

Overwhelming Demand From Voters and Small Businesses for Federal Investments in Child Care

Findings from national survey of voters and
small business owners, November 2022

Methodology

Two national online surveys conducted just after the election:



Registered Voters

- 1,006 registered voters, including an oversample of suburban women
- Interviews conducted November 9-13, 2022
- Credibility interval (similar to margin of error) of ± 3.5 percentage points for the full sample of voters and $\pm 4.9\%$ for suburban women



Small Business Owners

- 309 owners of small businesses, defined as those with between three and 499 employees
 - Audience is 63% male and +10 Republican in partisanship
- Interviews conducted November 9-13, 2022
- Credibility interval of ± 5.6 percentage points

Executive Summary

While voter motivations behind the outcomes of the 2023 midterm elections will be hotly debated over the coming weeks and months, two national polls commissioned by the First Five Years Fund (FFYF) and conducted by the bipartisan polling team of Hart Research and New Bridge Strategy **immediately following the 2023 midterm elections have found that voters and small business leaders across the political spectrum overwhelmingly endorse the federal government taking action on child care**, and agree that the national shortage of affordable child care programs is doing significant harm to families' finances, businesses' bottom lines, and the U.S. economy broadly.

As Congress works to negotiate an end of year package and gears up for the new 118th Congress, voters and small business leaders across the political spectrum want the federal government to take action and provide investments necessary to ensure that working parents are able to send their children to the high-quality child care program of their choice, and can do so affordably.

This presentation outlines key findings from the two national surveys: one capturing voter sentiments on child care policy and access to affordable care; and the second surveying 100 small business owners on how child care challenges directly impact their businesses and bottom lines.

Takeaway Points

It's not just parents who are desperate for federal action on child care - voters and business owners from both sides of the aisle understand the essential role that child care plays for families and the success of our economy, and expect Congress and the White House to work together to advance long-term solutions that address the severity of child care challenges.

Both voters and small business owners view access to child care as central to strengthening the U.S. economy and supporting workers.

- **70% of voters** say access to high-quality, affordable child care is "essential" or "very important" to our ability to strengthen the economy and help workers, including 74% of suburban women.
- **71% of small business leaders** think that access to high-quality, affordable child care is essential or important to strengthening the economy and helping workers, including 68% of Republicans.

Takeaway Points

The child care crisis is taking a pronounced financial toll on families and businesses.

- Voters and small business owners agree that the status quo does NOT work: there are too few high-quality, affordable child care programs at present, and the pandemic has only made things worse.
- **2 in 3** voters know someone who has taken a financial hit due to child care issues.
- **1 in 3** small businesses has had to deal with multiple child care-rooted workforce problems in the past 12 months.

Given these myriad and widespread problems, 74% of voters and small business owners say federal funding should be increased, and over 80% support a specific policy proposal for doing so.

- These are NOT partisan-driven attitudes: large majorities of Democrats, independents, and Republicans (even very conservative ones) support increasing federal child care funding.
- That includes **68% of Republican small business leaders** and **61% of Republican voters.**

Takeaway Points

Voters are disappointed and angry that Congress did not increase funding when it had a chance to earlier this year.

- Over 70% of suburban women, a key voter subgroup, are disappointed or angry.

Voters do not want to see a repeat performance in 2023: 81% say their member of Congress should work with the Biden administration to expand child care access—**including two thirds of Republicans.**

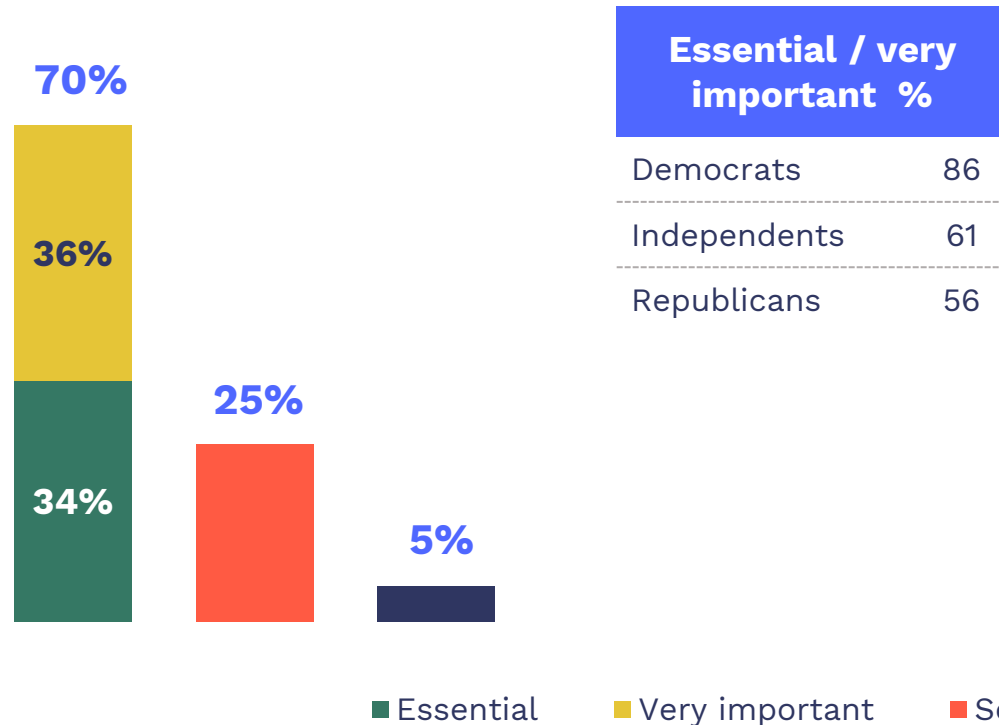
Voters of both parties overwhelmingly want President Biden and Congress to work together to expand affordable child care options.

