



Rutgers Center for
State Health Policy

*Institute for Health, Health Care Policy
and Aging Research*

Results from the 2007 New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll

Do we need to worry about wireless substitution in public opinion polls about health reform?

**Research and Evaluation Conference
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
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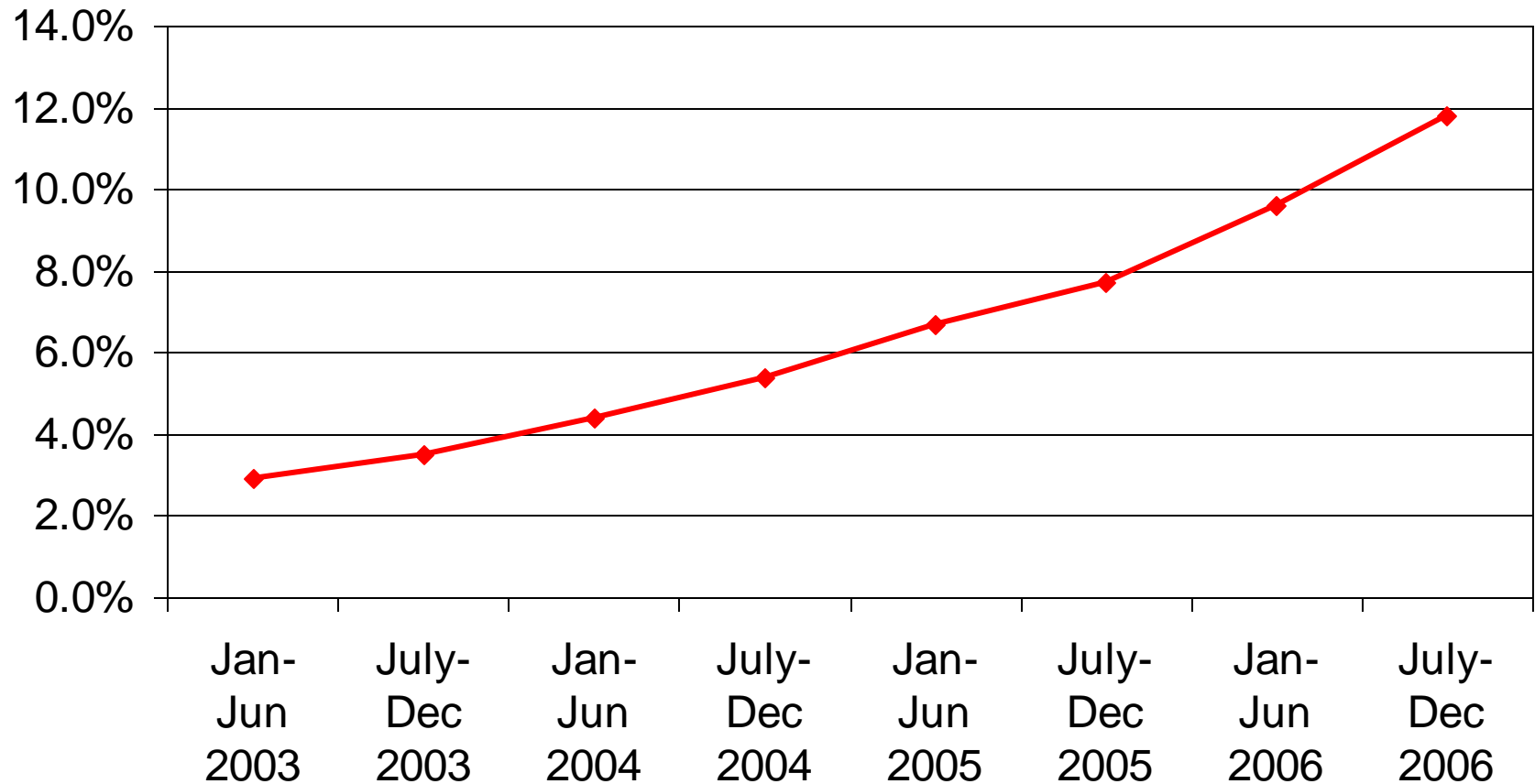
Acknowledgements

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Potential for Sample Frame Coverage Bias in Health Opinion Polls

- Opinion polls are traditionally based on Random Digit Dial (RDD) samples using landlines
- A growing number of households rely on wireless phones and do not have landlines
- Potential for sample frame coverage bias varies by:
 - Prevalence of wireless substitution
 - Magnitude of wireless - landline differences

Percentage of Adults Living in Wireless-Only Households



Source: Blumberg and Luke, Wireless Substitution: Preliminary Data from the January-June 2006 National Health Interview Survey. NCHS E-Health Stats. January 18, 2007; July-December data from personal communication from Risa Becker, mediamark.com (Sept. 6, 2007)

Characteristics of Wireless-Only Users

Adults, Jan-June 2006

- Age Group
 - **22.6%** - 18-24
 - **12.5%** - 25-44
 - **5.3%** - 45-64
 - **1.3%** - 65+
- **32.9%** - Current smoker (Jan-June 2005)
- **31.1%** - Currently uninsured (Jan-June 2005)
- **44.2%** - Living with unrelated roommate
- **22.5%** - Renters

Sources: Blumberg and Luke, op cit. and Blumberg, Luke, Cyanamon, [AJPH](#), May 2006.

