

## **First Five Years Fund**

**Key findings from a statewide survey of 500 registered voters in North Carolina conducted July 26-30, 2016.**



**LORI WEIGEL**



**JAY CAMPBELL**

# METHODOLOGY

- Statewide survey of 500 registered voters in North Carolina conducted on both landlines and cell phones
- Interviewing completed July 26-30, 2016
- Overall margin of error of  $\pm 4.38\%$
- Sample distributed proportionally throughout the state and is demographically representative of the electorate
- Bipartisan research team of Hart Research and Public Opinion Strategies

**Ensuring adequate funding for state needs like education is solidly more important than keeping taxes low to voters.**

**Making sure that there is sufficient funding  
for needs such as education**

**59%**

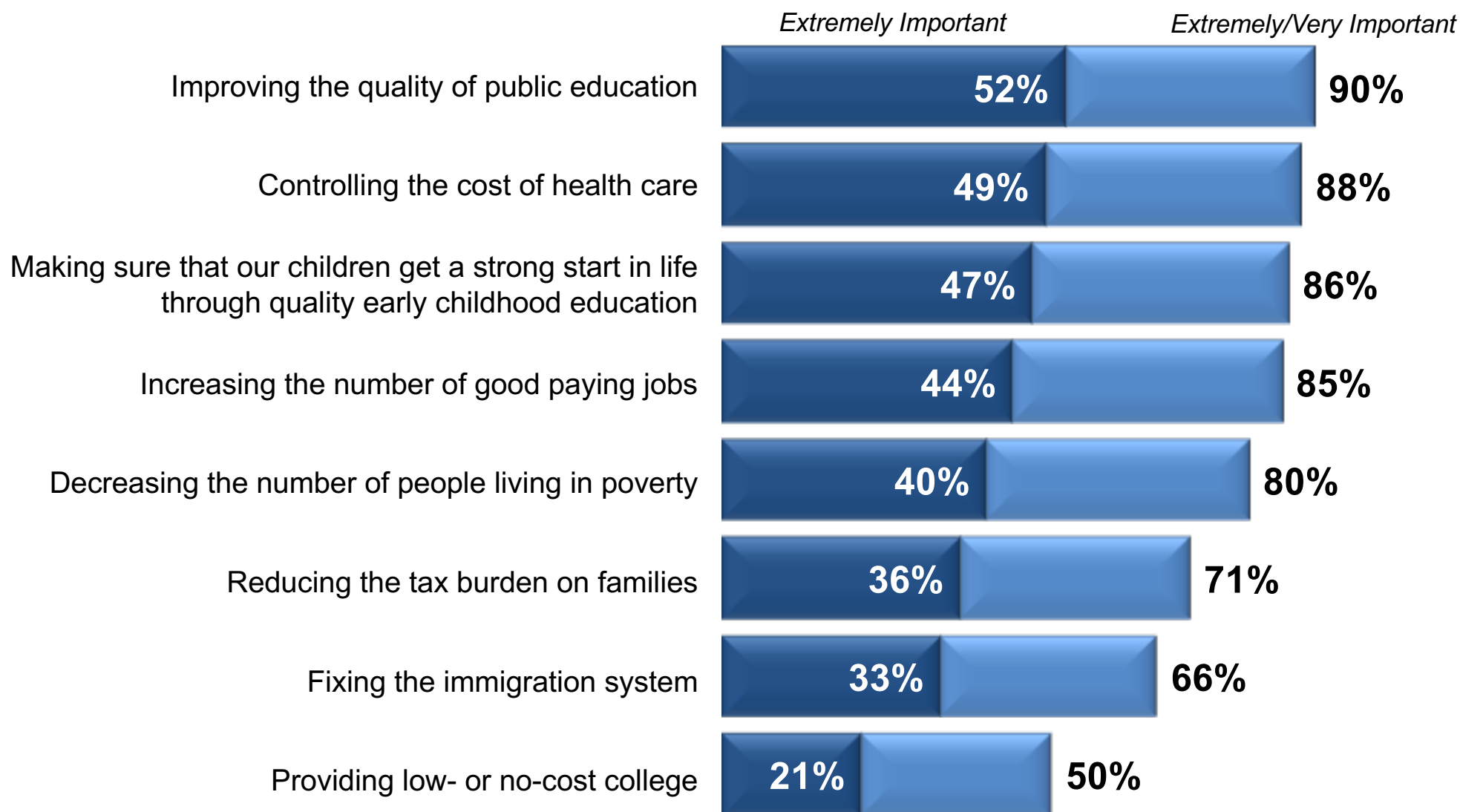
**Holding the line on taxes and spending**

**37%**

---

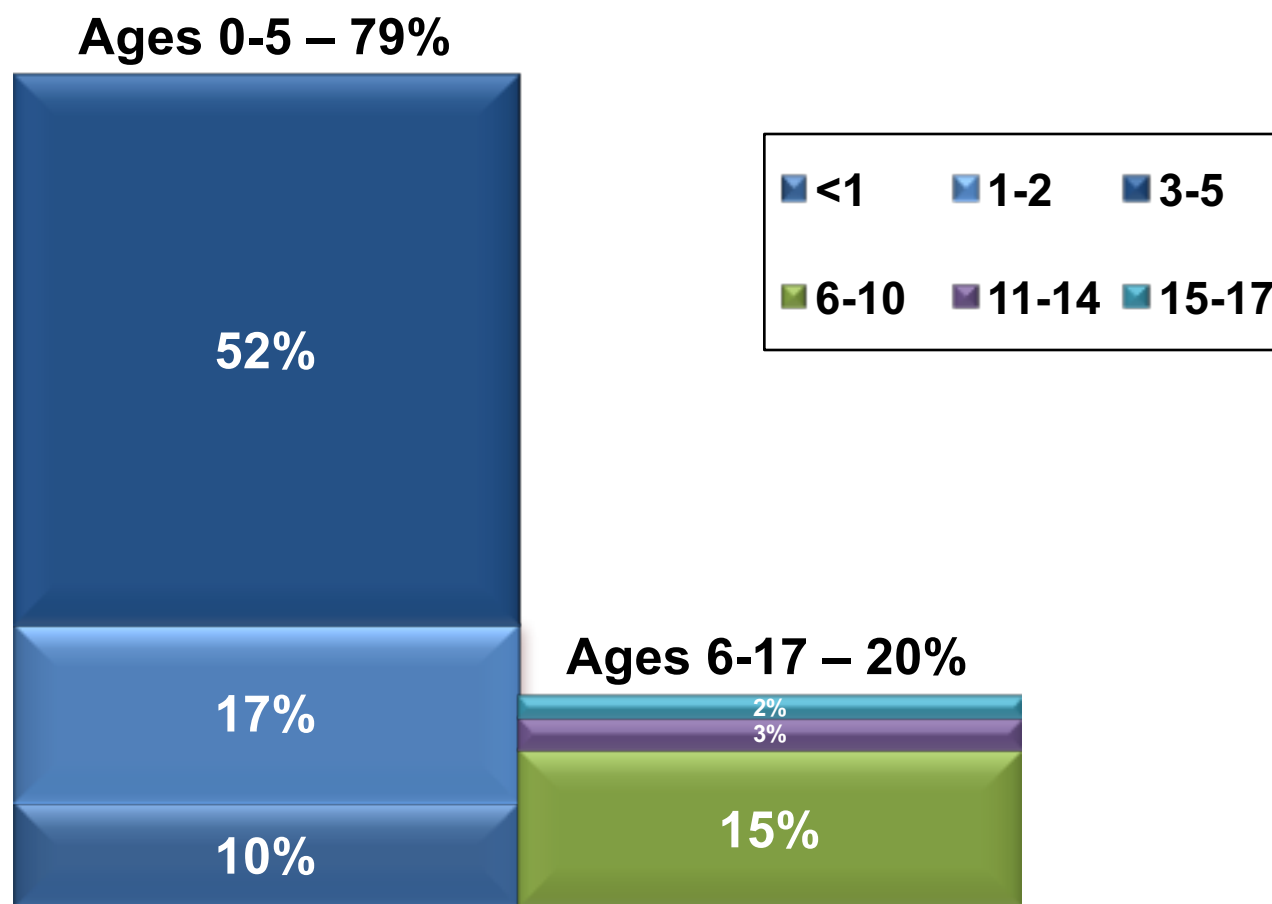
*Which of the following do you think is a greater priority right now – holding the line on taxes and spending, or making sure that there is sufficient funding for needs such as education?*

## Voters rate education—and early education specifically—as two of the top three most important priorities for the nation.