- **81% of voters** say their member of Congress should work with the Biden administration to enact policies that expand affordable child care options.
- **Sixty-five percent (65%) of Republicans say their member of Congress should work with the Biden administration on this.**

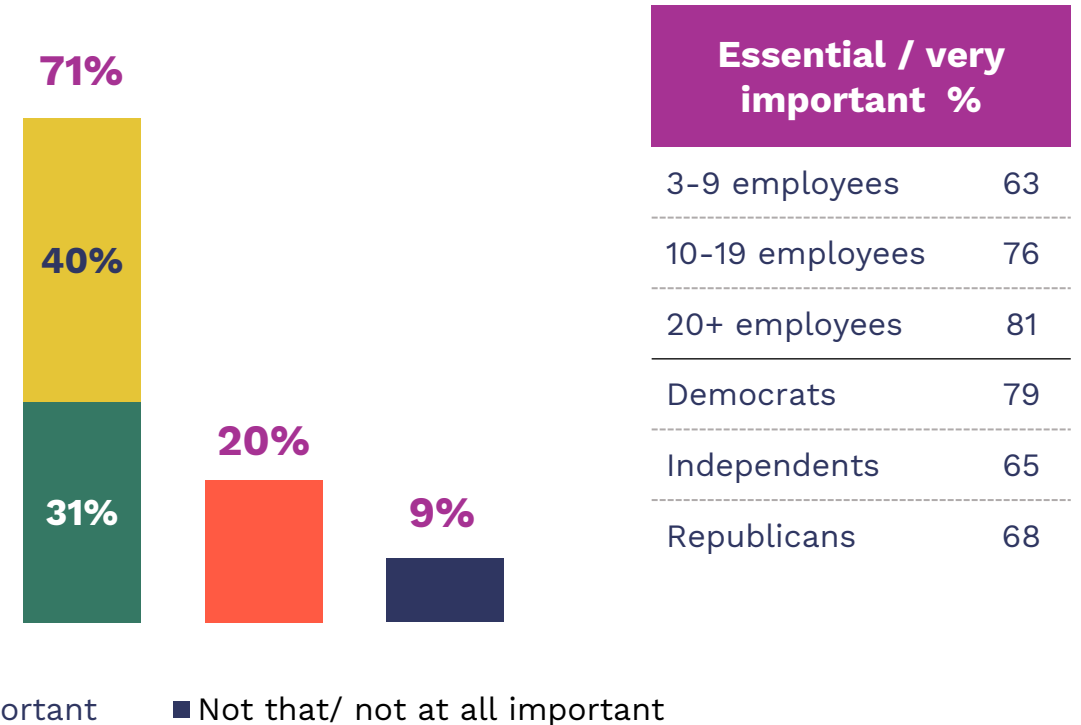
Voters and business owners alike see child care as central to the success of the U.S. economy.

How important is access to high-quality, affordable child care to our ability to strengthen the economy and help workers?

Registered Voters



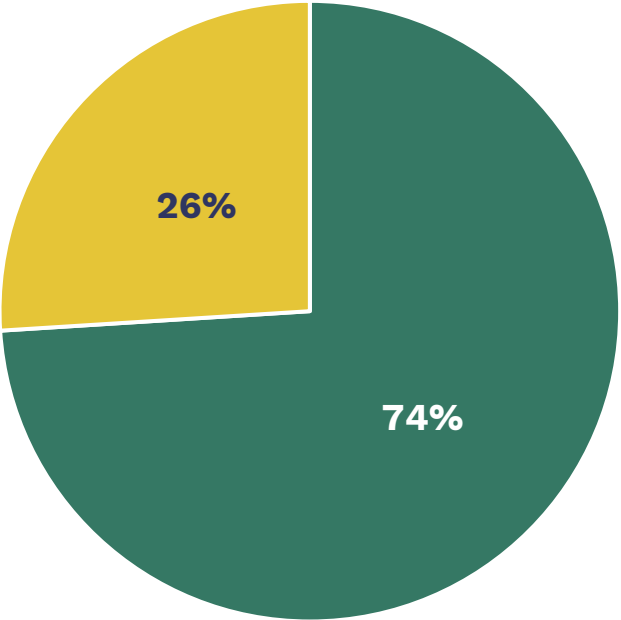
Small Business Owners



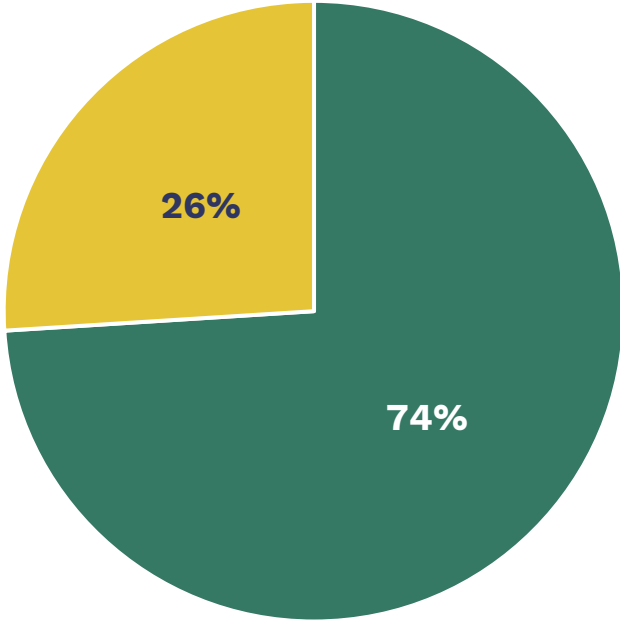
By margins of three to one, voters and business owners say federal funding for child care should be increased.

Do you think federal funding for child care and early learning programs should or should not be increased in order to lower the cost of these programs and make them more affordable?

