

G B A O

Center for American Progress



# Center for American Progress Child Care Research

September 2020

*N = 1,400 registered voters (includes oversamples of African American and Hispanic women)*

*Conducted September 8-13, 2020 via online web panel*

*Margin of error = +/- 3.1 percentage points*

- Families are struggling with finding affordable, quality child care at a time when parents are already feeling increased stress from health, economic, and schooling challenges.
- The difficulties with child care and online schooling have had a detrimental impact on parents' ability to work and earn a living.
- On top of that, many parents report the pandemic has increased child care costs, made it difficult to find care, or they simply aren't yet comfortable sending their kids to a child care center or home-based provider.
- Given growing family and economic needs during the pandemic, a majority of voters favor government investment to help families get reliable, affordable child care so people can work.

- Voters not only broadly support increased funding for child care and early childhood education, but also immediate relief as part of the next coronavirus stimulus package and longer-term proposals that alleviate costs and build out child care infrastructure.
- Voters are more likely to support candidates who endorse funding for child care and early childhood education.
- Voters respond positively to a range of arguments in support of increased funding that focus on the social and economic benefits to families and society.

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of an adult's hands holding an open children's book. The adult is wearing a red sweater and a silver watch. The book's left page has the text "Poor old Fox lost his socks." and a small illustration of a fox. The right page shows a fox standing next to an open wooden wardrobe. In the background, a young child with blonde hair is looking at the book. Another book titled "The Broom" is visible on the left.

Poor old Fox  
lost his socks.

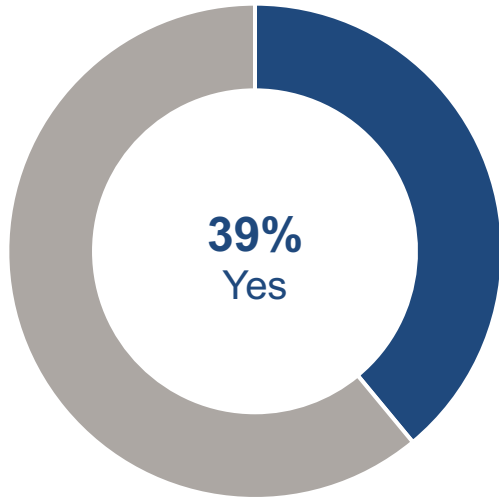
## Child Care Challenges

# Parents Utilize A Variety Of Forms Of Child Care

Figure 5

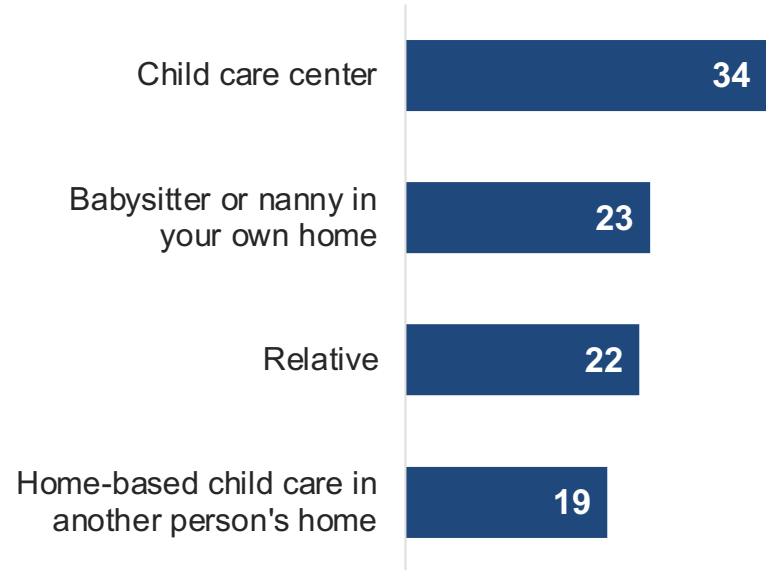
## Use Child Care

*Do you rely on anyone outside of yourself and your spouse/partner/co-parent to provide child care?  
(Asked of parents of kids <15)*



## Type of Child Care

*(If Yes:) What is the primary form of child care you rely on?*



# Even If Money Wasn't An Issue, Most Working Parents Would Continue To Work And Use Child Care

Figure 6

## Work Arrangement

*In an ideal world in which salary and benefits were not a consideration, what would be your choice of work arrangements relative to your child care needs? (Asked of parents who use child care.)*

Employed FT      Employed PT

Work full-time

57

85

15

Care for kid(s) at home  
full-time

26

6

10

Work part-time, care for  
kid(s) at home part-time

17

9

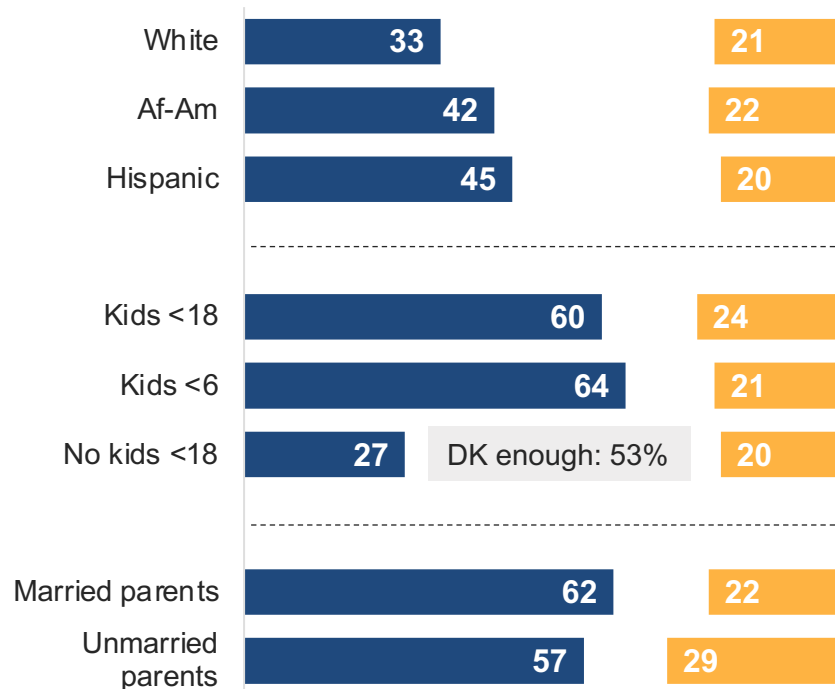
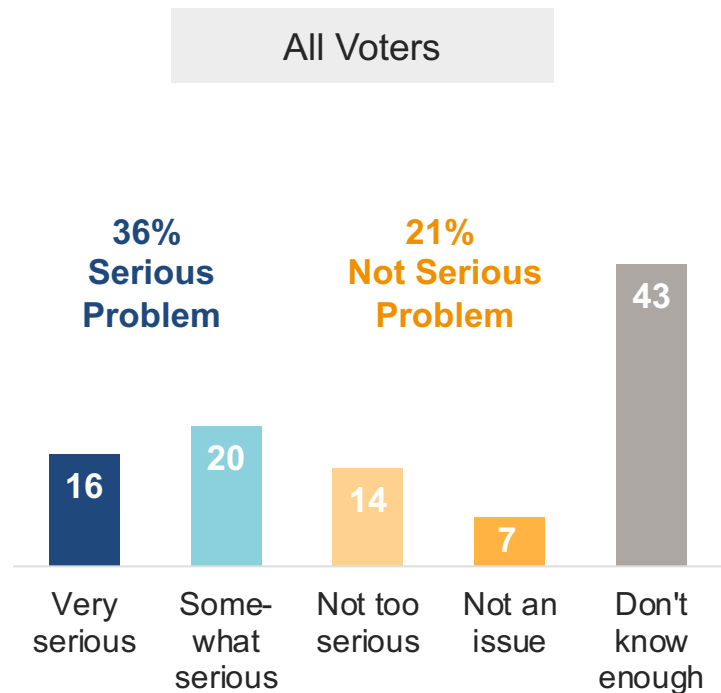
75

