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EXPANDING CHILDCARE AVAILABILITY IN THE UNITED STATES

The availability and affordability of childcare is one of the most important issues facing young voters, and has become a key feature of many of the Presidential campaigns. Recently, Data for Progress conducted polling¹ of US voters on the subject of childcare policy. The 1 survey included a policy creating new childcare programs, that would also provide good-paying jobs for childcare providers. Here, we shed light on voters' attitudes toward this childcare policy.

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Summary

- Voters are prepared to support new childcare programs, even if they include new taxes and new government programs
- Party identification plays a stronger role in determining support for new childcare assistance than does having children

New Childcare Programs

We asked respondents about a childcare proposal that included a new set of public and private childcare programs, as well as a plan to pay for those programs. The policy calls for public-private partnerships to develop a network of childcare facilities, whose employees would be paid at least fifteen dollars per hour, and that would be funded by additional taxation. We asked,

Some Democrats in Congress have proposed a new plan that would give grants to states, cities, nonprofits, schools, and other local partners to create a network of child care options that would be available to every family. The plan would require childcare workers be paid at least fifteen dollars per hour. Families earning less than 200 percent of the federal poverty line would pay nothing at all for childcare. For families earning more, their expected contribution would be capped at 7 percent of their income. The proposal would be paid for by a 2 percent tax on accumulations of wealth worth more than \$50 million.

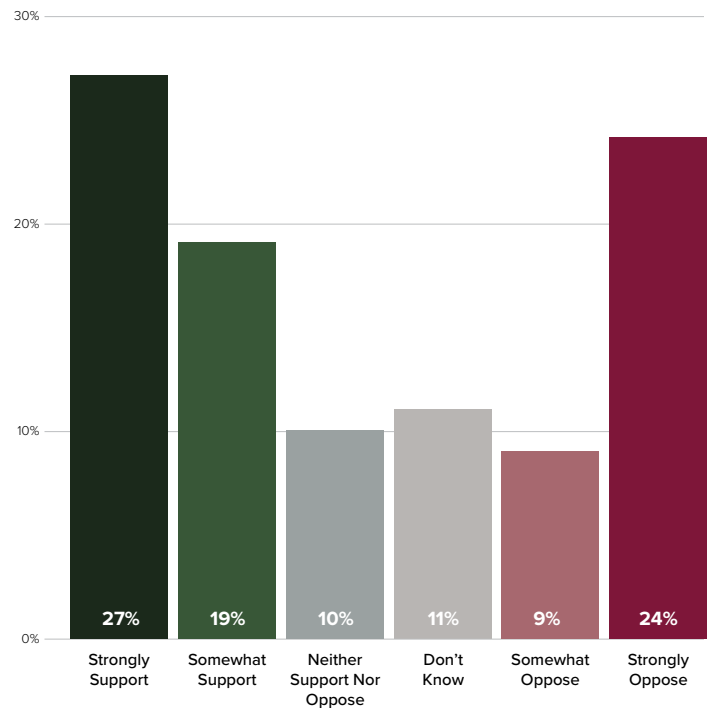
Democrats say this will provide affordable childcare for all Americans, and that leaving middle class families with more money in their pockets will grow the economy.

Republicans say that the government can't provide childcare as well as the private sector and that more taxes on job creators will harm economic growth.

Do you [support or oppose] this proposal?

Even considering this policy calls for new government programs and tax increases, we find clear support for new childcare programs. Fully 46 percent of voters somewhat or strongly support such programs, while just 33 percent somewhat or strongly oppose the program. About 1 in 5 voters remain undecided on such a policy. Not surprisingly,

