



New Poll Shows Broad Bipartisan Support for Financial Reform and Consumer Protections

CRL Research Brief

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Introduction

A new poll reveals that American voters broadly support the 2010 Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform law. The poll, conducted by Lake Research Partners for the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL), AARP, and Americans for Financial Reform (AFR), reveals that voters overwhelmingly support the specific consumer protection functions of the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, which will open its doors on July 21, 2011.

As described in this summary, the poll finds that:

- (1) Likely voters, including majorities of Independents, Democrats, and Republicans, favor the 2010 Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform law by a 5 to 1 margin (71% vs. 14 %).**
- (2) Presented with information about challenges in Congress to the law, almost two-thirds (63%) believe that policymakers should allow the law to be fully implemented.**
- (3) Three-quarters (74%) of voters support the existence of a single entity with the mission of protecting consumers from deceptive practices.**

Voters also voice overwhelming support for the following consumer protection functions of the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau:

- Requiring clearer explanations of rates and fees (93% favor);**
 - Restricting lenders from offering loans with risky or confusing features (77% favor);**
 - Banning incentives to mortgage brokers to put homeowners into higher rate mortgages than they qualify for (73% favor).**
- (4) Three-quarters (73%) of voters want to see federal oversight of financial companies that previously lacked national oversight, including mortgage brokers, payday lenders, and companies offering pre-paid debit cards.**

Background

The 2010 Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform law was enacted in the wake of the economic meltdown and subsequent Great Recession as an overhaul of the financial regulatory system. The law created the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau (CFPB), which consolidates the consumer finance protection authority previously scattered among

seven different (7) agencies into a single entity whose mission is to protect consumers from deceptive practices by banks, credit card companies, and other institutions. Prior polling has shown that the Wall Street reform law is the single most popular major piece of legislation passed by Congress in recent years.¹

On July 21, 2011, regulatory authority of existing consumer protection rules will be transferred to the CFPB. The bureau’s authority is limited, however, without further action by Congress to confirm a Bureau director and ensure adequate funding. CRL, AARP, and AFR engaged Lake Research Partners to conduct a poll of 800 likely voters to assess the public’s perception of the law, specific consumer finance protections, and the CFPB.

Key Results

The poll consists of 16 questions, including demographic questions and questions about party affiliation and geography. Responses to questions related to key results are presented here. Full survey results can be found in full in a separate document on the Center for Responsible Lending website.

Support for the Dodd-Frank Financial Reform Law

Q7: From what you know, do you favor or oppose the Wall Street reform law?

| | Favor | Oppose | DK |
|--|-------|--------|------|
| Favor or oppose Wall Street reform law | 71 % | 14 % | 15 % |

Q8: As you may know, while the Wall Street reforms have been signed into law, they have not fully taken effect. There are proposals in Congress to repeal the Wall Street Reform law. Do you think the Wall Street Reform law should be repealed or should it be allowed to take effect?

| | Repeal | Take Effect | DK |
|--|--------|-------------|------|
| Should Wall Street reform law be repealed or allowed to take effect? | 20 % | 63 % | 16 % |

Consumer Finance Protections and the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau

Q5: Now, let me read you some parts of the Wall Street reform law that relate to consumer protection and for each one, please tell me whether you favor or oppose it.

¹ From *Among Recent Bills Financial Reform a Lone Plus for Congress*, based on USA/Today/Gallup poll, August 27-30, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/142967/among-recent-bills-financial-reform-lone-plus-congress.aspx>

| | Favor | Oppose | DK |
|--|-------|--------|-----|
| A. Banning payments from lenders to mortgage brokers for putting home-owners into higher rate mortgages than they legitimately qualify for: | 73 % | 22 % | 5 % |
| B. Requiring credit card companies, banks, auto lenders and other lenders to provide clearer explanations of their rates and fees: | 93 % | 4 % | 2 % |
| C. Making it harder for lenders to offer loans with risky or confusing features, such as low teaser rates that change to much higher rates after an introductory period: | 77 % | 19% | 4 % |
| D. Having a single agency with the single mission of protecting consumers from deceptive practices by banks, financial institutions, and credit card companies: | 74 % | 19 % | 6 % |

Q6: The Wall Street reform law requires federal oversight of certain types of financial companies that were not previously regulated at the national level, like mortgage brokers, payday lenders and companies that offer pre-paid debit cards. Please tell me whether you favor or oppose requiring federal oversight of these financial companies

| | Favor | Oppose | DK |
|--|-------|--------|-----|
| Federal oversight of financial companies not previously not regulated at national level? | 73 % | 20 % | 7 % |

Survey Methods

Results for this poll are based on telephone interviews conducted by professional interviewers from July 10, 2011 to July 13, 2011 with a random sample of 804 likely registered voters nationwide. Telephone numbers for the sample were drawn from a sample of listed registered voters. The sample was stratified geographically and weighted by demographic factors and party identification to ensure representativeness. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% certainty that the true percentage will fall within +/- 3.5 percentage points of the reported percentage.