# Finding Quality, Affordable Child Care Is Problematic For Parents

Figure 7

## Child Care Availability

*Thinking specifically about the issue of child care - how serious a problem is finding quality, affordable child care in your area?*



# Nearly 4 in 10 Parents Struggled To Find Care During The Pandemic, Hispanic Moms Report Having An Even Harder Time

Figure 8

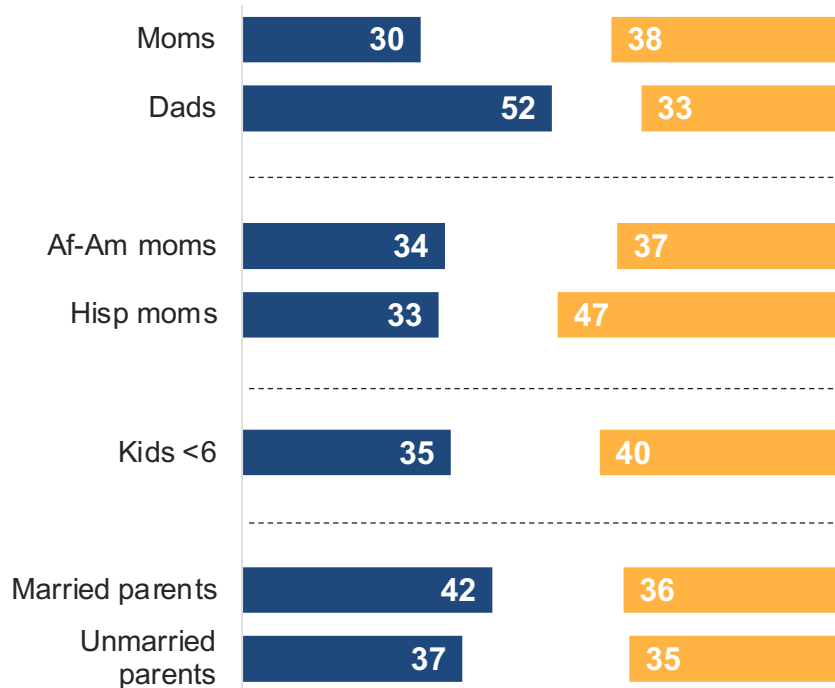
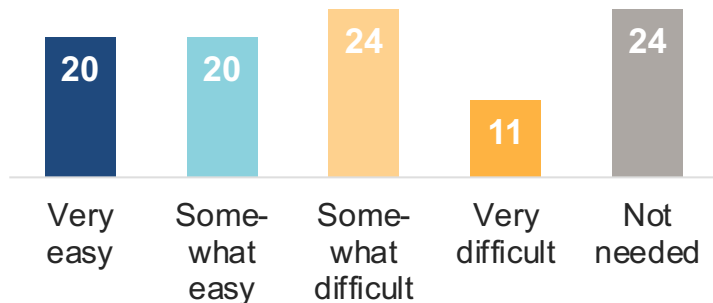
## Child Care Availability

*In your personal experience, since the coronavirus pandemic started, has finding quality, affordable child care that is convenient for your family been easy or difficult?*

*Asked of parents who are responsible for providing or finding child care*

**41% Easy**

**36% Difficult**



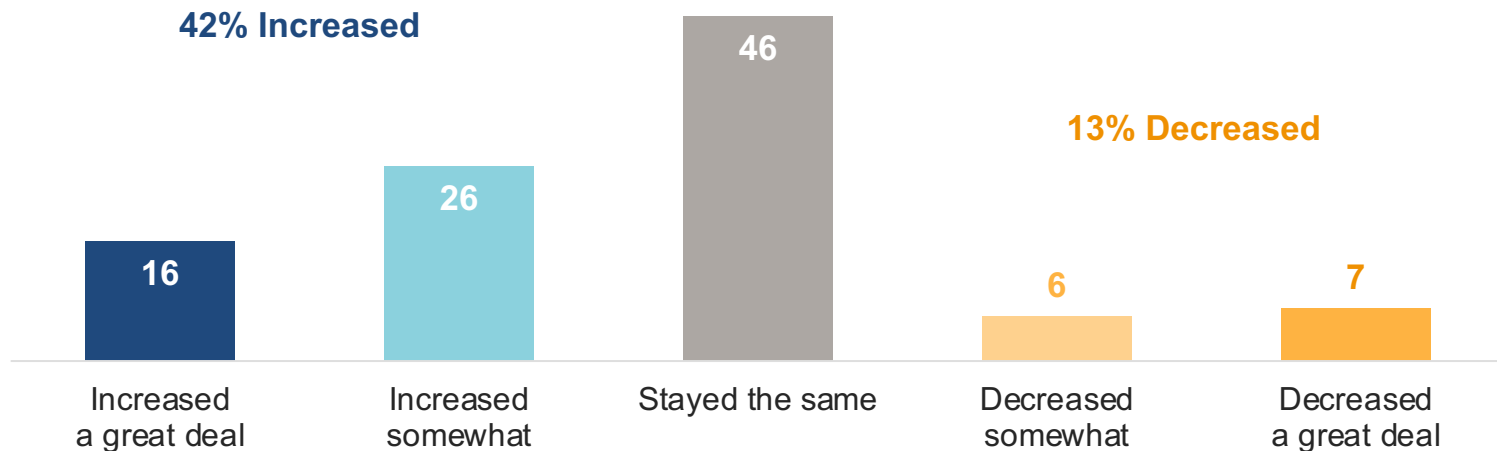
# By More Than 3-to-1, Parents Who Saw Change In Child Care Costs Report Spending For Child Care Increased During The Pandemic

Figure 9

## Child Care Costs

*During the coronavirus pandemic, has the amount of money you spend on child care increased, decreased, or stayed the same? Asked of parents who are responsible for providing or finding child care.*

Voters in higher socioeconomic groups are more likely to say costs have gone up.