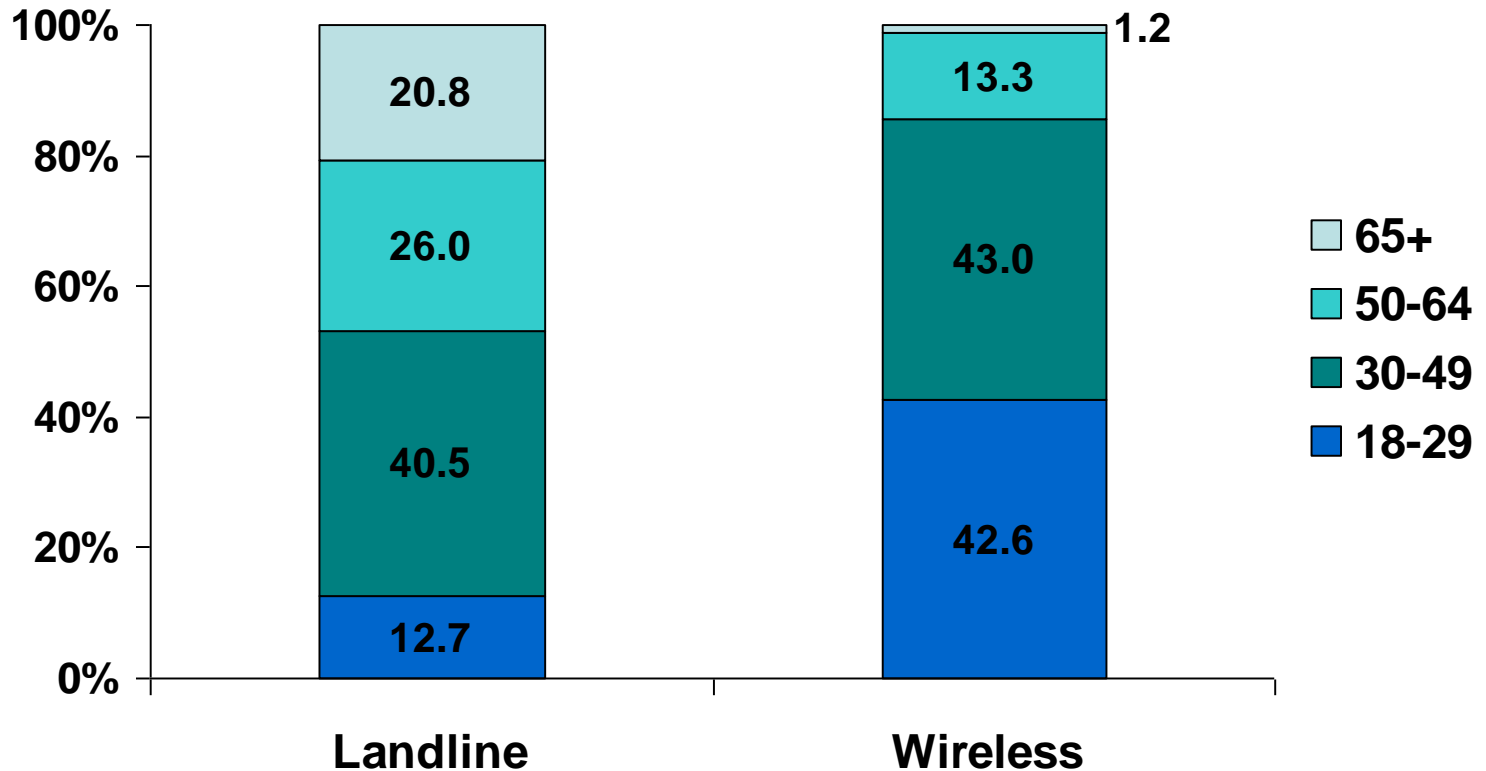
Question for Today

Is there a wireless substitution bias in polls about health care and support for reform?