Registered Voters



Small Business Owners



■ Should be increased

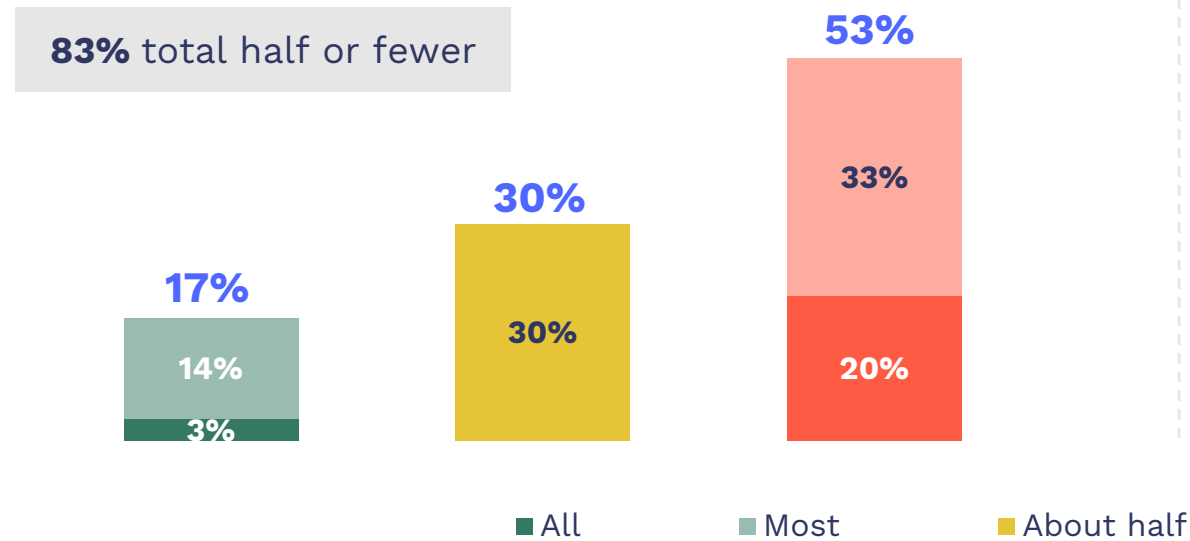
■ Should not be increased

The need is clear: voters and small business owners overwhelmingly say there is a lack of child care in their area that is both high-quality and affordable.

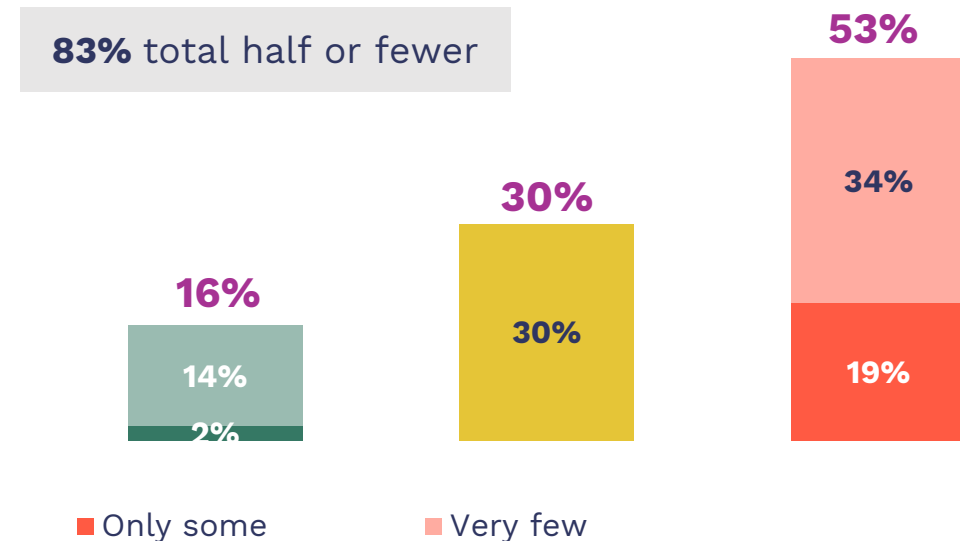
About how many of the child care and early learning programs in your area would you say are high quality AND affordable for lower- and middle-income families?

Registered Voters

Results are consistent in all geographic types—urban, suburban, rural. Southerners are more apt to cite shortages (60% some/very few) than voters in other regions (approx. 50% in each).



