

# **Voters Overwhelmingly Support Federal Investments in Child Care and Preschool**

Key findings from a nationwide voter survey,  
conducted September 2021

# Executive Summary

As Congress considers the Build Back Better Act, voters overwhelmingly support a significant, sustained investment in child care and preschool, which they view as a good investment of taxpayer dollars.

A recent national poll shows a strong majority of voters, including suburban women, independents, and other voter groups whose votes are crucial in key elections, are supportive of the child care and preschool investments proposed in the Build Back Better Act. In fact, voters want their federal policymakers to prioritize child care and preschool **this year**, and support for these investments has inspired broader voter support for the legislation as a whole.

This presentation highlights key findings from a new nationwide voter survey commissioned by the First Five Years Fund and conducted by the bipartisan polling team of Hart Research and New Bridge Strategy in September 2021.

# Key Takeaways

**Voters firmly believe in the essential role of child care and preschool for families and the economy, and they recognize the need for federal investment in these programs.**

- 81% of voters see child care and preschool as a good investment of taxpayer money—including 80% of independents and 66% of Republicans.
- 70% of voters believe federal funding is needed to ensure that parents have safe, reliable, high-quality care for their children while they work.
- The majority of voters support increasing federal funding for high-quality child care and preschool programs, as well as tax credits to make child care more affordable.

# Key Takeaways

**Voters want Congress to act quickly to ensure quality child care and preschool are affordable for families who need it, and they support the proposals under consideration on Capitol Hill.**

- Nearly 70% of voters say taking action to ensure working families have access to affordable, high-quality child care and early learning programs should be a priority **this year**.
- When asked about the child care and preschool policies included in the Build Back Better Act:
  - More than three in four voters support these policies and believe they would benefit their community.
  - More than 70% of voters would like their members of Congress to work with President Biden to enact these policies.
  - In fact, 73% of voters support the Build Back Better Act as a whole, including 48% who strongly support it, 80% support the bipartisan infrastructure package, and 68% support passing both packages.
  - Notably, nearly two-thirds of all voters say they are more likely to support the budget reconciliation package if it includes provisions to make child care and preschool affordable for working families.

# Key Takeaways

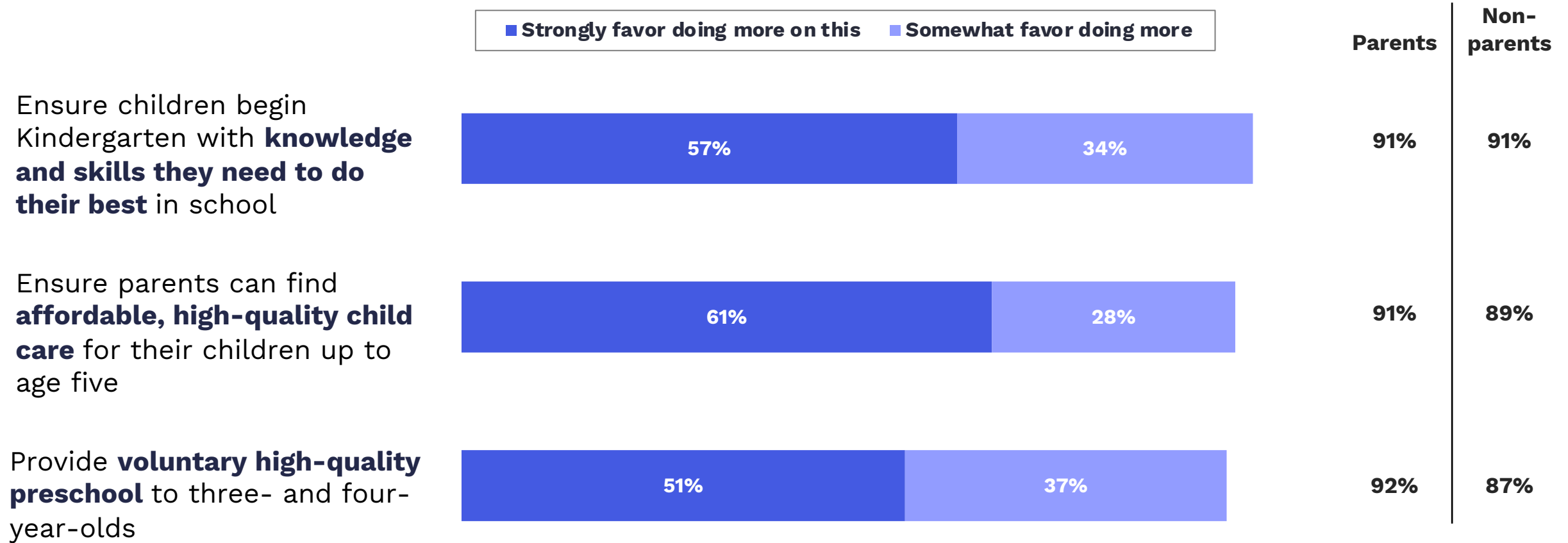
**Voters recognize that a well-trained, adequately-compensated early education workforce is a key element of solving the child care crisis.**

- Nearly 70% of voters believe the best solution to the shortage of child care in America is to use public funding to ensure that child care is affordable for families and child care workers receive higher wages and benefits.
- That's because 86% of voters support child care and preschool proposals that attract, retain, and support quality early childhood educators and caregivers by paying them better salaries and providing them with better career development opportunities.