NJ Health Care Opinion Poll

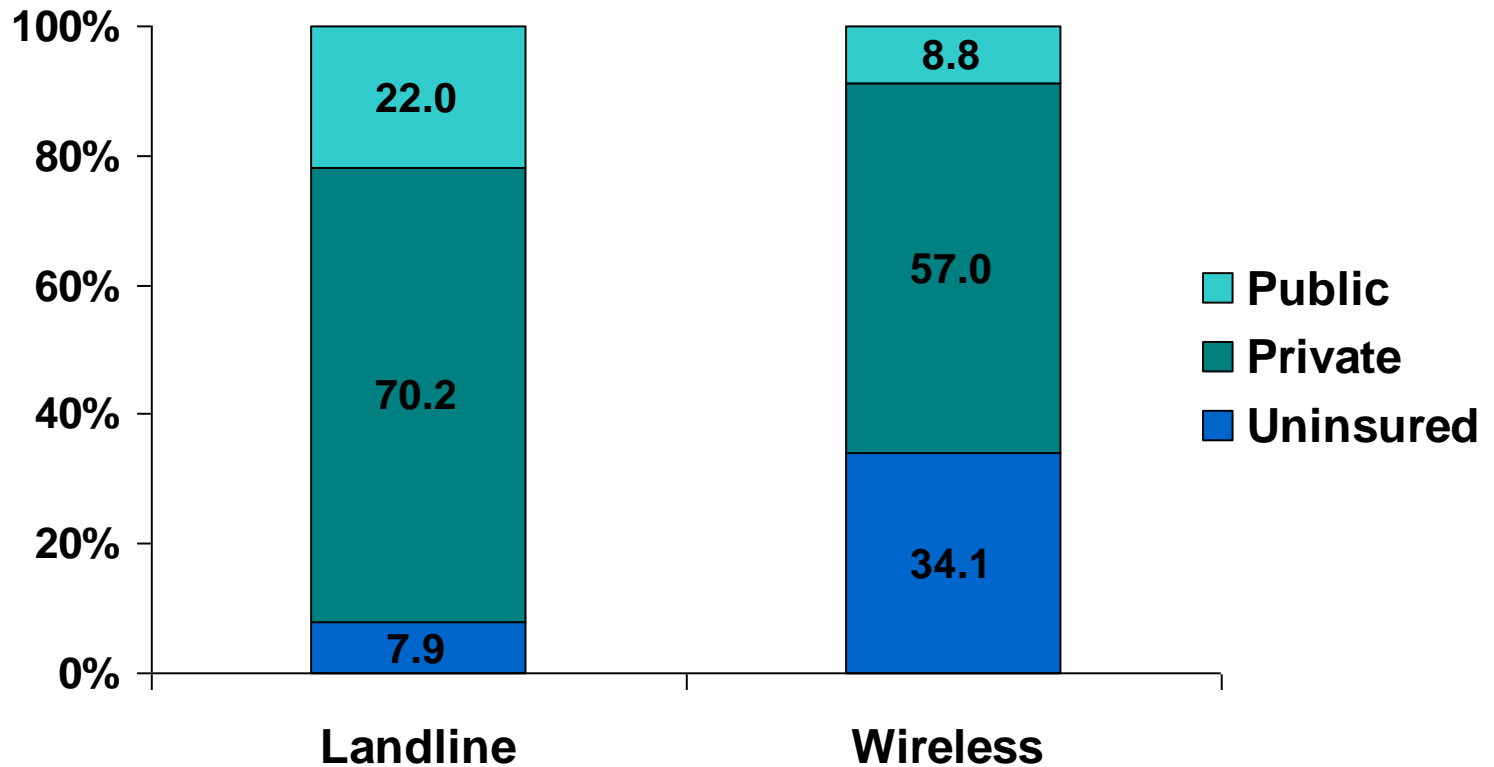
- Designed to gauge concerns about health care issues and support for reform in NJ (release date Oct. 3)
- 22 minute interview, June 1 to July 9, 2007
- English and Spanish
- 1,104 adults total...
 - 804 by traditional RDD landline sample
 - 300 by wireless phone – wireless only (197) and wireless “mainly” (103)
- Response rate 32%
- Weighted
 - Adjust for probability of selection
 - Post-hoc adjustment to Census distributions (age, sex, education)

Age Distribution by Sub-Sample



Source: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007

Coverage Status by Sub-Sample



Sources: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007

Analysis Strategy

- For selected poll responses compare...
 - Landline and wireless groups (only & mainly)
 - Landline-only and total populations
- Unadjusted estimates and estimates adjusted for...
 - Age (18-29, 30-49, 50-64, 65+)
 - Self-assessed health (fair/poor v. other)
 - Coverage (public, private, none)
 - Number adults (1, 2, 3+)
 - Region of state (5 areas)
 - Marital status (4 categories)
 - Employment status (5 categories)
 - Income (<\$35k, \$35k-\$70k, >70k)

Is there a wireless substitution bias?