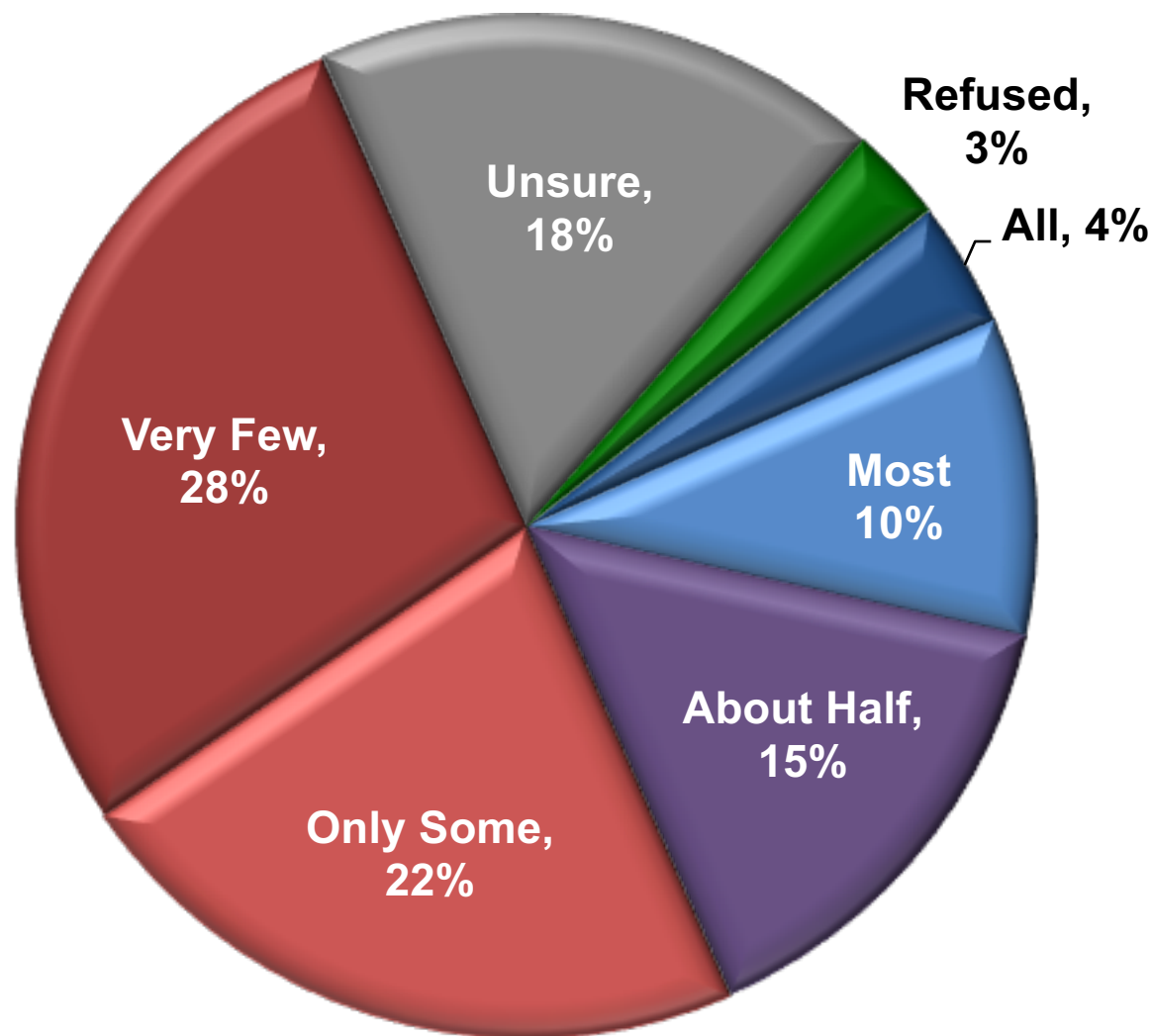
*Now I'm going to read you some goals that people might have for our country right now, and I'd like you to rate how important you personally consider each goal to be – is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important or not that important to you?*

# Eight-in-ten North Carolinians say birth to age five is the most important time for developing a child's capacity to learn.



*What do you think is the most important age for developing a child's capacity to learn? Is it...*

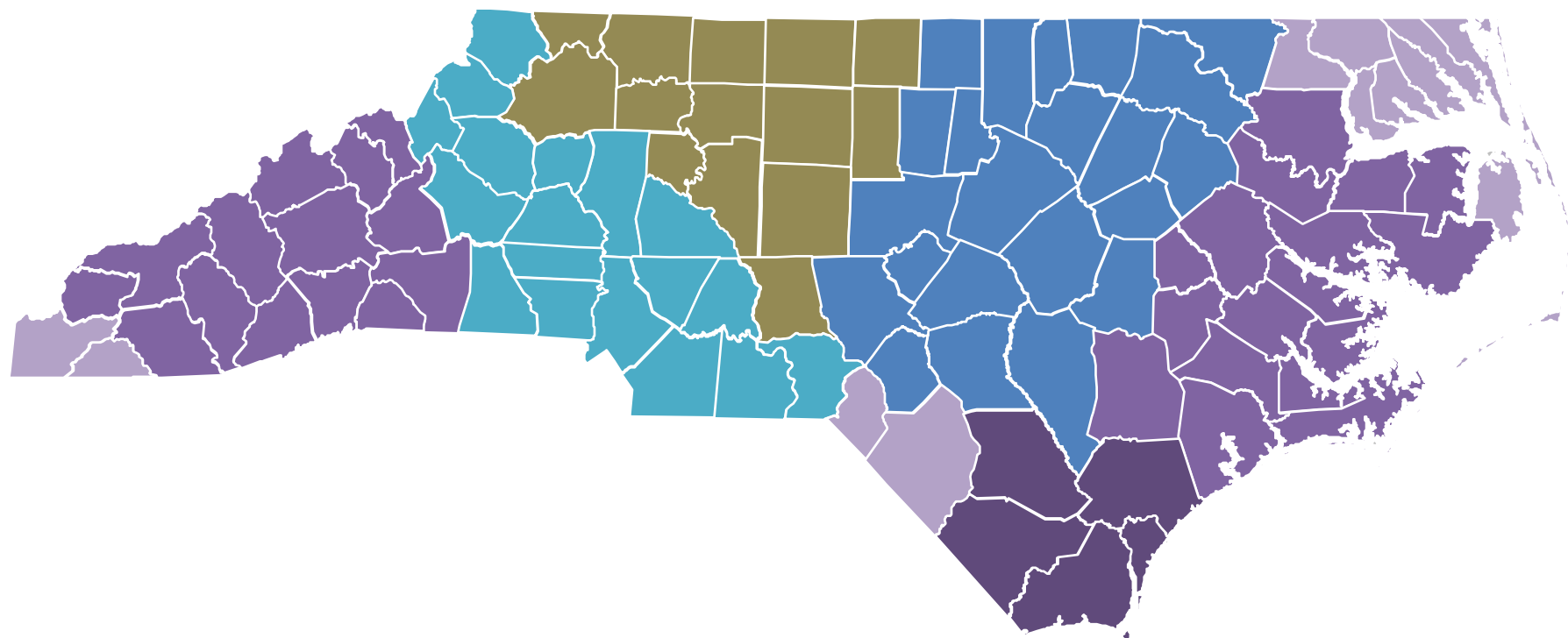
## Two-thirds of respondents say half or fewer of early education programs are high-quality and affordable.