A photograph of a preschool classroom. In the foreground, a white table with a yellow chair is visible. In the background, another white table with red and green chairs is set up. The room has a light-colored wall with wood paneling and a speckled floor.

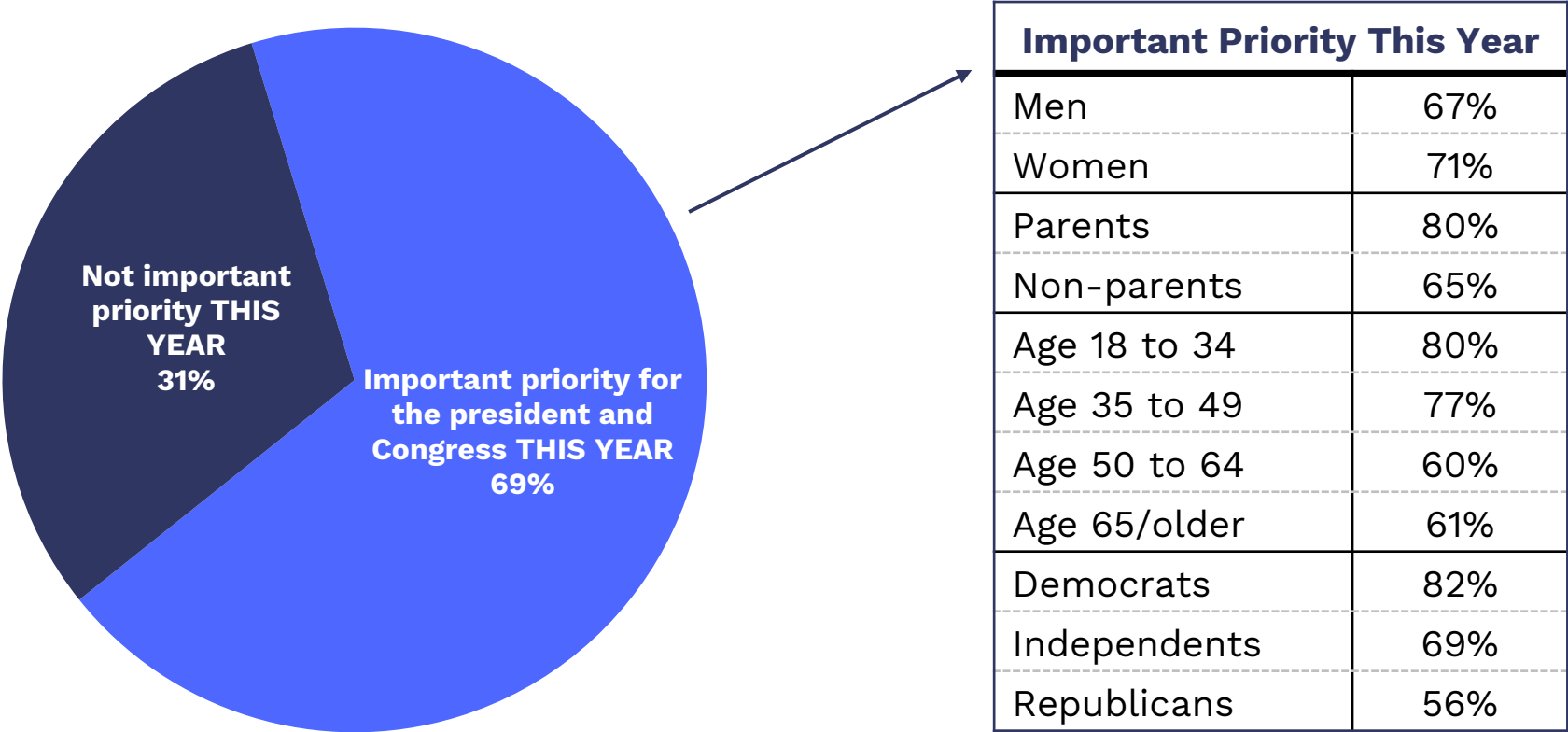
# Attitudes Towards Child Care And Preschool Programs

# Voters—whether they have children or not—overwhelmingly say that we should be doing more in the realm of child care and preschool.



