

G B A O

Center for American Progress



Center for American Progress Child Care Research in Michigan

October 2020

N = 600 registered voters

Conducted September 14-20, 2020 via online web panel

Margin of error = +/- 4.0 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 are not 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.

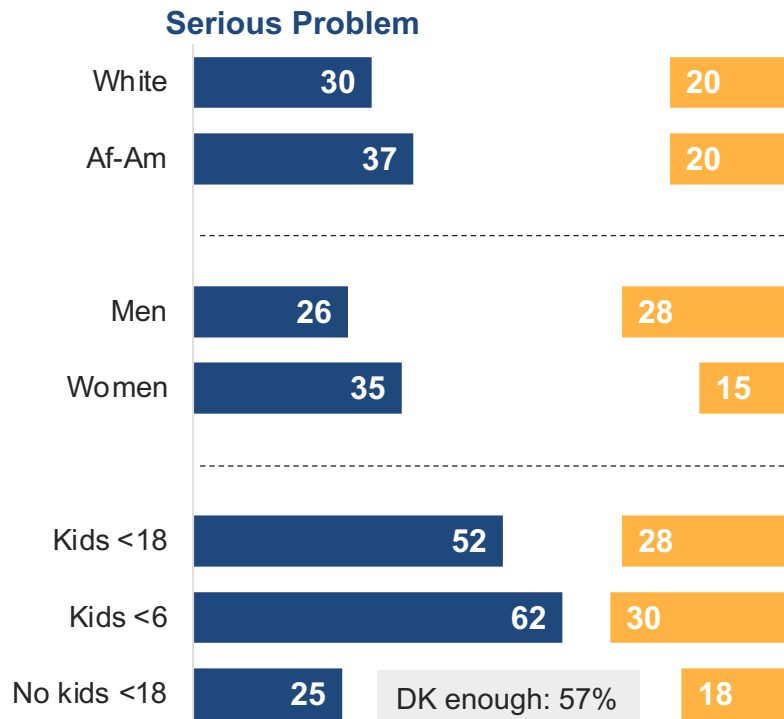
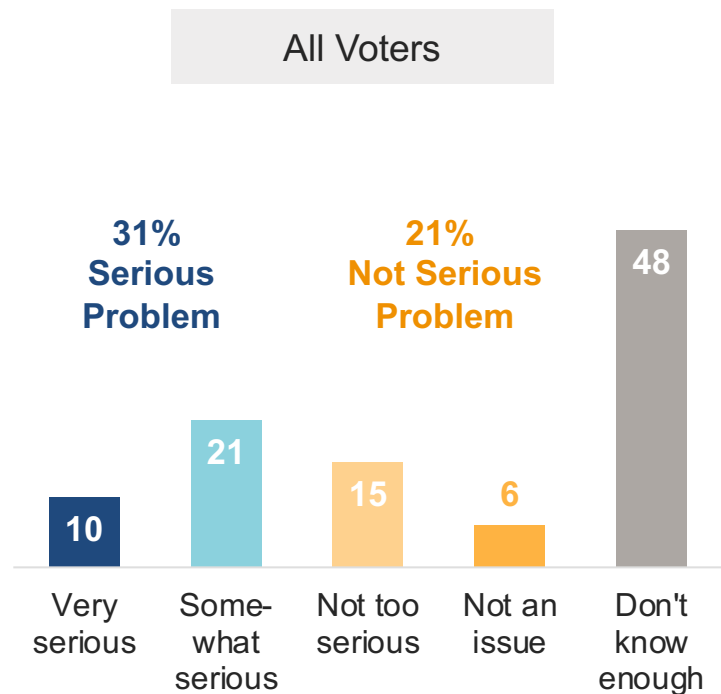
Child Care Challenges

Finding Quality, Affordable Child Care Is Problematic For Parents

Figure 5

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 Half Of Parents Struggled To Find Care During The Pandemic, Parents Of Young Children Report Having An Even Harder Time

Figure 6

Child Care Availability

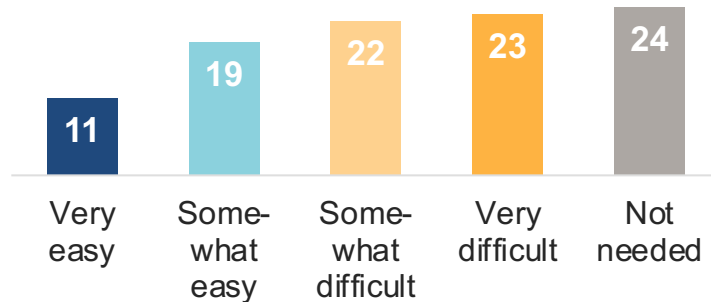
In your personal experience, since the coronavirus pandemic started, has finding quality, affordable child care that is convenient for your family been easy or difficult?