<sup>^</sup> Denotes Rounding

*About how many of the early education programs in your area would you say are high-quality AND affordable for lower- and middle-income families?*

# Voters throughout the state say there is a lack of affordable quality early education programs.



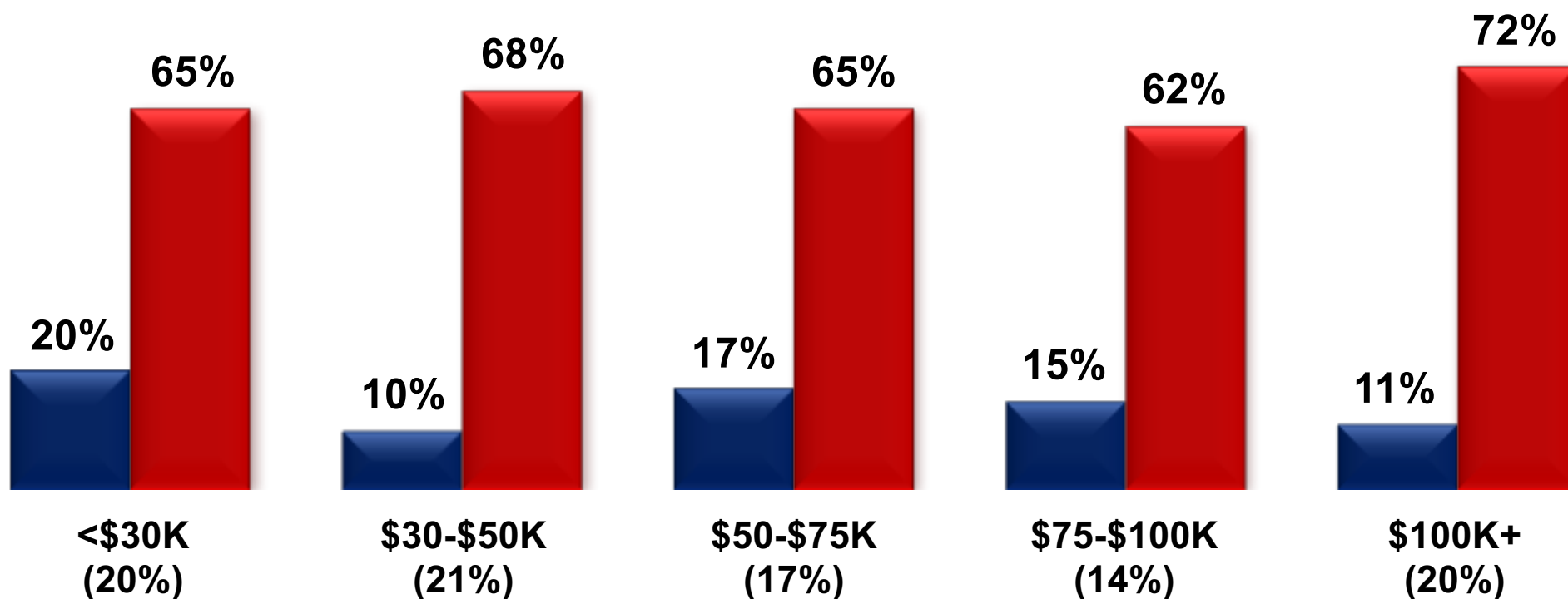
Charlotte (27%)		Raleigh (31%)		W-S/Greensboro (17%)		Other Media Markets (25%)	
All/Most Programs	15%	All/Most Programs	12%	All/Most Programs	22%	All/Most Programs	13%
Half or Fewer Programs	63%	Half or Fewer Programs	69%	Half or Fewer Programs	65%	Half or Fewer Programs	66%

About how many of the early education programs in your area would you say are high-quality AND affordable for lower- and middle-income families?

**This is also true across all income levels.**

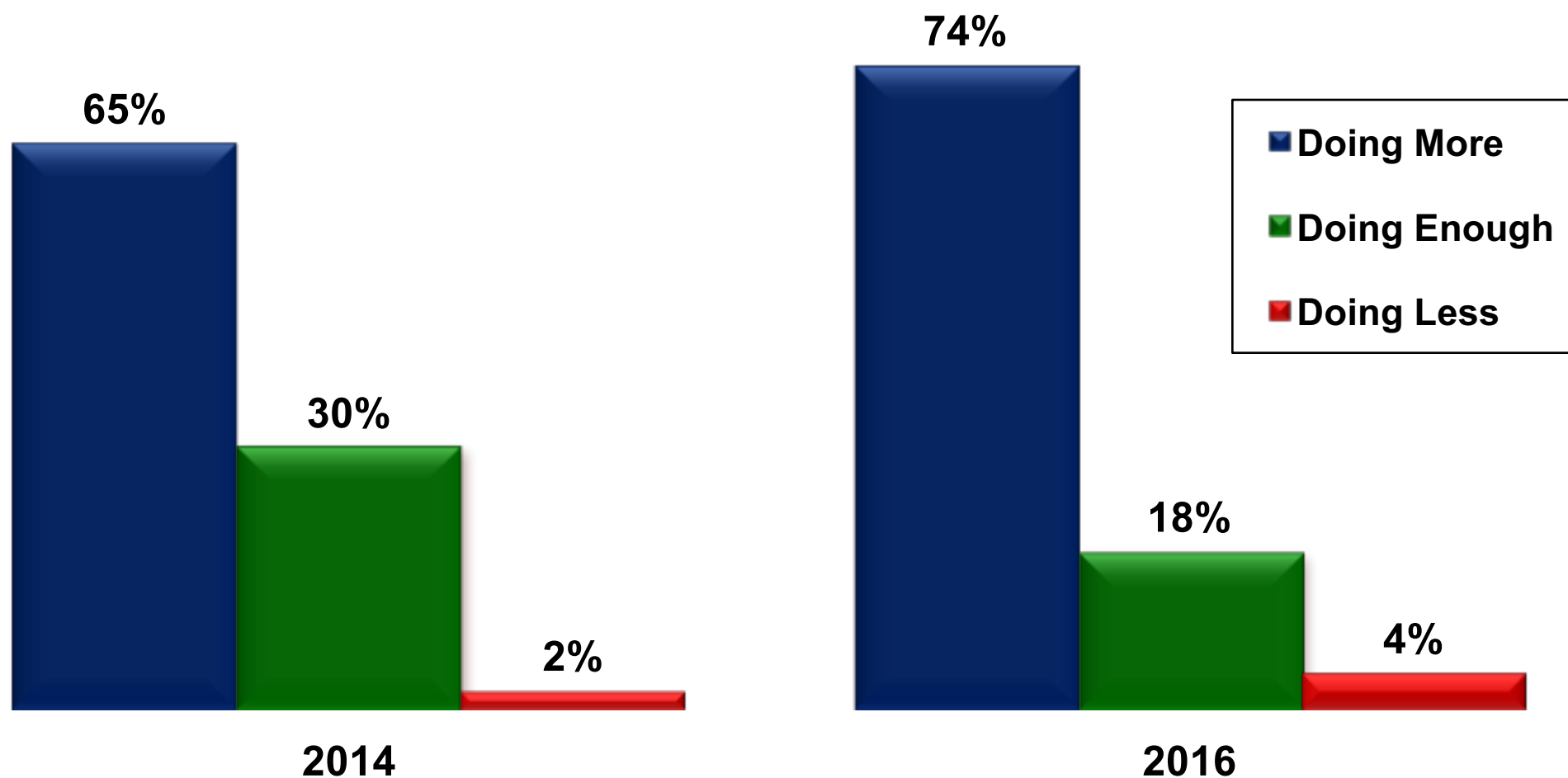
## High-Quality/Affordable Early Education by Income