# Specifically, voters say taking action on child care and preschool should be a priority for federal leaders this year.

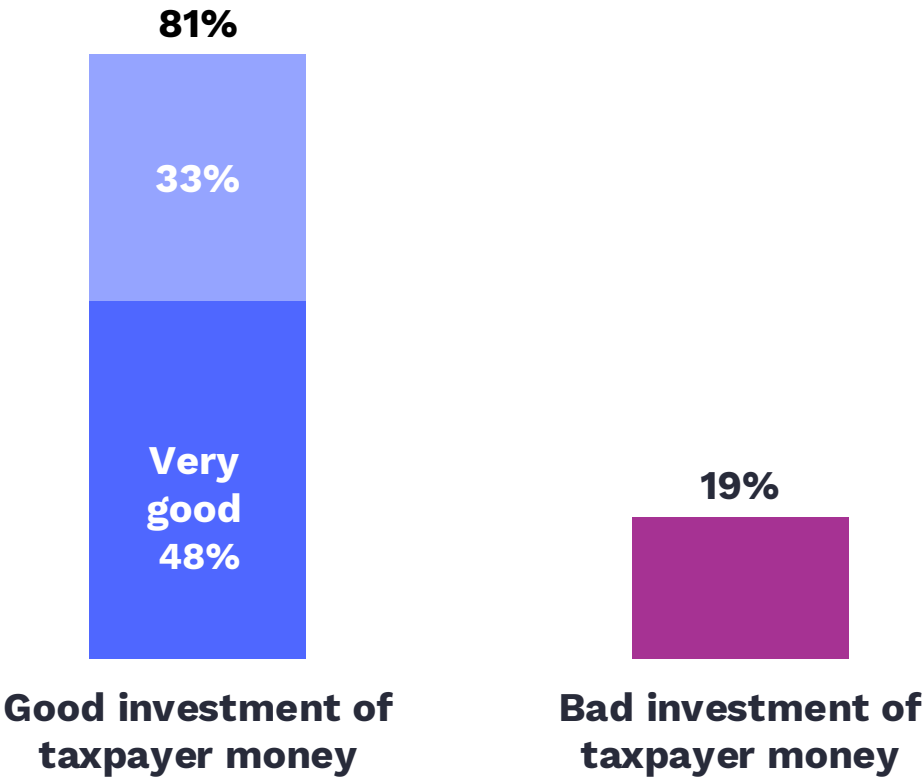
**Priority of taking action to ensure that all working families have access to affordable, high-quality child care and early learning programs**





# Voters are clear that child care and preschool programs are a good investment of taxpayers' money; four in five independents agree.

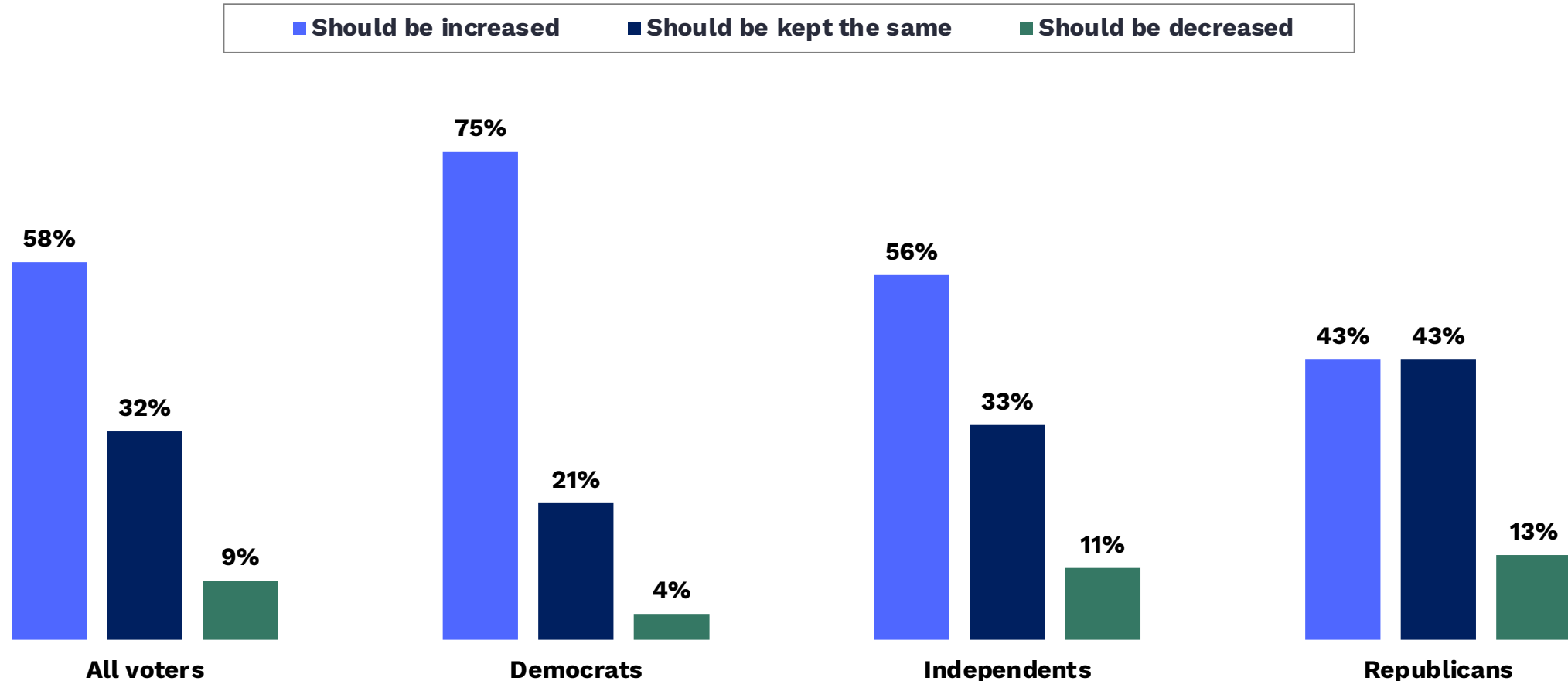
Perceived value of improving the quality of child care and early learning programs and making them more affordable for families