Kids <18

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

30% Easy

45% Difficult

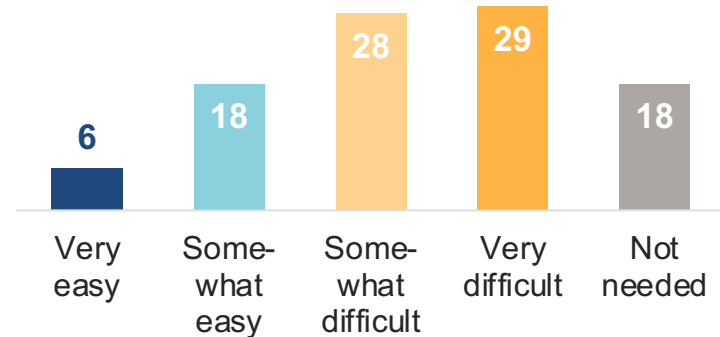


Kids <6

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

25% Easy

57% Difficult

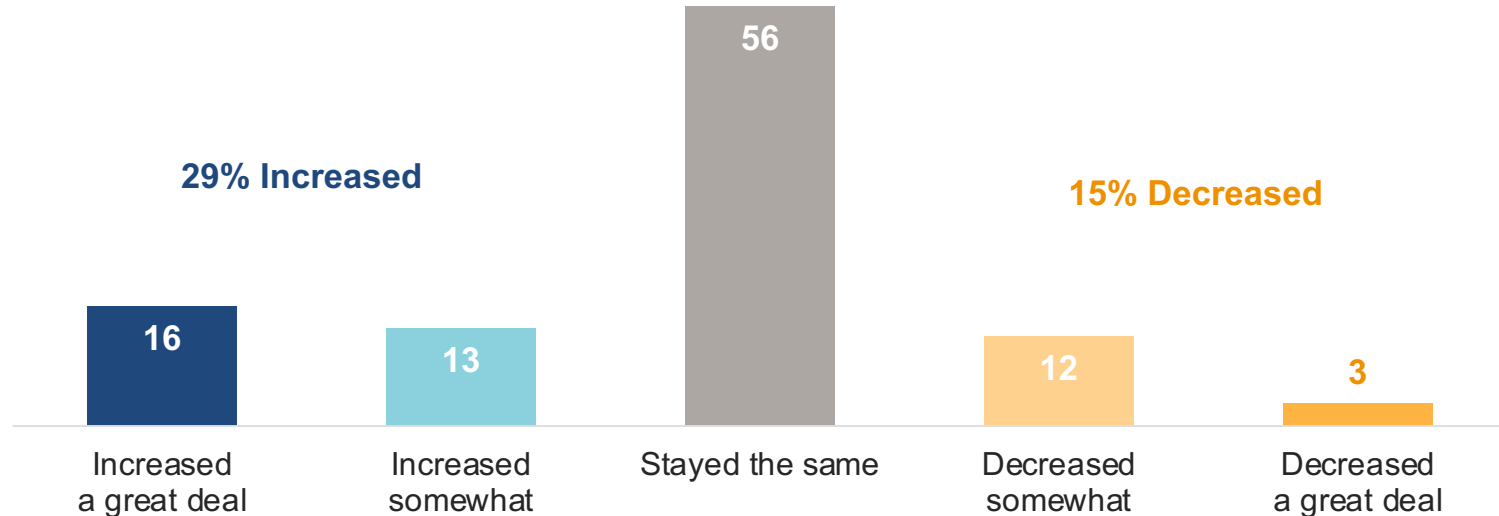


By 2-to-1, Parents Who Saw Change In Child Care Costs During The Pandemic Are More Likely To Report Costs Have Increased

Figure 7

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.)



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 blue banner with a diagonal cut on the right side is overlaid on the lower half of the image, containing the text 'Economic Challenges' in white.