■ All/Most Programs are Affordable/High-Quality ■ Half/Some/Few





## Nearly three-quarters of North Carolina voters say we should be doing more for young children's education.



*And when it comes to ensuring that children here in North Carolina begin kindergarten with the knowledge and skills they need to do their best in school, do you think we should be doing more, doing less, or are doing enough?*

## Significant increases in desire to take action on early childhood education were made across the board.

<i>Increase in Doing More (+9% Overall)</i>	2014	2016	Net Increase
<b>Party</b>			
Republicans	51%	59%	+8%
Independents	58%	76%	+18%
Democrats	82%	85%	+3%
<b>Gender/Age</b>			
Men Ages 18-44	68%	79%	+11%
Men Ages 45+	58%	69%	+11%
Women Ages 18-44	72%	81%	+9%
Women Ages 45+	64%	72%	+8%
<b>Parents</b>			
Dads	64%	71%	+7%
Moms	69%	76%	+7%
Men Without Kids	61%	76%	+15%
Women Without Kids	68%	75%	+7%

*And when it comes to ensuring that children here in North Carolina begin kindergarten with the knowledge and skills they need to do their best in school, do you think we should be doing more, doing less, or are doing enough?*

## A desire for action is grounded in the many perceived benefits of quality early education programs.

Education Benefits Ranked by % Help A Lot	Help A Lot	Total Help
<i>Children developing curiosity and a love of learning</i>	<b>68%</b>	<b>83%</b>
<i>Children having academic success in middle school and high school</i>	<b>65%</b>	<b>78%</b>
<i>Children achieving their third grade reading goals</i>	<b>65%</b>	<b>77%</b>
<i>Children having academic success in elementary school</i>	<b>64%</b>	<b>78%</b>
<i>Having a larger pool of highly skilled workers in the long-term</i>	<b>60%</b>	<b>75%</b>

---

*If more children are able to attend high-quality early education programs, how much would it help in each of the following areas?*

## North Carolinians express strong support for a range of state improvements in access and quality in early education.

Proposals Ranked by % Total Support	Total Support	Total Oppose
<i>Making early education and child care more affordable for working families to give children a strong start.</i>	90%	9%
<i>Giving young children a clearer pathway to success through better integration of early health, parent education and early childhood education so that these services work together.</i>	89%	9%
<i>Providing voluntary home visiting and parent education programs that help parents support their child's early learning, health and emotional development.</i>	80%	19%

---

*Please tell me if you support or oppose each of the following...*

Moreover, this support is quite intense.

Proposals Ranked by % Strongly Support	Strongly Support	Total Support
<i>Making early education and child care more affordable for working families to give children a strong start.</i>	69%	90%
<i>Giving young children a clearer pathway to success through better integration of early health, parent education and early childhood education so that these services work together.</i>	59%	89%
<i>Providing voluntary home visiting and parent education programs that help parents support their child's early learning, health and emotional development.</i>	46%	80%

---

*Please tell me if you support or oppose each of the following...*

## State improvements garner majority support across party lines.

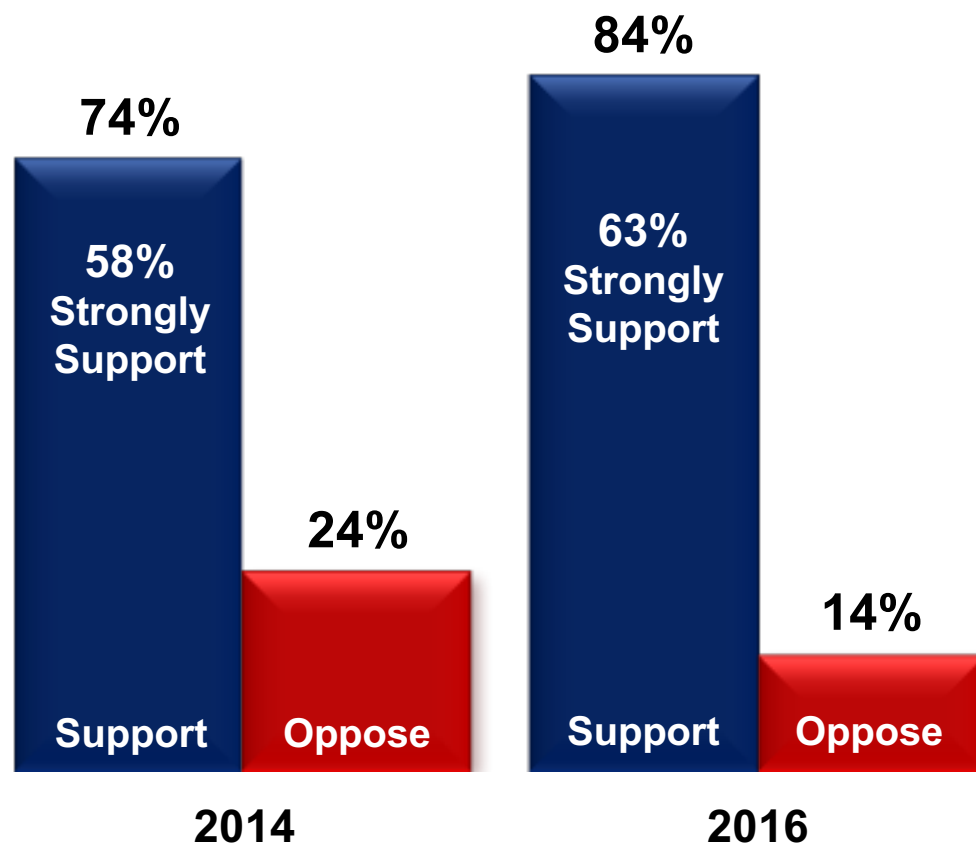
Proposals % Total Support by Party	GOP	IND	DEM
<i>Making early education and child care more affordable for working families to give children a strong start.</i>	78%	93%	97%
<i>Giving young children a clearer pathway to success through better integration of early health, parent education and early childhood education so that these services work together.</i>	78%	90%	96%
<i>Providing voluntary home visiting and parent education programs that help parents support their child's early learning, health and emotional development.</i>	65%	85%	88%

---

*Please tell me if you support or oppose each of the following...*

## The vast majority of respondents also support the expansion of NC Pre-K and Smart Start - by an even greater degree than two years ago.

*As you may know, two of the programs that serve young children in North Carolina are NC Pre-K, a pre-kindergarten education program, and Smart Start, a local program that works with families, teachers, faith communities, doctors and educators to ensure healthy development and early learning for children birth to five. Currently, less than a quarter of North Carolina's four-year-olds receive NC Pre-K, and Smart Start funding is inadequate to reach all the children that need it.*