Good Investment	
Men	77%
Women	84%
Parents	90%
Non-parents	77%
Age 18 to 34	94%
Age 35 to 49	86%
Age 50 to 64	73%
Age 65/older	72%
Democrats	97%
Independents	80%
Republicans	66%

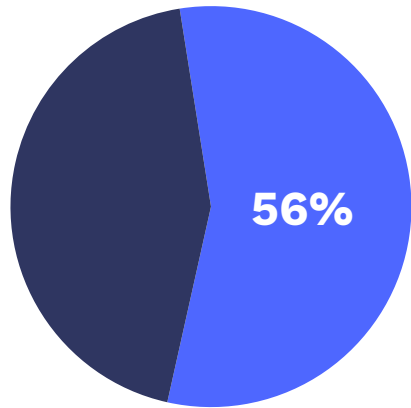
# A strong majority of voters say federal funding for child care and preschool should be increased.

## Preferred level of federal funding for high-quality child care and early learning programs

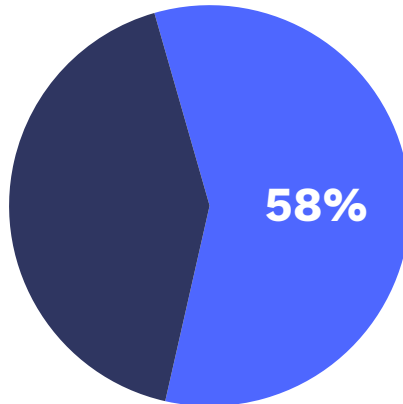


# A strong majority of voters say federal funding for child care and preschool should be increased.

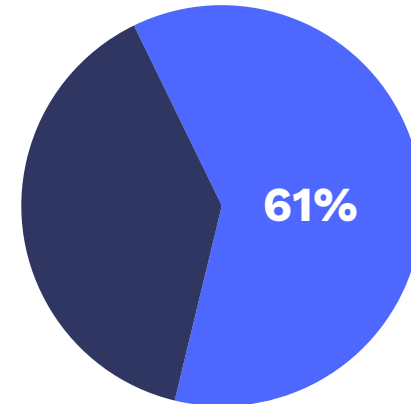
Federal funding for high-quality child care and early learning programs **SHOULD BE INCREASED** (key swing subgroups)



