

PAES/Invest in Kids Working Group



**Partnership for America's Economic Success/Invest in Kids
Working Group**

January 28, 2008

Lake Research Partners

PAES/Invest in Kids Working Group

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Key Findings



Background

- Voters support childcare and early learning, but creating intensity is more difficult.
- Education is a critical component to help increase saliency.
- Children's health insurance and education often end up trumping childcare.
- With a bad economy, the deficit and the war, voters believe we need to set priorities.
- While voters support government spending, they are also at record high levels of distrust and cynicism about government.
- In a bad economy, people are short of money and resistant to tax increases.
- Safety and preparation for school are powerful frames. Quality and costs are also concerns.

Key Findings:
Early Childhood Learning and Childcare

- Half of Americans believe that programs and services for infants and young children should be a top priority for government spending.
- Women are more likely than men to include childcare and early education on their domestic agenda for Congress.
- Almost three fourths of Americans say that providing early learning programs should be a high priority for their community.
- When it comes to possible budget cuts around education, voters prove most protective of early childhood programs, though note that this is clearly in the educational frame.
- More than half of the public thinks we are spending too little on assistance for childcare right now.

Key Findings: Early Childhood Learning and Childcare

- Benefits, including childcare, are important when making the decision to accept or reject a job.
- Over two-thirds of working parents depend on child care, particularly working mothers and parents working the same shifts.
- Strong majorities of parents favor increased funding for improving the quality of childcare.
- Not surprisingly, quality and cost are among the top two concerns around childcare for parents.
- Parents say their primary goals for childcare are finding a safe and healthy environment for their children and preparing them to enter school ready to learn.
- The public supports making investments to ensure working parents have access to affordable housing, childcare, Head Start, and good schools.

Key Findings: Pre-School

- The public proves receptive to voluntary pre-school and kindergarten as a way to address the achievement gap between low- and high-performing students.
- Many also see a connection between pre-school programs for children from low-income and poverty-level households and the teenage years for these children.
- Most say it is very or somewhat important for the presidential candidates to express support for pre-school and Head Start.
- It is important for Democratic candidates to demonstrate their commitment to providing children with a world-class education, which includes expanding access to pre-school and making college affordable.

Key Findings: In the States

- Across the country, residents in individual states are showing widespread support for early education.
- Voters in Alabama say expanding pre-K programs for all four year olds is an important priority for the state to address now to help prepare children for K-12 success.
- In California, more than a majority say that ensuring that all children in CA start kindergarten ready to do their best in school is highly important.
- Ninety percent of Kansan voters believe it is important for children to attend high quality pre-kindergarten to ensure that they are prepared to do their best in school.
- Opportunities for social and emotional development and getting their child ready to go to school are among the top factors when parents in Massachusetts make decisions around early learning and childcare arrangements.

Key Findings: In the States

- While most Michiganders think that public spending on early childhood education is a wise investment, many also think that the state should take care of K-12 first.
- Over three fourths of voters in Minnesota say that children experience an advantage in school after attending early education programs.
- New Jersey voters find getting kids ready for kindergarten to be as important as reducing taxes and improving the quality of K-12 education.
- New Yorkers prove supportive of investing in pre-kindergarten programs even if it means raising taxes.
- Almost nine in ten Texan voters believe the state should be doing more to prepare its children to be productive citizens.

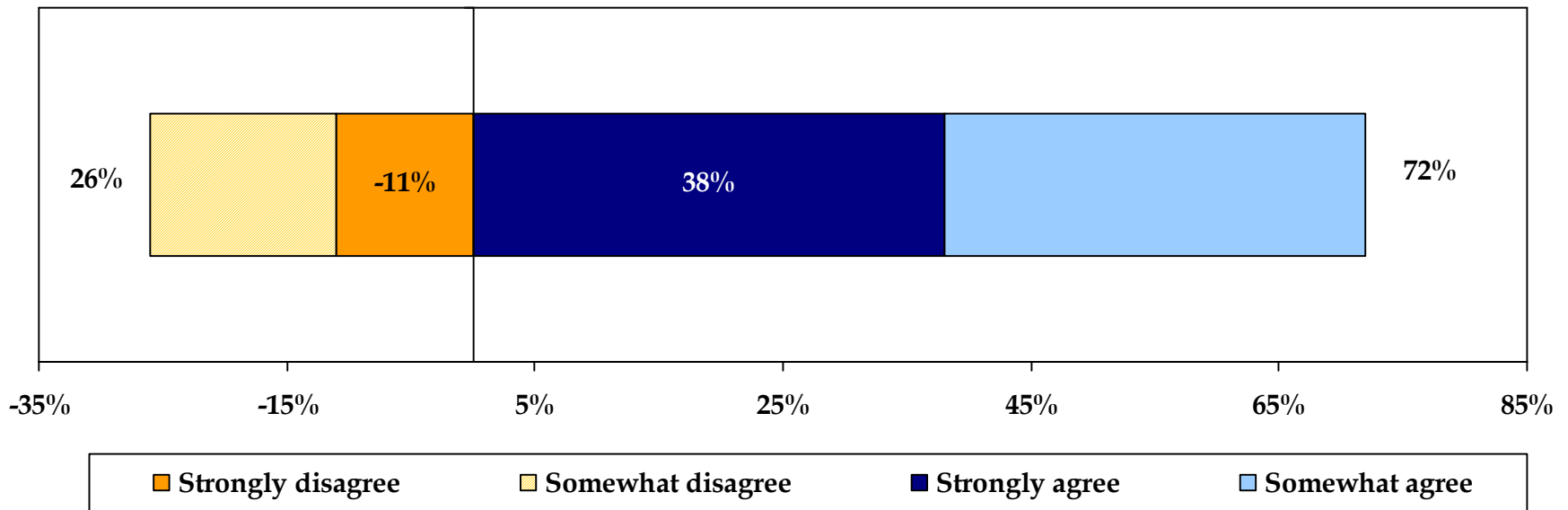


Context

Among children's issues, S-CHIP has received much of recent media coverage. Childcare and early education are part of the women's domestic agenda.

Voters are looking for political leadership on children's issues.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Our political leaders are not doing enough to ensure the health, education and well-being of children today"?

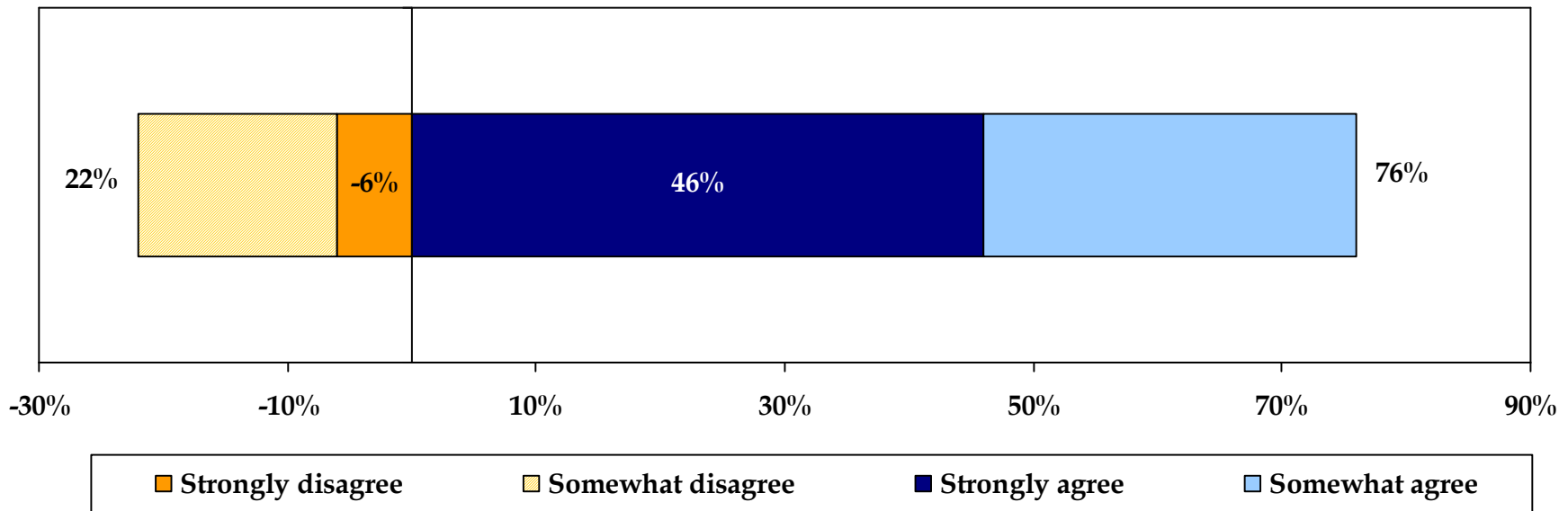


Every Child Matters Education Fund: June 2007 (Survey of 625 likely general election voters)

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They show even greater intensity of agreement around having the president and Congress place a higher priority on the health, education and well-being of the country's children.

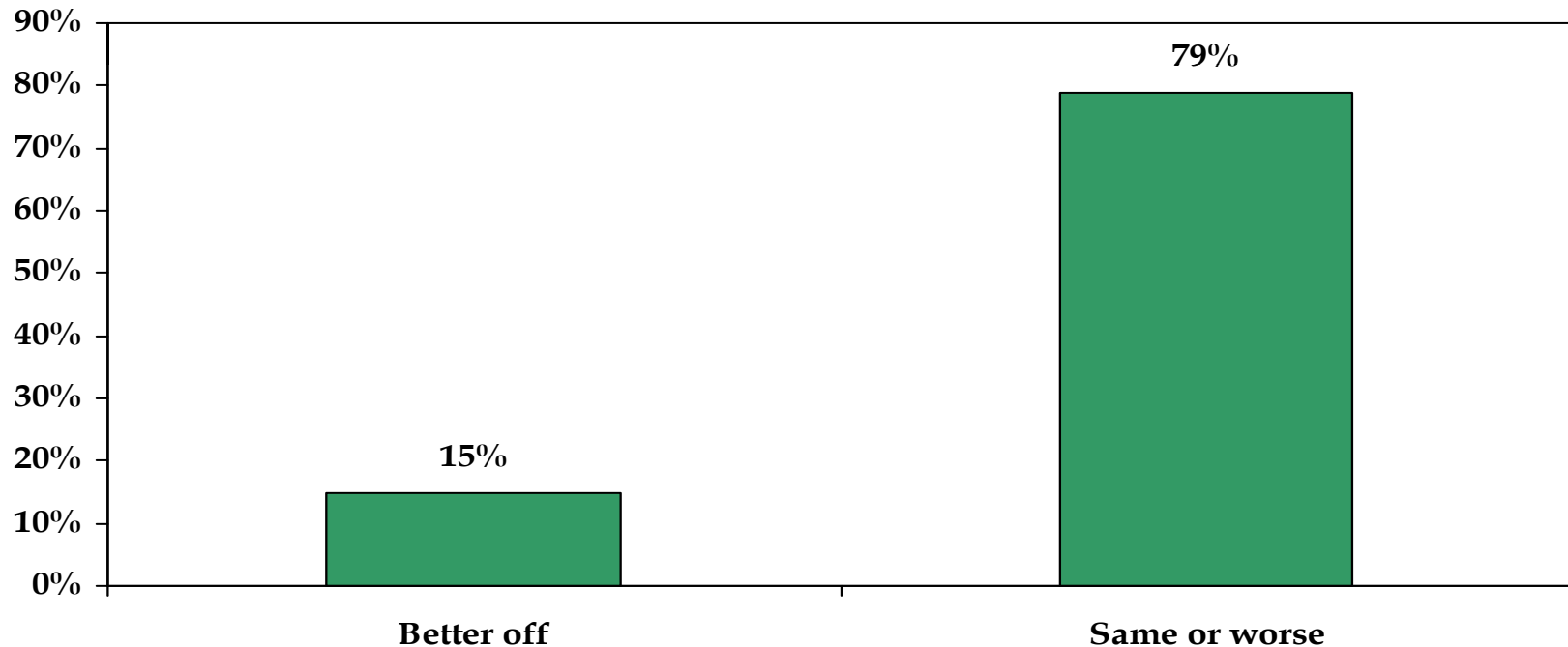
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "The President and Congress need to give a higher priority to the health, education and well-being of the country's children and spend less time on other issues"?