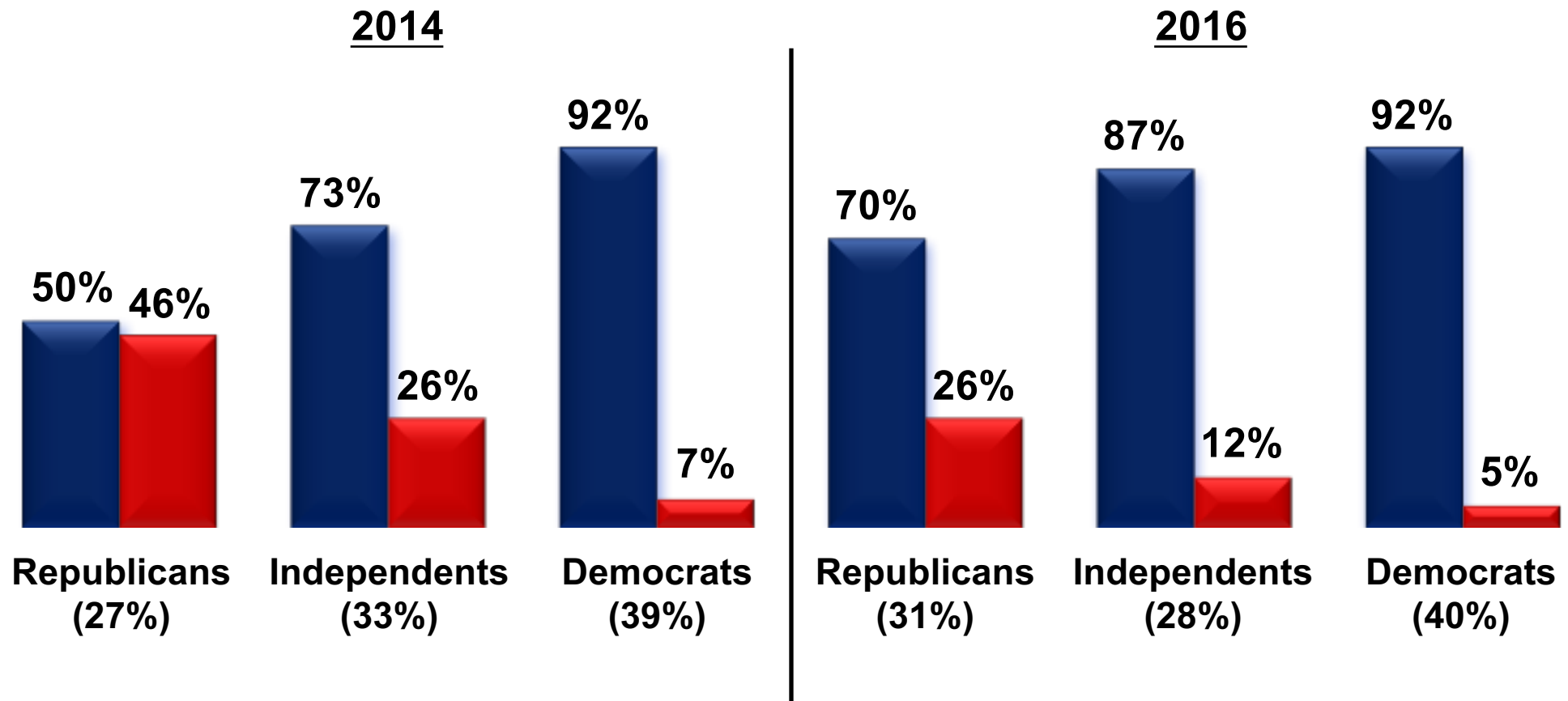


*Would you support or oppose expanding access to NC Pre-K and Smart Start so that more children in the state can participate in them?*

# Support for increasing funding for these state programs has shot up among GOP and independent voters dramatically.

## NC Pre-K/Smart Start By Party

■ Total Support ■ Total Oppose

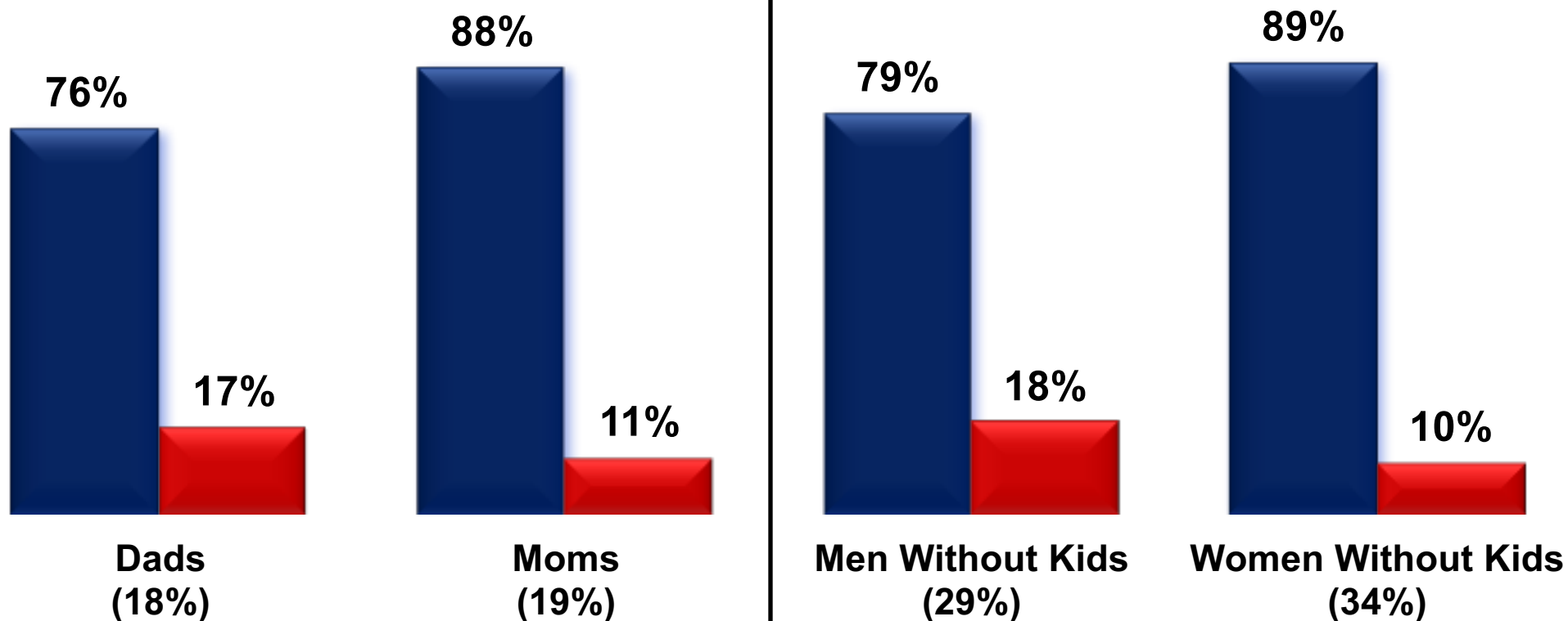




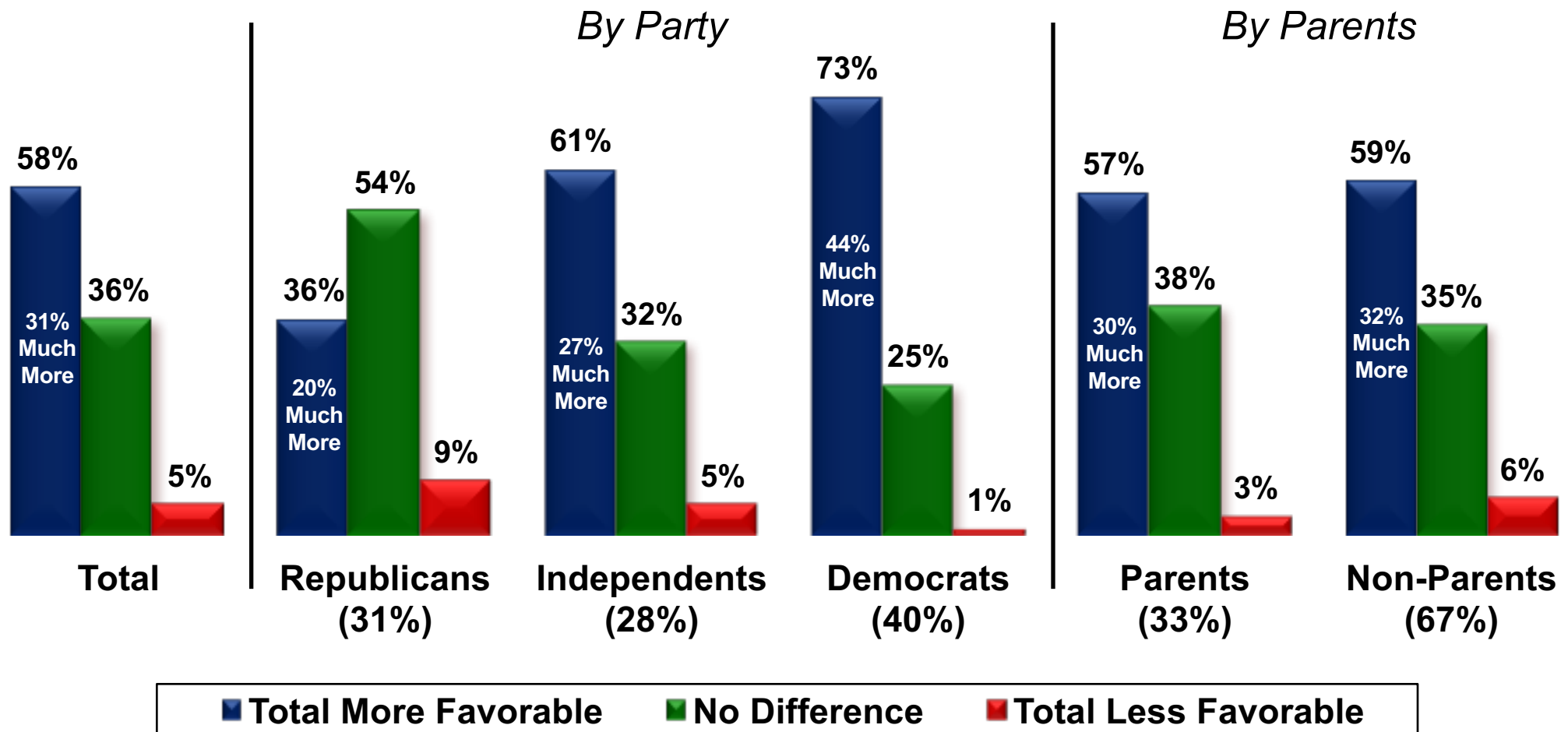
**Those with and without kids are similarly likely to support expanding access to these existing programs.**