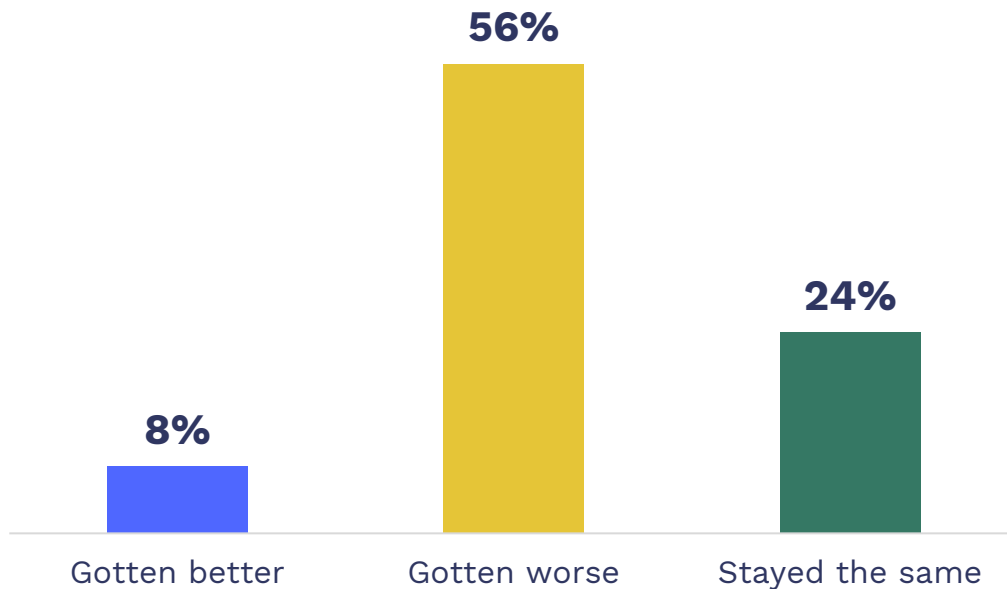
Small Business Owners



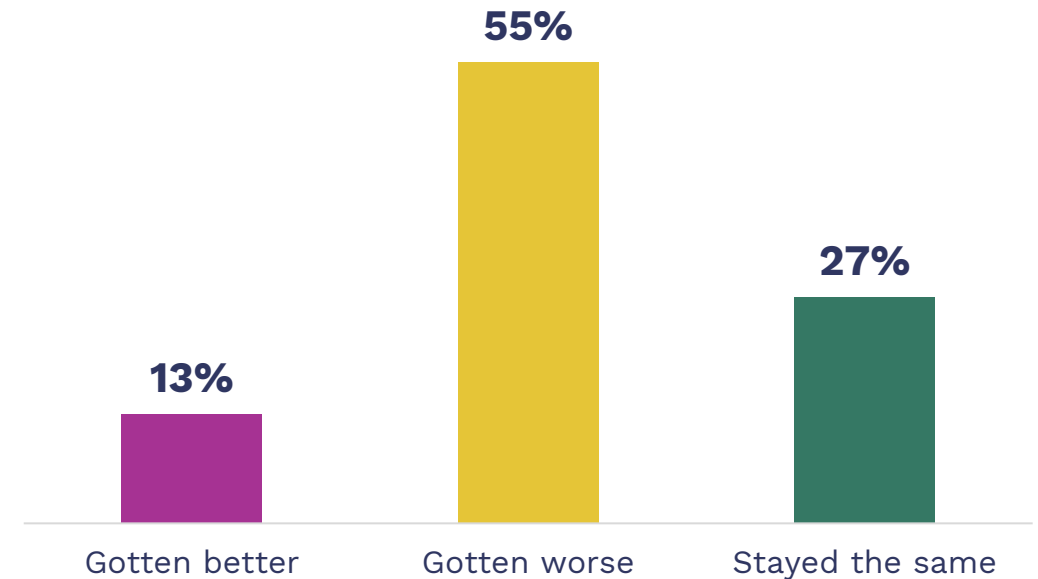
Voters and small business owners say the pandemic exacerbated problems with child care availability.

Since 2020 and the start of the pandemic, do you think that the availability of high-quality and affordable child care has...?

Voters

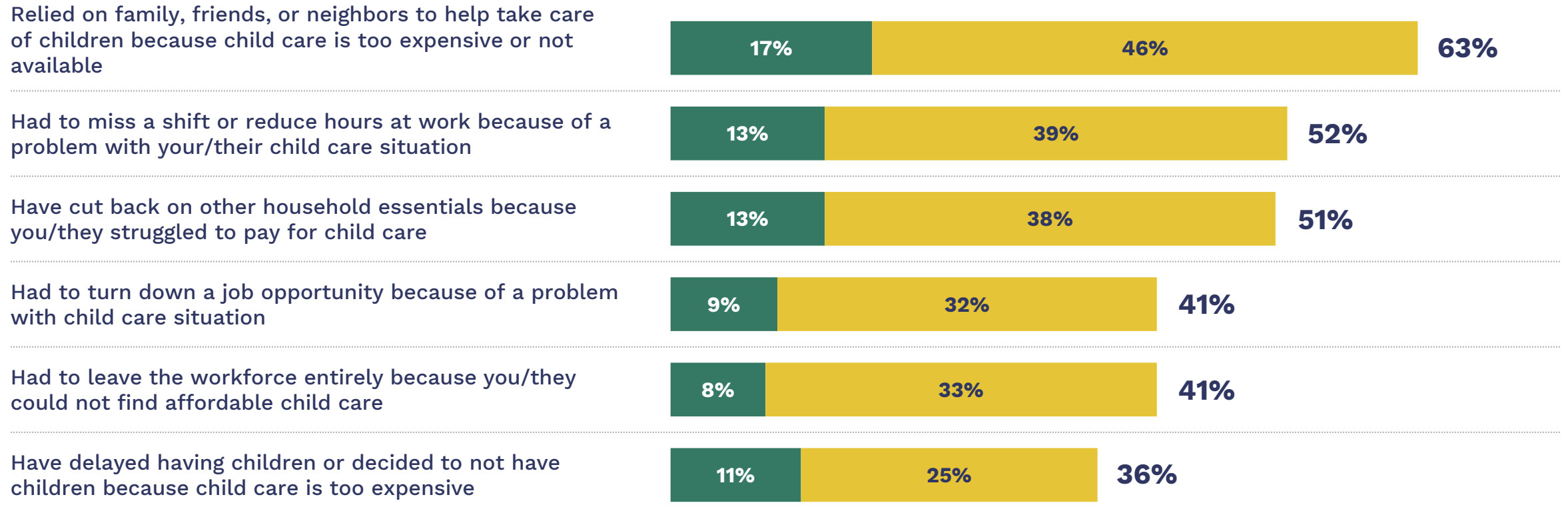


Small Business Owners



The Impact of Affordable Child Care Shortages on Voters and Families

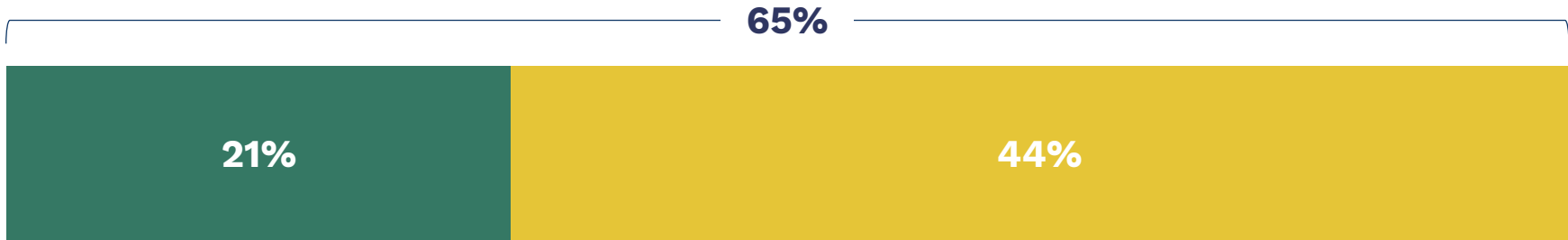
% say this applies to me or someone I know