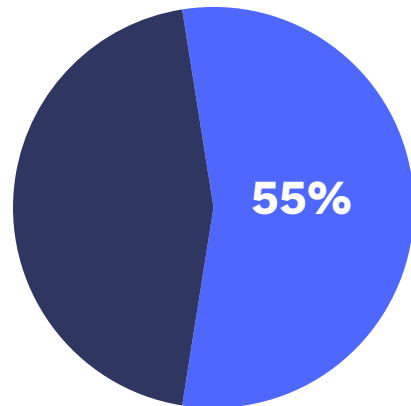
**Swing  
voters**



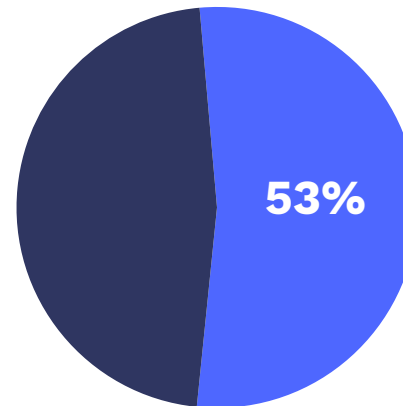
**Suburban  
women**



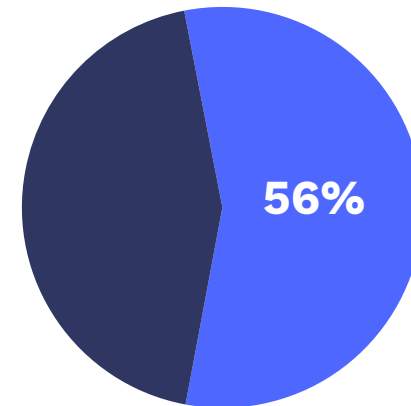
**Hispanic  
voters**



**White non-  
college  
men**



**White non-  
college  
women**



**Middle  
income**



# Reactions To Build Back Better

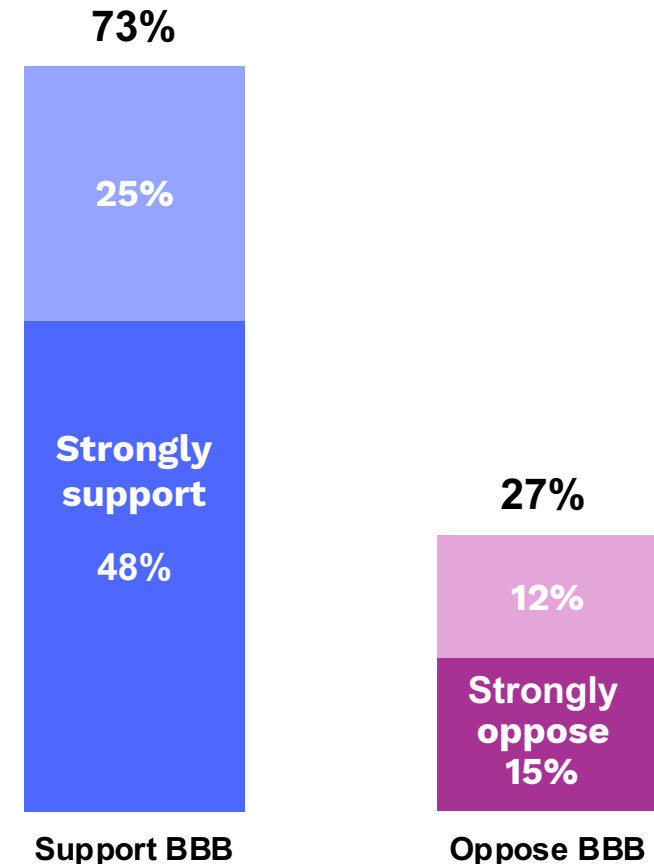
# Nearly three in four voters support the Build Back Better (BBB) reconciliation plan, including half who strongly support it.

## Support for the Build Back Better Plan after Description

Congress is considering a major legislative package. Here is a list of some of the things this legislation could do.

- Dental/vision care more affordable for seniors by covering under Medicare
- Reduce cost of Rx drugs by giving Medicare power to negotiate with drug companies for lower prices
- Expand use of clean energy sources by setting clean energy standards that electric companies must meet
- Expand access to quality, affordable home care for elderly and people with disabilities
- Expand access to quality child care that working parents can afford
- Continue the new child tax credit of \$3,000 to \$3,600 per child per year
- Lower cost of college: provide two years of tuition-free community college
- Improve children's education: provide free access to voluntary pre-kindergarten for all three- and four-year-olds

This legislation would cost \$3.5 trillion and would be paid for by raising taxes on corporations and the wealthy. It would not raise taxes on anyone earning less than \$400,000 a year.