### NC Pre-K/Smart Start By Parents

■ Total Support ■ Total Oppose



**A North Carolina candidate's support for early education is seen as a positive for more than half of respondents and a negative for almost none.**

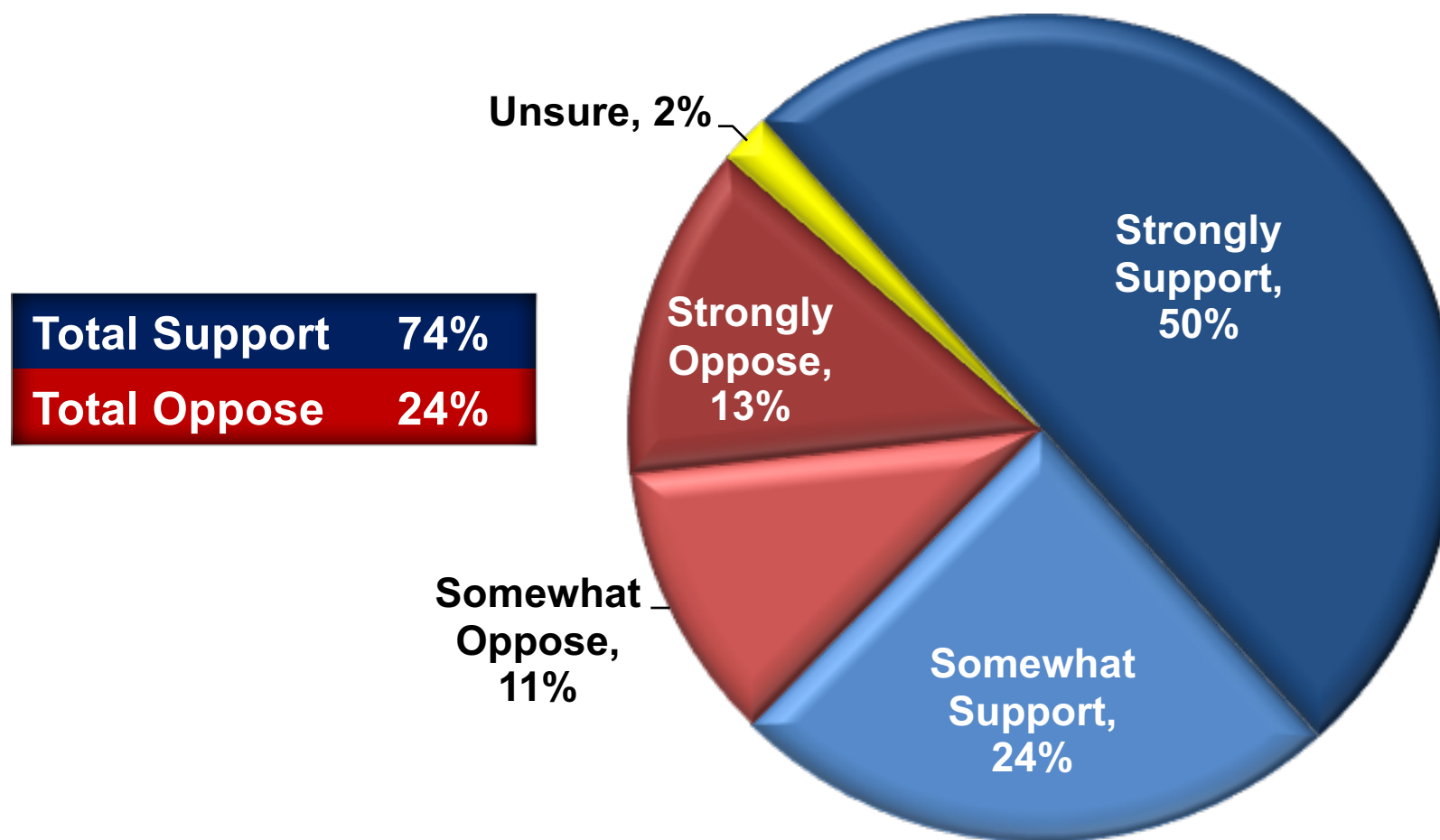


*And if a candidate for elected office here in North Carolina supported investing in early childhood education, would you have a more favorable impression of him or her, less favorable impression or would it not affect your opinion much one way or the other?*

# FEDERAL INVESTMENT PROPOSAL

*“Now, thinking about one potential national proposal – Congress could consider a plan that helps states and local communities provide better early childhood education programs to low- and moderate-income parents of children from birth to age five. The plan will make available ten billion dollars per year, for ten years, in grants to states in order to provide voluntary access to high-quality early childhood education through child care for infants and toddlers, preschool programs, home visiting and parent education.”*