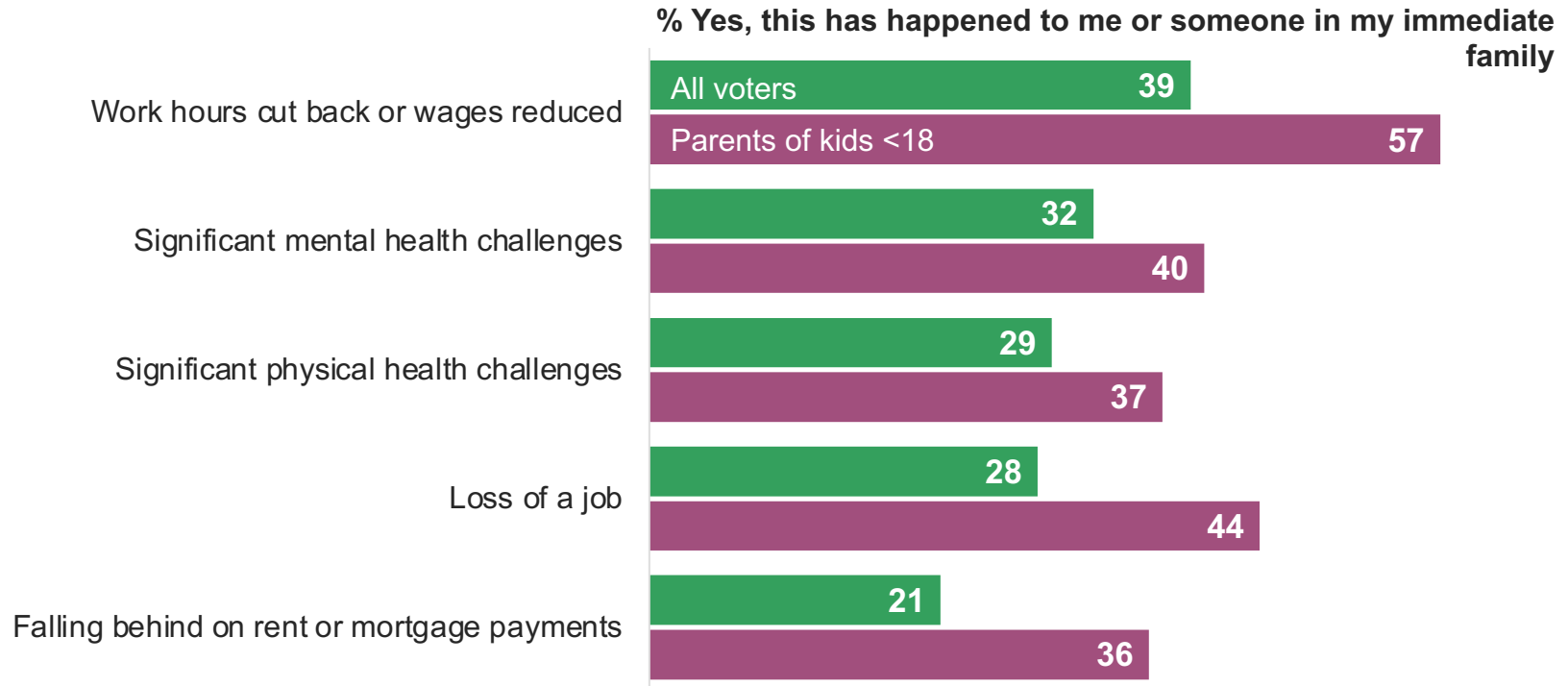
Economic Challenges

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

Figure 9

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?