# Child Care Costs Have Had An Outsized Impact On Parents' Budgets

Figure 10

## Household Expenses

*Which TWO of the following expenditures have most affected you or your family's economic situation in terms of overall costs or availability in the past year?*

		Kids <18	Kids <6
Food	38	36	30
Utilities like electric, water, and gas	37	34	37
Health care and medicine	33	32	31
Entertainment and eating out	31	28	29
Commuting and travel	23	20	25
Cell phone and internet services	18	18	13
Child care and education	10	25	31

# Other Factors Aside, Many Parents In Need Of Child Care Are Still Hesitant About Sending Their Kids During The Pandemic

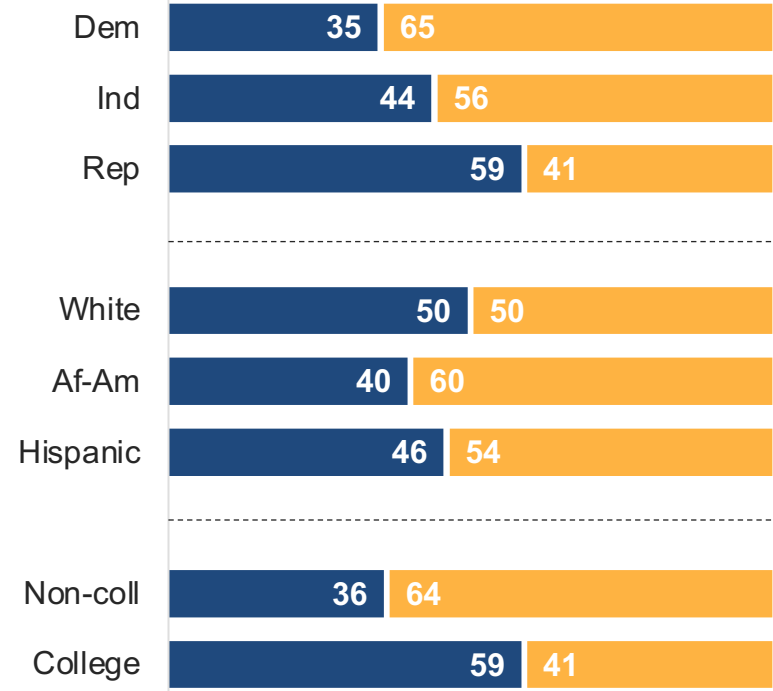
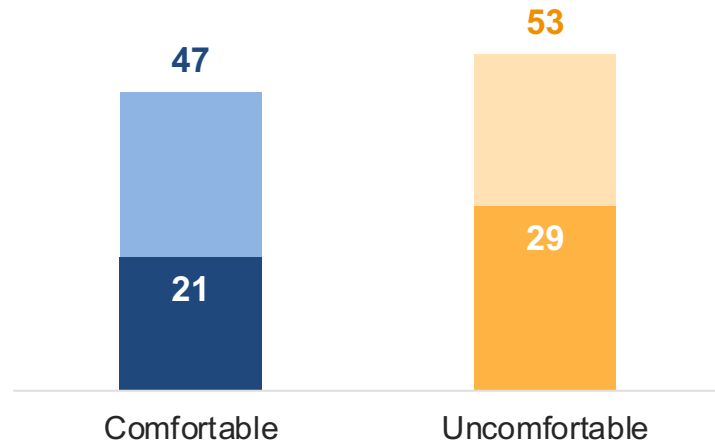
Figure 11

## Child Care Comfort

*How comfortable would you feel sending your child/children to a child care facility or home-based child care provider, if needed, during the current coronavirus pandemic?*

*Asked of parents who are responsible for providing or finding child care*

*Darker shade = Stronger intensity*



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a US dollar bill. The bill is slightly out of focus, showing the portrait of George Washington and the words 'The Federal Reserve Bank of America'. A semi-transparent blue banner with a diagonal cut on the right side is overlaid on the lower half of the image. The text 'Economic Challenges' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font on this banner.

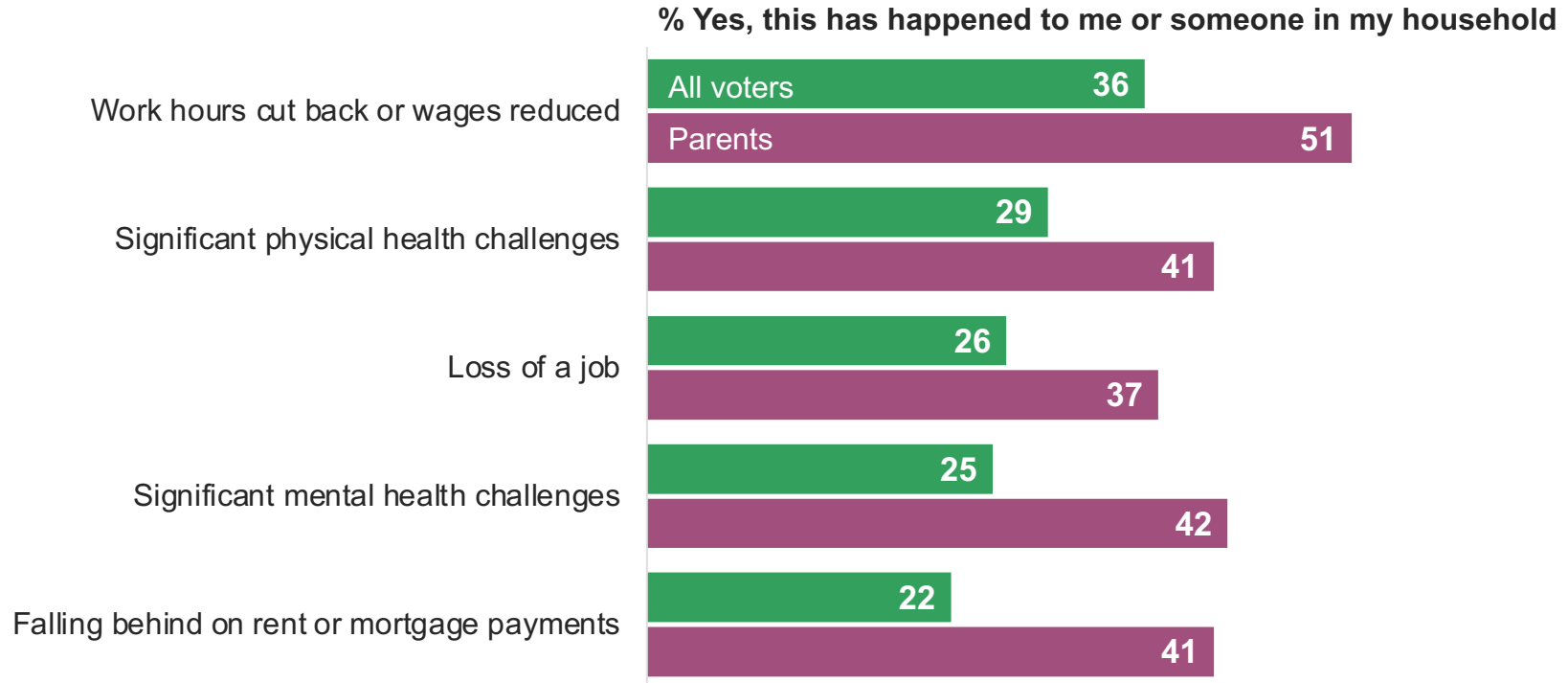
## Economic Challenges

# Parents More Likely Than Voters Overall To Face Health And Economic Challenges As A Result Of The Pandemic

Figure 13

## Economic Challenges

*Below is a list of economic challenges facing many Americans today as a result of the current coronavirus pandemic. Have you or a member of your immediate family had a serious problem with this issue over the past year?*