Differences between Total & Landline-Only Groups

No Significant Differences

- Need for reform
- Gov't action on cost
- Gov't action on uninsured
- Employer mandate
- Expand public programs covering low-income

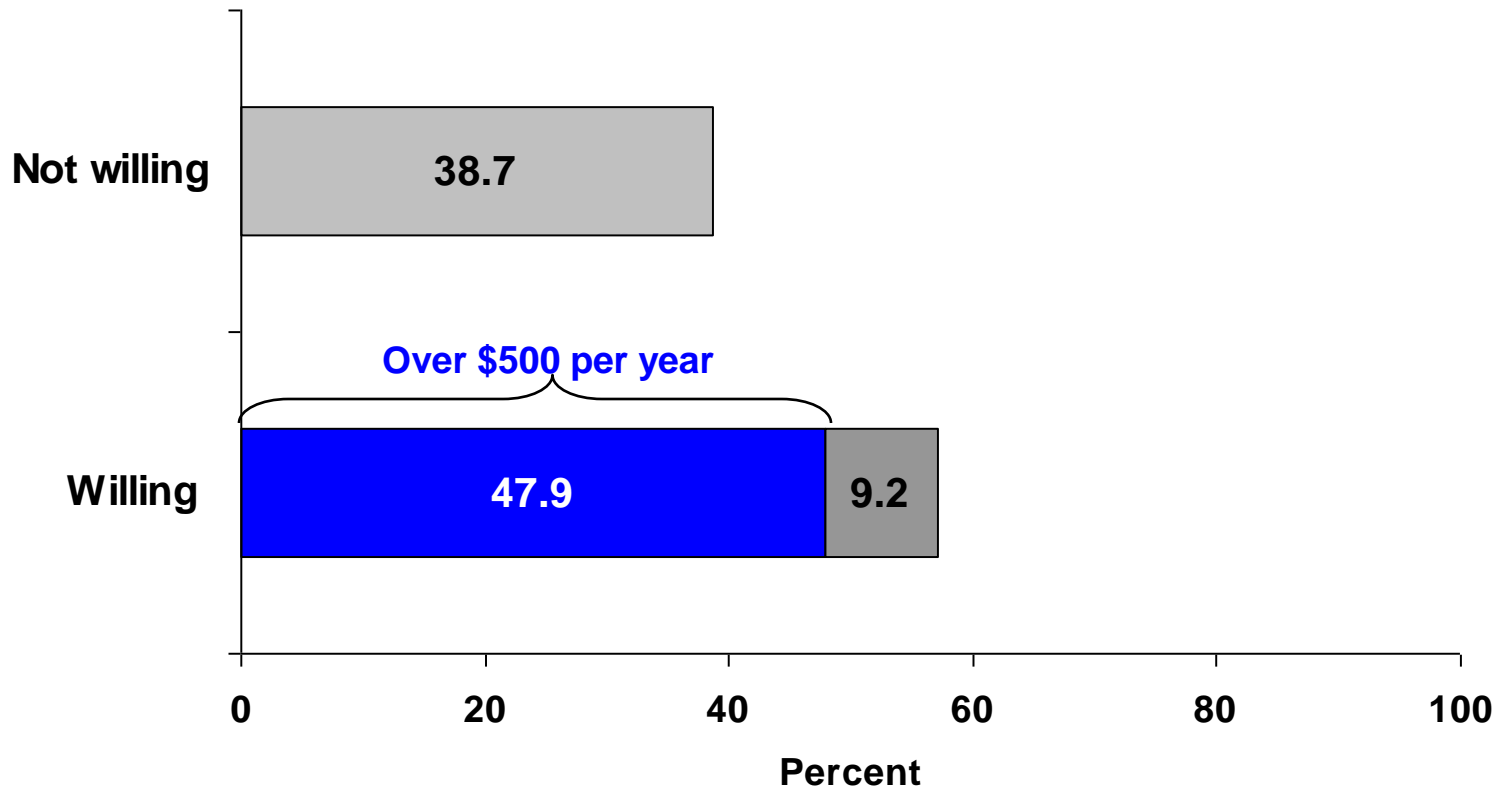
Significant Differences

- Willingness to pay more taxes*
- Read or heard about reform
- Individual mandate

*Almost significant ($p=0.11$)

Willingness to Pay Higher Taxes

Would you be willing or not willing to pay higher taxes so that everyone in New Jersey has health insurance they can't lose, no matter what?

