

The First Five Things To Know About:

A New Poll Showing West Virginia Voter Support For Child Care Funding

In July 2023, Public Opinion Strategies completed a poll on behalf of the First Five Years Fund, examining West Virginia voters' attitudes toward the issue of child care and early childhood education programs. The poll surveyed a national audience as well as voters in Alabama, Arizona, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

The Bottom Line: The vast majority of West Virginia voters continue to feel a sense of urgency around the need for affordable, quality child care. This concern cuts across party lines and spans state borders. It is felt strongly by parents and non-parents alike. As a result, even among concerns about the federal deficit, there continues to be persistent, substantial voter support for increased federal funding for child care and early learning programs.

Here are the First Five Things To Know about voter support for federal funding for child care in West Virginia.

1

The vast majority of West Virginia voters believe it is important for working parents of young children to be able to find and afford quality child care programs. Not only do 94% believe this is important, but fully 63% say it is extremely important, and the overall sentiment clearly cuts across party lines, with 93% of Republicans, 90% of Independents, and 97% of Democrats saying finding quality child care programs for children or working parents is important.

2

West Virginia voters believe federal funding for child care and early learning programs should be increased. Even after acknowledging concerns about the federal deficit, 78% of West Virginia voters say they still believe that "increasing funding for child care and early childhood education programs is an important priority and a good use of tax dollars." Again, this sentiment cuts across party lines, with 72% of Republican voters, 79% of Independent voters and 87% of Democratic voters agreeing on the issue.

3

West Virginia voters believe that resources directed to child care and early learning programs benefit not just the family, but the overall community. Two-thirds of West Virginia voters (66%) say that resources directed to child care and early learning programs benefit both the individual family/children and the overall community, while 15% say the resources only benefit the community and 12% say they only benefit the family.

4

There is broad support for each of five child care policy proposals tested. West Virginia voters provide clear bipartisan support to each of five child care reform policies proposed. Each proposal wins easily across gender and generational lines, as well as across both ideological and partisan lines. In fact, even '24 Trump voters provide at least 75% support for each of the five policies tested. These include:

- Providing tax incentives to businesses which provide or help their employees find and afford quality early childhood education programs – 85% support (including 85% of Republicans and 88% of Democrats)
- Providing greater funding to Head Start and Early Head Start to support families with the greatest needs. – 85% support (including 83% of Republicans and 90% of Democrats)
- Increasing the federal funding to states to expand current programs that directly help low-income children (also known as the Child Care & Development Block Grant, or CCDBG) – 85% support (including 82% of Republicans and 91% of Democrats)
- Increasing the tax credit specifically designed to help working parents offset the cost of child care (also known as the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, or CDCTC) – 84% support (Including 83% of Republicans and 87% of Democrats)
- Increasing the Child Tax Credit, a tax benefit for families with children which can be used on any household expense – 77% support (including 75% of Republicans and 83% of Democrats)

5

One reason for such strong and broad support – voters recognize the impact that child care can have on a family's household economy. Previous polling has shown that business owners and voters feel strongly that child care is important for the local and national economy. In this poll, we see it also hits even closer to home. Almost one-third of West Virginia voters polled (31%) said they or a family member had to miss work because of child care issues, while 14% of all West Virginia voters say they have missed or cut back on work because of child care issues. Finally, half of non-fulltime working parents say they would go back to work full-time if their child had access to quality child care at a reasonable cost.

In Their Own Words

Nearly 80% of voters support increasing federal funding for states to expand their child care programs, (also known as the Child Care & Development Block Grant, or CCDBG), including 78% of Republicans, 79% of Independents, and 87% of Democrats.

Here's what they had to say:

- "In this day and age, it takes both parents working to make ends meet. If they have children, they find themselves in precarious situations such as, leaving work early, missing work and even loss of production, focus if the child, children are sick." – Strong GOP, Female, Charleston-Huntington DMA
- "Because as a single parent with a teenage daughter, I feel it is important to have quality care while I can work to give my daughter a better life than I had." – IND, Male, Clarksburg-Weston DMA
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Putting It All In Context, From FFYF

Sarah Rittling, Executive Director, First Five Years Fund: “We’ve seen a lot of polling through the years that underscores the importance of child care. What this poll tells us is that, both nationally and in these states, voters expect something to be done about the very real issues that families are facing. Members of Congress are making decisions right now about funding for the coming year, and it’s clear from these results that early care and learning programs are not only popular across the entirety of the political spectrum, but that voters want them prioritized.”

About First Five Years Fund

The first five years last forever. At First Five Years Fund, we work to protect, prioritize, and build bipartisan support for quality child care and early learning programs at the federal level. Reliable, affordable, and high-quality early learning and child care can be transformative, not only enhancing a child's prospects for a brighter future but also bolstering working parents and fostering economic stability nationwide. Join us at www.ffyf.org.