Every Child Matters Education Fund: June 2007 (Survey of 625 likely general election voters)

In a survey of non-supervisory workers, only 15 percent say they think the next generation will be better off.

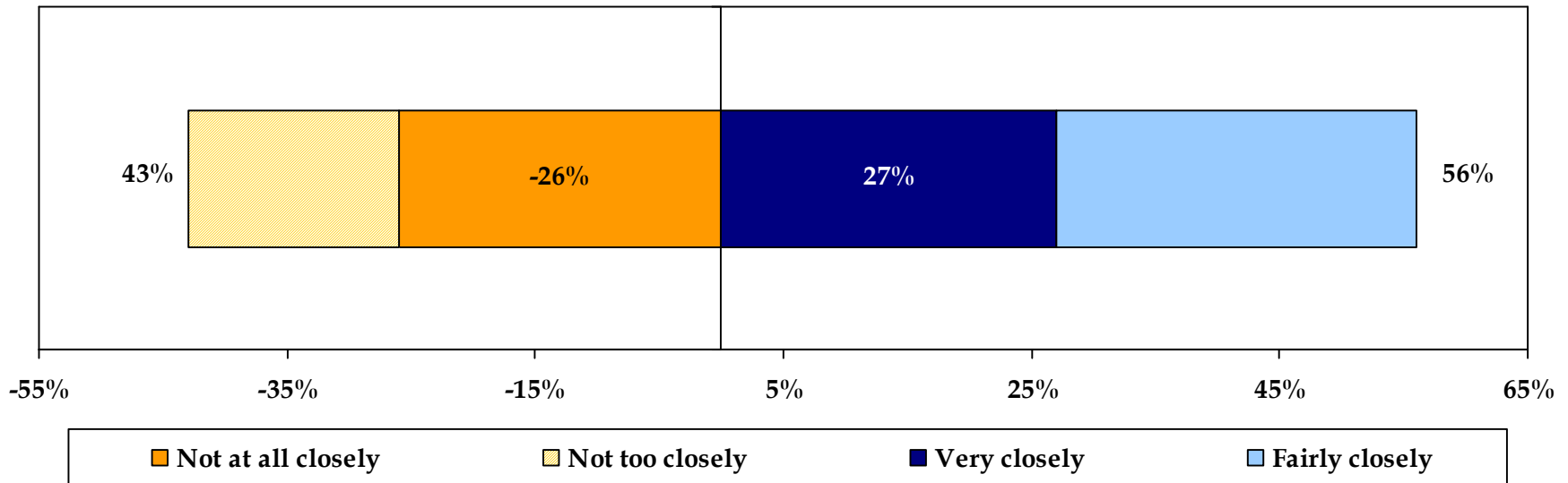
Thinking about the next generation of Americans who are children today, the way things are going, do you think economically they will be better off, worse off, or about the same as the generation of adults who are working today?



CTW/LRP: March 2007 (Survey of 800 non-supervisory workers)

Over half of the public say they were following the president's veto of S-CHIP closely.

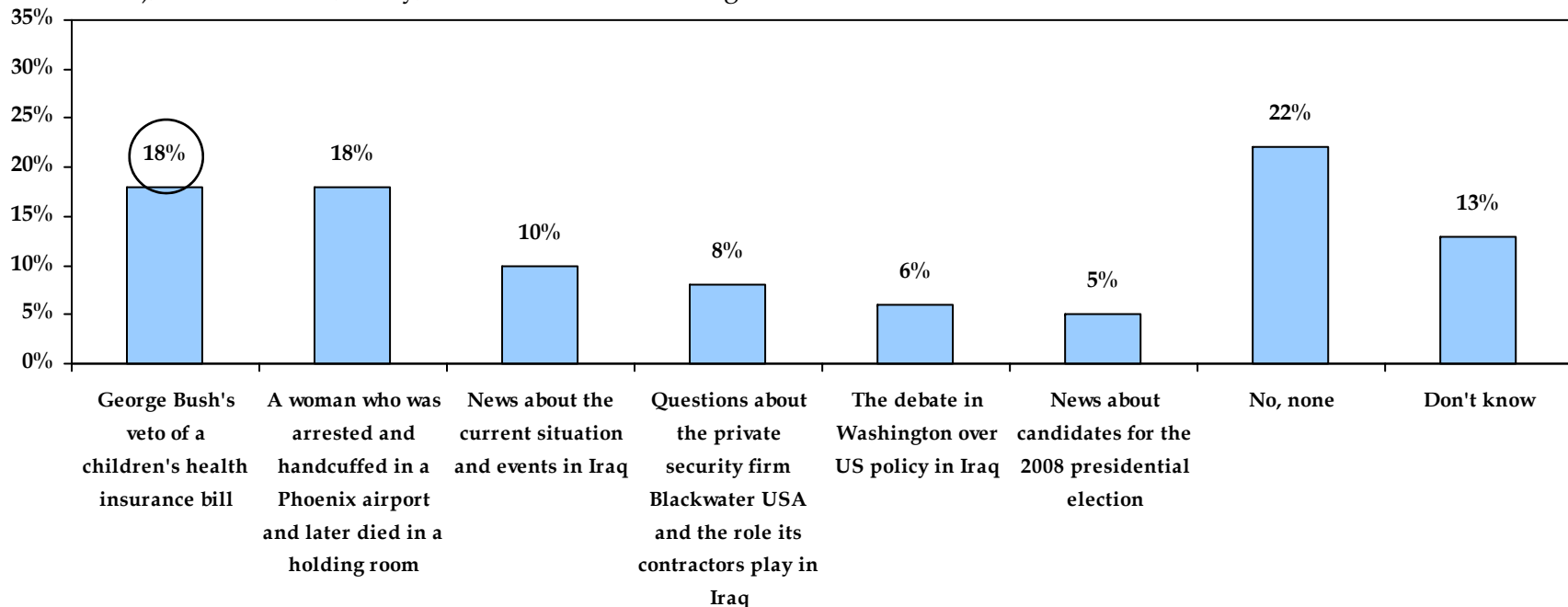
As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely...George (W.) Bush's veto of a children's health insurance bill...(If Necessary, ask:) Did you follow...George Bush's veto of a children's health insurance bill very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?



Pew Weekly News Interest Index Poll: October 2007 (Survey of 1,013 adults)

Given the overwhelming support nationwide for expanding S-CHIP, it is not surprising that media coverage of the president's veto is among the top two issues that the public thought received too little coverage in the news.

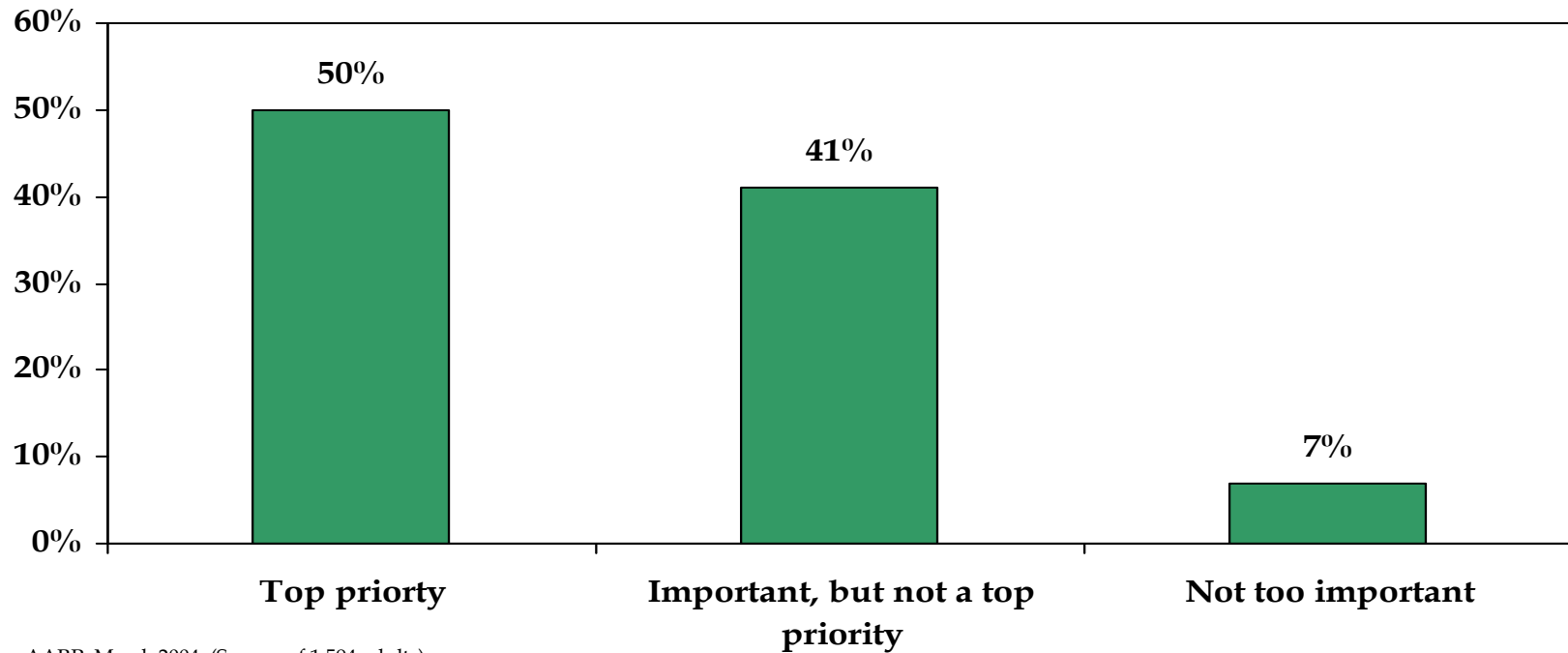
Of all the (news) stories I just mentioned (news about the current situation and events in Iraq, the debate in Washington over US (United States) policy in Iraq, questions about the private security firm Blackwater USA and the role its contractors play in Iraq, George (W.) Bush's veto of a children's health insurance bill, a woman who was arrested and handcuffed in a Phoenix airport and later died in a holding room, news about candidates for the 2008 presidential election), which of them, if any, received too little coverage?



Pew Weekly News Interest Index Poll: October 2007 (Survey of 1,013 adults)

Americans say that programs and services for infants and young children should be a priority for government spending.

I'd like your opinions about different priorities for government spending. Tell me if you consider each of the following areas a top priority for government spending, important, but not a top priority, or not too important? In your opinion, are...programs and services for infants and young children a top priority for government spending, important, but not a top priority, or not too important?