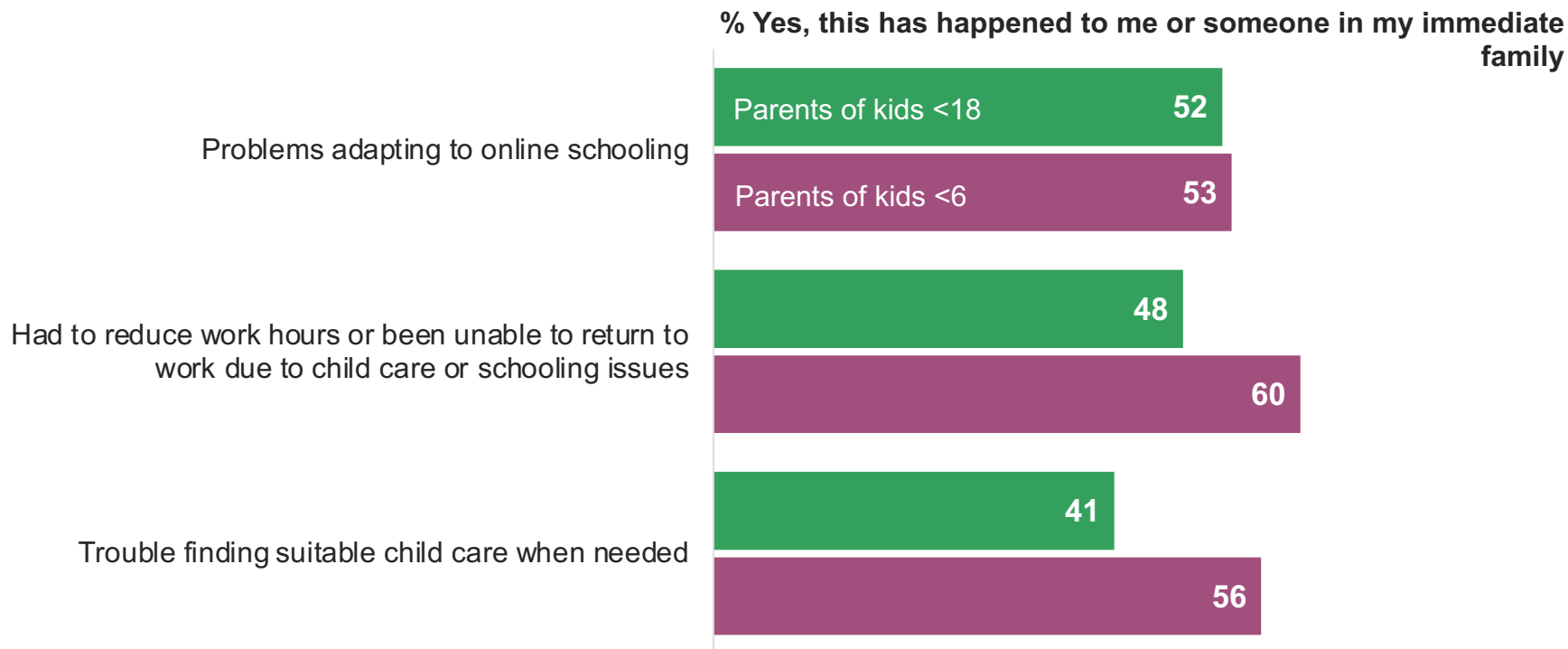


Schooling And Child Care Add To Parents' Challenges

Figure 10

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?



Child Care Challenges Have Hurt Career Prospects Of Many Parents

Figure 11

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?



51% of parents

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

A photograph of the Michigan State Capitol building, a large neoclassical structure with a prominent dome. The building is set against a blue sky with scattered white clouds. In the foreground, there is a green lawn with a central stone monument and a circular walkway. Bare tree branches are visible on the left side of the frame. A dark blue banner with a diagonal cut on the right side is overlaid across the middle of the image.

Legislative Solutions

Voters Prefer State Government Play A Role In Helping Families Afford Child Care

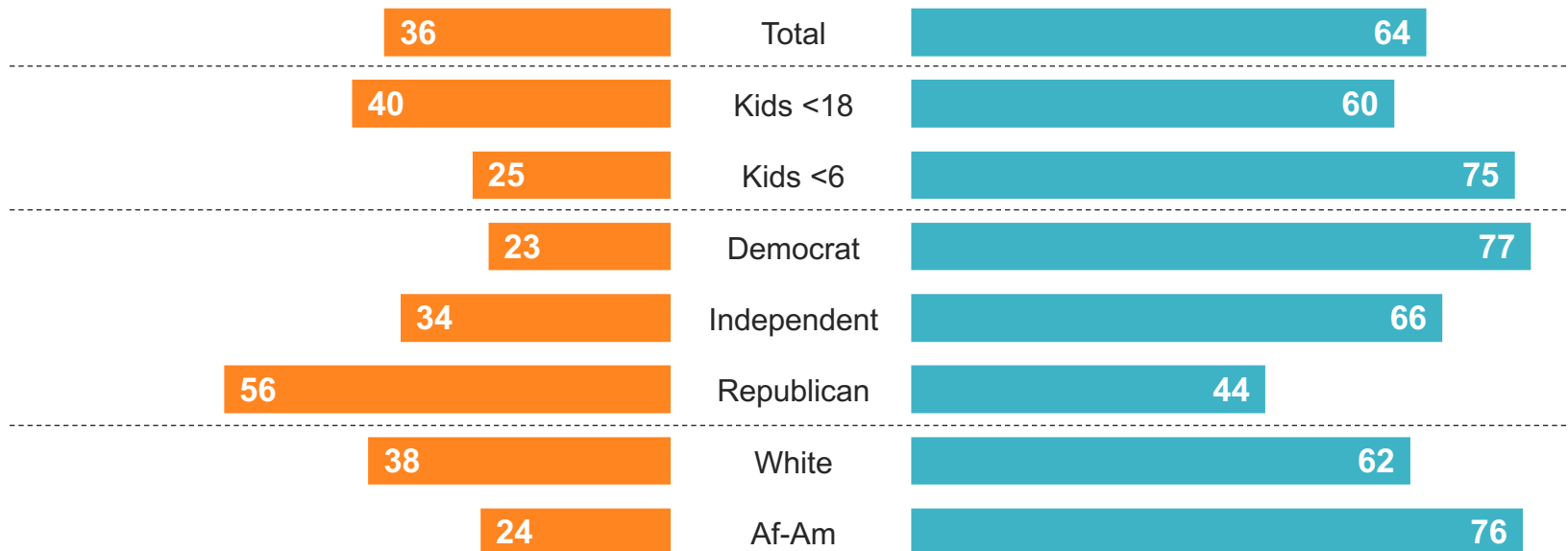
Figure 13

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 our state 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 State Government To Prioritize Child Care

