

G B A O

Center for American Progress



# Center for American Progress Child Care Research in Texas

October 2020

*N = 800 registered voters*

*Conducted September 14-20, 2020 via online web panel*

*Margin of error = +/- 3.5 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 ribbed 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 child's head and shoulders are visible, wearing a black and white checkered shirt. Another book titled "The Broom" is partially visible on the left.

Poor old Fox  
lost his socks.

## Child Care Challenges

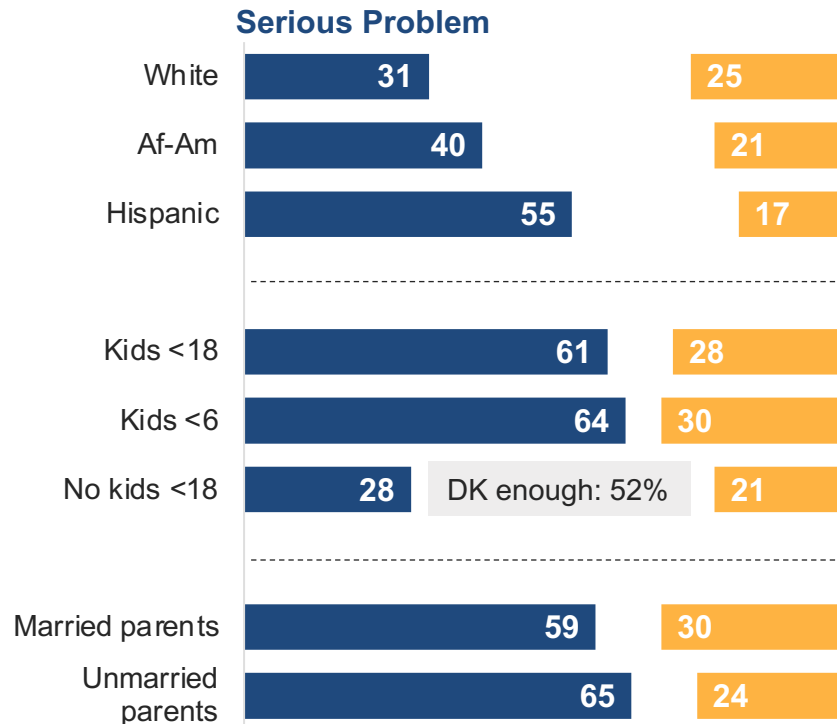
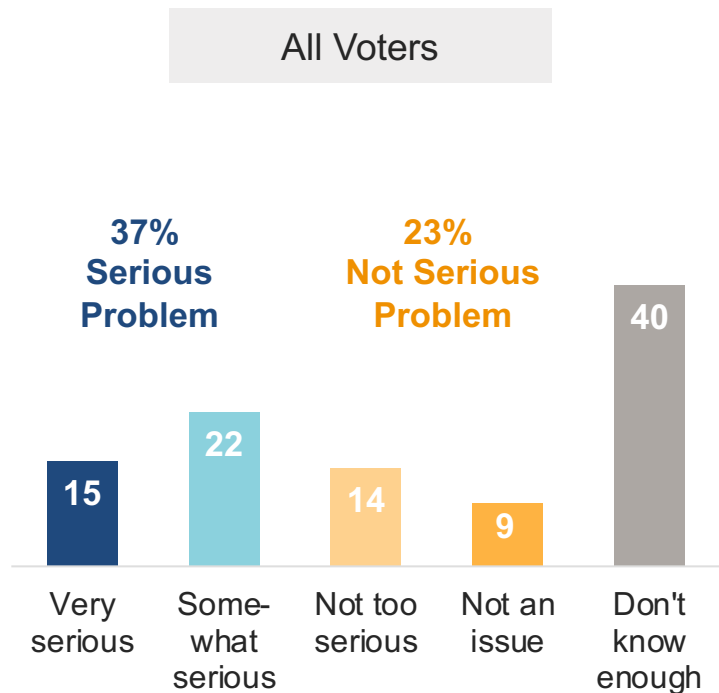


# Finding Quality, Affordable Child Care Is Problematic For Parents

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?*



# 4 In 10 Parents Struggled To Find Care During The Pandemic, Moms & Parents Of Young Children Report Having An Even Harder Time