● Applies to me ● Applies to me or someone I know

One in five voters has paid a financial toll due to child care problems and two in three know someone who has.

One or more of these financial effects applies to...



● % say applies to me ● % say applies to me or someone I know

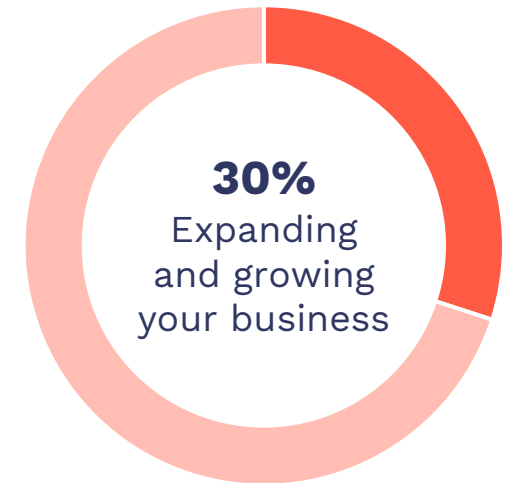
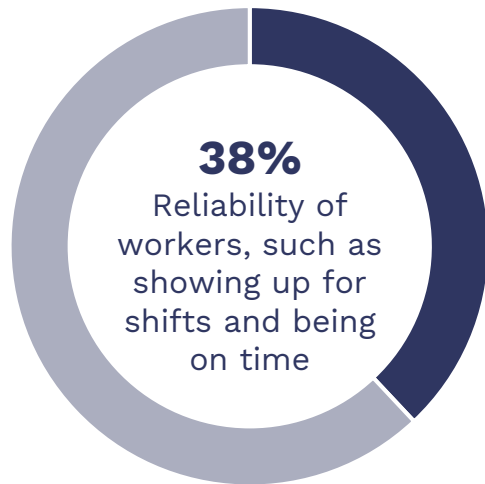
Voters, or someone they know, have:

- Had to miss a shift or reduce work hours
- Have cut back on other household essentials
- Had to turn down a job opportunity
- Had to leave the workforce entirely

Specifically due to a lack of child care

Child care shortages: 1 in 3 small business have dealt with multiple child care-rooted workforce problems in the past 12 months.

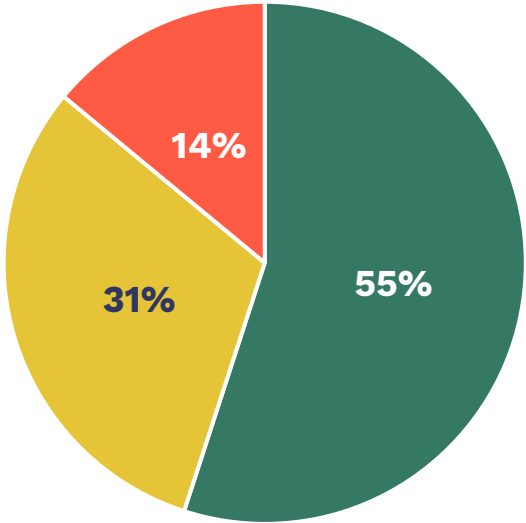
Made more challenging specifically because of a shortage of affordable, reliable child care



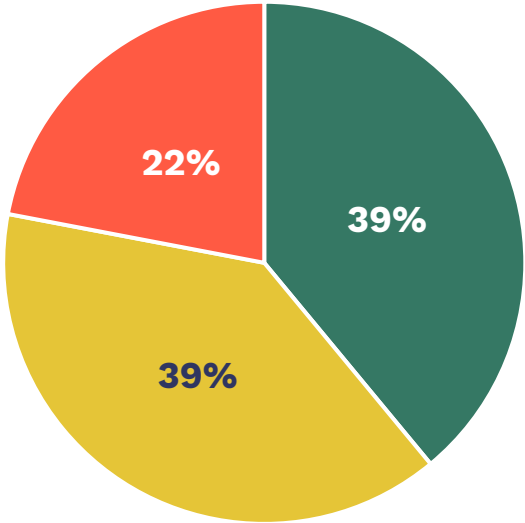
Small business owners see short-term and long-term workforce benefits from child care investments.

How much do you agree with the following statements?