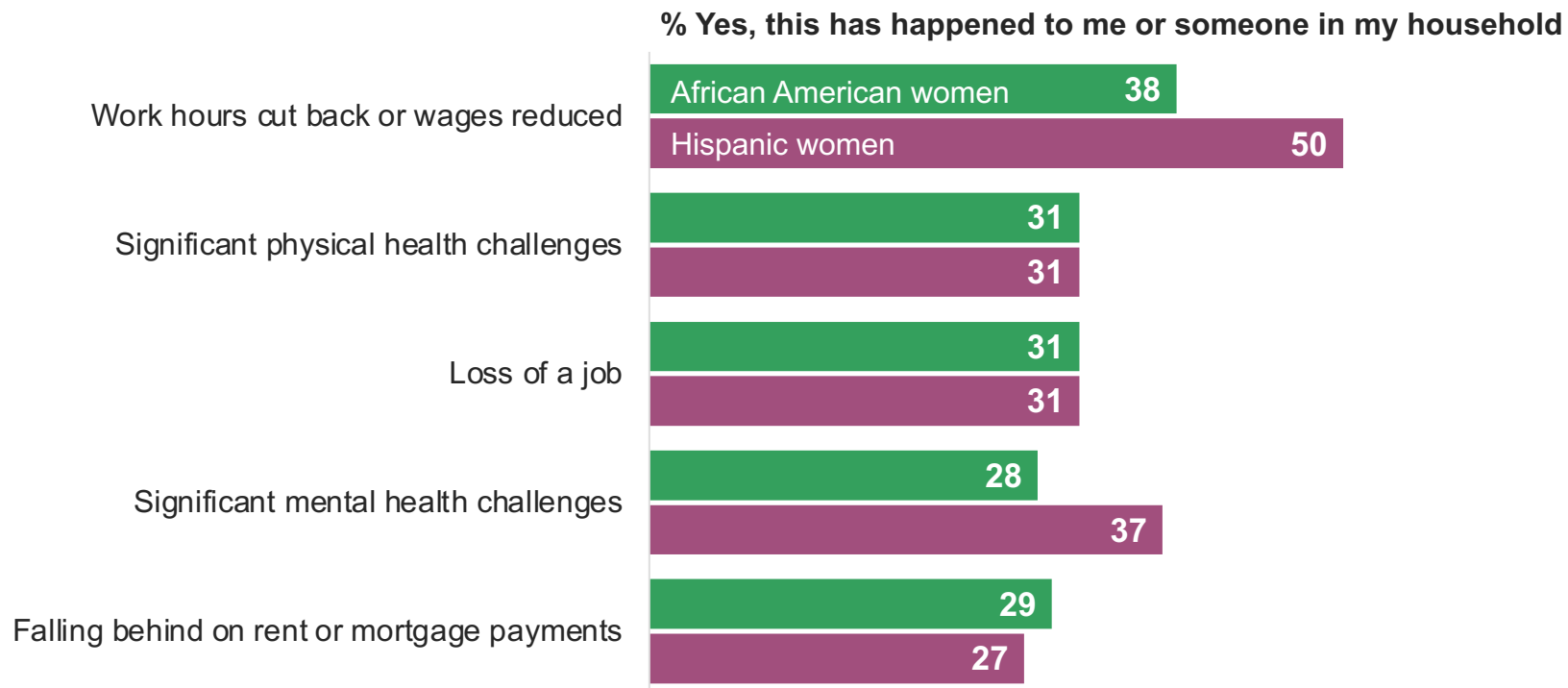


# Women Of Color Also More Likely To Face Challenges

Figure 14

## Economic Challenges

*Below is a list of economic challenges facing many Americans today as a result of the current coronavirus pandemic. Have you or a member of your immediate family had a serious problem with this issue over the past year?*



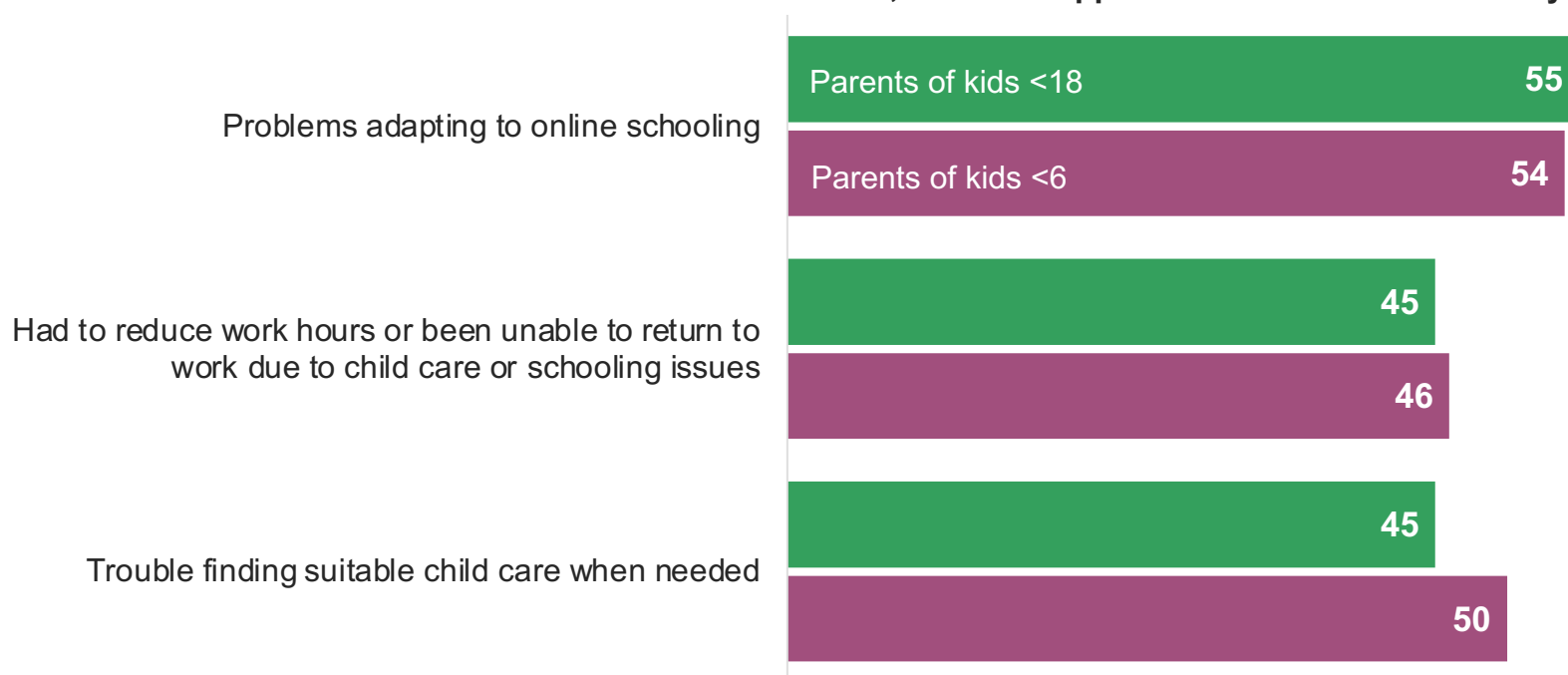
# Schooling And Child Care Add To Parents' Challenges

Figure 15

## Economic Challenges

*Below is a list of economic challenges facing many Americans today as a result of the current coronavirus pandemic. Have you or a member of your immediate family had a serious problem with this issue over the past year?*

**% Yes, this has happened to me or someone in my household**



# Child Care Challenges Have Hurt Career Prospects Of Many Parents

Figure 16

## Career Impact

*Have you or a member of your immediate family had your career or career prospects negatively impacted - such as passing up a job or promotion, working fewer hours, or not being able to pursue new skills - due to child care considerations?*



### **48% of parents**

Say child care has had a negative impact on their career or that of a family member

A low-angle photograph of the United States Capitol building in Washington, D.C. The image shows the iconic white dome and the neoclassical facade with its columns and pediment. An American flag flies from a tall pole in front of the dome. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. A dark blue diagonal banner is superimposed over the lower half of the image.