Figure 6

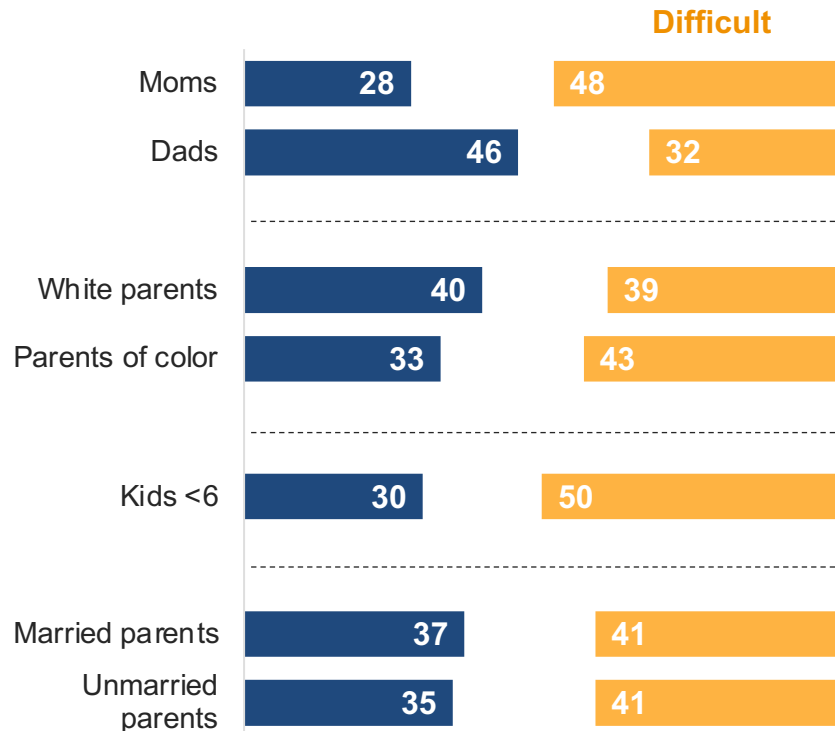
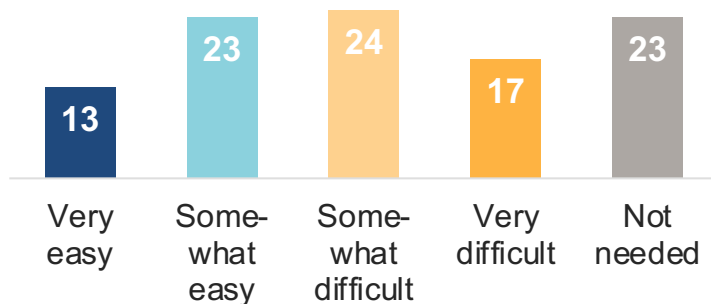
## Child Care Availability

*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?*

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

**36% Easy**

**41% Difficult**

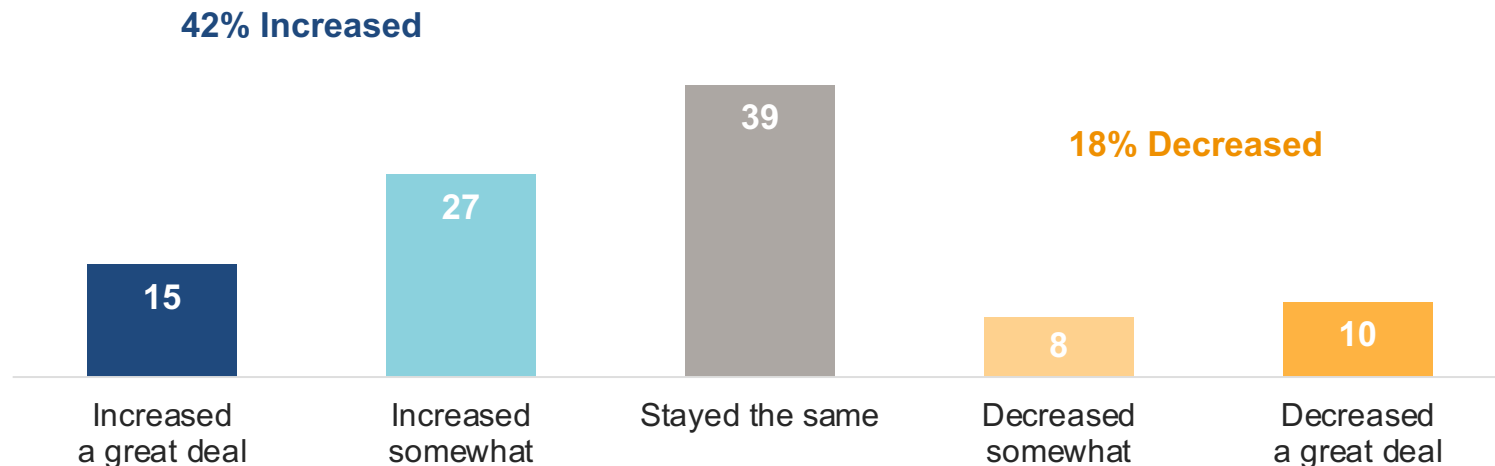


# By 2-to-1, Parents Who Saw Change In Child Care Costs During The Pandemic Are More Likely To Report Costs Have Increased

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 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.