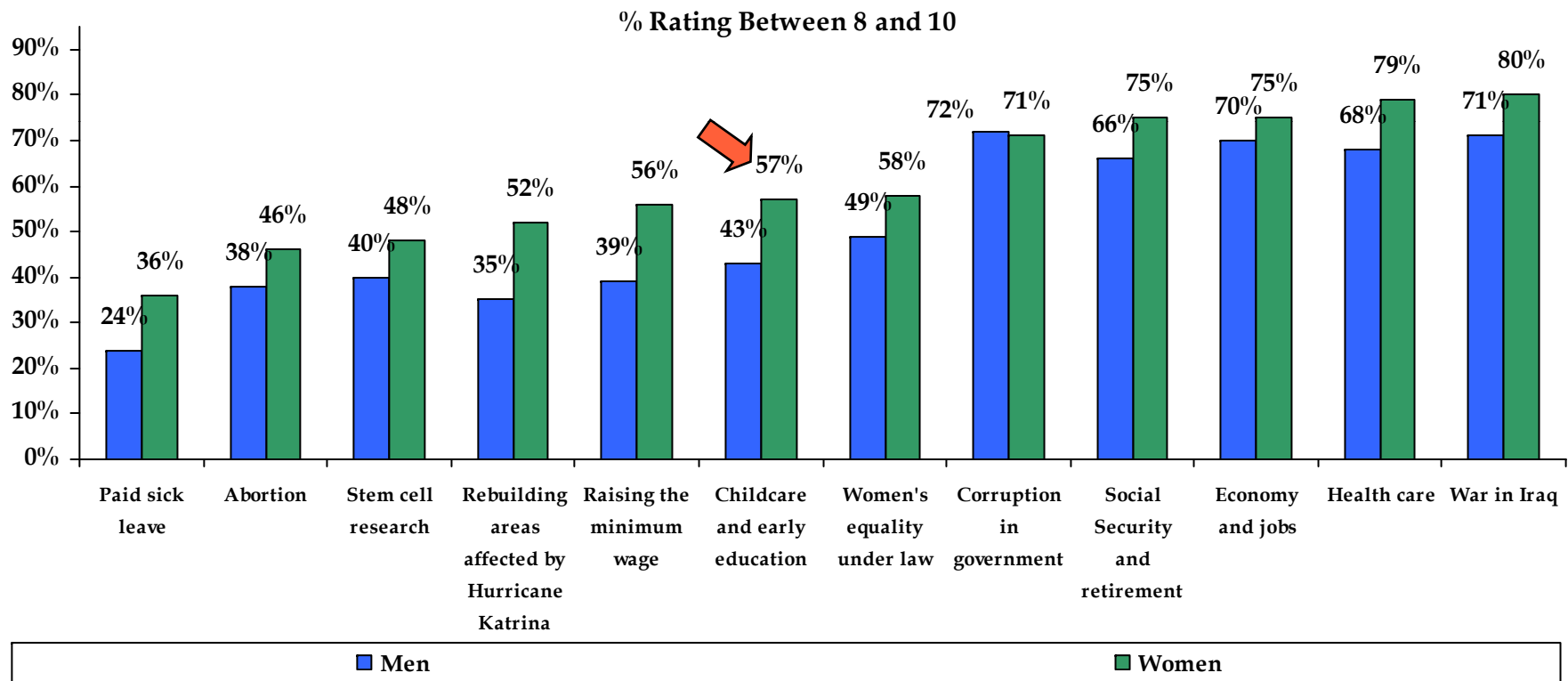


AARP: March 2004 (Survey of 1,594 adults)

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The domestic agenda, including child care and early education, is particularly salient for women voters. However, other major issues push it down.

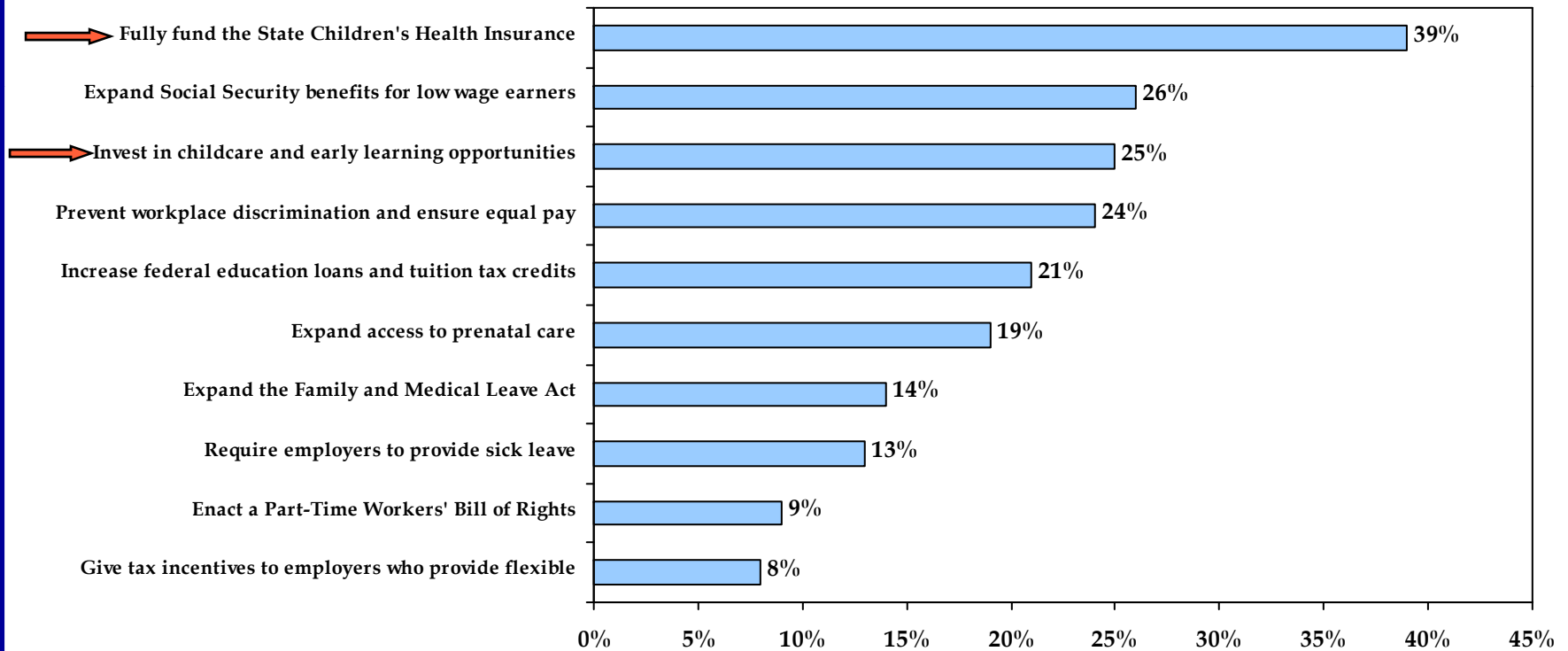
Now I am going to read you a list of some issues that are in the news. For each, please tell me how big of a priority you would like this issue to have in the Congress over the next two years regardless of who controls the Congress. Please use a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is a very high, top priority and 0 is a very low priority and you can pick any number in between.



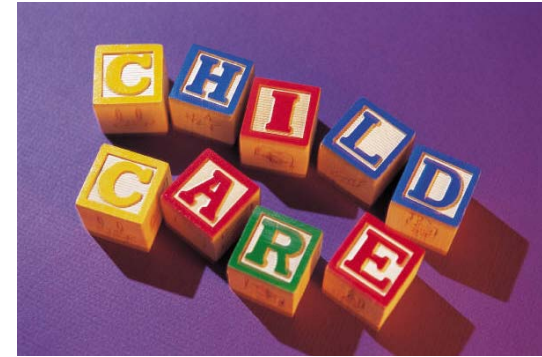
Lake Research Partners: November 2006 (Election Day Survey of 1,000 voters)

Investing in child care and early learning is among the top priorities for unmarried women as well.

Thinking about that list, what two are most important for Congress to do: Fully fund the State Children's Health Insurance Program, expand Social Security benefits for low wage earners, (Form B half sample:) invest in childcare and early learning opportunities, prevent workplace discrimination and ensure equal pay, increase federal education loans and tuition tax credits, expand access to prenatal care, expand the Family and Medical Leave Act, (Form A half sample:) require employers to provide sick leave, enact a Part-Time Workers' Bill of Rights, give tax incentives to employers who provide flexible hours?



Women's Voices, Women Vote: January 2007 (Survey of 1,000 unmarried women)

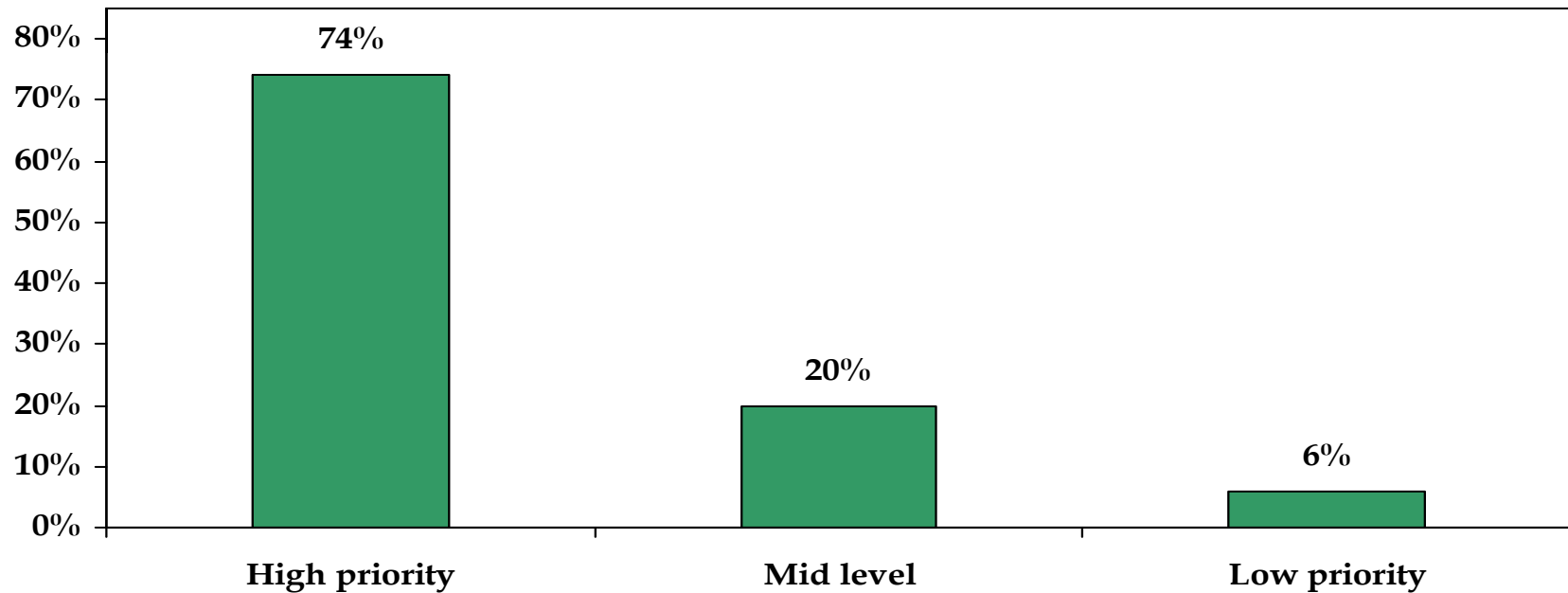


Early Childhood Learning and Childcare

Cost and quality are important factors when parents of young children make decisions about childcare.