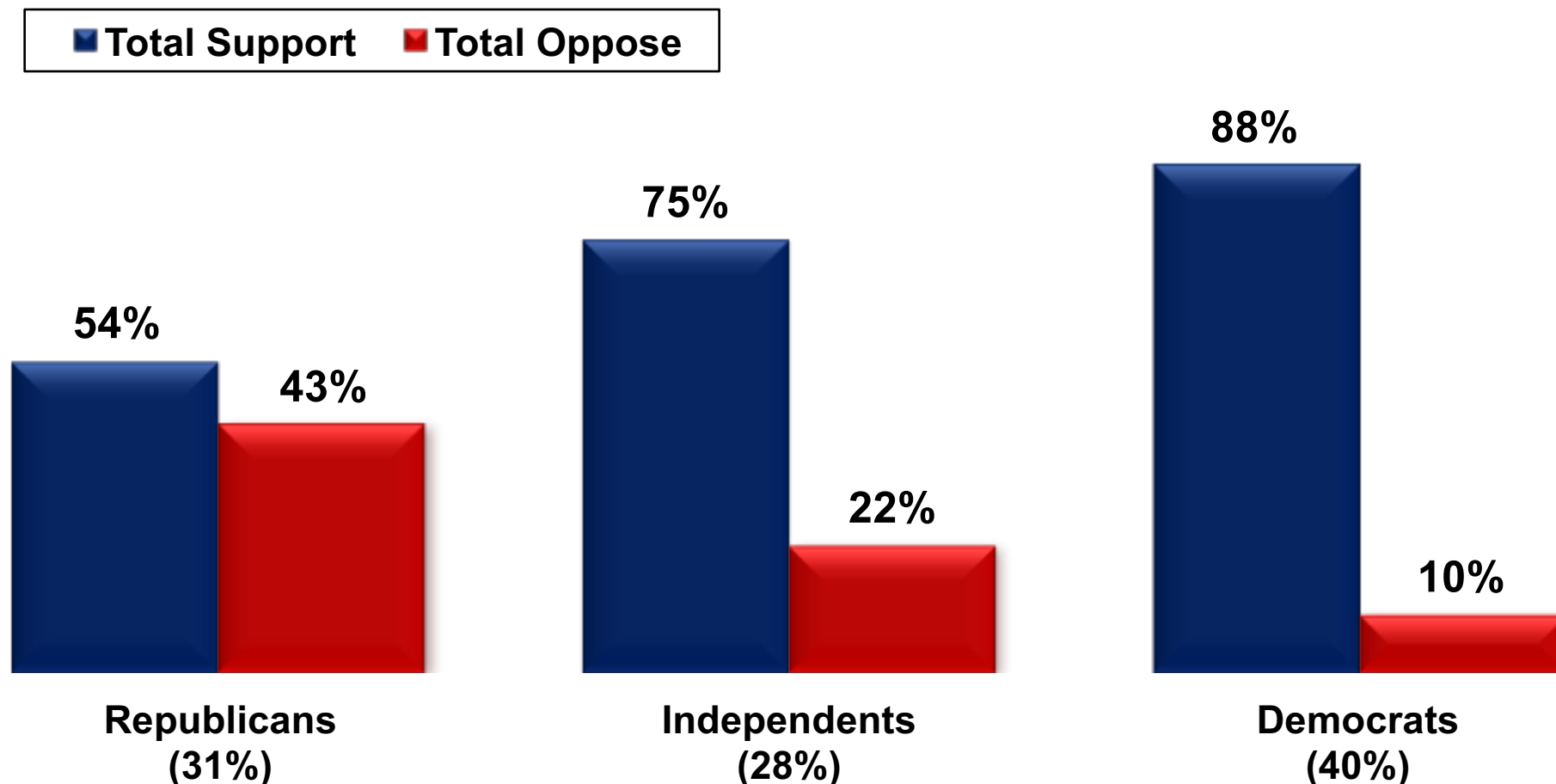
## Nearly three-in-four support a significant investment by the federal government in early childhood education.



*Would you support or oppose this plan to help states and local communities provide better early childhood education?*

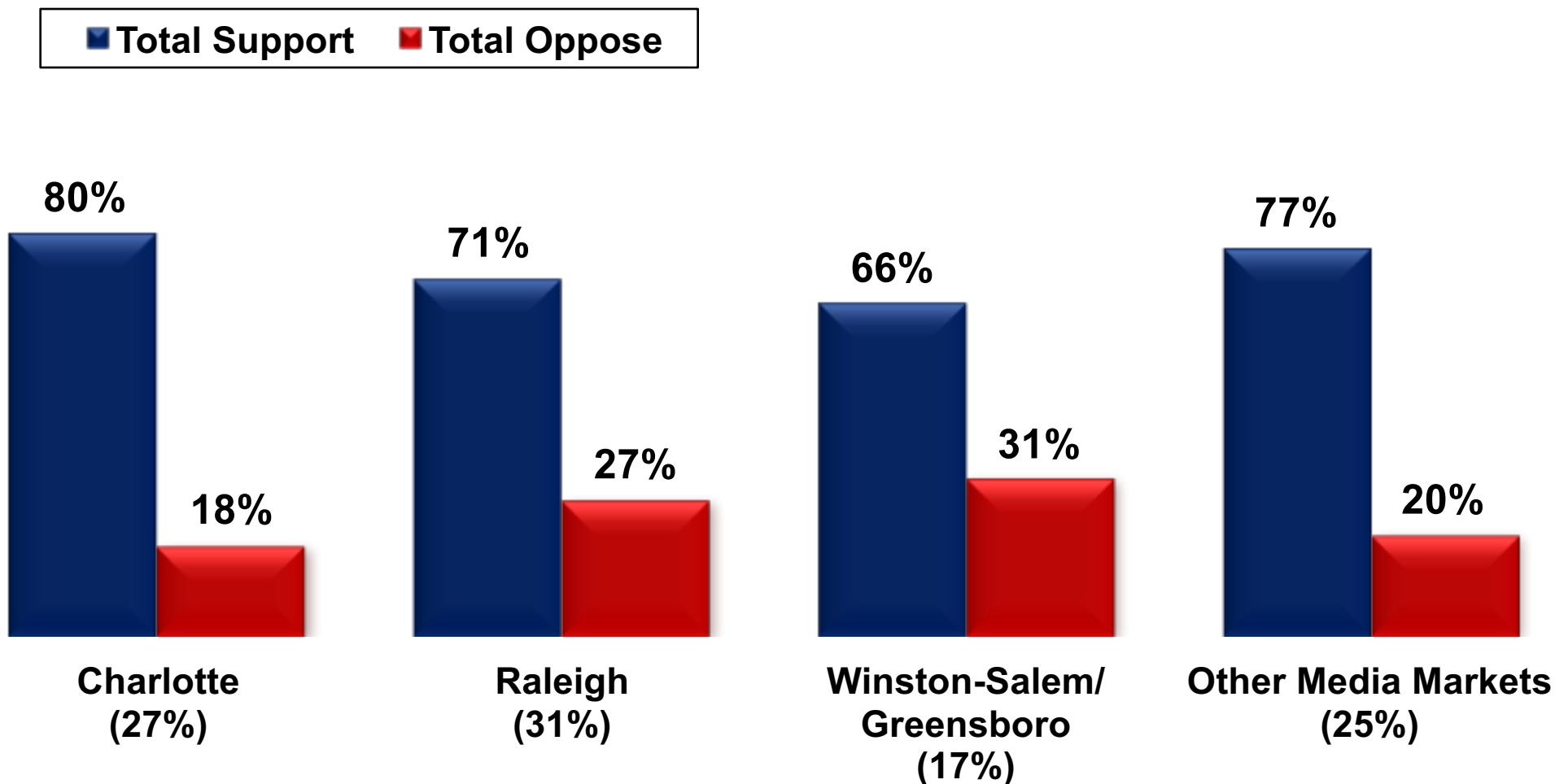
**A majority of voters across the political spectrum support this federal investment in early childhood education.**