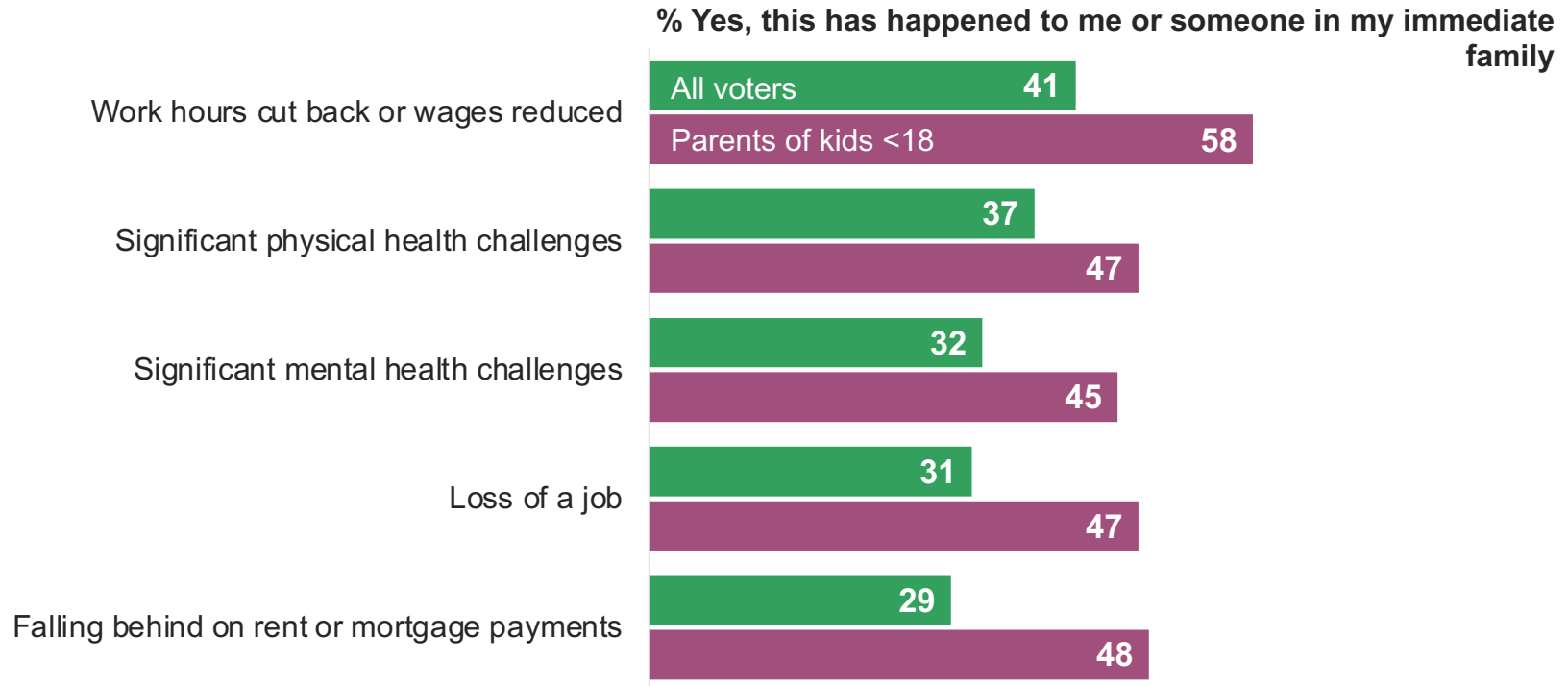
## Economic Challenges

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

Figure 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?*



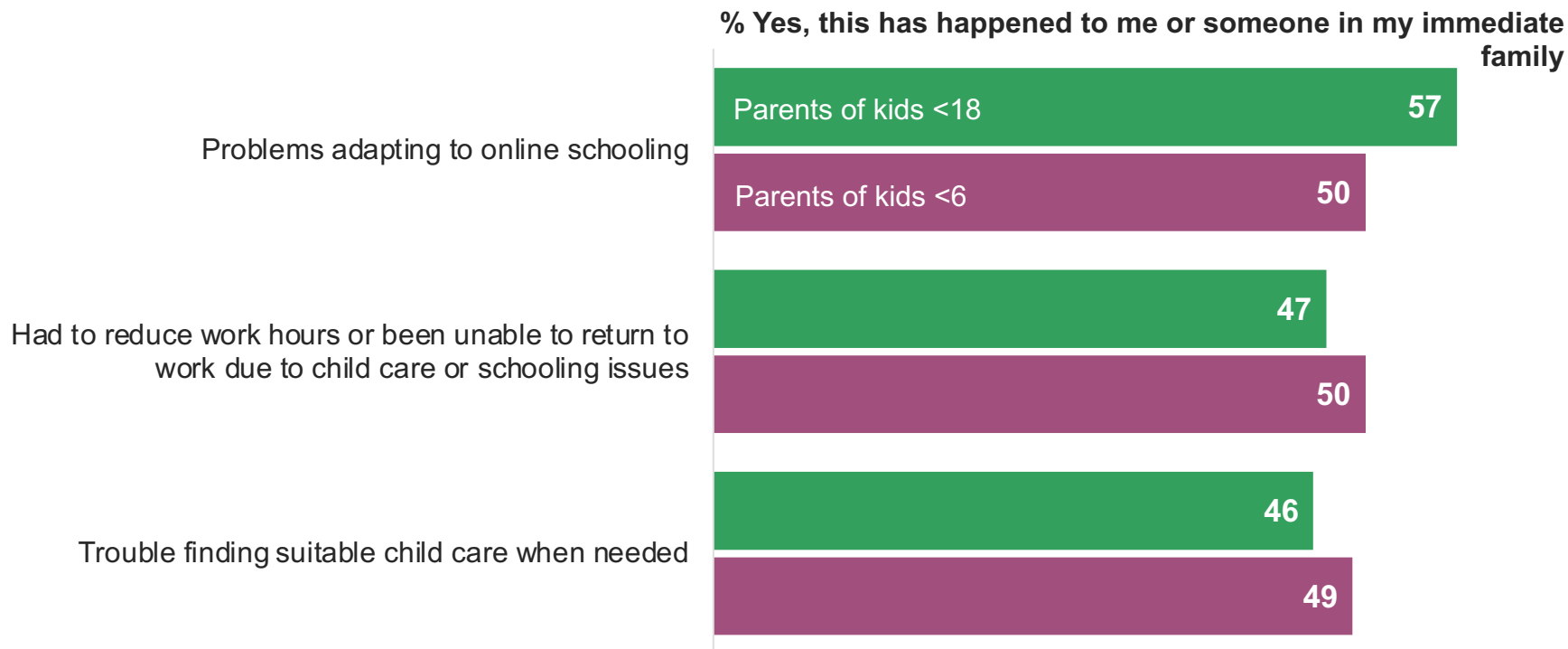