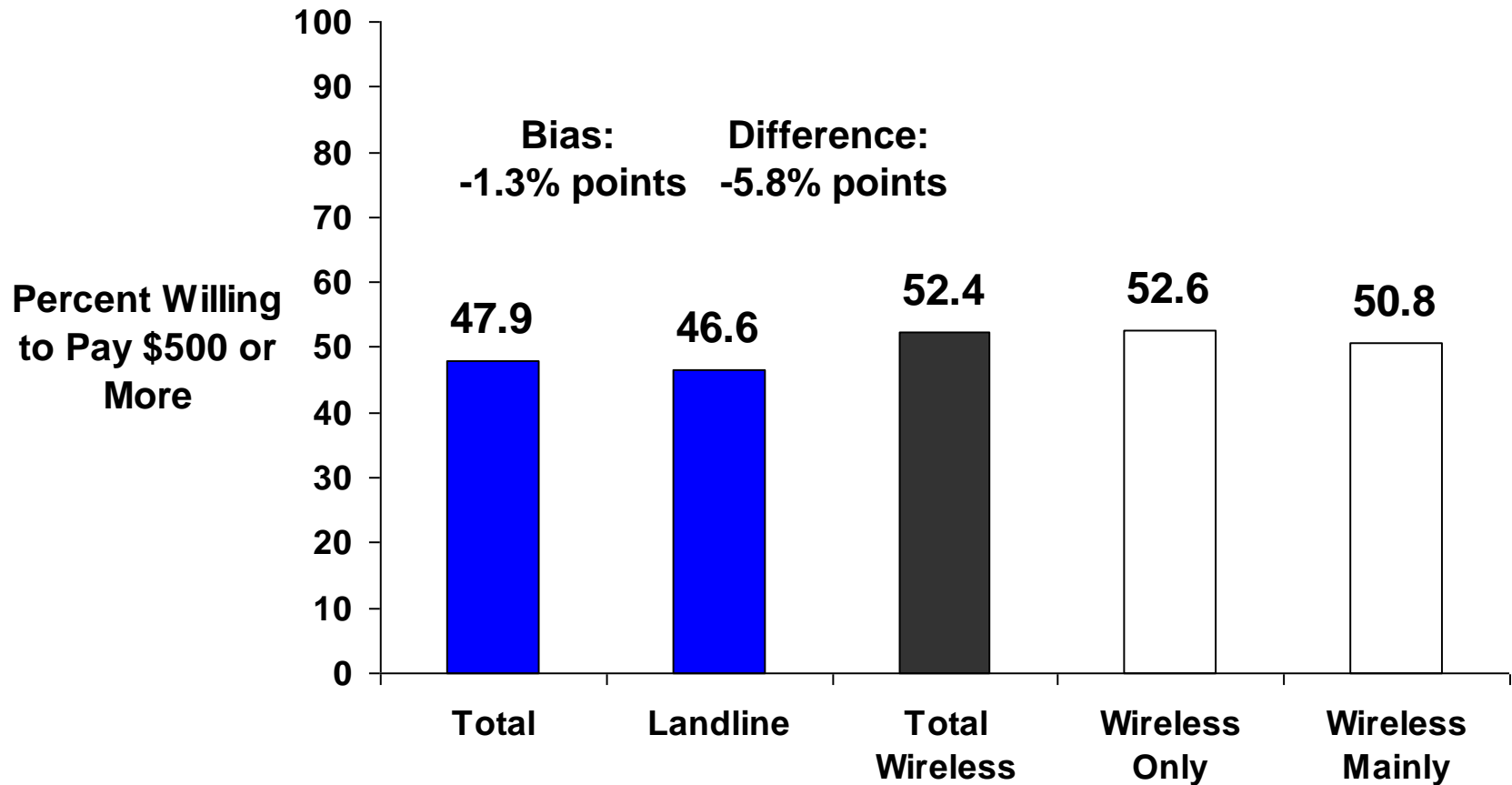


Note: "Don't Know" and refused responses not shown

Sources: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007

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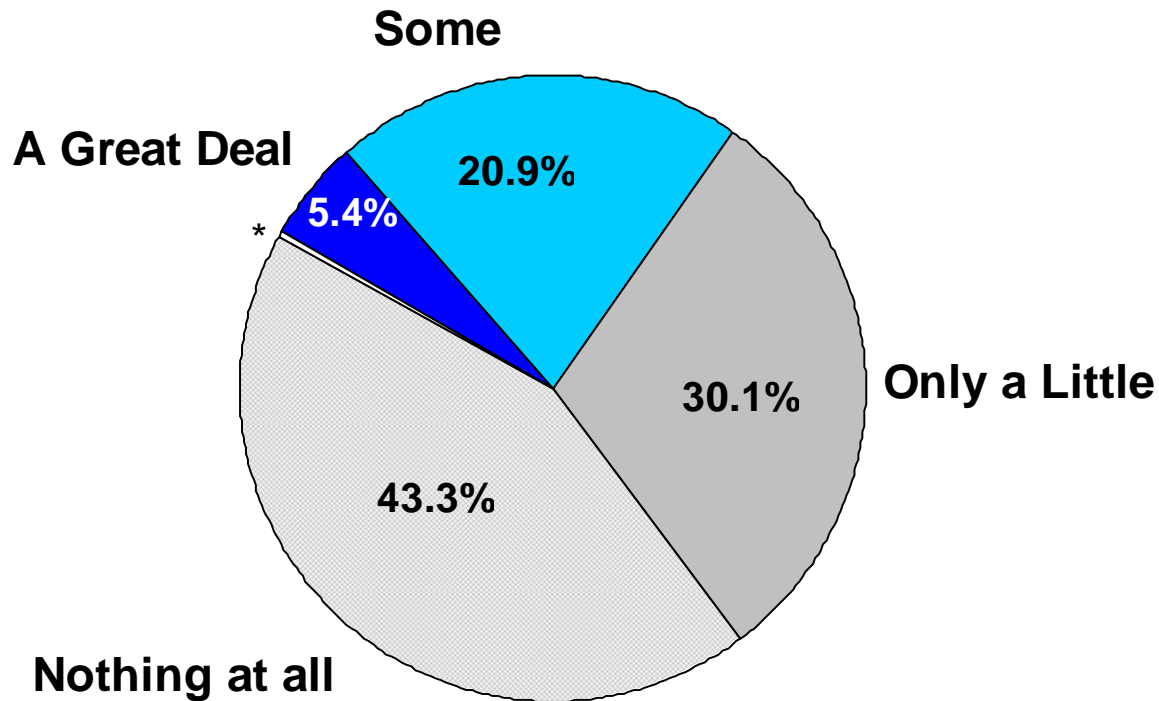


Note: Not Willing, "Don't Know", and refused responses not shown

Sources: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007

New Jerseyans Following Health Reform

How much have you heard or read about health care reform proposals currently being discussed in New Jersey?