Americans place a high priority on early childhood learning programs for their own communities.

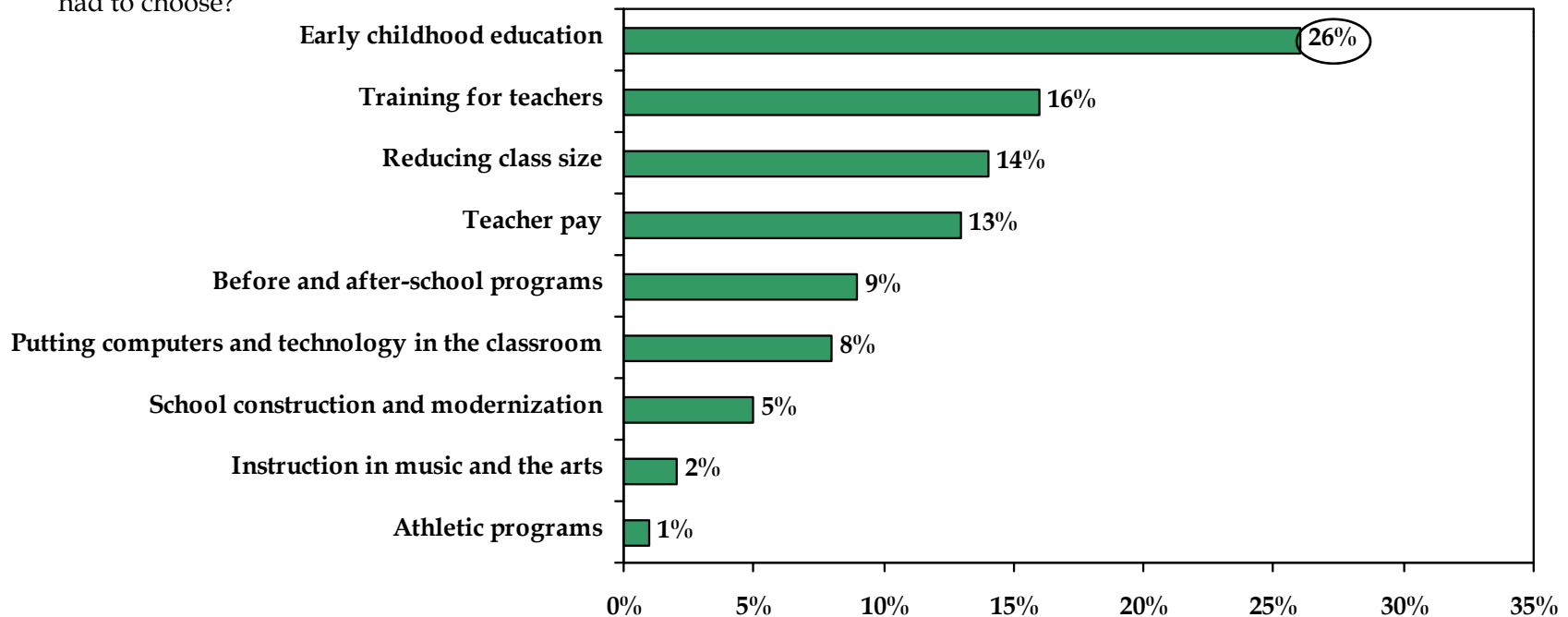
Do you think...providing early childhood learning programs should be a high, midlevel, or low priority for your community?



Public Agenda Foundation: March 2006 (Survey of 1,203 adults)

After hearing a list of programs and areas that compete for school funding, voters have been most likely to say that early childhood education should be protected from budget cuts.

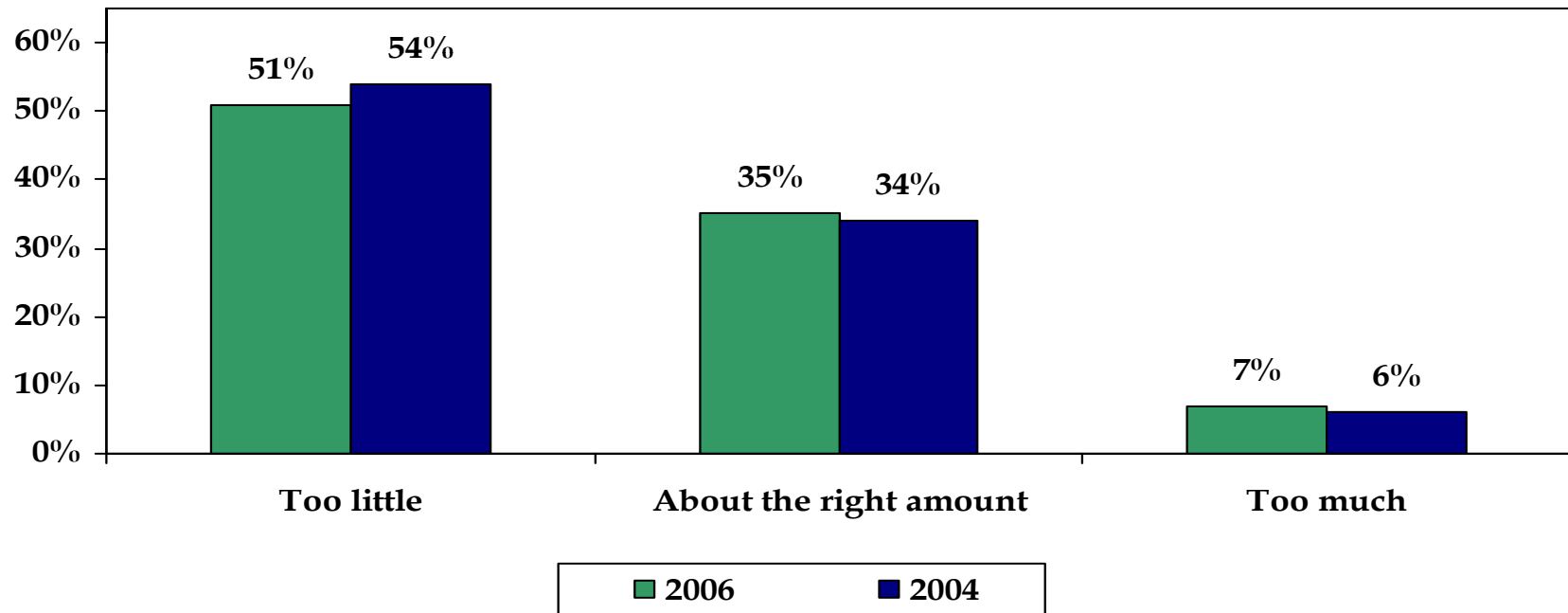
Thinking about the different areas that compete for school funding, which one of the following areas do you think it is most important to protect from budget cuts? School construction and modernization, early childhood education, reducing class size, training for teachers, teacher pay, putting computers and technology in the classroom, instruction in music and the arts, before and after-school programs, athletics programs ...(If All of the above/None of the above, ask:) But if you had to choose?



Public Education Network/Education Week/Lake Research Partners: January 2003 (Survey of 1,050 voters)

The majority of the public consistently says that we are not spending enough on assistance for childcare.

We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. Are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on...assistance for childcare? (Asked of 1/3 sample in 2006 and 1/2 sample in 2004)

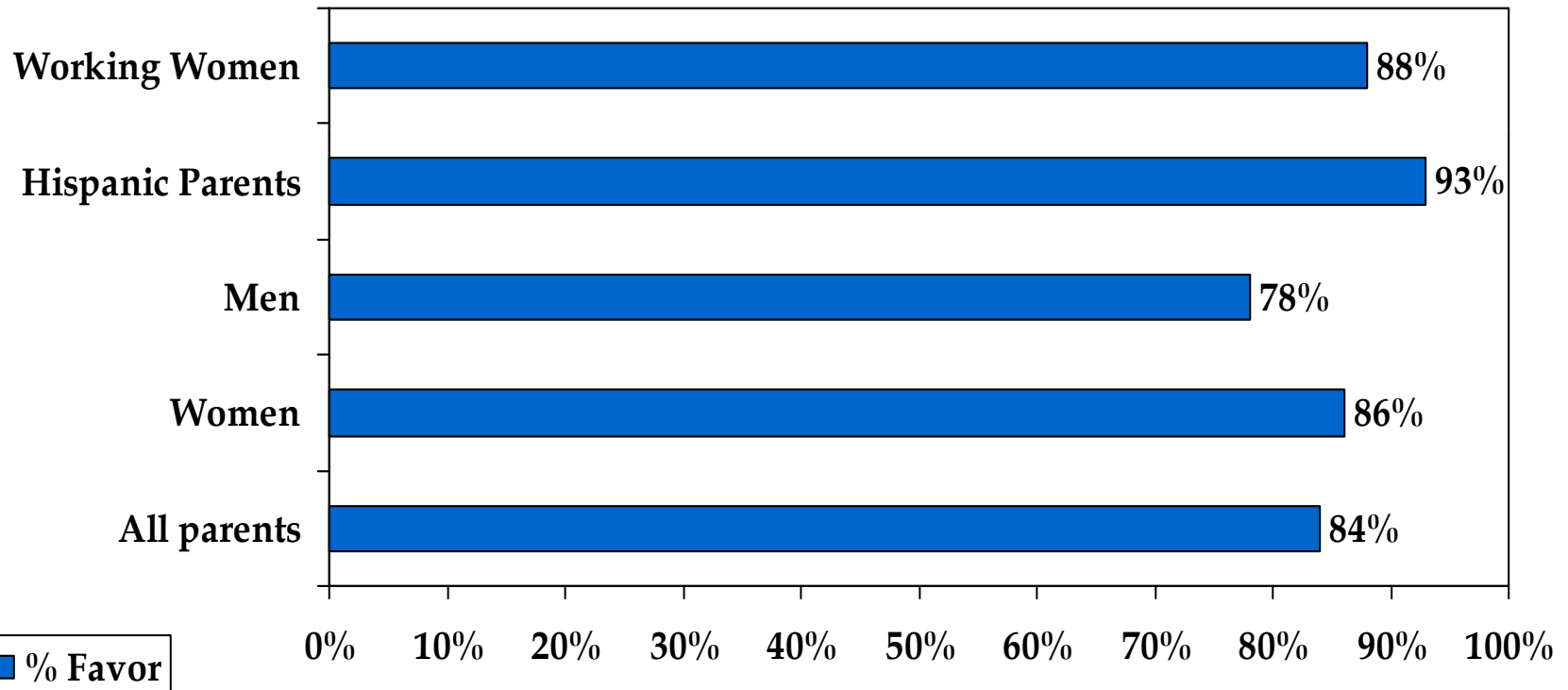


2006 - National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago: March 10-August 7, 2006 (Personal interviews with 4,510 adults)

2004 - National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago: August 18-January 4, 2005 (Personal interviews with 2,812 adults)

Strong majorities of parents favor increased funding for improving the quality of childcare.