# Schooling And Child Care Add To Parents' Challenges

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?*



### **53% of parents**

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



# Legislative Solutions

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

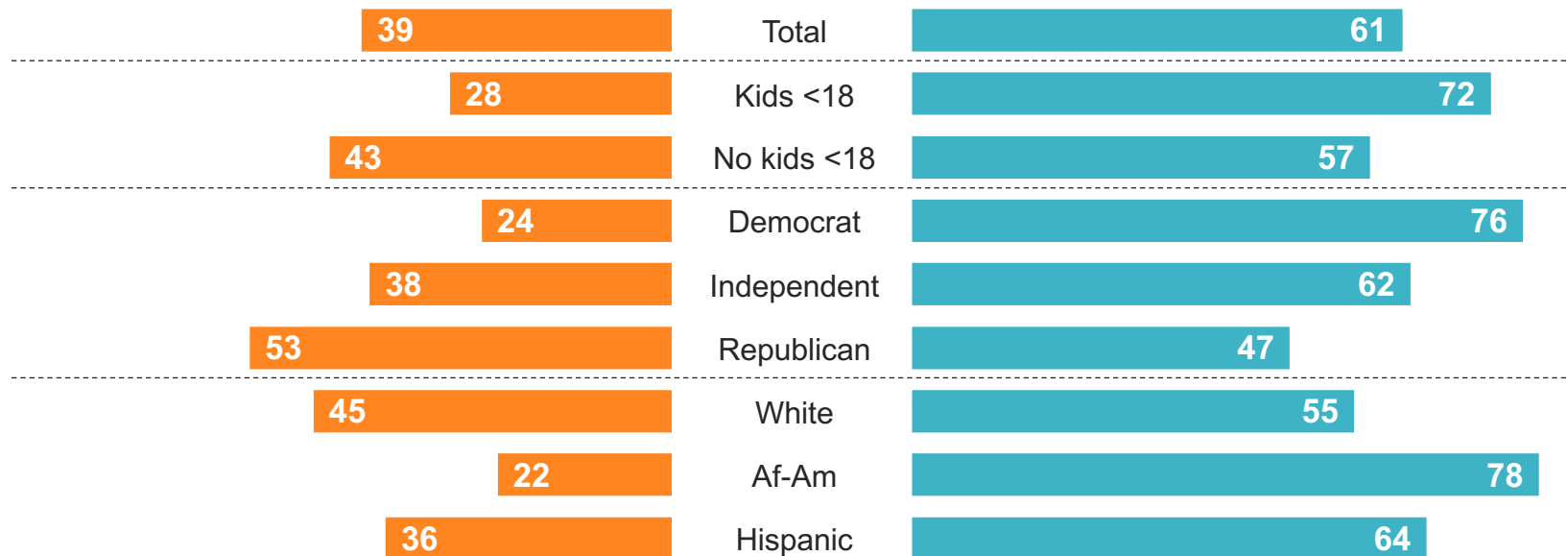
Figure 13

## 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

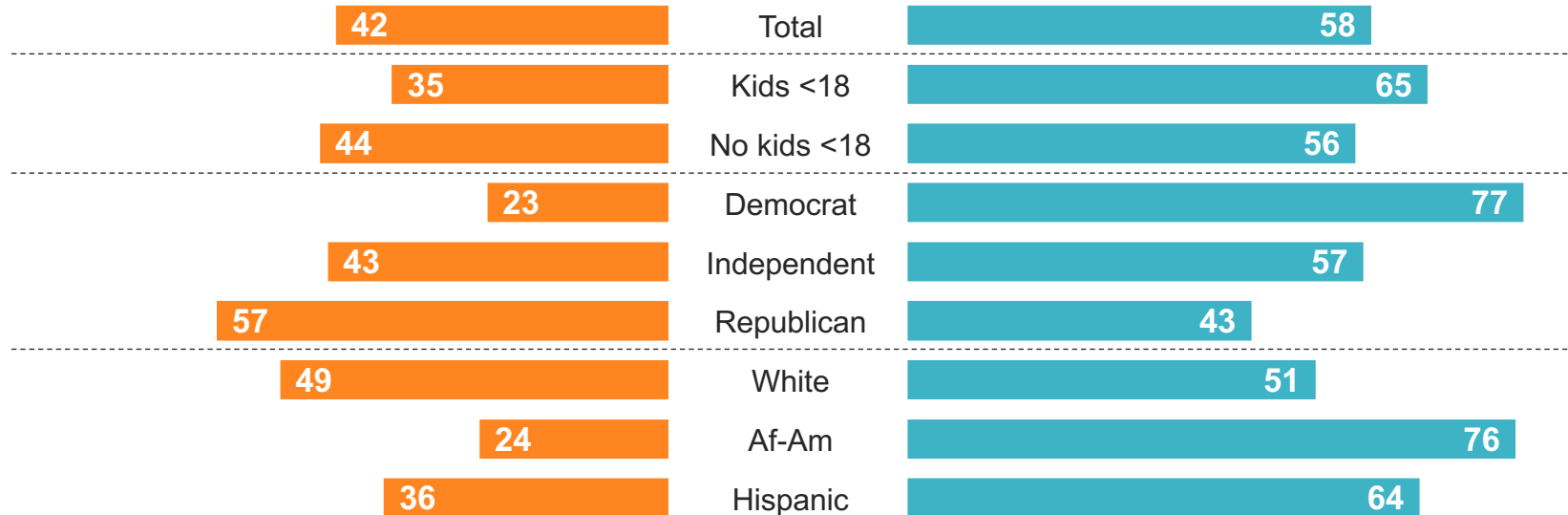
Figure 14