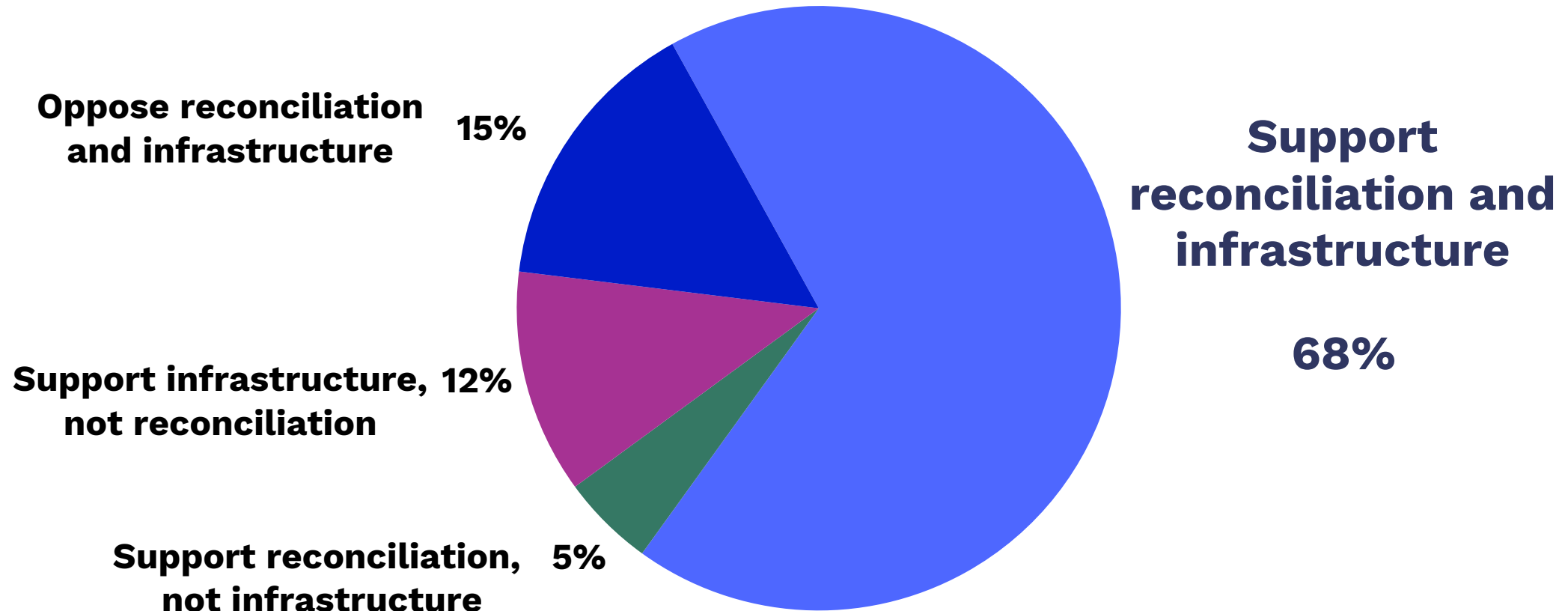


# Support for BBB spans the electorate, including half of Republicans.

## SUPPORT the Build Back Better reconciliation plan

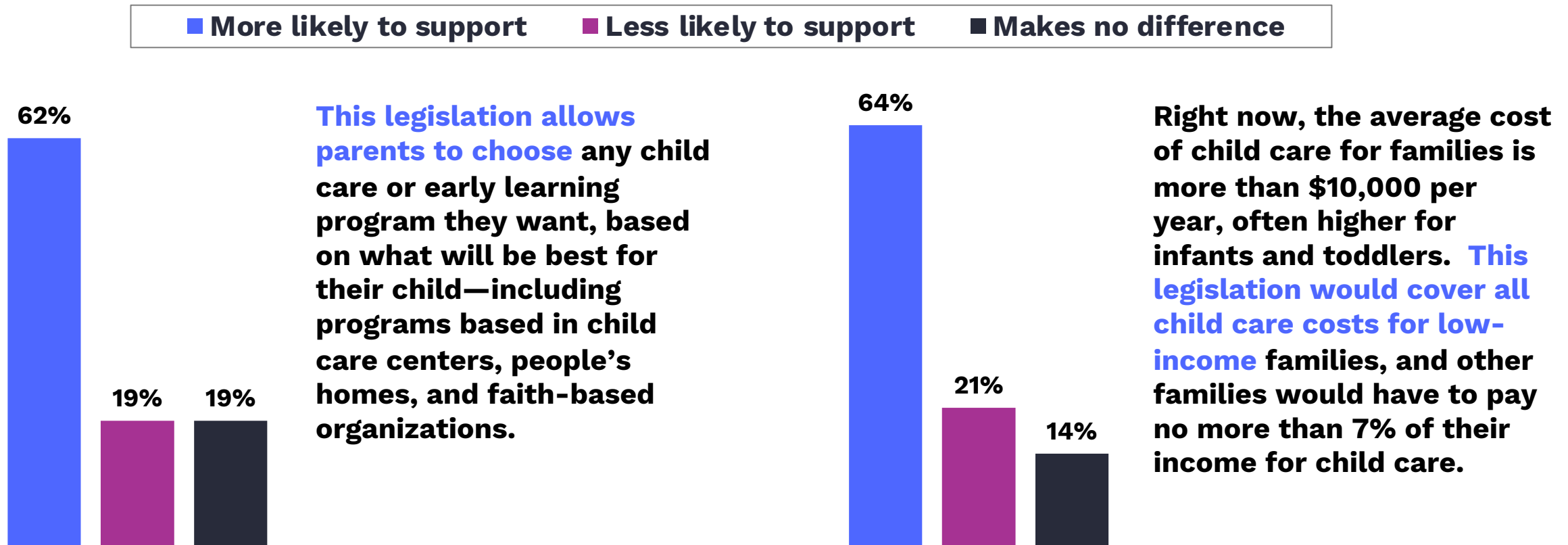
<b>All voters</b>	<b>73%</b>	Urban residents	88%
Democrats	96%	Suburban residents	72%
Independents	74%	Small town/rural residents	61%
Republicans	50%	Suburban women	77%
Less conservative GOPs	59%	Age 18 to 34	85%
Very conservative GOPs	36%	Age 35 to 49	78%
White voters	68%	Age 50 to 64	66%
Black voters	93%	Age 65/older	64%
Hispanic voters	81%		

# **Voters are ready to go big on federal investment, with nearly seven in 10 supporting the bipartisan infrastructure package and reconciliation plans.**



# Voters see parental choice and a cap on out-of-pocket child care costs as key features of the child care and preschool component of BBB.