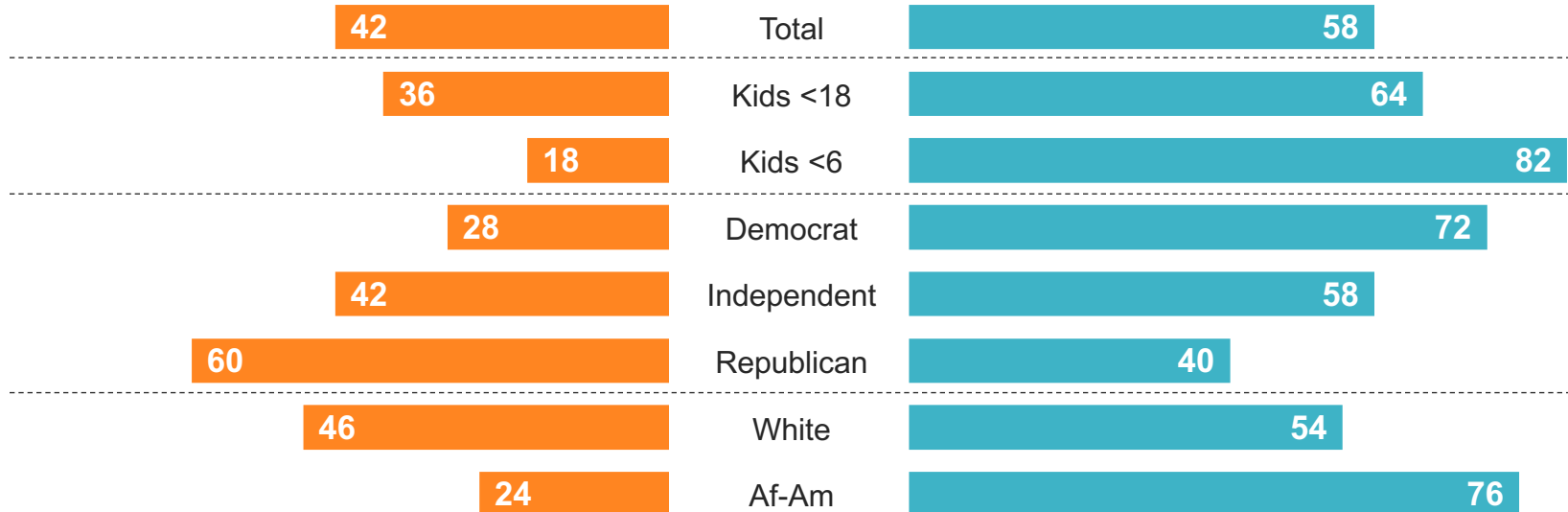
Figure 14

Government's Role

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

Our state government has already spent more than taxpayers can afford and been forced to make cuts to critical priorities. 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.**

Our state 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.



