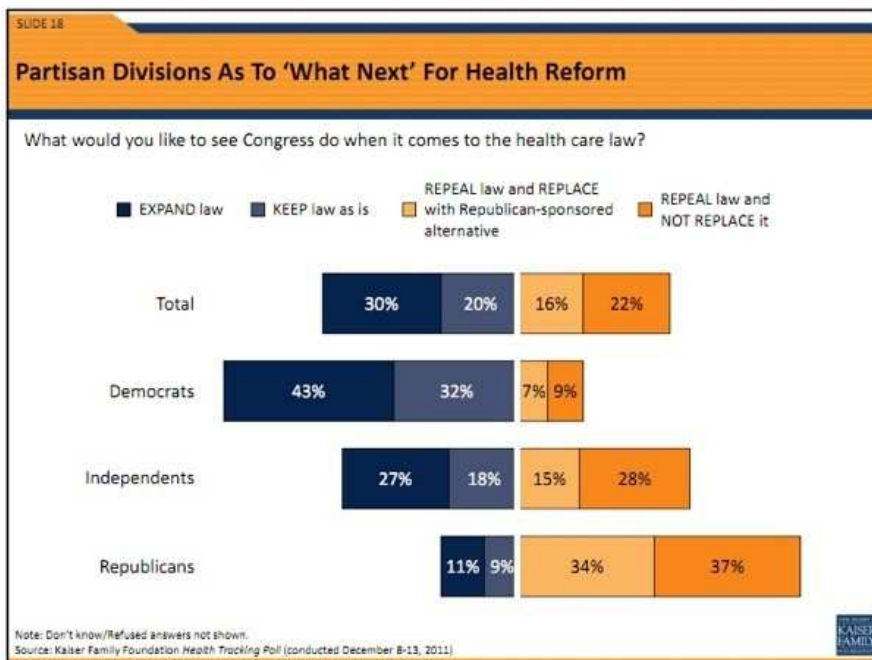
In his Washington Post [story](#) Sunday, my colleague David Fahrenthold has Cato Institute's Michael Cannon list off two reasons Republicans haven't focused much on the "replace" of their repeal-and-replace argument on health reform:

"If Republicans aren't talking about how they would replace Obamacare," said Michael Cannon, the libertarian Cato Institute's director of health policy studies, "there are two good reasons for that."

"The first one is: They're winning the argument. Why would they change the subject?" Cannon said, meaning that Republicans have won support by focusing only on the "repeal" part of their promise. "The second one is: Their current proposals [for replacement] aren't ready for prime time."

I'd add a third: "Replace" does not have much of a political constituency. The Kaiser Family Foundation has repeatedly found in polls that more voters want to see health reform repealed flat-out, rather than repealed and replaced with something

else:



The gap is especially wide among independent voters who support repeal. There's nearly a 2-to-1 ratio of those who want to see the law fall without a replacement, versus those who want to see a new solution.