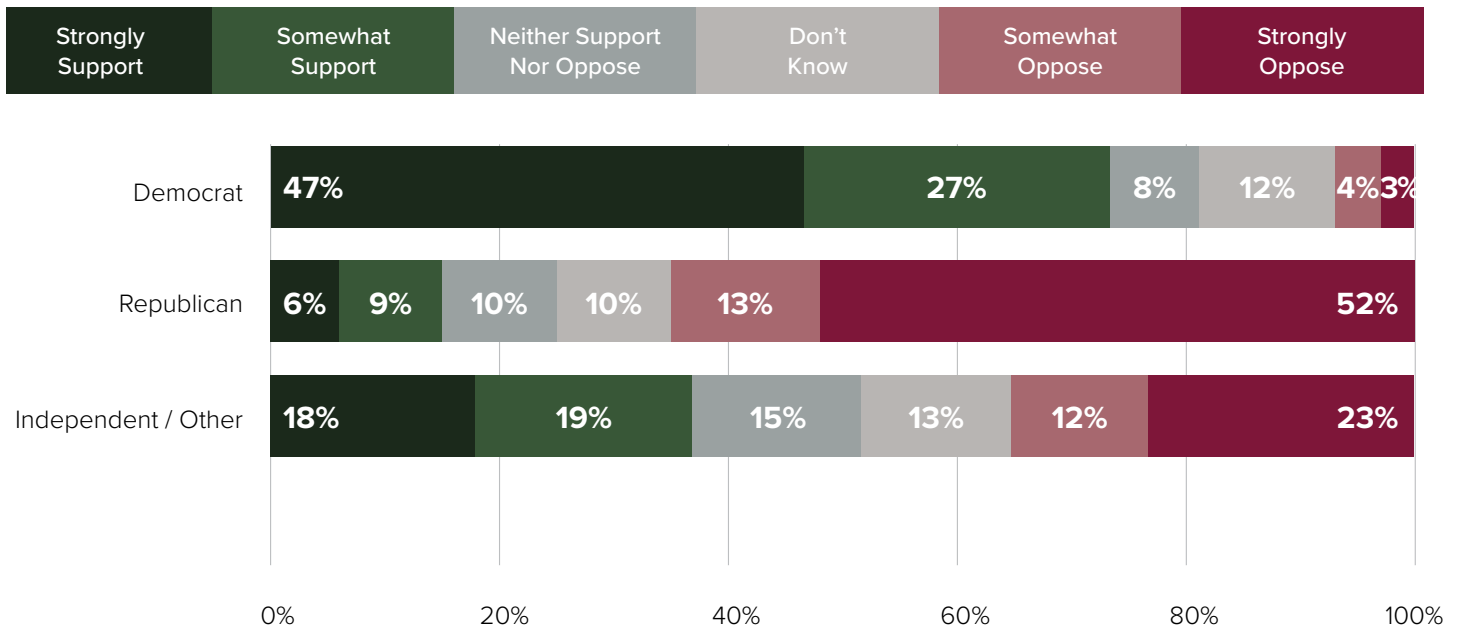
SUPPORT FOR NEW CHILDCARE PROGRAMS



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party identification plays a strong role in predicting how voters feel about new childcare programs. Democrats support the policy by a 74-7 margin, while Republicans oppose the policy by a 65-15 margin. Independent voters narrowly support new childcare programs by a 37-35 margin.² Among partisans, fully 1 in 5 Democrats and Republicans report they are unsure or neutral on such programs, as are 28 percent of Independents, indicating there is plenty of room to continue swaying public opinion on this question.

SUPPORT FOR NEW CHILDCARE PROGRAMS BY PARTY IDENTIFICATION



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More surprisingly, parents are no more nor likely to support new childcare programs than are voters who do not have children. Across the full sample, about 40 percent of voters with children support such programs and 39 percent oppose them, while 57 percent of voters without children support such a program and 23 percent of voters without children oppose them.

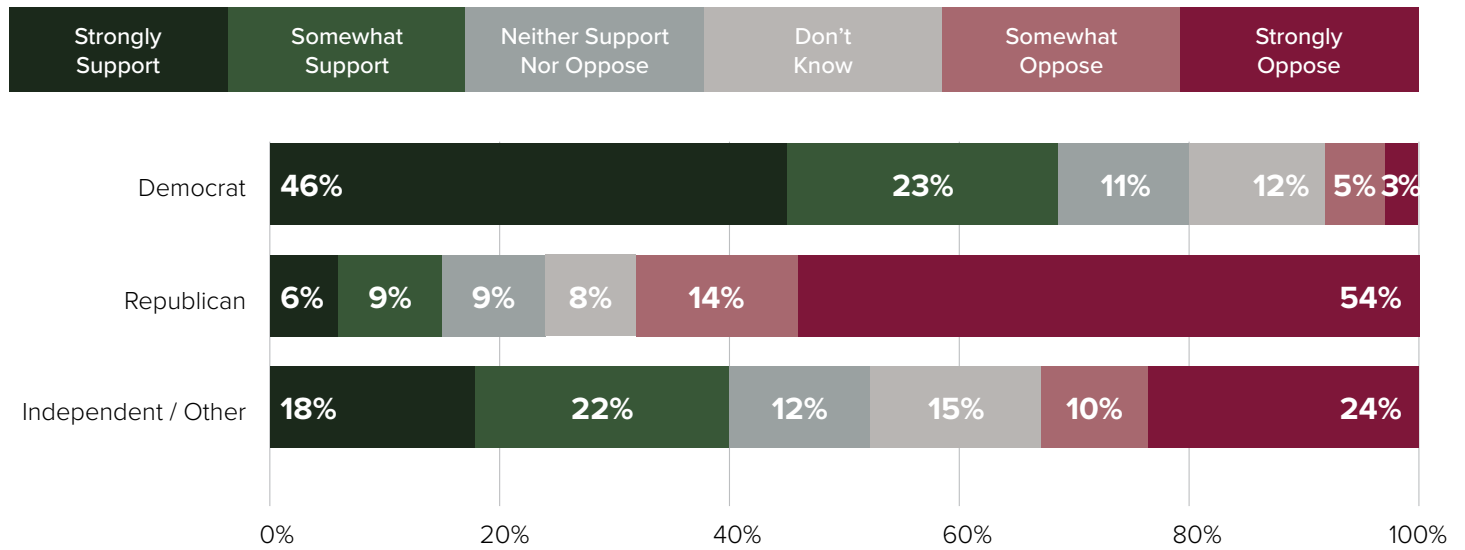
Indeed, if we break out the result both by party identification and by whether or not voters reported they had children, we see the role of partisanship here. About 79 percent of Democrats with children support the policy, as well as 79 percent of Democrats without children, support new childcare programs. About 40 percent of Independents with children and 32 percent of Independents without children supported the

policy, as did 15 percent of Republicans with children and 12 percent of Republicans without children.