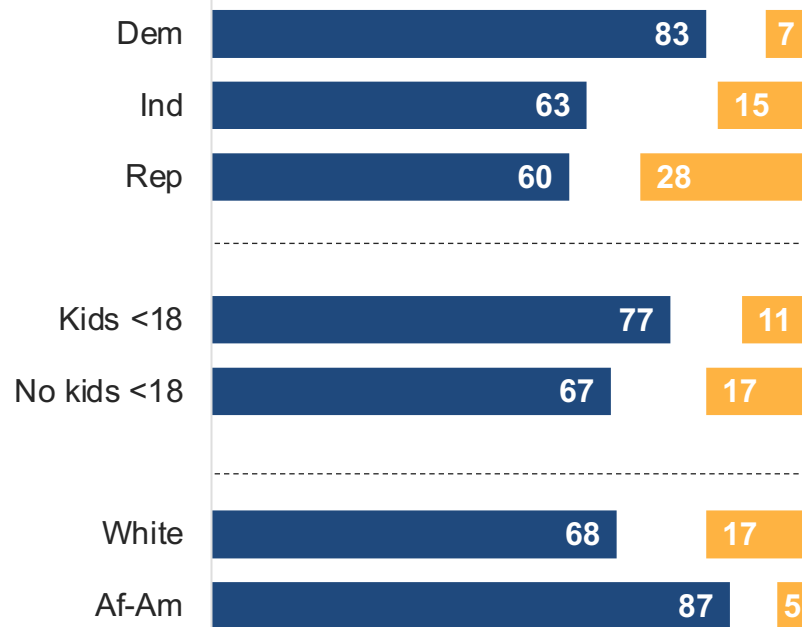
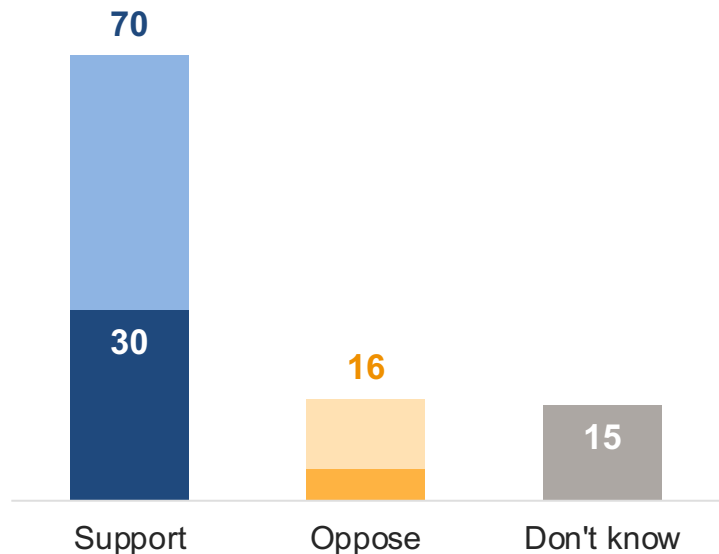
A Wide Majority Across Parties Support Michigan Government Increasing Funding For Child Care And Early Childhood Education

Figure 15

Child Care / Early Education Funding

Would you support or oppose efforts in the state legislature 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 From Congress

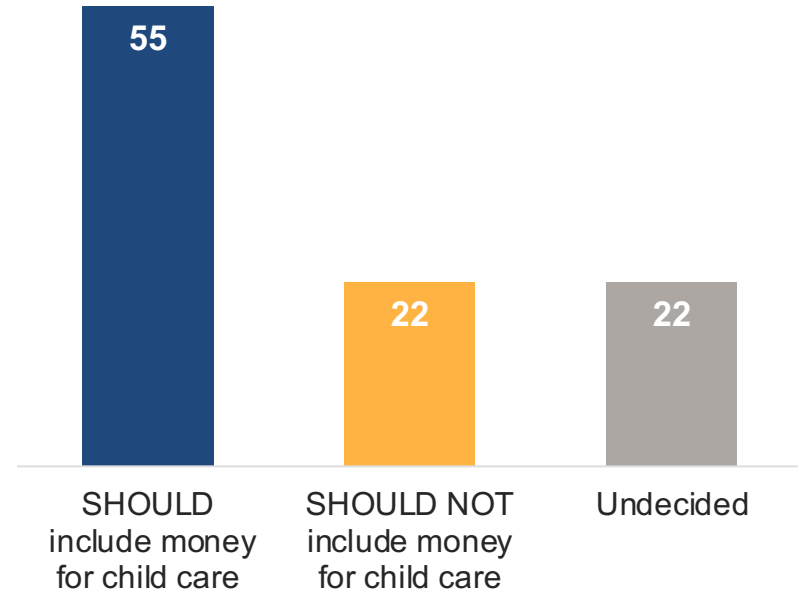
Figure 16

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?