## 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.





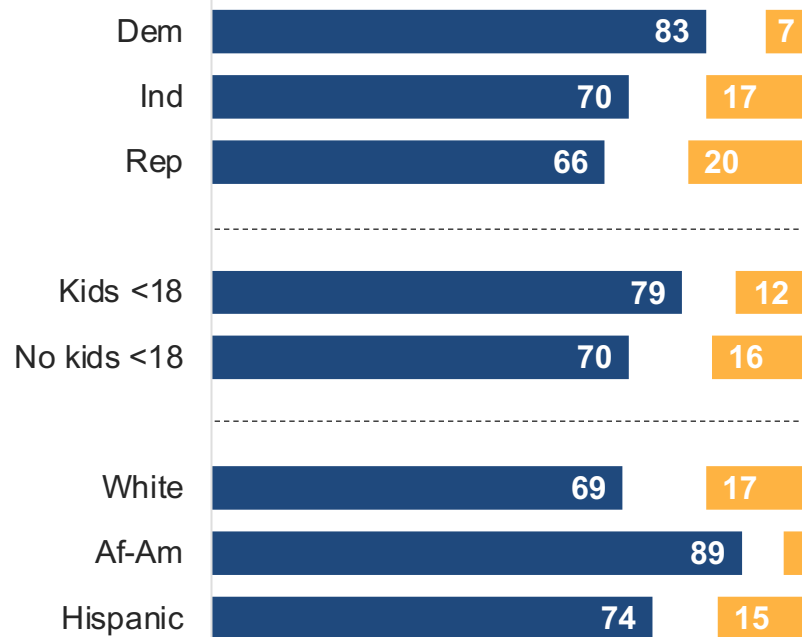
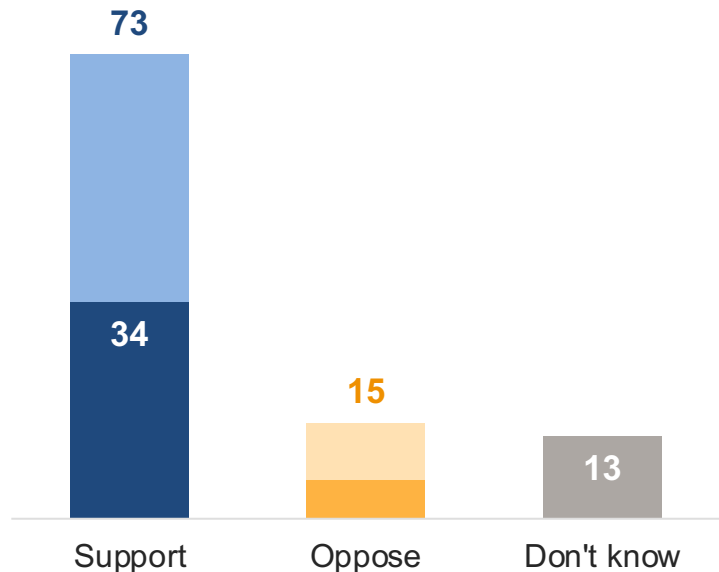
# A Wide Majority Across Parties Support Texas Government Increasing Funding For Child Care And Early Childhood Education