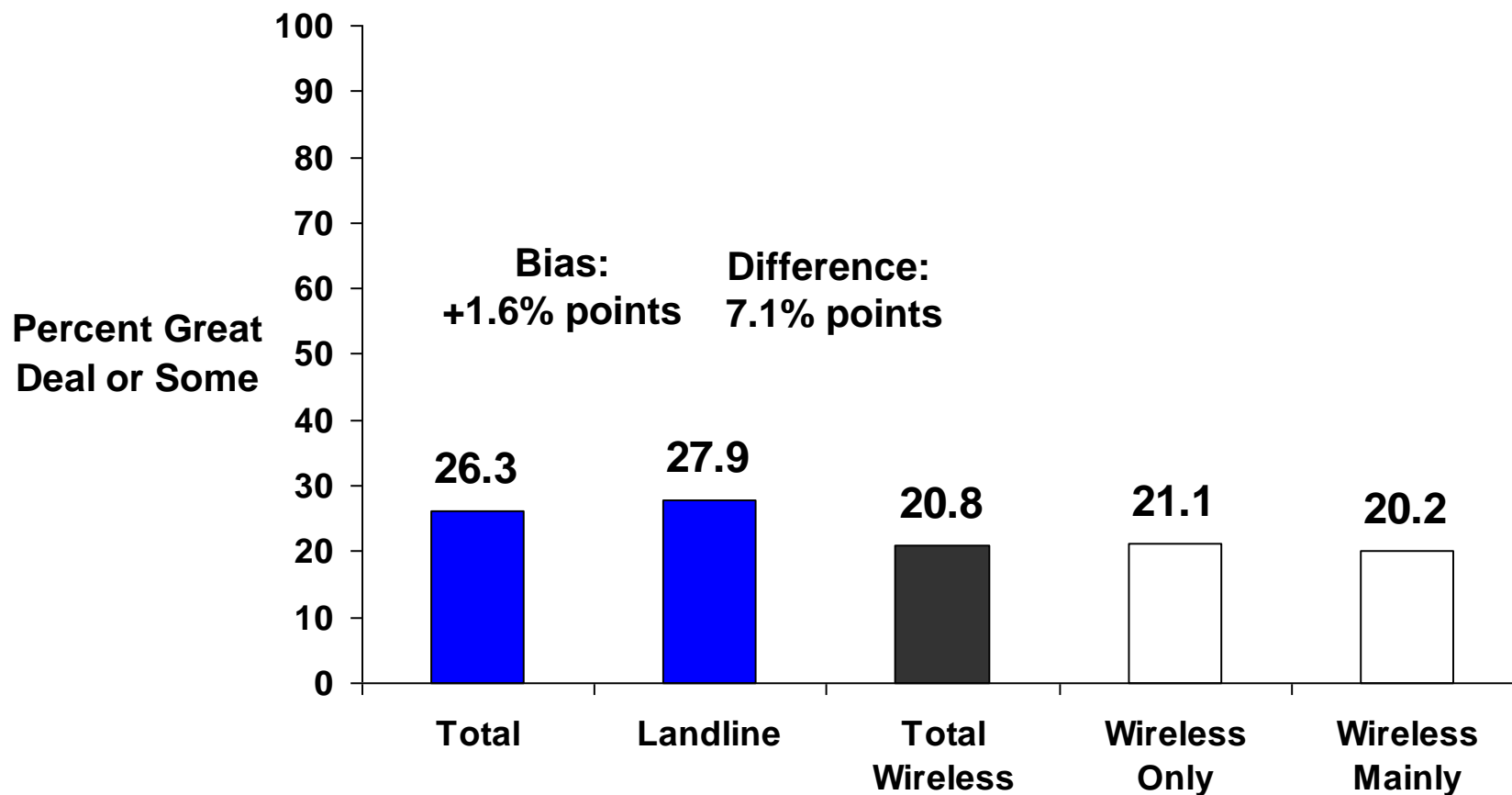


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Sources: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007

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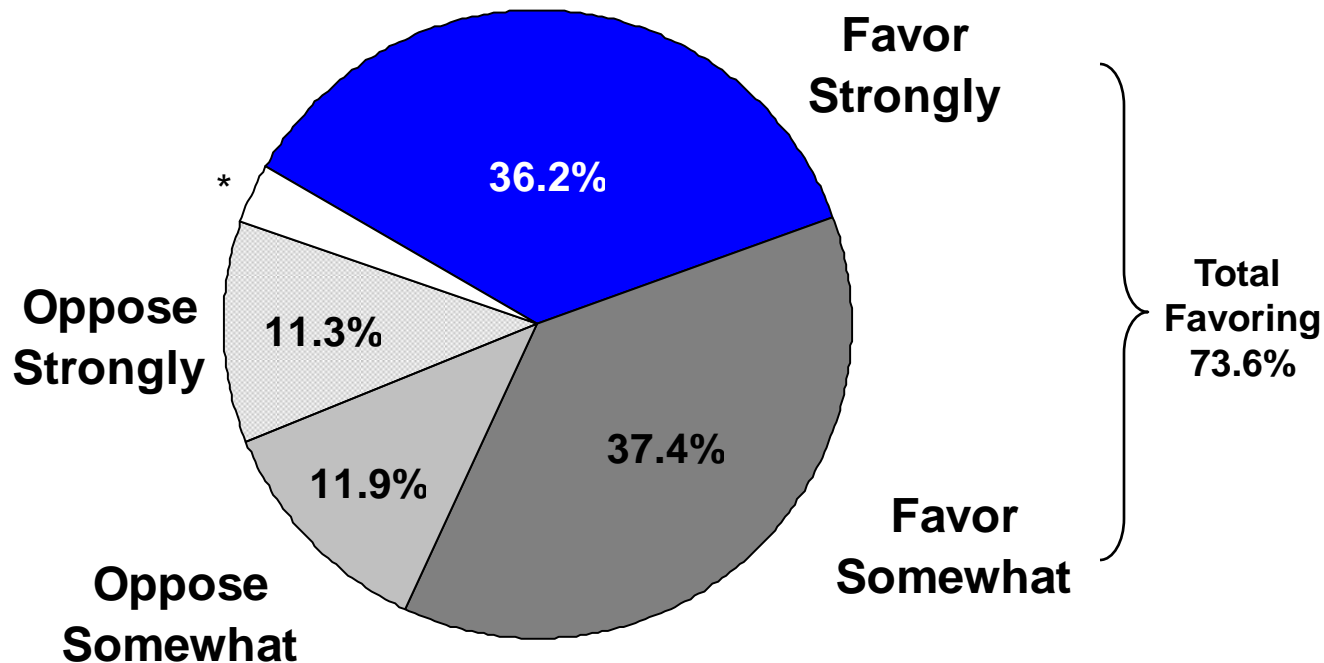


Note: "Only a little", "Nothing At All", "Don't Know", and refused responses not shown

Sources: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007

Individual Mandate

To achieve universal coverage, one proposal would require everyone to have health insurance, the way all drivers are required to have automobile insurance. People with higher incomes who do not have coverage would be required to buy insurance, and the government would help pay for those who can't afford it.