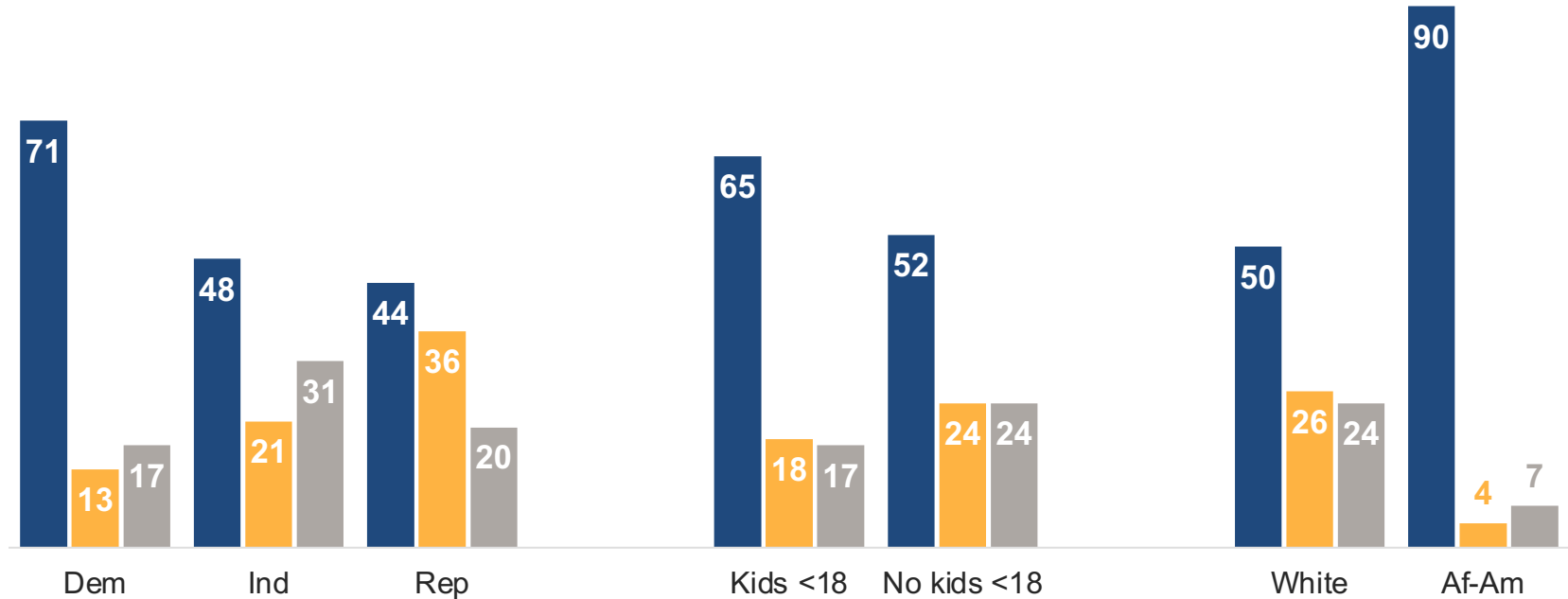


All Audiences Support Inclusion of Child Care Funding In Next Relief Package – Especially Parents, Democrats, And African Americans

Figure 17

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

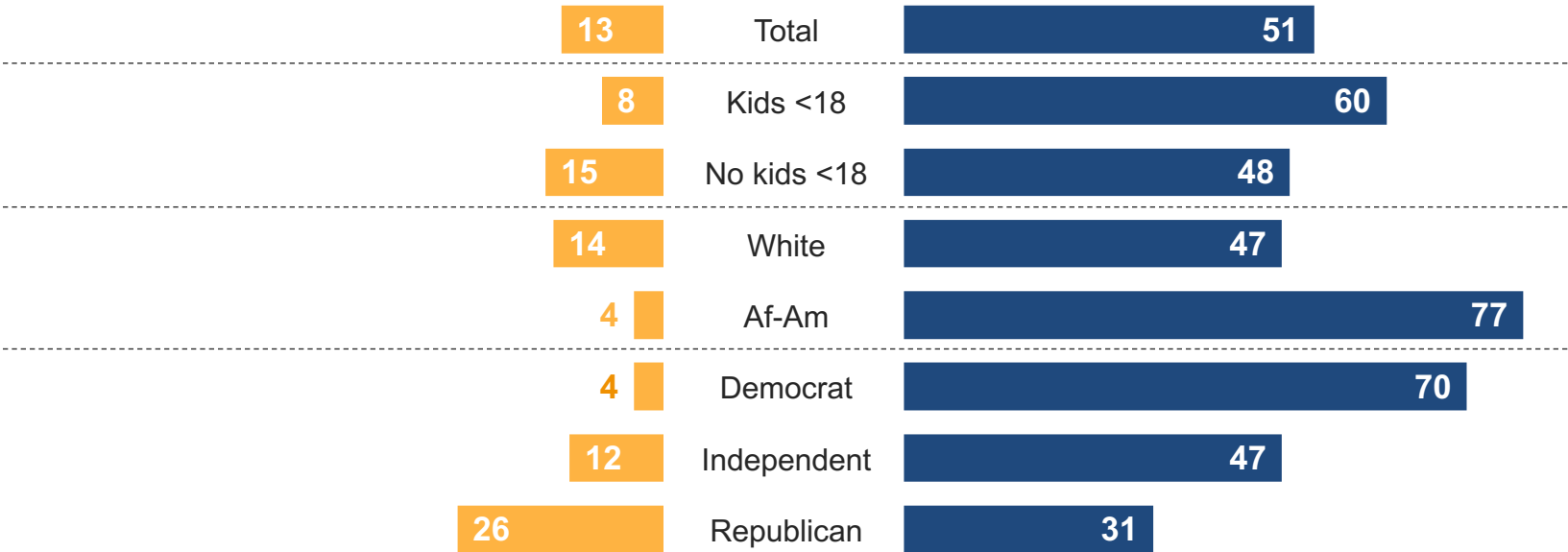
Figure 18

Candidate Impact

Thinking about the next election for Governor and state legislature, 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 supports 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 19