# Legislative Solutions

# Voters Favor Role For Government In Helping Families Afford Child Care

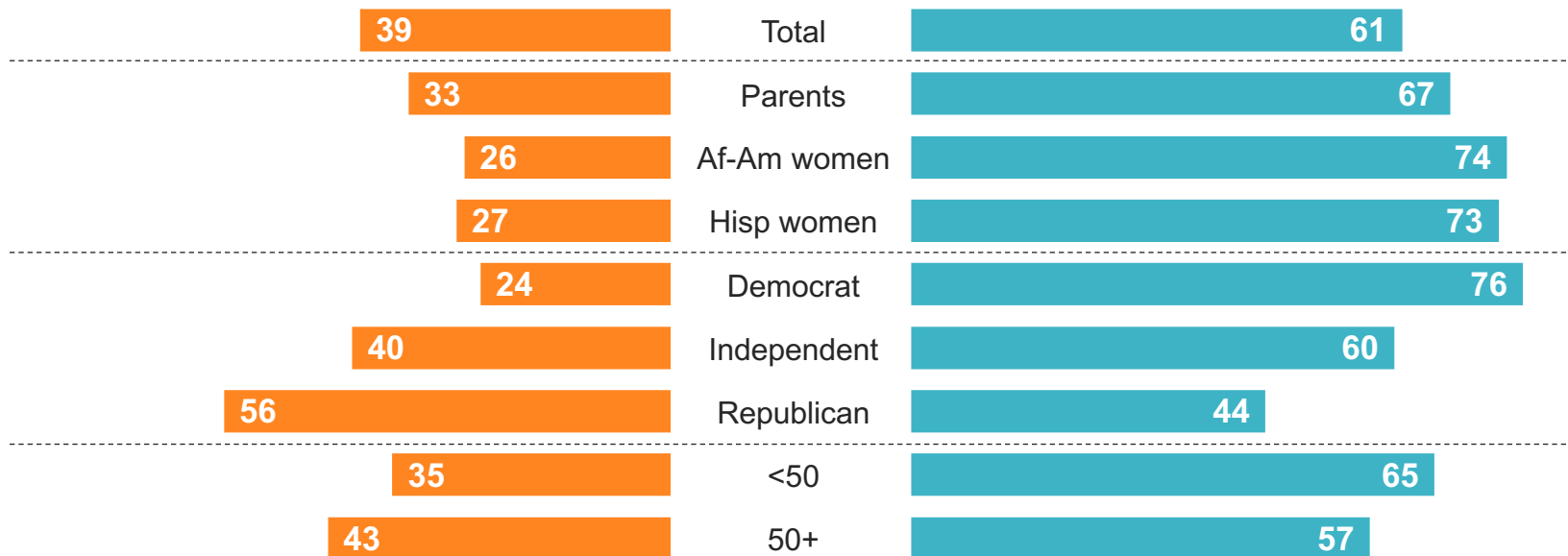
Figure 18

## Government's Role

*After reading both statements, please indicate which statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.*

Helping people afford child care or early learning is **not the role of government.**

Our public **policies should be designed to help families** afford the costs of child care and early learning.



# Even In The Context Of The Pandemic & Government Spending, Voters Still Want Government To Prioritize Child Care

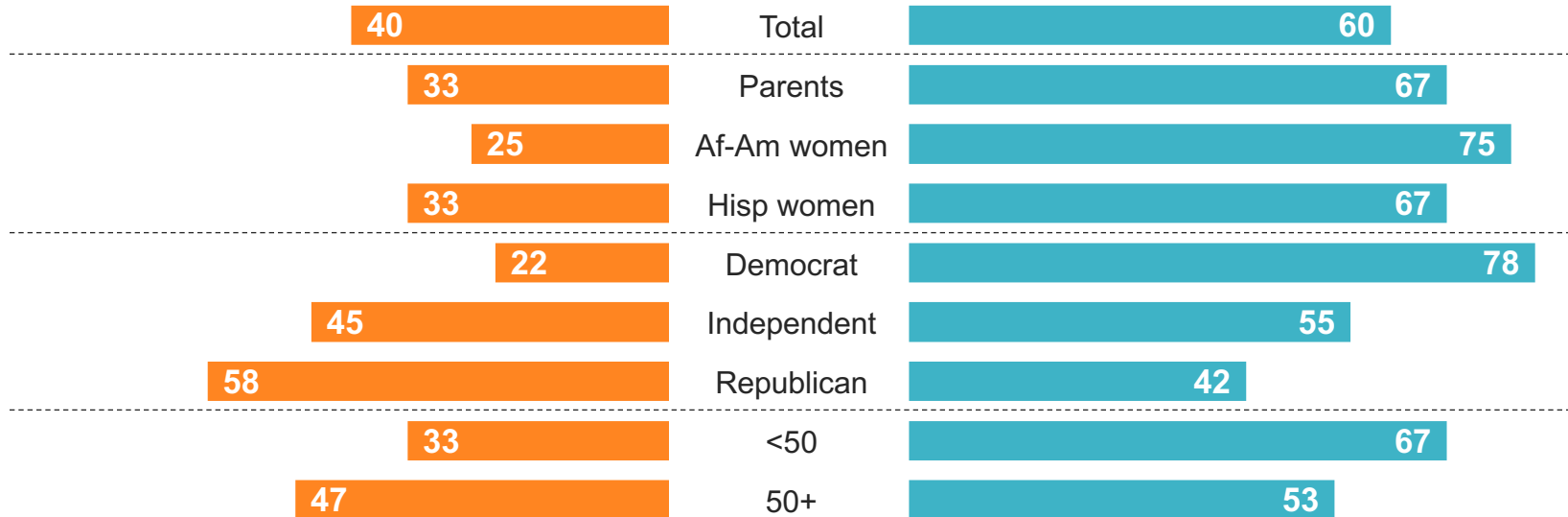
Figure 19

## Government's Role

*After reading both statements, please indicate which statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.*

The government has already spent more than taxpayers can afford and added trillions to the federal debt. Helping people afford child care would be great, but **we have other more important priorities and can't afford to add any more debt right now.**

**Government should take an active role in ensuring all families have access to reliable, affordable child care** because we will not be able to fully recover from the current coronavirus pandemic unless parents are able to return to work.