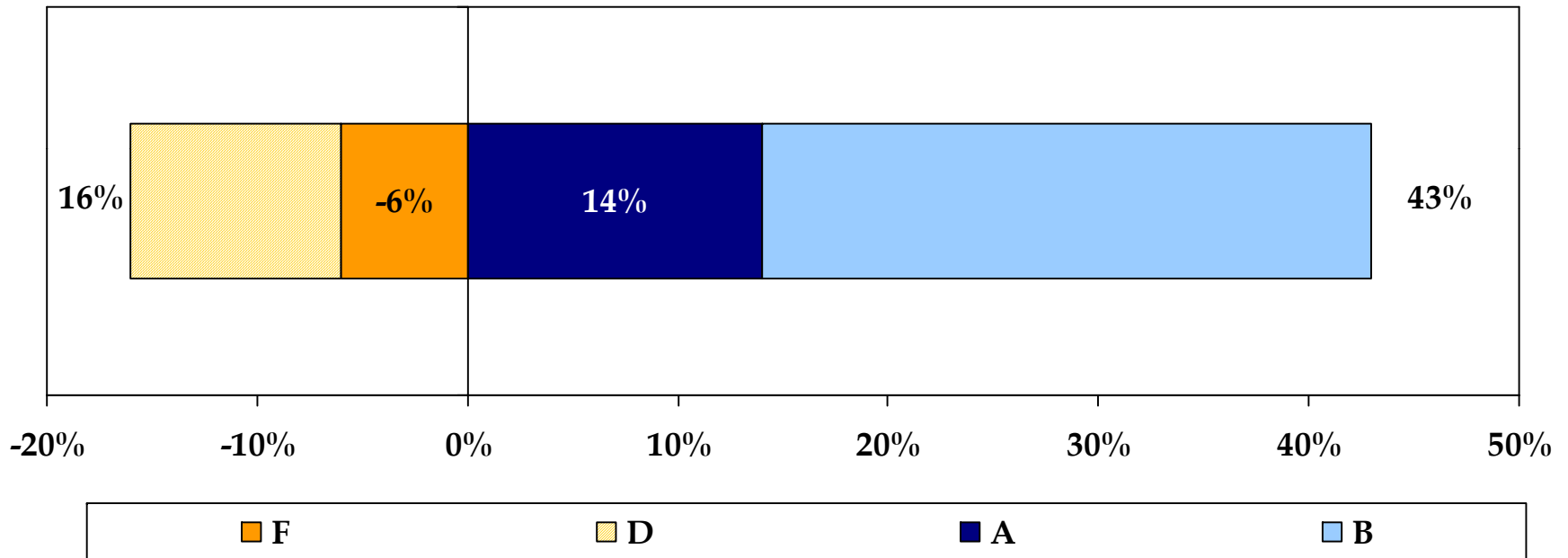
Do you favor or oppose increased funding for improving the quality of childcare?



NACCRRRA/Lake Research Partners: February 2006 (Survey of 592 parents with a least one child under the age of six)

Less than one in five adults give their local community an “A” for providing affordable quality child care.

What grade would you give your local community on affordable quality childcare? Please give an A, B, C, D or F, where an A is excellent and F is failure

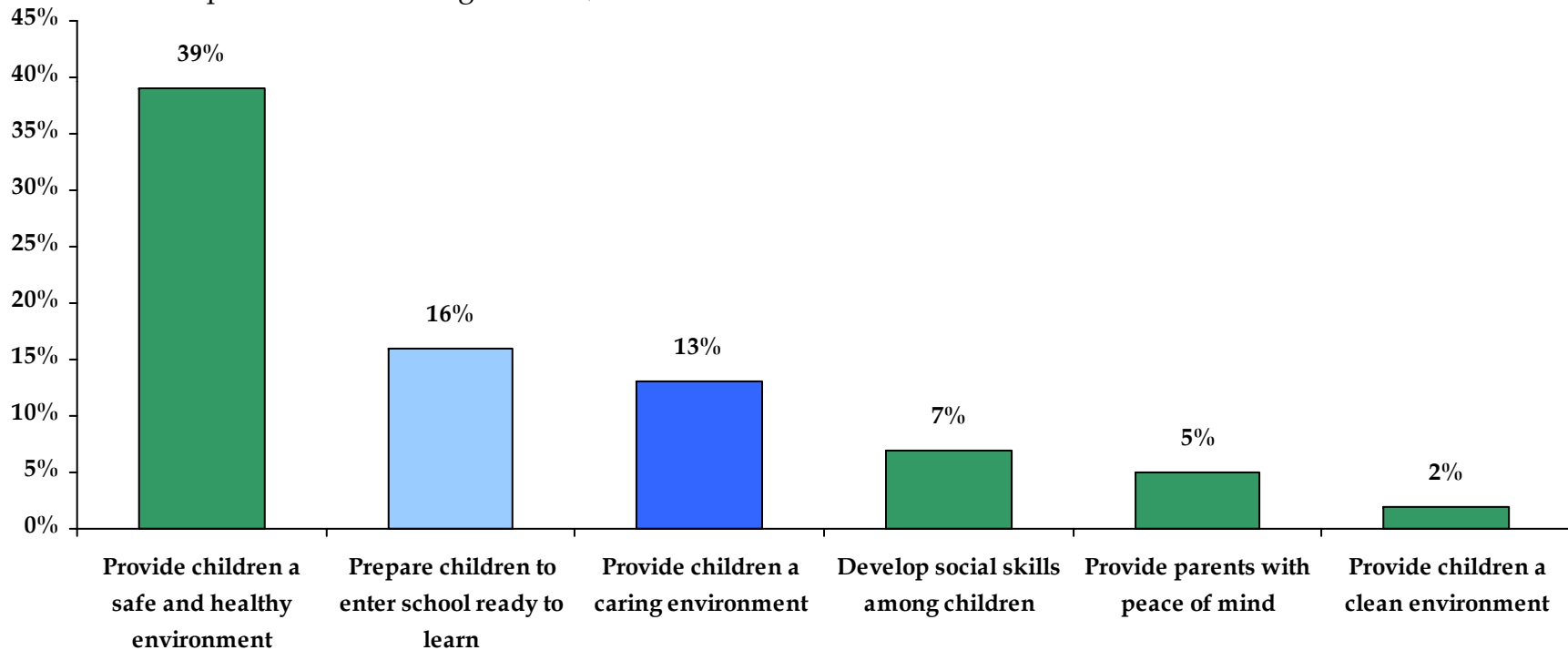


One quarter of adults give their local community a C (25 percent), while 17 percent don't know how they would grade their community on providing affordable quality childcare.

Public Agenda Foundation: March 2006 (Survey of 1,203 adults)

Providing a safe and healthy environment followed by preparing children to enter school ready to learn are parents' top two goals for childcare.

Of the following which one would you say is the MOST important goal for childcare - [ROTATE] _to provide children a clean environment, _to prepare children to enter school ready to learn, _to provide children a safe and healthy environment, _to provide children a caring environment, _to provide parents with peace of mind, _to develop social skills among children,?



NACCRRRA/Lake Research Partners: February 2006 (Survey of 592 parents with a least one child under the age of six)

Cost is parents' top concern around childcare.

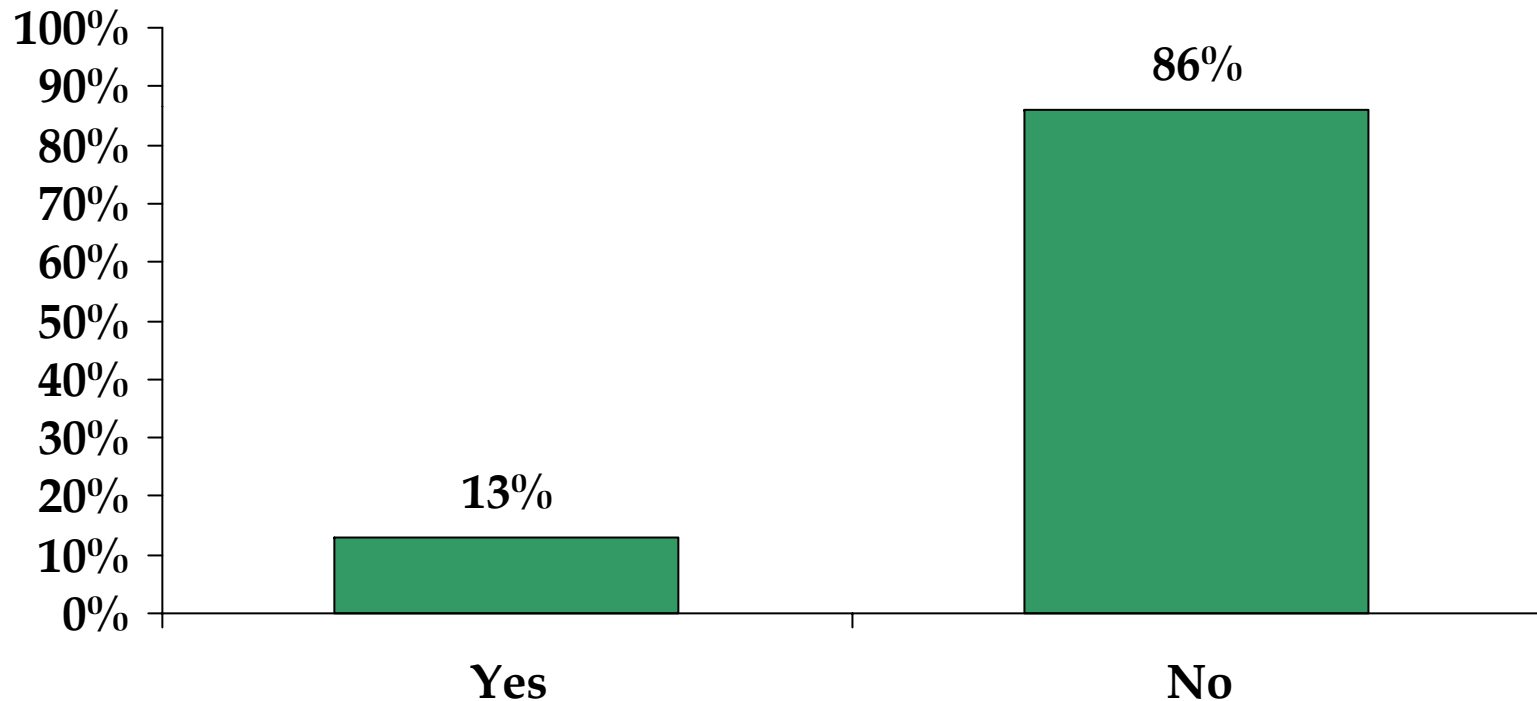
When you think about your own situation, what is your single biggest concern about childcare, the cost, the quality, the reliability, the availability or are you more concerned about something else?



NACCRRRA/Lake Research Partners: February 2006 (Survey of 592 parents with a least one child under the age of six)

For most, child care is not a regular household expense.