## Impact of Information on Likelihood of Supporting BBB





# A detailed description of the child care and preschool component yields broad support and a strong belief from voters in all types of areas that their community would benefit.

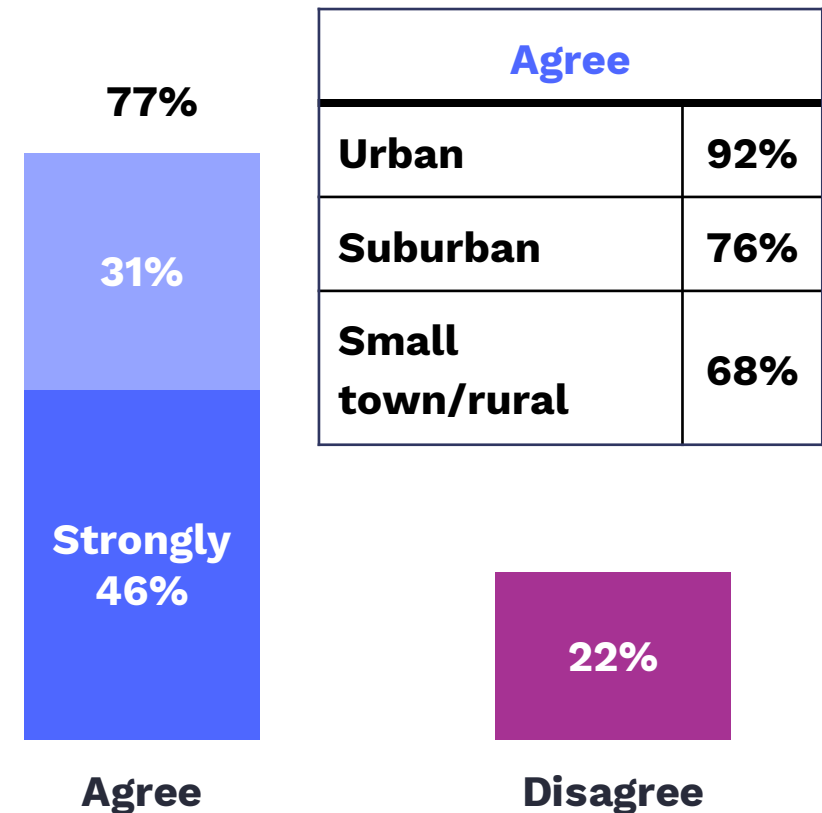
## Child care/early learning for children too young for Kindergarten:

The federal government would provide funding to states to expand their child care systems so that every working parent who wants to do so could send their child, from birth through age five, to the eligible high-quality child care or early learning program of their choice. The amount that parents would pay out of pocket would be determined by their household income, with the lowest-income families receiving care at low or no cost. Each state would be responsible for overseeing these systems, which would be required to meet established quality and safety standards. The average working family would save around \$10,000 per year in child care and preschool expenses.

**76% support this**

**24% oppose this**

## My community would benefit



# Voters see better wages and benefits as the answer to the national shortage of early childhood educators.

**A main reason for the shortage of child care in America is that child care workers earn \$11 per hour, on average, and many are leaving to pursue jobs with better wages and benefits in other professions. Which of these is the best solution to this problem?**