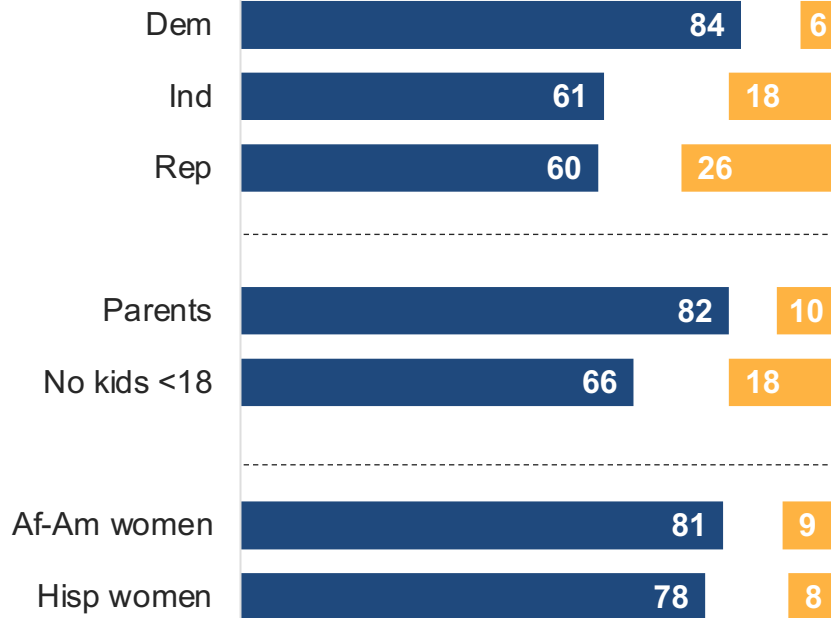
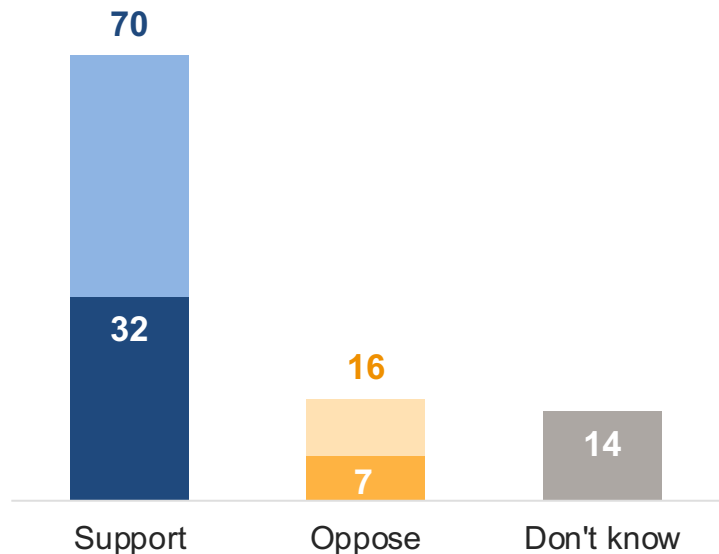
# A Wide Majority Across Parties Support Increased Funding For Child Care And Early Childhood Education

Figure 20

## Child Care / Early Education Funding

*Would you support or oppose efforts in Congress to increase funding for child care assistance and to expand access to early childhood education?*

*Darker shade = Stronger intensity*



# Voters Also Want Money For Child Care Included In Any Future Coronavirus Stimulus Package

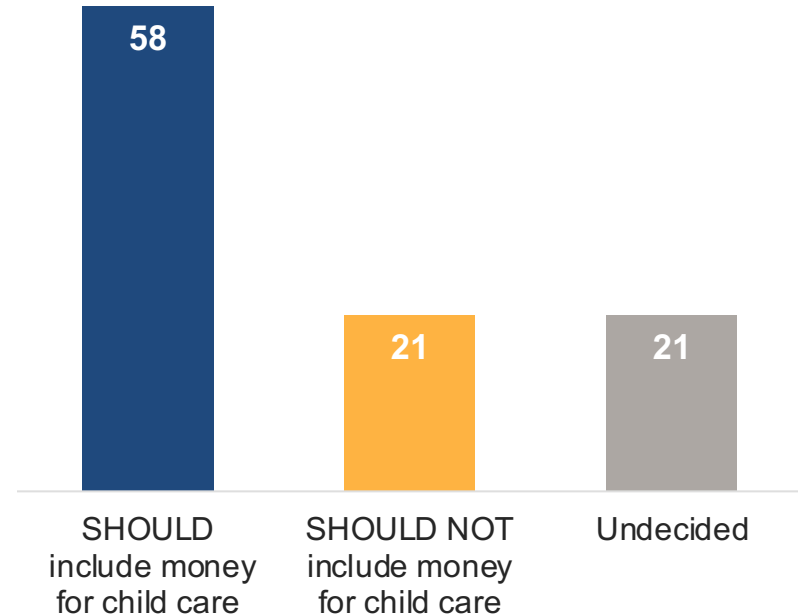
Figure 21

As you may know, Congress is debating a new coronavirus relief package, but there is significant disagreement about what should be included in that package.

Some members of Congress say we need new coronavirus relief measures to support unemployed workers and small businesses, but we must also include funding to support child care providers who are struggling to stay in business and families trying find suitable child care to meet new work and school demands.

Other members of Congress say we have already spent trillions on coronavirus relief. Any new coronavirus relief package must be much smaller than what has already passed and must be focused on our top priorities - supporting unemployed workers and helping businesses create or preserve jobs. We can't afford to spend money on other priorities like child care.

*Do you think the next coronavirus relief package should or should not include money to assist with child care expenses?*

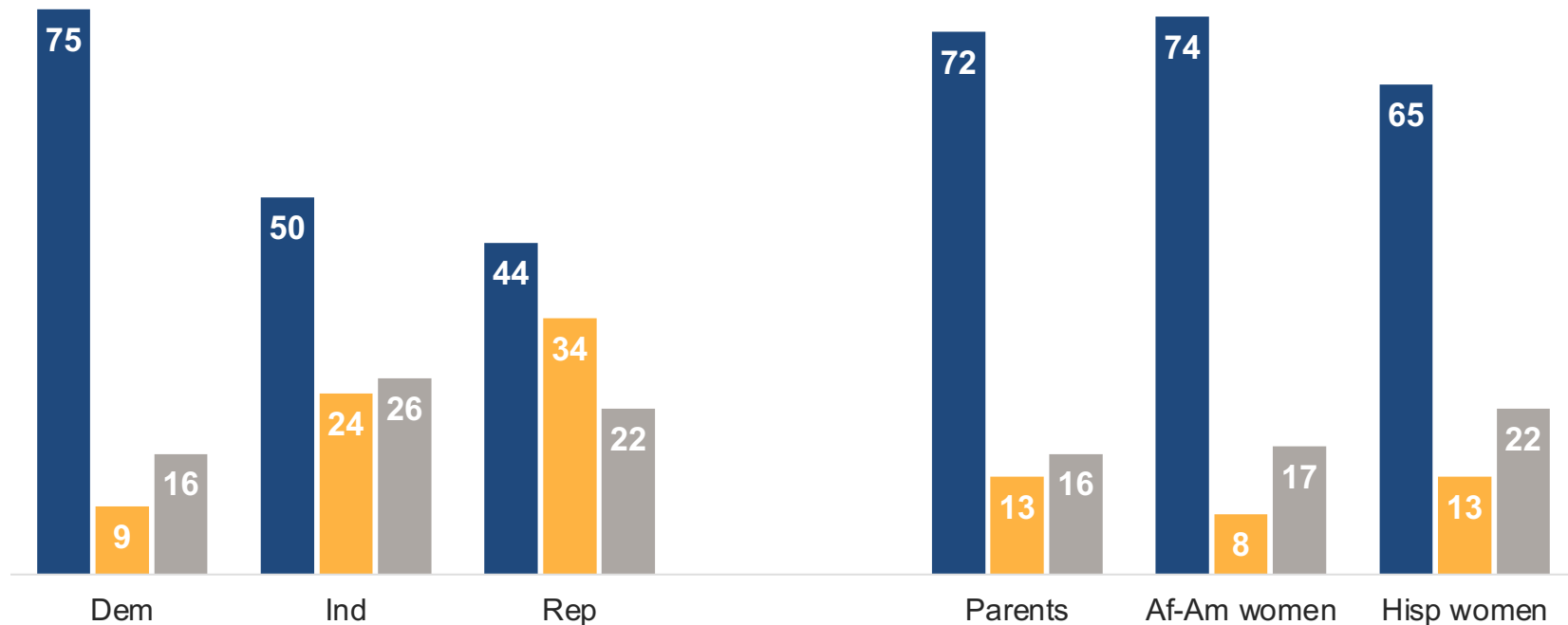


# All Audiences Support Inclusion of Child Care Funding In Next Relief Package – Especially Parents, Democrats, And Women Of Color