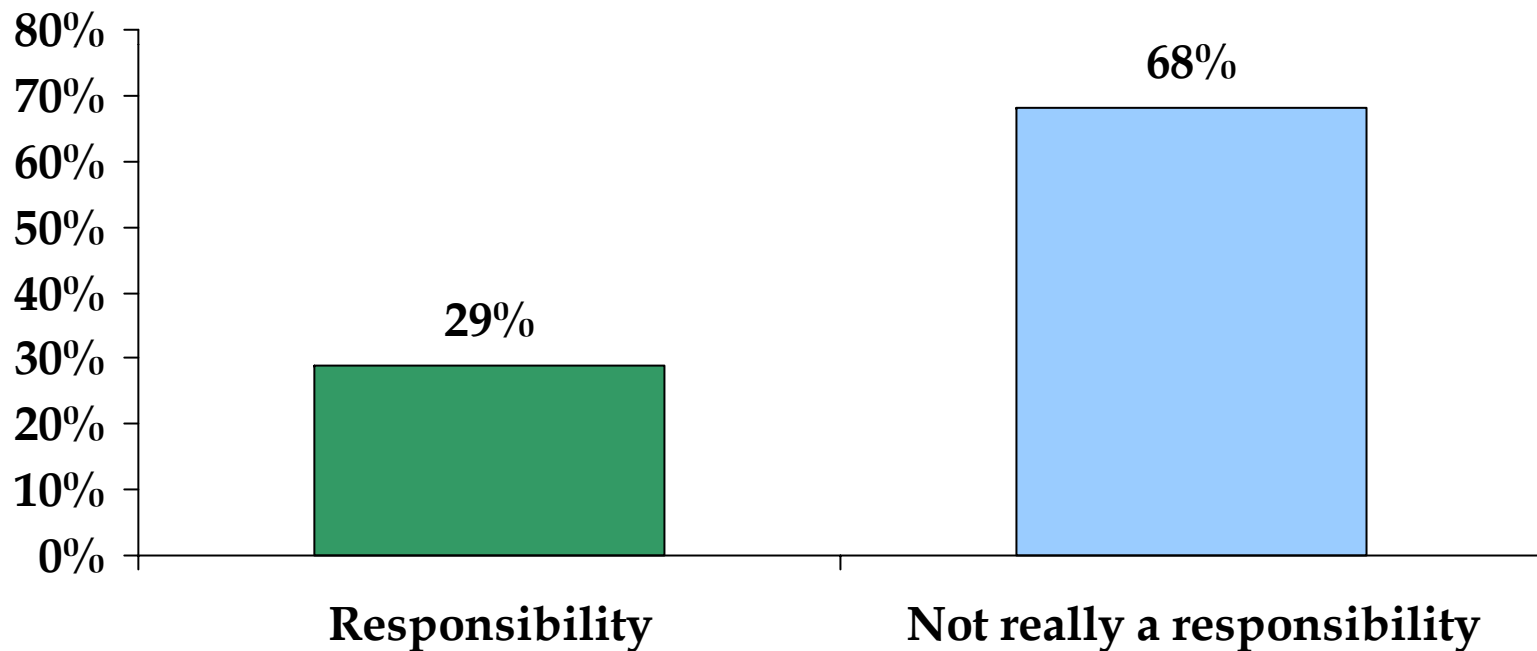
For this survey we'd like to know what people regularly spend money on. As I read each item, tell me if this is one of your household's regular expenses, or not....Childcare (Read if necessary): Is this one of your household's regular expenses, or not?



Pew Research Center: October 2006 (Survey of 2,000 adults)

Almost one third say that grandparents helping with child care for their grandchildren is a responsibility.

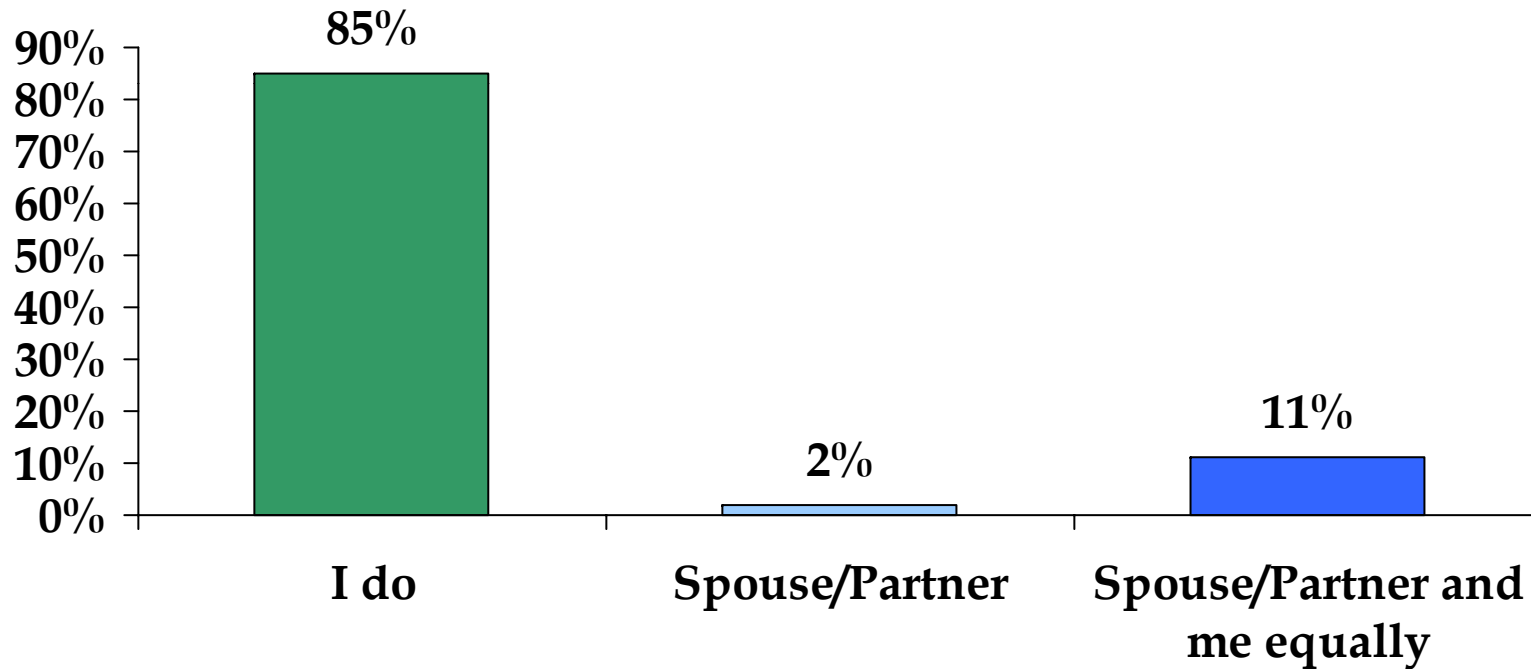
Here are a few things family members sometimes do for each other. I'd like to know if you think each is a responsibility or is it not really a responsibility, regardless of whether it might be a good thing to do...Grandparents helping with childcare for their grandchildren.



Pew Research Center: October 2005 (Survey of 3,014 adults)

An overwhelming majority of mothers say that the primary responsibility of child care falls to them.

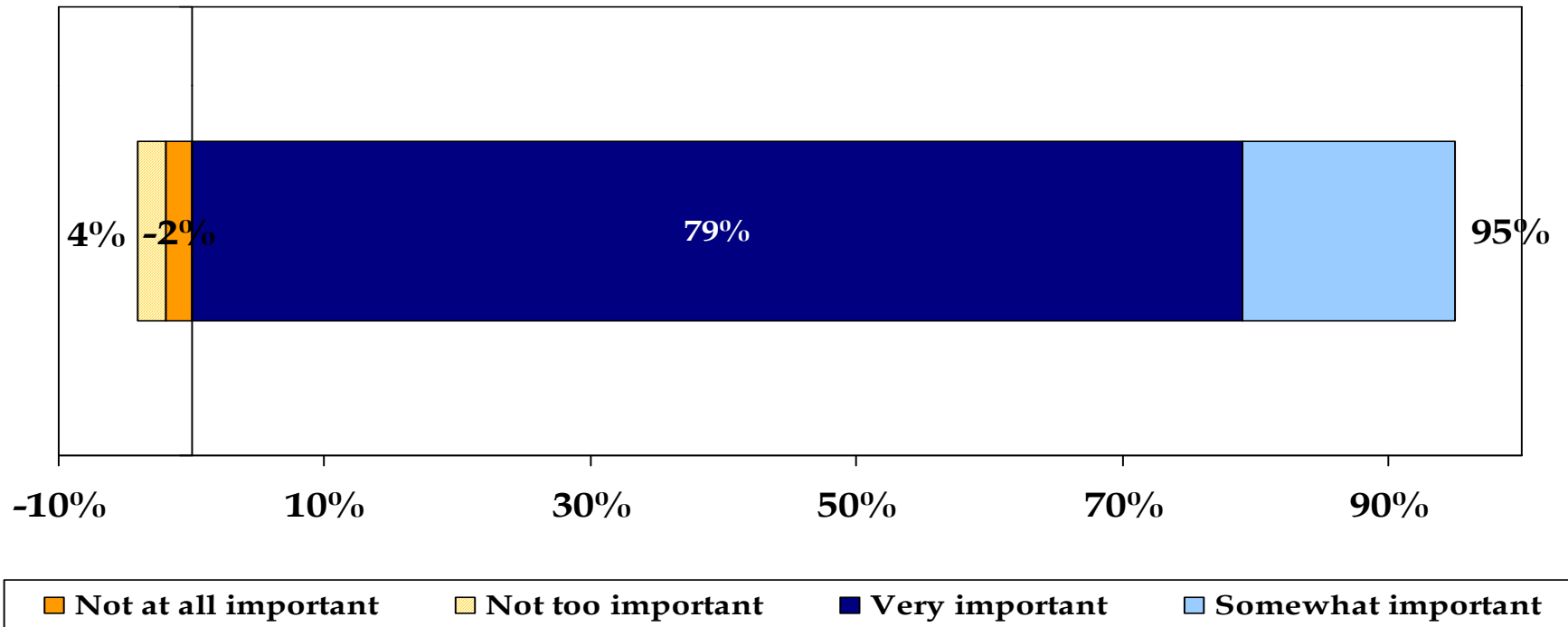
Who has the main childcare responsibilities in your household?



ABC News/Good Housekeeping: January 2006 (survey of 585 adult mothers)

Over three fourths say that benefits, including childcare, are very important factors in their decision to accept or reject a job.

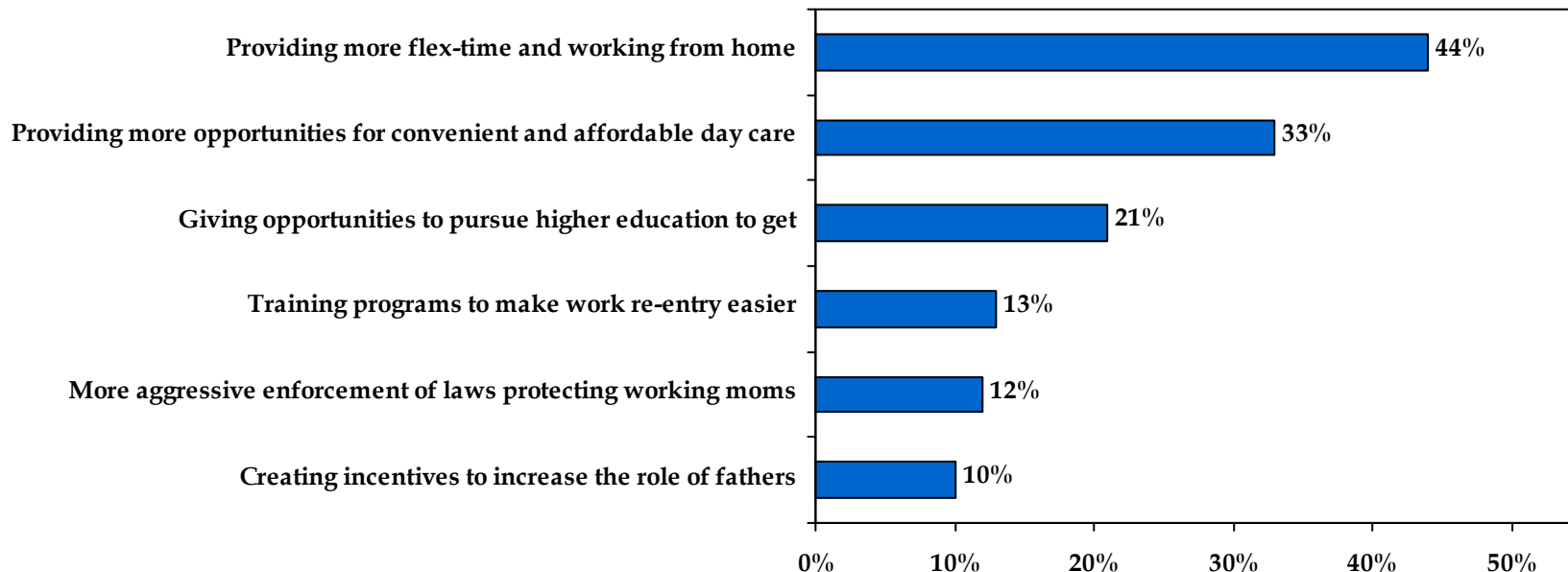
When choosing a job, how important are the benefits that a potential employer offers, such as retirement plans, health benefits, vacations, sick leave, childcare and life insurance, in your decision to accept or reject the job? Are they....very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?