Increasing access to high-quality child care and early learning programs will **improve future generations of workers** by exposing them to good educational opportunities earlier in life



Your business would be on stronger footing if your employees had better access to affordable, high-quality child care

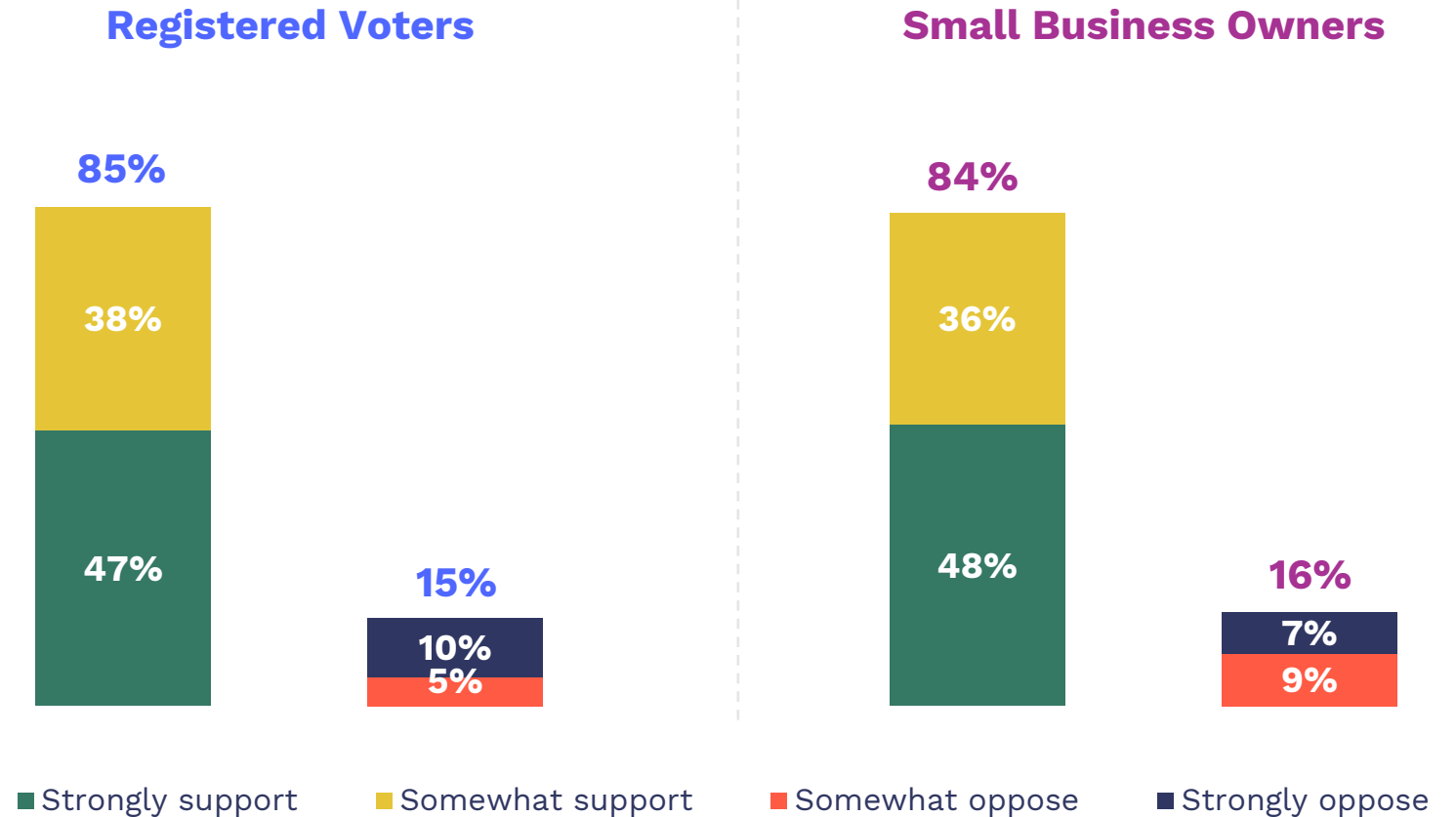


■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Disagree

“The federal government would expand funding to states to increase child care options so that working parents who want to do so can afford to send their child to the high-quality child care 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 programs, which would be required to meet established quality and safety standards and ensure that parents have a range of options to meet their family’s needs.”

Voters agree that the child care crisis requires a comprehensive federal solution.

How much do you support or oppose this proposal?



Support for this proposal is very high across all key voter groups and business owners.

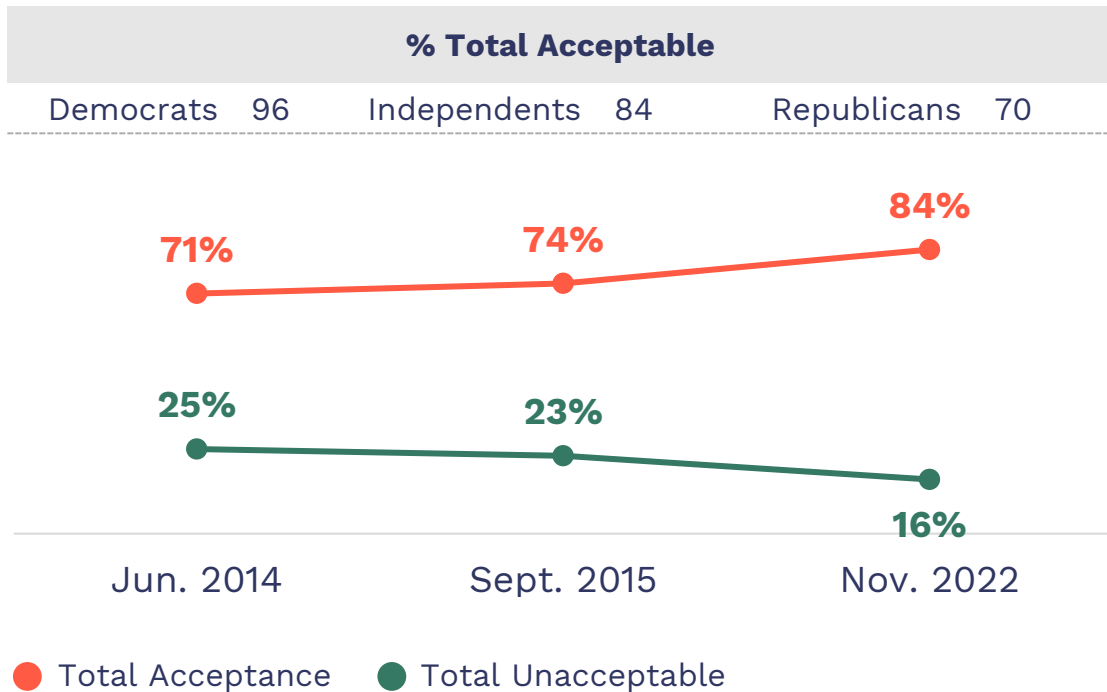
% who support the proposal

Registered Voters	
Democrats	97
Independents	87
Republicans	72
Not very conservative	76
Very conservative	63
White voters	82
Black voters	93
Hispanic voters	92
Urban	94
Suburban	82
Small town/rural	82
Suburban women	87
Democrats	95
Republicans	75
Age 18-49	89
Age 50+	85