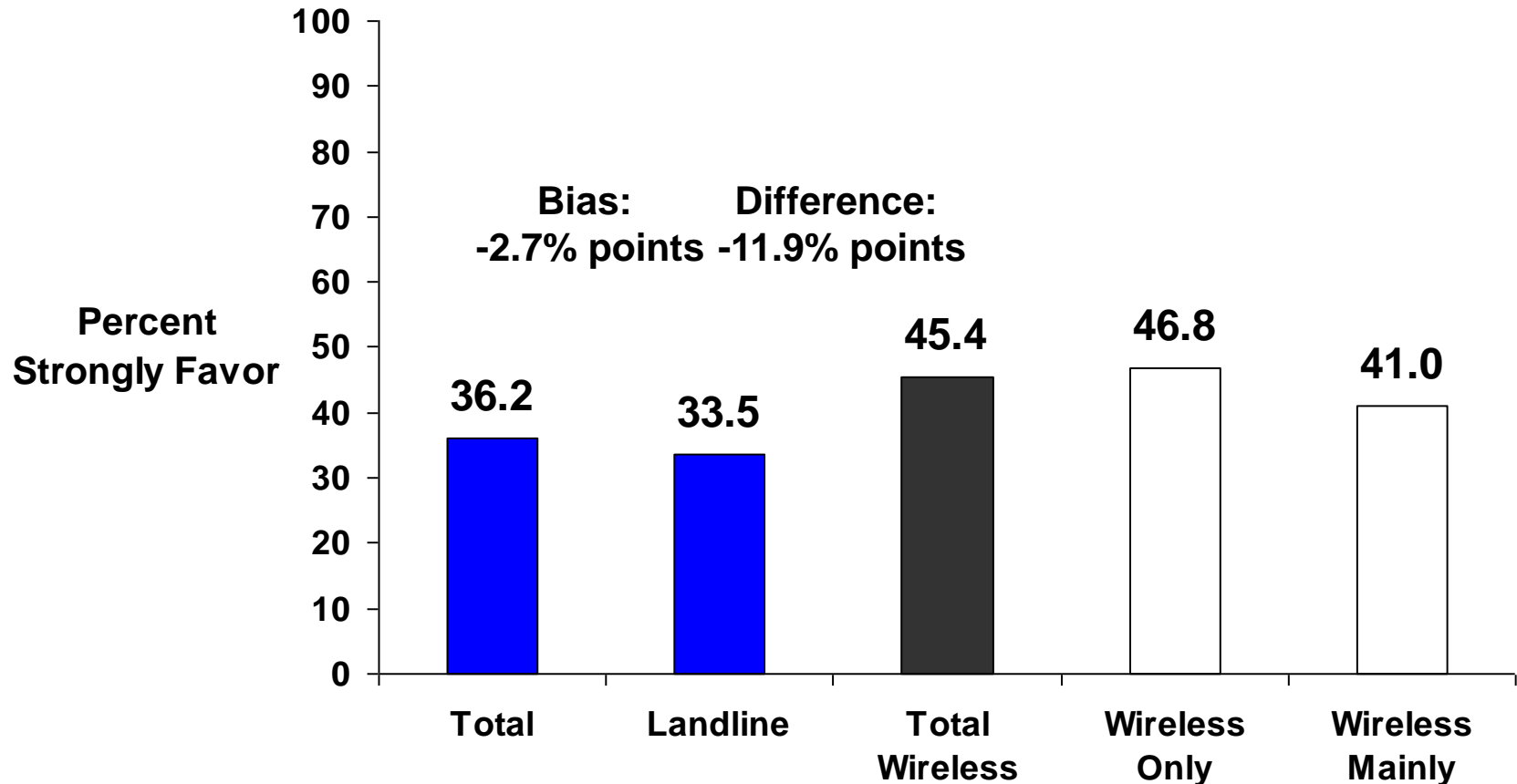


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Sources: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007

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Note: "Somewhat Favor", "Somewhat Oppose", "Strongly Oppose", "Don't Know", and refused responses not shown
Sources: Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, New Jersey Health Care Opinion Poll, 2007

Is there a wireless substitution bias in polls about health care and support for reform?

- Not in most variables we examined
- Small bias in:
 - Willingness to pay for taxes (almost significant)
 - Heard/read about reform
 - Support for individual mandate
- Accounted for by other variables in multivariable regressions (e.g., age, coverage, etc.)

Do we need to worry about wireless substitution in public opinion polls about health reform?

- Not quite yet
 - Bias limited
 - Accounted for by other factors
 - But...
- Polls rarely adjust for other factors (other than demographics)
- Individual mandate is key policy question
 - Large wireless-land difference: near 12% points
 - Near 3% point bias
 - As wireless grows, bias becomes more pronounced
- Should wireless-mainly population be included?
 - Mainly population responses similar to landline sample
 - Is mainly population excluded from RDD samples?
 - Further exploration important