Employee Benefit Research Institute: June 2004 (Asked of those employed full or part-time)

Convenient and affordable day care is among the top two suggestions women think can improve the lives of working moms.

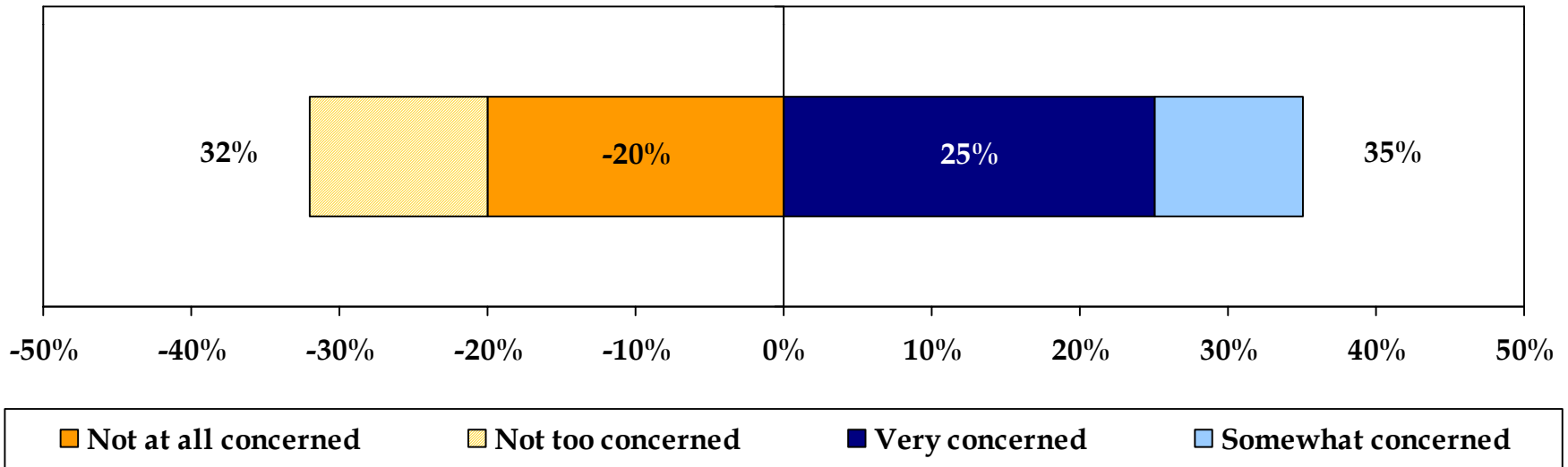
Please tell me which of the following suggestions can have the most influence in improving the professional lives of working moms....Providing more flex-time and working from home, providing more opportunities for convenient and affordable day care, giving opportunities to pursue higher education to get they skills they need to succeed in the work place, training programs to make work re-entry easier, more aggressive enforcement of laws protecting working moms against discrimination in the workplace, creating incentives to increase the role of fathers in taking childcare responsibilities.



Voice of Mom: March 2004 (Survey of 1,207 mothers)

Among all adults, just over one third say they are concerned about having adequate child care when they go to work while another one third say this concern does not apply to them.

I'd like you to think about some concerns that people may have.) How concerned are you, if at all, about...not having adequate childcare when you go to work? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about this?



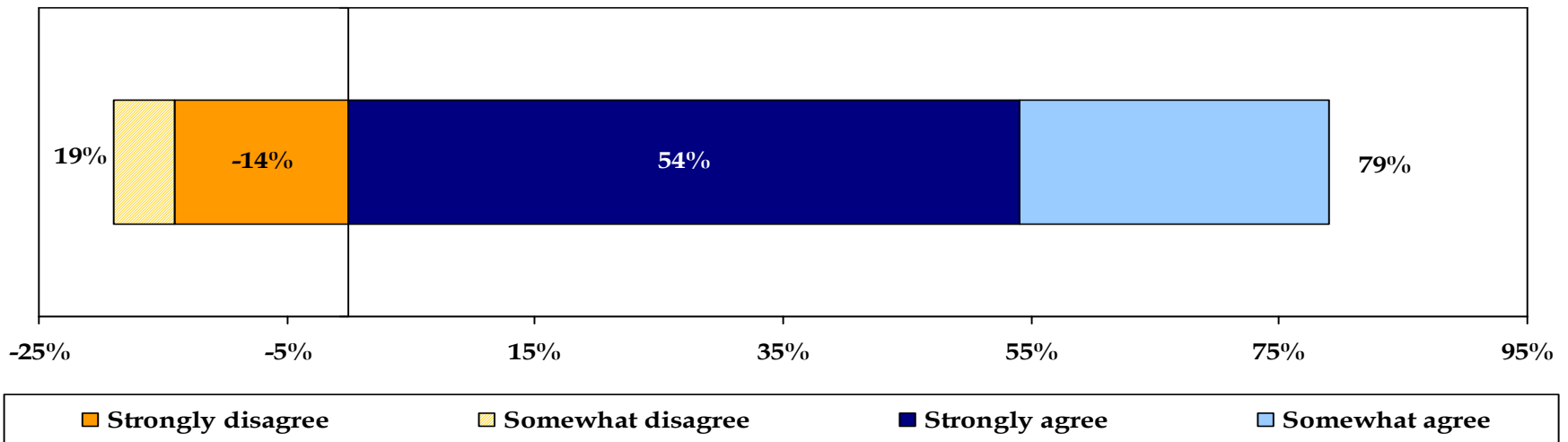
One third (33 percent) say this concern does not apply to them.

Pew Research Center: January 2004 (Survey of 1,503 adults)

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In the context of Katrina, the majority of voters strongly agree that America is most successful when expanding opportunities, which includes making investments to ensure working parents have access to affordable housing, childcare, Head Start, and good schools.

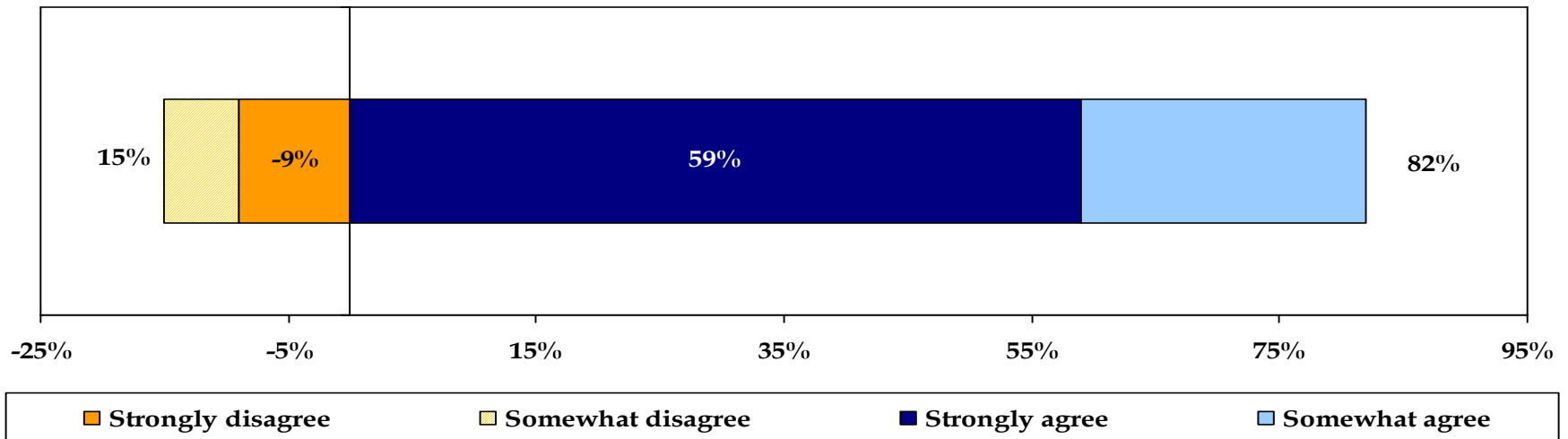
Now I'd like to read you a statement about how the government should respond to (Hurricane) Katrina. After the statement please tell me whether you agree or disagree with that statement...Katrina helped reveal the millions of working Americans who live in poverty and cannot afford quality health care or education. Instead of helping these people, many of our elected officials help the well-off instead by passing tax cuts for the wealthy. America is most successful when we pull together and pursue policies that expand opportunity. We need to invest to make sure working parents have access to affordable housing, childcare, Head Start and good schools. That way, we create a rising prosperity for all, not just a few. If Agree/Disagree, ask: Is that agree/disagree strongly or somewhat? (Split-sampled question)



Democracy Corps: September 2005 (Survey of 1,000 likely voters)

Intensity of support for increasing access to programs for working families increases when framed against statements around our lack of investment in key areas as opposed to poverty.