**Public funding to ensure child care is affordable for families and child care workers receive higher wages/benefits**



**Parents should pay more for child care**



**Reduce/eliminate quality/safety standards so individual child care worker can care for more infants and toddlers**

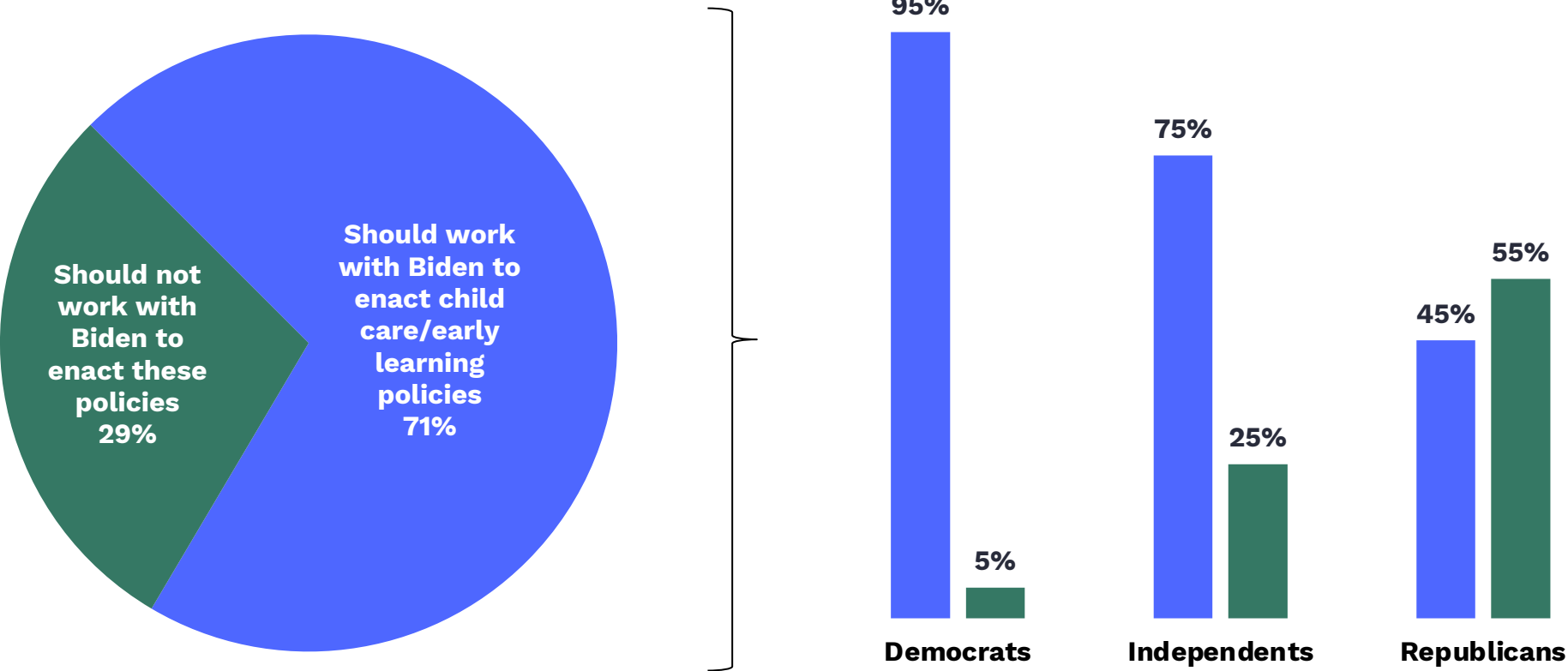


↓

Parents	76%
Non-parents	67%
Democrats	85%
Independents	69%
Republicans	54%

# Just as they did in 2017, voters want their members of Congress to work with the president to enact child care and preschool policies.

Should your member of Congress work with Joe Biden to enact these kinds of child care and early learning policies?

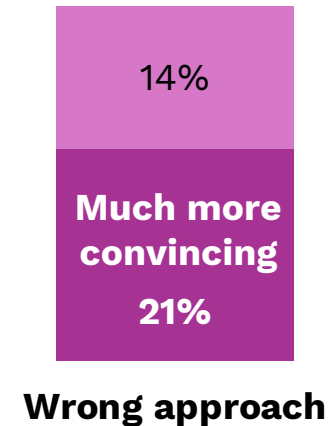
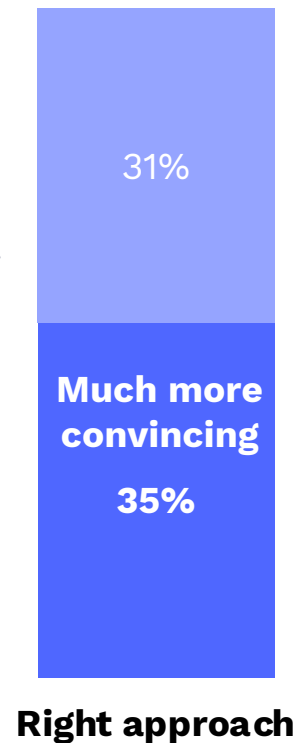


In May 2017, 79% wanted their Member of Congress to work with the Trump administration to improve the quality and affordability of child care and preschool.

# Voters reject the idea that BBB is a “federal takeover” of child care.

Which statement about Build Back Better is more convincing?

**This legislation is the right approach.** It will ensure that parents can afford to use the program or provider of their choice, whether a child care center, home-based provider, faith-based provider, or other-wise.



**This legislation is the wrong approach.** It will lead to the federal government taking over child care and making one-size-fits-all decisions for families on the type of child care they can put their children into.

# Methodology

- Online survey among 1,000 registered voters around the country
- Research conducted by bipartisan polling team of Hart Research (D) and New Bridge Strategy (R)
- Interviews conducted September 14 to 17, 2021
- Survey's credibility interval is  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points for the full sample, higher for subgroups





**Thank You**