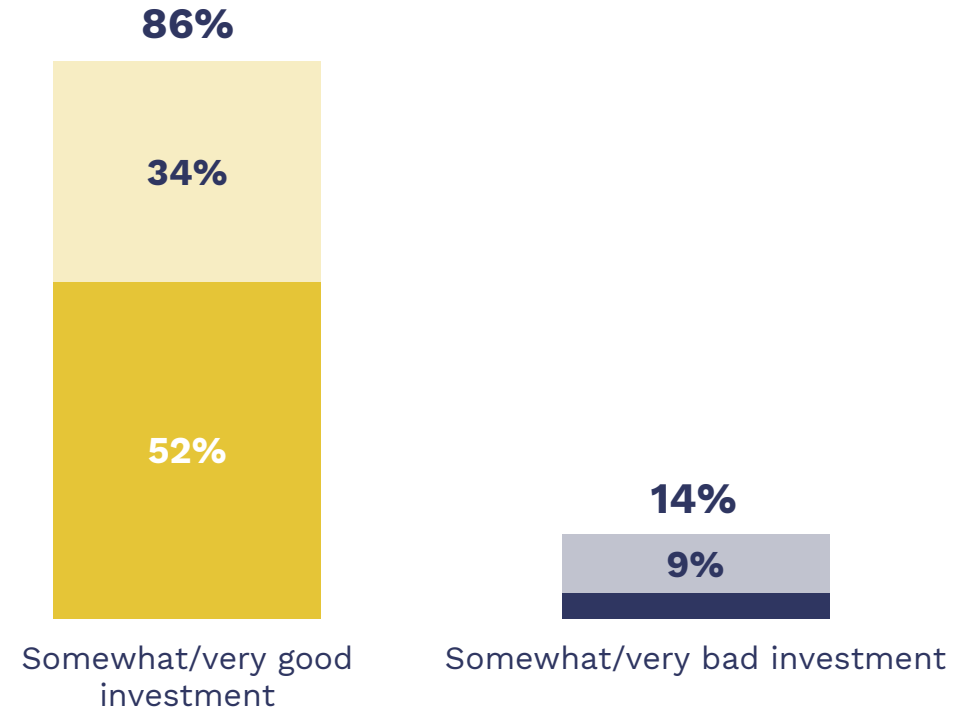
Small Business Owners	
Democrats	94
Independents	83
Republicans	76
Employees WFH	
None	78
Fewer than half	91
Half or more	89
Services company	85
Products company	70
Both	94
3-9 employees	78
10-19 employees	90
20-499 employees	88

Voters are more willing than ever to increase the deficit with child care spending.

Would this proposal be acceptable or unacceptable if it increased the deficit in the short term, but paid for itself in the long term by improving children's education, health, and economic situations, so that less spending will be needed in these areas?



Do you think that improving the quality of child care and early learning programs and making them more affordable for families are a good investment or bad investment of taxpayers' money?



Voters deem multiple potential congressional actions—aid to families, aid to programs, workforce investments—to be important.

Things Congress could do when it comes to child care and early learning programs

Attract and retain more qualified workers in the child care field by increasing funding to enable child care programs to provide better pay and benefits

88%

Using **targeted tax credits** to ease child care costs for parents and encourage businesses to help with employees' child care needs

86%

Increase the child care options available to parents by **increasing funding to child care programs** so that more of them can open or expand

85%

Bring down families' household costs by making child care more affordable through federal funding

84%

Create more options for parents by **allowing programs of all types—including those in schools, child care centers, homes, and religious institutions—to access federal funding**