Figure 22

## Coronavirus Stimulus

● Should include money for child care    ● Should not include money for child care    ● Undecided



# Support For Child Care Funding Is Beneficial To Candidates

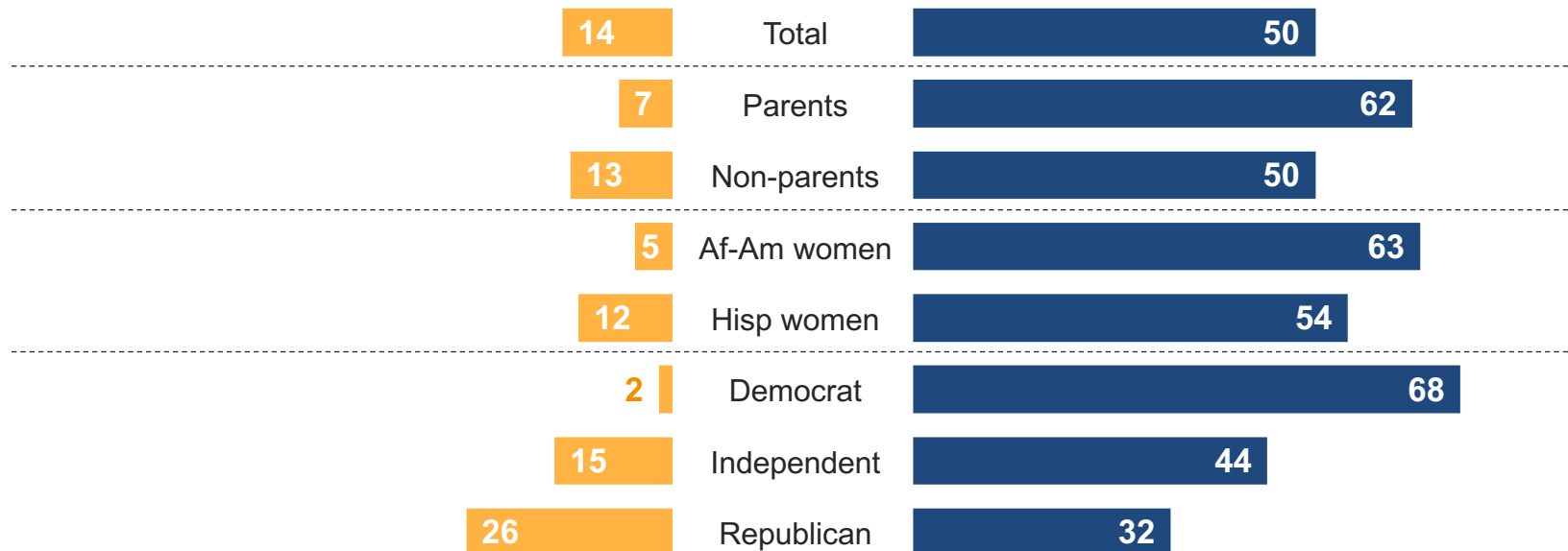
Figure 23

## Candidate Impact

*Thinking about the election for Congress later this year, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate who supports increased funding for child care assistance and expanded access to early childhood education?*

Less likely to vote for a candidate who  
support increased funding

More likely to vote for a candidate who  
supports increased funding



# Voters Strongly Support Universal Pre-K And A Range Of Proposals To Help With Child Care Costs

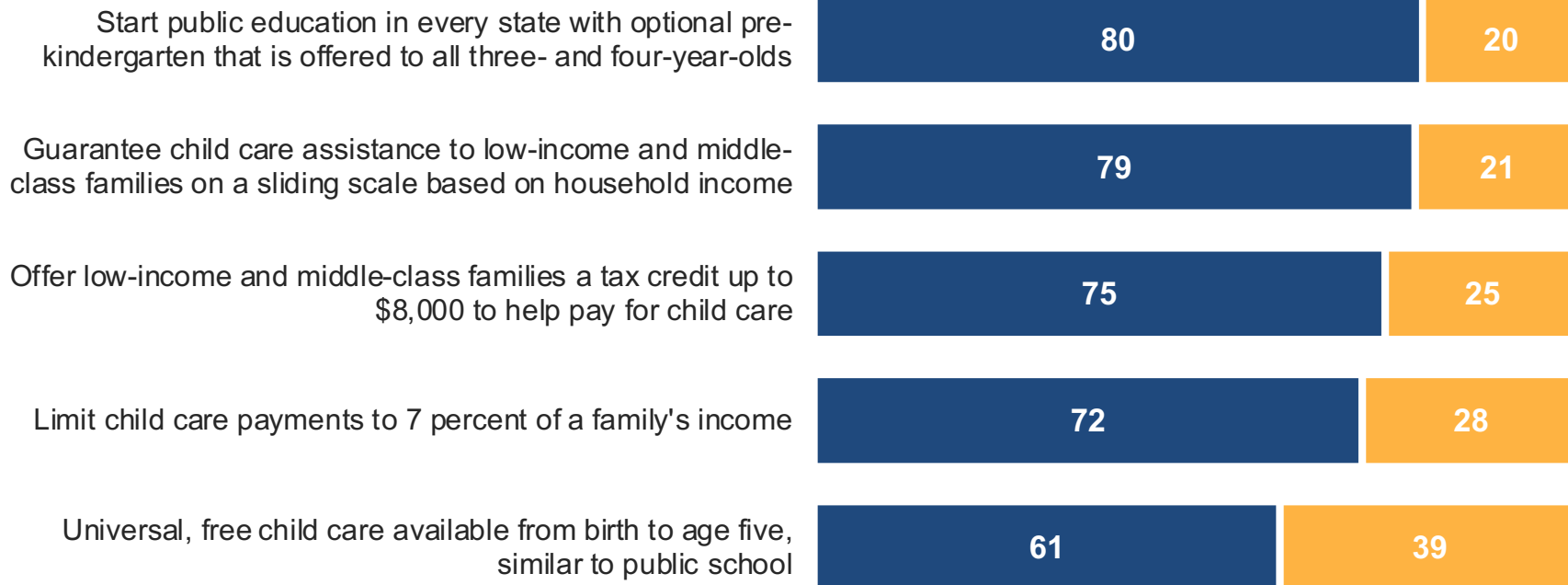
Figure 24

## Child Care Proposals

*Next, you will see some specific proposals for how to improve access to quality, affordable child care. Please indicate whether you support or oppose each proposal.*

### SUPPORT

### OPPOSE



# Universal Pre-K, Range Of Direct Support Proposals Receive Bipartisan Support

Figure 25

## Child Care Proposals

*Next, you will see some specific proposals for how to improve access to quality, affordable child care. Please indicate whether you support or oppose each proposal.*

% Support	Dem	Ind	Rep	Parents	Af-Am women	Hisp women
Start public education in every state with optional pre-kindergarten that is offered to all three- and four-year-olds	90	75	72	87	91	86
Guarantee child care assistance to low-income and middle-class families on a sliding scale based on household income	90	76	67	87	93	87
Offer low-income and middle-class families a tax credit up to \$8,000 to help pay for child care	88	70	65	80	88	80
Limit child care payments to 7 percent of a family's income	76	68	71	79	78	76
Universal, free child care available from birth to age five, similar to public school	80	55	44	74	80	69