### Early Education Proposal By Party



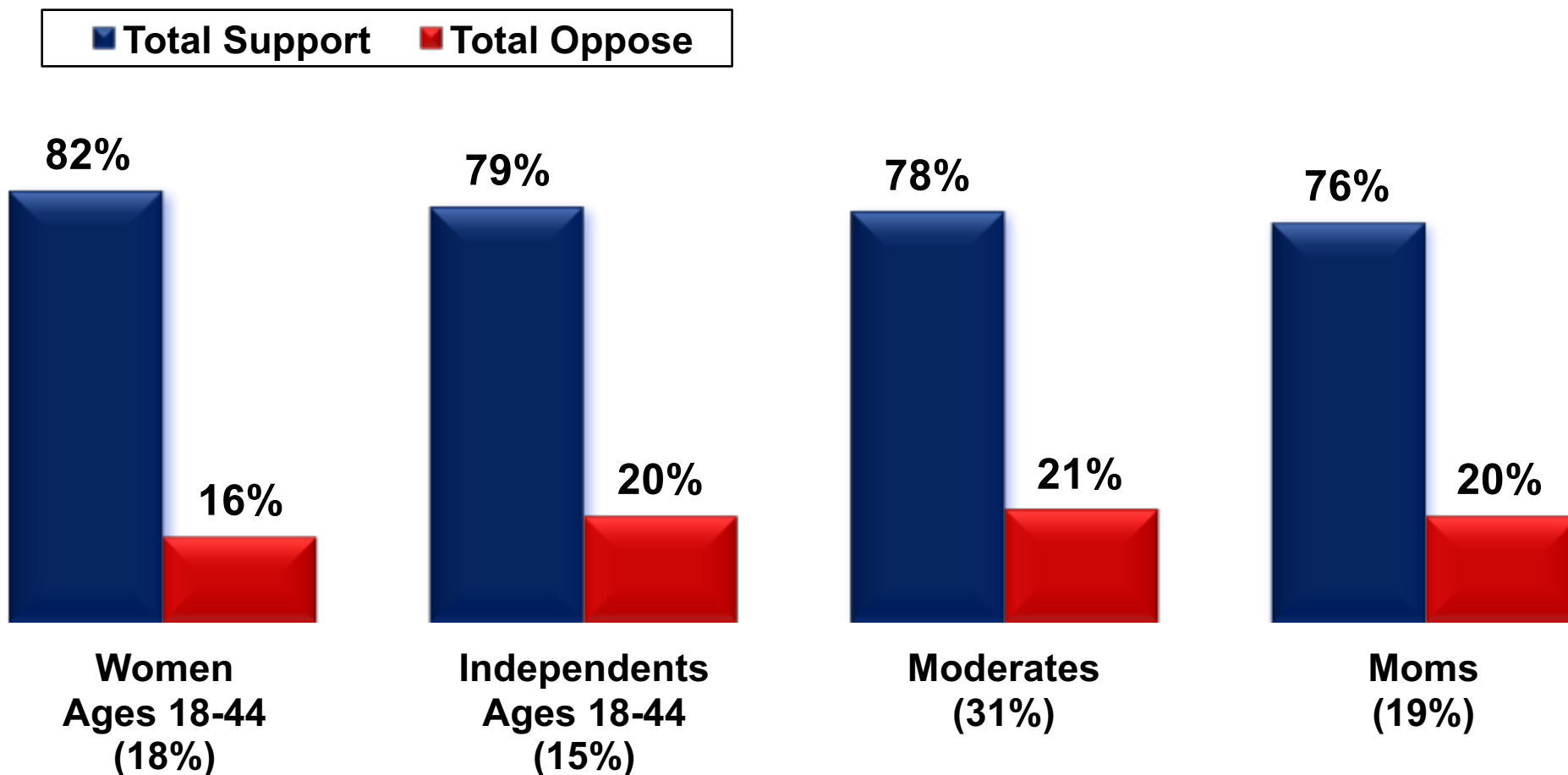
**A majority in every media market back this proposal to increase federal funding for early childhood education.**

### Early Education Proposal By Media Market

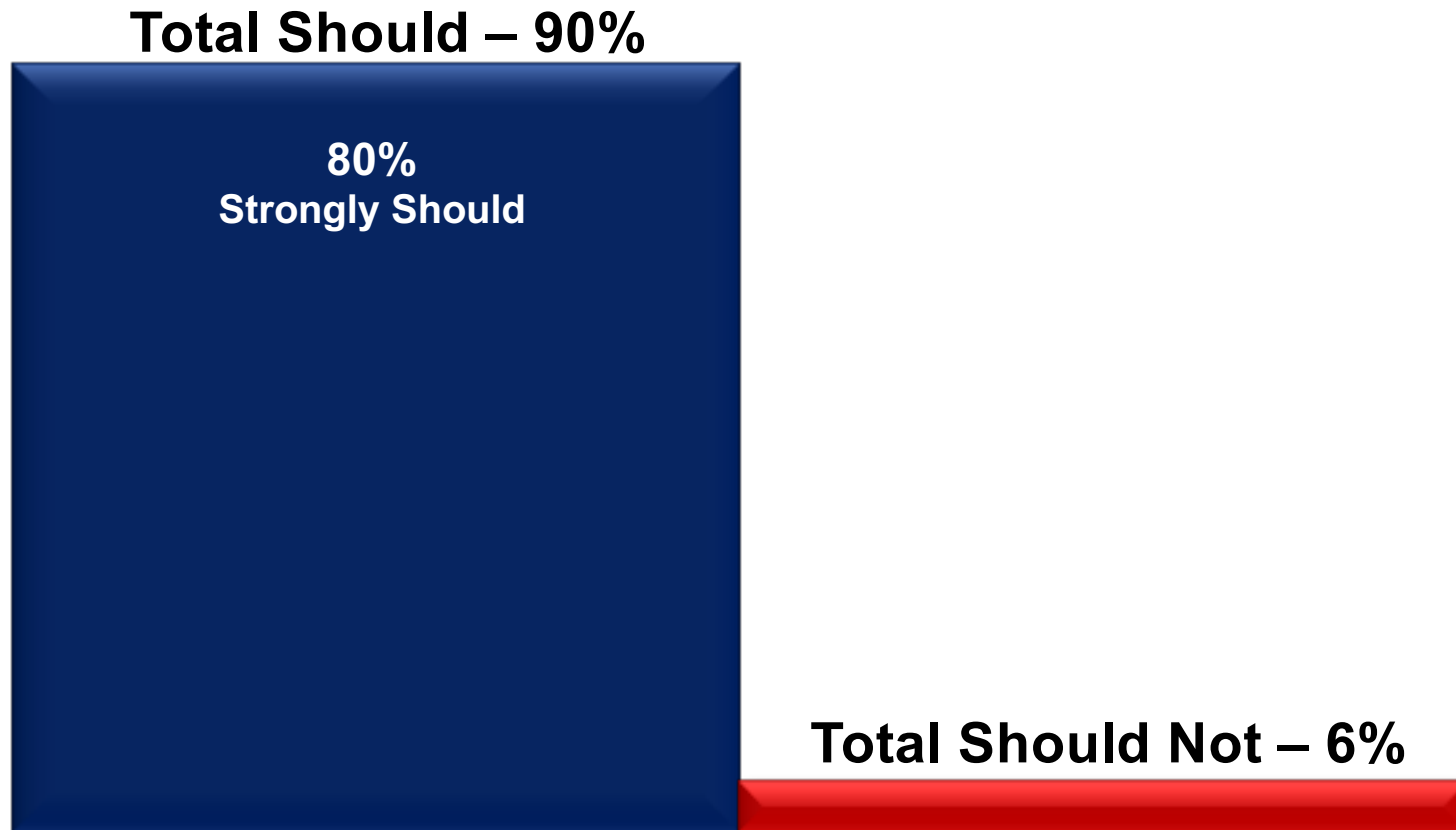


## Critical swing voter sub-groups are some of the most enthusiastic about funding quality early education.

### Early Education Proposal By Key Sub-groups



**Almost all respondents feel Congress should work together with the next president to improve access to early education.**



---

*Even if they are from different political parties, do you think the next president and Congress should or should not work together to improve access to quality early childhood education?*



# THE BOTTOM LINE

- Majorities of Republican, Democratic and Independent voters say North Carolina should be doing more for young children's learning, including making quality child care more affordable, providing parent education and expanding NC Pre-K and Smart Start.
- North Carolina voters say that children having access to early childhood education has a number of benefits, including third grade reading proficiency, greater academic success throughout their schooling, and more skilled workers in the state.
- Moreover voters recognize that success requires an integrated focus on young children's health, families and early learning.
- The state's electorate also expresses strong support for federal investments that would help states meet the need for affordable, quality early childhood education options, and rates this as a top-tier goal for the nation at this time. The desire to "do more" on this issue has increased in the last two years.

**THANK YOU**



**Lori Weigel**  
**PARTNER**  
lori@pos.org



**Jay Campbell**  
**SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT**  
jcampbell@hartresearch.com