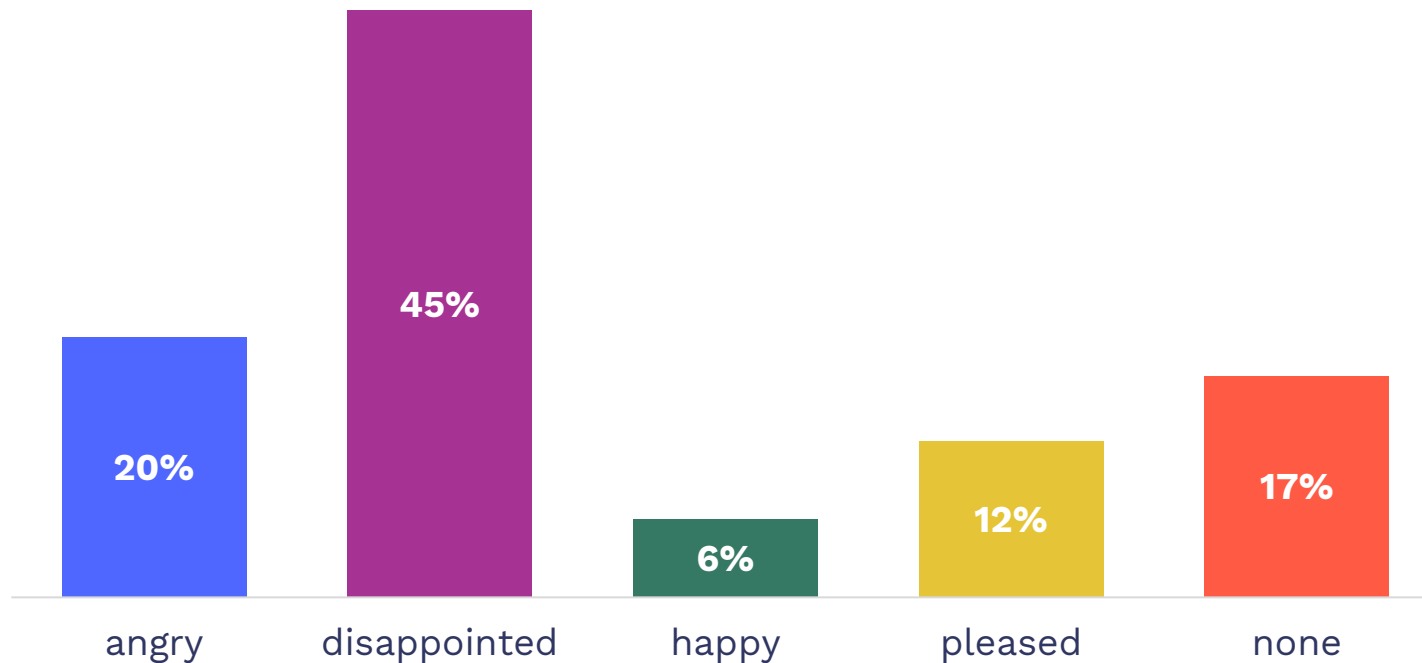
83%

● Important

Voters are dismayed that Congress failed to take action on child care earlier this year.

Earlier this year, Congress was considering legislation that would have increased funding for child care and made it more widely available and affordable for families. But they didn't end up passing the legislation.

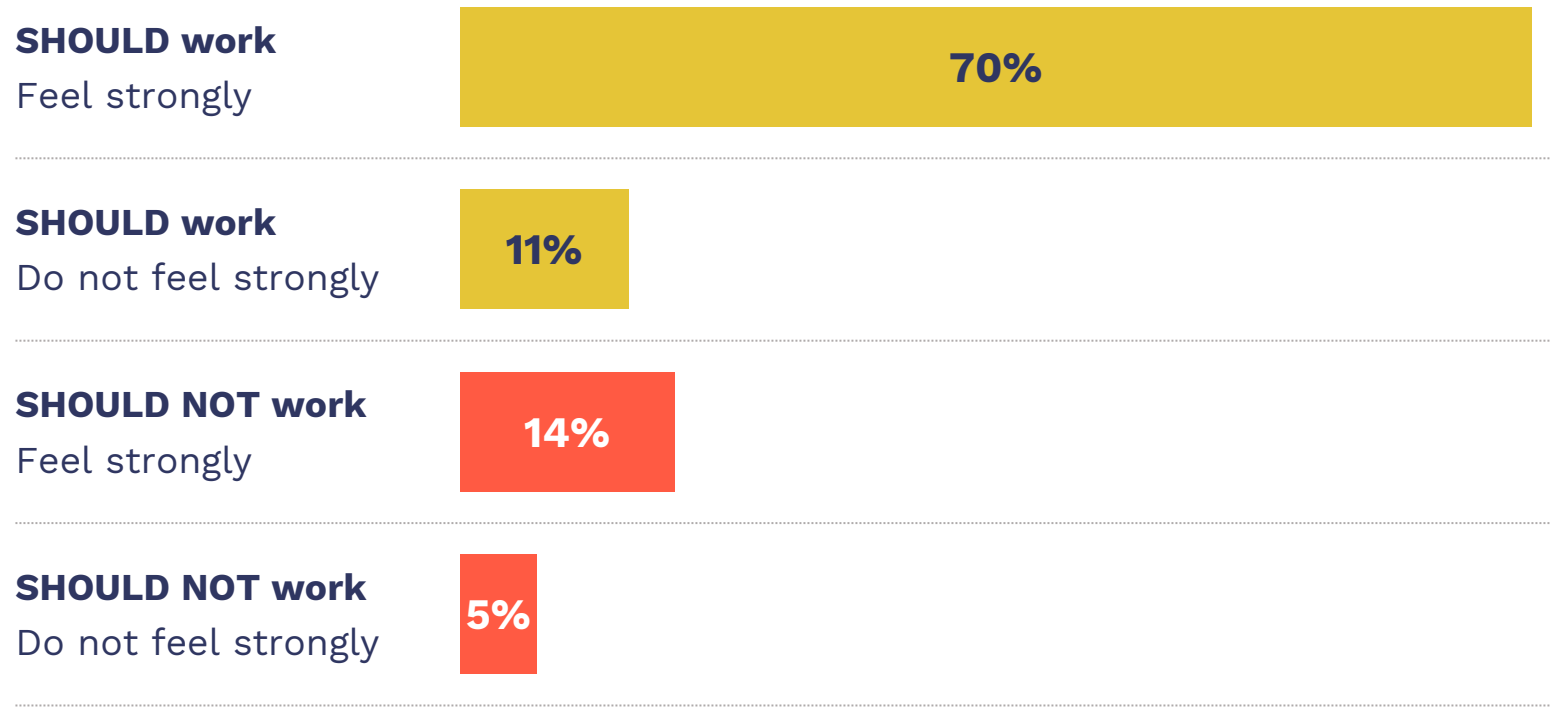
Does knowing that Congress could have passed legislation like this but did not do so make you feel...?



% Angry/disappointed	
Democrats	79
Independents	61
Republicans	52
Suburban women	71
Democrats	81
Republicans	57

Majority of Republicans want their member of Congress to work with Biden.

Do you think that your member of Congress should or should not work with the Biden administration to enact policies that expand affordable child care options?



% think Congress SHOULD work with Biden	
Democrats	97
Independents	77
Republicans	65
Not very conservative	70
Very conservative	55
Suburban women	85
Democrats	97
Republicans	67

Thank You