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

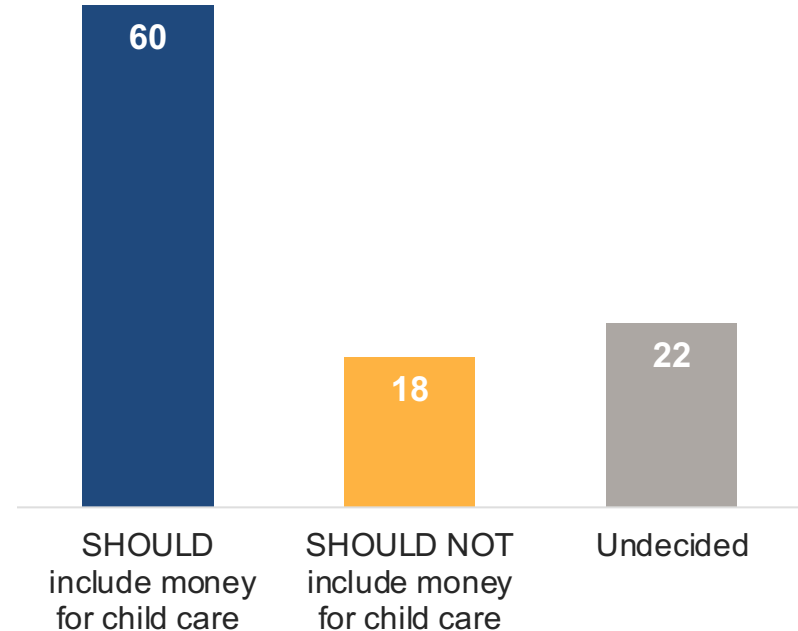
Figure 16

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?*

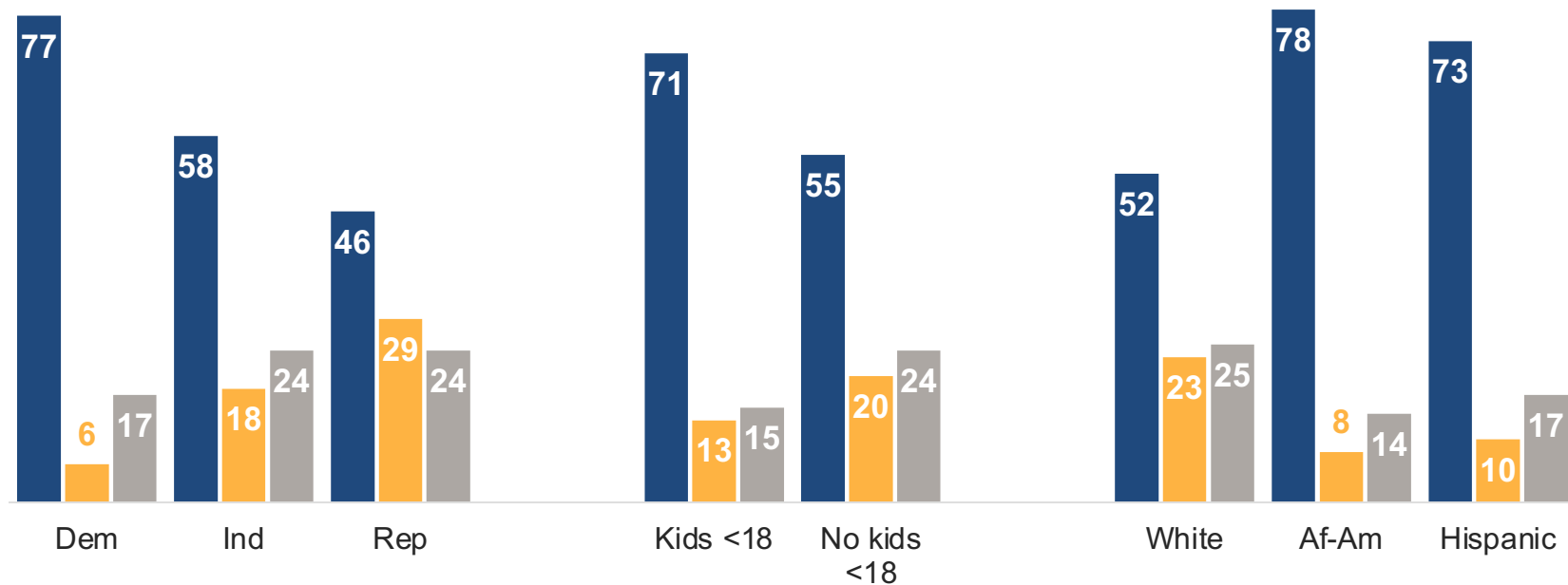


# All Audiences Support Inclusion of Child Care Funding In Next Relief Package – Especially Parents, Democrats, And Voters Of Color