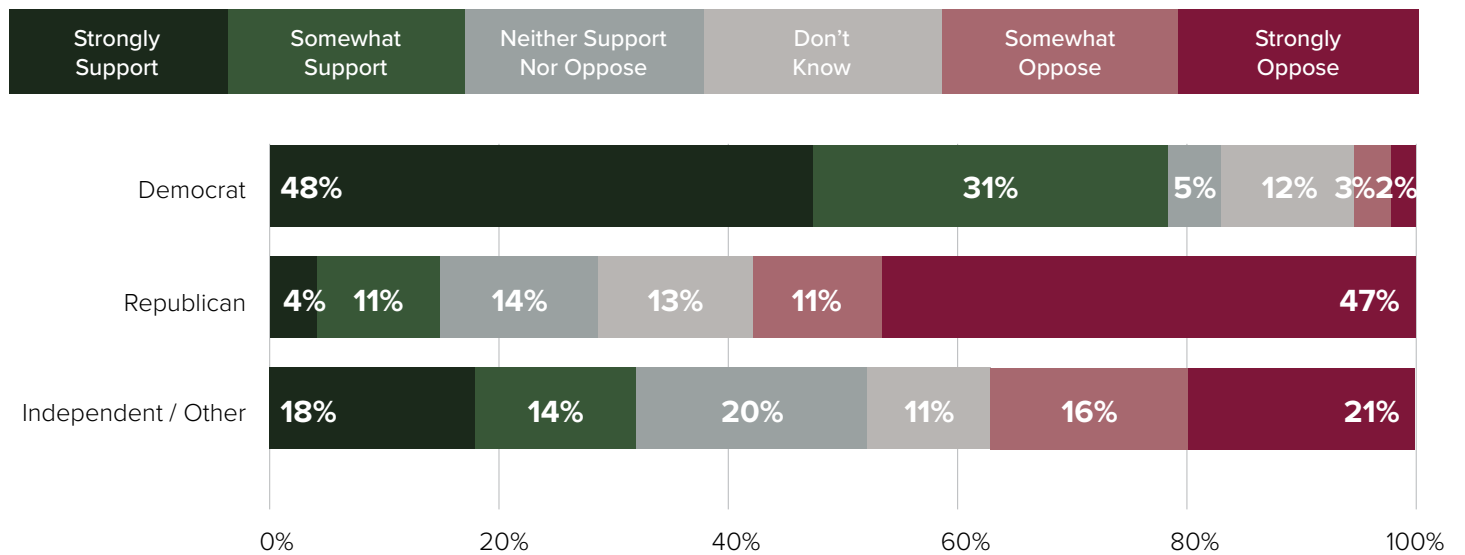
There are a few ways to interpret this result. Most importantly, voters with children are older. The average age of voters with children in our sample is 59, while the average age of voters without children is 44. About 31 percent of voters with children reported that they were retired, compared to just 13 percent of those who did not.

This age difference correlates with political ideology. While about 48 percent of voters between the ages of 18-29 identified as politically liberal or very liberal, only about 21 percent of voters over the age of 65 identified that way. As such, it is likely that the relative youth of those without children, their political ideology, and their support for new childcare programs are interrelated.

VOTER IS A PARENT



VOTER IS NOT A PARENT



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Also, as each of these policies provides benefits to new parents and parents of young children, it is intuitive that those who do not yet have children would support these policies the most. They stand to gain the most clear benefits from new programs that provide childcare for young children. In addition to political ideology, practical economic outlook suggests that these policies, if passed, would provide clear benefits to new parents and parents of young children.

Conclusion

These results provide clear evidence that voters support new programs to assist with childcare. Even after hearing the tax hikes the policy would entail, voters are supportive of comprehensive childcare policy.

ENDNOTES

- 1 On behalf of Data for Progress, YouGov Blue fielded a survey of US voters that included several items on childcare policy. The survey included 1,380 US voters and fielded from 8/15/19-8/17/19 on YouGov's online panel. The sample was weighted to be representative of the population of US voters by age, race/ethnicity, sex, education, US Censusregion, and 2016 Presidential vote choice.
- 2 Here, we present the results with Independent voters who report they lean toward one party or the other with that party. For example, Independents who report they "leaned to the Democrats" are included with the Democrats here, as the partisan lean of Independents correlates extremely highly with their underlying policy preferences.