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

Guarantee child care assistance to low-income and middle-class families on a sliding scale based on household income

79

21

Start public education in every state with optional pre-kindergarten that is offered to all three- and four-year-olds

77

23

Offer low-income and middle-class families a tax credit up to \$8,000 to help pay for child care

75

25

Limit child care payments to 7% of a family's income

71

29

Universal, free child care available from birth to age five, similar to public school

62

38

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

Figure 20

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	White	Af-Am	Parents
Guarantee child care assistance to low-income and middle-class families on a sliding scale based on household income	90	80	64	76	99	82
Start public education in every state with optional pre-kindergarten that is offered to all three- and four-year-olds	83	80	67	75	91	83
Offer low-income and middle-class families a tax credit up to \$8,000 to help pay for child care	81	77	66	74	88	79
Limit child care payments to 7% of a family's income	74	74	63	71	72	73
Universal, free child care available from birth to age five, similar to public school	82	56	43	56	86	72

Voters Also Support Bolstering Child Care Workers And Infrastructure

Figure 21

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

Ensure people who work in child care earn a living wage

90

10

Invest in new child care programs in rural and low-income urban neighborhoods, where the lack of licensed child care is greatest

81

19

Help subsidize and create more options for home-based child care

76

24

Create a new child care construction tax credit to encourage businesses to build child care facilities at places of work

74

26

Worker & Infrastructure Proposals Also Receive Bipartisan Support

Figure 22

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	White	Af-Am	Parents
Ensure people who work in child care earn a living wage	97	90	82	89	99	92
Invest in new child care programs in rural and low-income urban neighborhoods, where the lack of licensed child care is greatest	88	85	70	80	96	82
Help subsidize and create more options for home-based child care	90	77	57	73	94	83
Create a new child care construction tax credit to encourage businesses to build child care facilities at places of work	84	77	60	73	88	81



Messaging

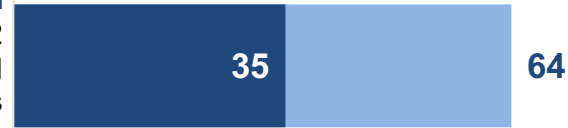
Strongest Arguments Focus On Children And Economic Benefits

Figure 24

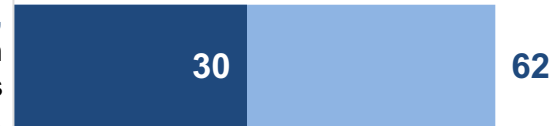
Supporter Messaging

● 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.



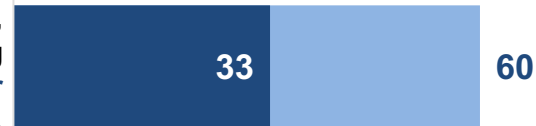
A major investment in child care and early learning would put more people to work, increase wages, and help families make ends meet while providing children with safe and stable learning environments. It would create tens of thousands of new jobs in Michigan and help predominantly low-income parents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



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).



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.



Majorities Across Party Find Benefits To Children Convincing

Figure 25

% Convincing	Dem	Ind	Rep	Parents
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.	75	66	50	75
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 tens of thousands of new jobs in Michigan and help predominantly low-income parents to return to the workforce.	74	61	48	70
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)	74	64	42	71
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.	71	62	45	69

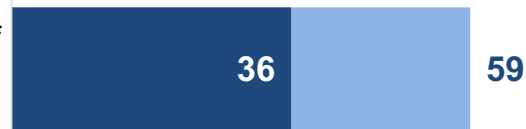
Arguments About The Burden On Women Also Work Well

Figure 26

Supporter Messaging

● Very convincing ● Total convincing

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)



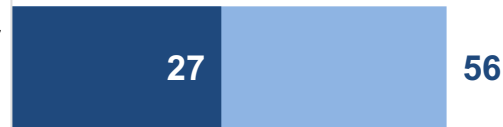
Today, American families pay an average of \$10,000 per child for full-time child care. In 31 states, infant day care costs more annually than in-state college tuition. Despite these massive costs, federal child care assistance only reaches 1 in 6 eligible families. (split)



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)



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.



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RESEARCH + STRATEGY