# Voters Also Support Bolstering Child Care Workers And Infrastructure

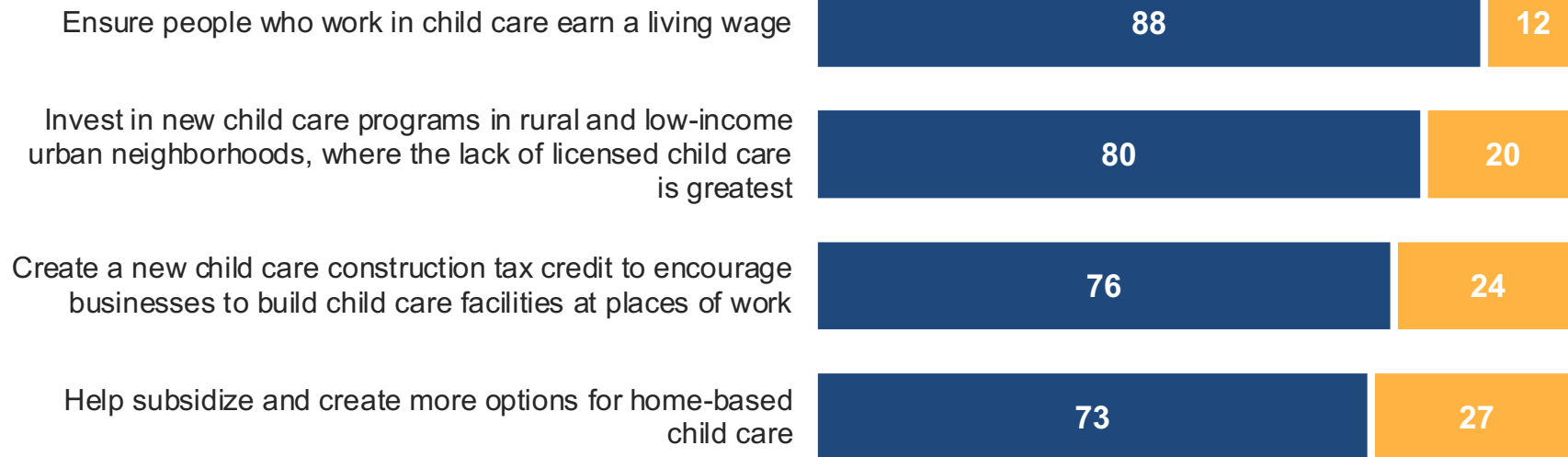
Figure 26

## Child Care Proposals

*Next, you will see some specific proposals for how to improve access to quality, affordable child care. Please indicate whether you support or oppose each proposal.*

**SUPPORT**

**OPPOSE**



# Worker & Infrastructure Proposals Also Receive Bipartisan Support

Figure 27

## Child Care Proposals

*Next, you will see some specific proposals for how to improve access to quality, affordable child care. Please indicate whether you support or oppose each proposal.*

% Support	Dem	Ind	Rep	Parents	Af-Am women	Hisp women
Ensure people who work in child care earn a living wage	95	86	83	90	93	90
Invest in new child care programs in rural and low-income urban neighborhoods, where the lack of licensed child care is greatest	92	78	67	85	92	82
Create a new child care construction tax credit to encourage businesses to build child care facilities at places of work	84	74	69	82	86	82
Help subsidize and create more options for home-based child care	86	68	61	81	85	79



# Messaging

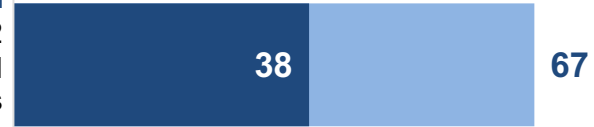
# Strongest Arguments Focus On Benefits For Children, Women, And Society

Figure 29

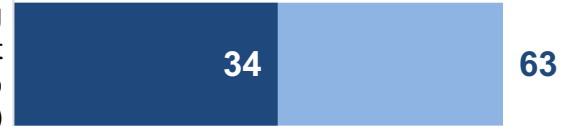
## Supporter Messaging

● Very convincing    ● Total convincing

The first five years of a child's life are critical to their ability to learn social and emotional skills, and for becoming good students later in life. Just as we make K-12 education available to all families, we should be investing in early childhood programs to make them available to all children and to ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed.



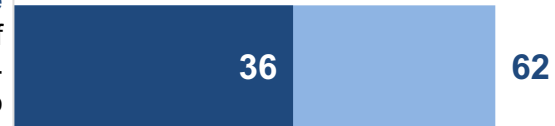
The inability to find quality, affordable child care is one of the greatest factors limiting women in the workplace. Women are still the primary caregivers for children, and it is difficult for many women to advance in the workplace, get higher wages, or to secure new jobs when they do not have access to reliable child care. (split)



The coronavirus pandemic has exposed undeniable, systemic racial inequalities in our economic, health care, and educational systems. Addressing these injustices will require equal pay for equal work regardless of race, eliminating differences in health care service and outcomes based on race, and equal child care opportunities for children of every background, race, and religious belief. (split)



The coronavirus pandemic has shifted even more of the burden for child care and at-home education onto women, even if they work full-time, forcing millions of women to reduce their work hours or give up their jobs completely. Investing in high-quality, affordable child care will help to ensure that women have equal opportunity to succeed at work and take care of their families. (split)



# Majorities Across Party Find Benefits To Women & Children Convincing

Figure 30

% Convincing	Dem	Ind	Rep	Parents
<b>The first five years of a child's life are critical to their ability to learn social and emotional skills</b> , and for becoming good students later in life. Just as we make K-12 education available to all families, we should be investing in early childhood programs to make them available to all children and to ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed.	80	62	54	72
The inability to find quality, affordable child care is one of the greatest factors limiting <b>women in the workplace</b> . Women are still the primary caregivers for children, and it is difficult for many women to advance in the workplace, get higher wages, or to secure new jobs when they do not have access to reliable child care. (split)	78	59	51	72
The coronavirus pandemic has exposed undeniable, <b>systemic racial inequalities</b> in our economic, health care, and educational systems. Addressing these injustices will require equal pay for equal work regardless of race, eliminating differences in health care service and outcomes based on race, and equal child care opportunities for children of every background, race, and religious belief. (split)	79	57	47	73
<b>The coronavirus pandemic has shifted even more of the burden for child care and at-home education onto women</b> , even if they work full-time, forcing millions of women to reduce their work hours or give up their jobs completely. Investing in high-quality, affordable child care will help to ensure that women have equal opportunity to succeed at work and take care of their families. (split)	74	55	52	69

# Economic Arguments Also Work Well

Figure 31

## Supporter Messaging

● Very convincing    ● Total convincing

A major investment in child care and early learning would **put more people to work, increase wages, and help families make ends meet** while providing children with safe and stable learning environments. It would create 2.3 million new jobs and help predominantly low-income parents to return to the workforce.

32

62

In recent years, nearly 2 million parents of children age 5 and under had to quit a job, turn down a new job, or change jobs because of problems with child care. Enabling these families to afford quality child care **will make a huge difference in their economic security** for years to come.

31

62

The **long-term benefits** of high-quality child care and early childhood education for children and their families **are well-documented**, from better academic performance and health outcomes for children to higher incomes for families.

30

61

The coronavirus pandemic has exposed undeniable, **systemic inequalities** in our economic, health care, and educational systems. Addressing these injustices will require equal pay for equal work regardless of race or gender, more access to quality affordable health care for all, and equal child care opportunities for children of every background, race, and religious belief. (split)

33

61

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RESEARCH + STRATEGY