

The Delray Democrat

“Off the Table”¹

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A series of national polls conducted between 2003 and 2009 **showed support for a universal healthcare system ranging from 59% to 75%**. Yet Sen. Max Baucus, chair of the Senate Finance Committee charged with principal responsibility for drafting the Affordable Care Act, declared single-payer to be “off the table.” Having relinquished their best bargaining chip, Democrats failed to even include a public option in the ACA.

In 2011, Republicans refused to raise the debt ceiling without deficit reduction (an outrageous and hypocritical position given their silence as the federal debt was doubling under George W. Bush). Although reduction could have been achieved through either spending cuts or tax increases (or a combination of the two), tax increases were deemed “off the table.”

Once again, what was “off the table” was widely favored by the American public. A CNN [poll](#) found that **nearly three-quarters of respondents favored raising taxes on incomes over \$250,000**, with majorities across all stripes other than Tea Party supporters, 44% of whom nevertheless supported such a tax:

	Total	Dem	Ind	Rep	Liberal	Mod	Cons	Tea Party
Favor	73%	92%	71%	51%	88%	85%	52%	44%
Oppose	26%	7%	29%	49%	12%	15%	48%	56%

A September New York Times/Siena [poll](#) found that 72% of respondents supported a **\$2 trillion stimulus package** to extend increased unemployment insurance, send stimulus checks to most Americans, and provide financial support to state and local governments; 67% supported “**a public health insurance option** that would allow anyone to purchase a government-run health insurance plan”; and 66% supported a **\$2 trillion plan to increase the use of renewable energy** and build energy-efficient infrastructure.

Which of these do you think will be “off the table” if Republicans retain the Senate in 2021?

¹ *The Delray Democrat*, November 2020, p. 5.