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

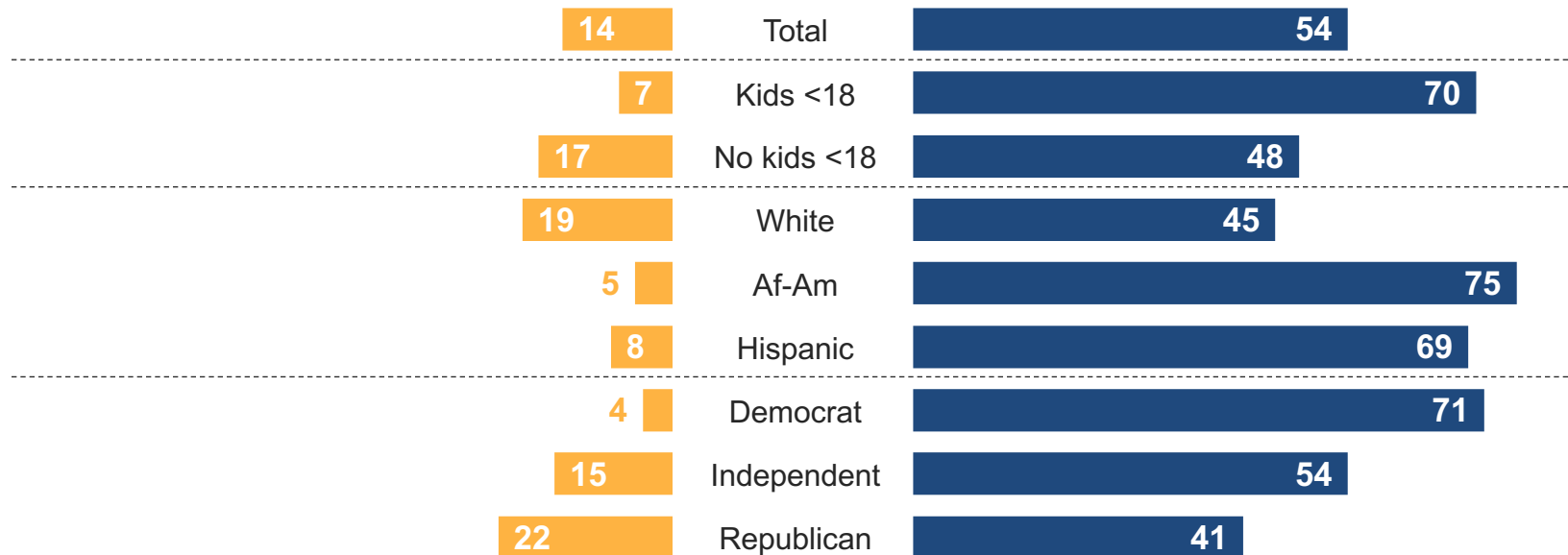
Figure 18

## 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  
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 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

Start public education in every state with optional pre-kindergarten that is offered to all three- and four-year-olds	78	22
Guarantee child care assistance to low-income and middle-class families on a sliding scale based on household income	77	23
Offer low-income and middle-class families a tax credit up to \$8,000 to help pay for child care	77	23
Limit child care payments to 7 percent of a family's income	71	29
Universal, free child care available from birth to age five, similar to public school	61	39



# 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	Hisp	Parents
Start public education in every state with optional pre-kindergarten that is offered to all three- and four-year-olds	90	76	70	72	88	87	89
Guarantee child care assistance to low-income and middle-class families on a sliding scale based on household income	89	76	67	72	90	82	85
Offer low-income and middle-class families a tax credit up to \$8,000 to help pay for child care	88	75	67	72	87	81	85
Limit child care payments to 7 percent of a family's income	78	70	65	67	78	75	81
Universal, free child care available from birth to age five, similar to public school	82	63	40	50	81	75	73

# 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

87

13

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

82

18

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

77

23

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

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	Hisp	Parents
Ensure people who work in child care earn a living wage	95	85	82	87	90	88	90
Invest in new child care programs in rural and low-income urban neighborhoods, where the lack of licensed child care is greatest	94	82	73	78	94	88	90
Create a new child care construction tax credit to encourage businesses to build child care facilities at places of work	83	77	72	76	81	78	86
Help subsidize and create more options for home-based child care	84	72	66	71	80	79	83



# Messaging

# Children's Health & Well-Being And Societal & Economic Benefits Are Strong Arguments In Support Of Child Care/Early Education Funding

Figure 24

## Supporter Messaging

● Very convincing    ● Total convincing

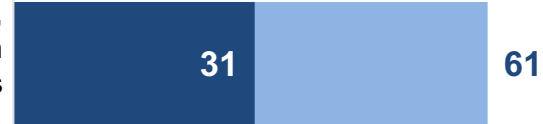
The first five years of a child's life are critical to their ability to learn social and emotional skills, and for becoming good students later in life. Just as we make K-12 education available to all families, we should be investing in early childhood programs to make them available to all children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



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)



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 Texas and help predominantly low-income parents to return to the workforce.



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 Children And The Economy Convincing

Figure 25

% 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.	75	61	50	73
The coronavirus pandemic has exposed undeniable, <b>systemic inequalities</b> 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)	77	60	45	68
A major investment in child care and early learning would <b>put more people to work, increase wages, and help families make ends meet</b> while providing children with safe and stable learning environments. It would create tens of thousands of new jobs in Texas and help predominantly low-income parents to return to the workforce.	76	57	51	74
<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)	79	62	43	72

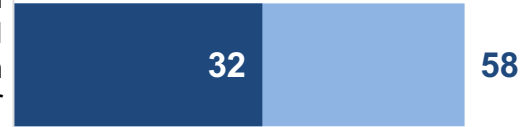
# Children's Health & Well-Being And Societal & Economic Benefits Are Strong Arguments In Support Of Child Care/Early Education Funding

Figure 26

## Supporter Messaging

● Very convincing    ● Total convincing

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)



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.



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.



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)



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RESEARCH + STRATEGY