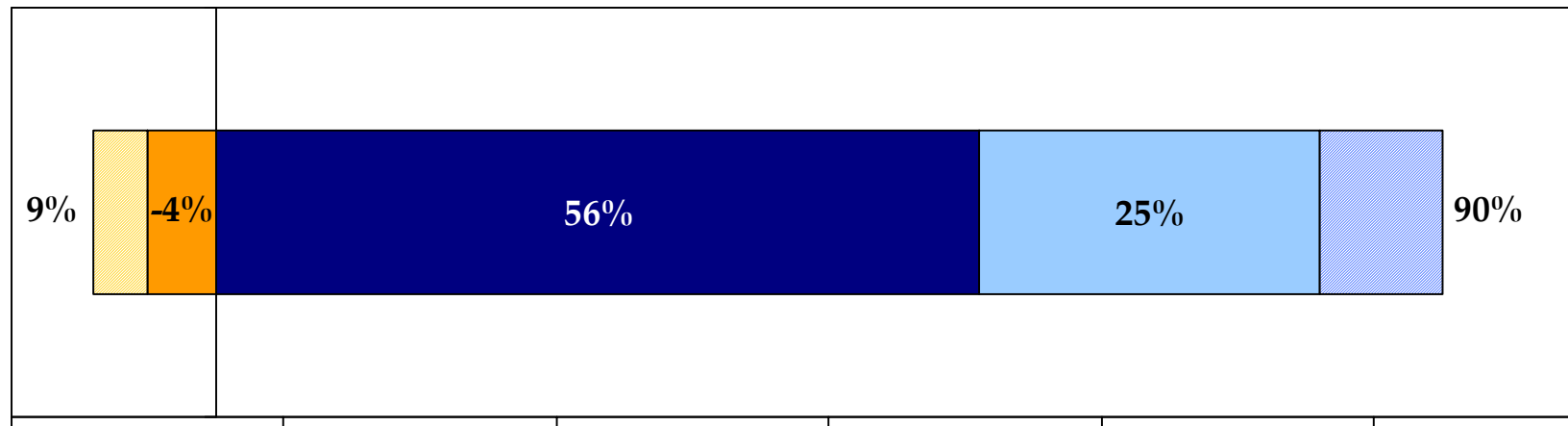
Now I'd like to read you a statement about how the government should respond to (Hurricane) Katrina. After the statement please tell me whether you agree or disagree with that statement...Katrina was a reminder that when America skimps on vital investments such as disaster preparedness, we wind up having to pay far more later. Shortchanging education will have a similar effect, as we'll pay far more later in higher crime rates and a workforce unable to keep America economically competitive. America is most successful when we pull together and pursue policies that expand opportunity. We need to invest to make sure working parents have access to affordable housing, childcare, Head Start and good schools. That way, we create a rising prosperity for all, not just a few. If Agree/Disagree, ask: Is that agree/disagree strongly or somewhat? (Split-sampled question)



Democracy Corps: September 2005 (Survey of 1,000 likely voters)

Over half of unmarried women say that they would be much more likely to support a candidate that was committed to early learning and improved childcare.

Now I am going to read you some things that the Congress may take up this year. After each one, please tell me whether it would make you much more likely, somewhat more likely, a little more likely, no more likely, or less likely to support a candidate for Congress?...Investing in improved childcare and early learning that allow children access to better opportunities when women choose to participate in the workforce. (Split-sampled question)



■ Less likely ■ No more likely ■ Much more likely ■ Somewhat more likely ■ A little more likely

Women's Voices, Women Vote: January 2007 (Survey of 1,000 unmarried women)



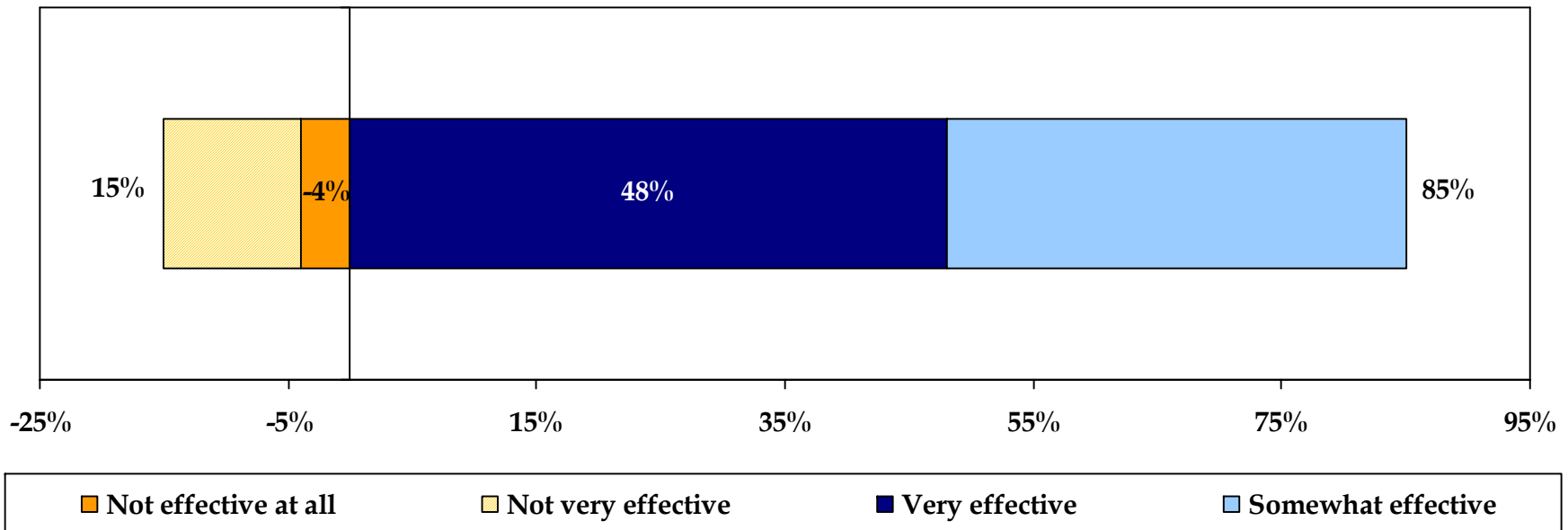
Pre-School

Voluntary pre-school is seen as one way to help close the achievement gap.

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An overwhelming majority say that providing additional voluntary pre-school and kindergarten for low-performing students would help close the achievement gap, with just under half saying this would be a very effective strategy.

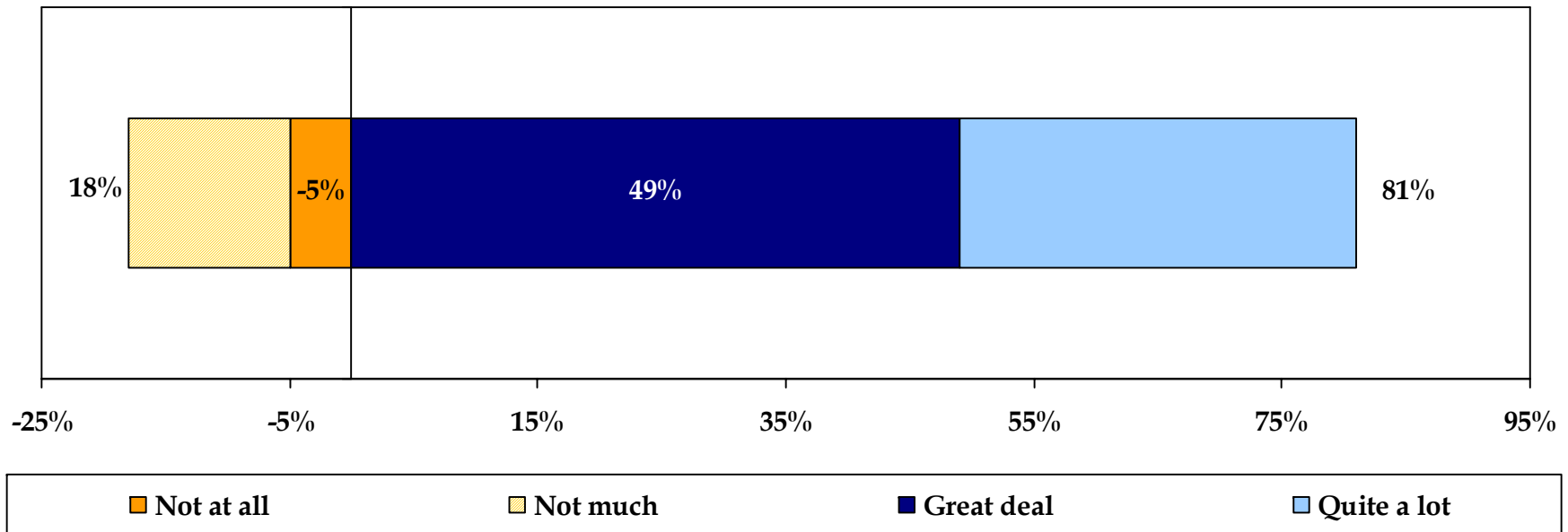
Here are some plans that have been proposed as ways to close the achievement gap between low- and high-achieving public school students. As I read off each of these proposals, would you tell me how effective you think it would be as a way to close this achievement gap? Would it be very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective, or not effective at all?...Provide additional voluntary pre-school and kindergarten care for low-performing students.



Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Organization: June 2007 (Survey of 1,005 adults)

Just under half of the public believes that pre-school programs for children from low-income and poverty-level households would help them perform a great deal better in school during their teenage years.

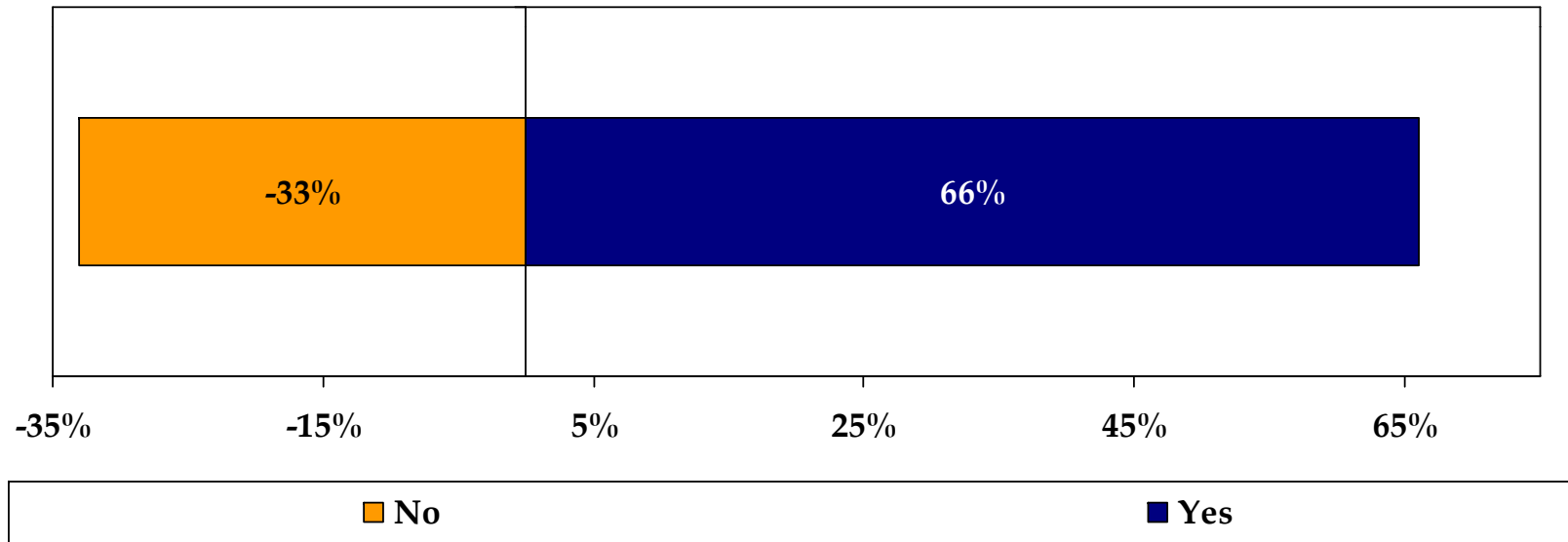
Do you think that pre-school programs for children from low-income and poverty-level households would help them perform better in school in their teenage years--a great deal, quite a lot, not much, or not at all?



Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Organization: June-July 2006 (Survey of 1,007 adults)

Americans prove receptive to paying more in taxes to fund pre-school programs for children from low-income or poverty-level households.

Would you be willing to pay more taxes for funding pre-school programs for children from low-income or poverty-level households?

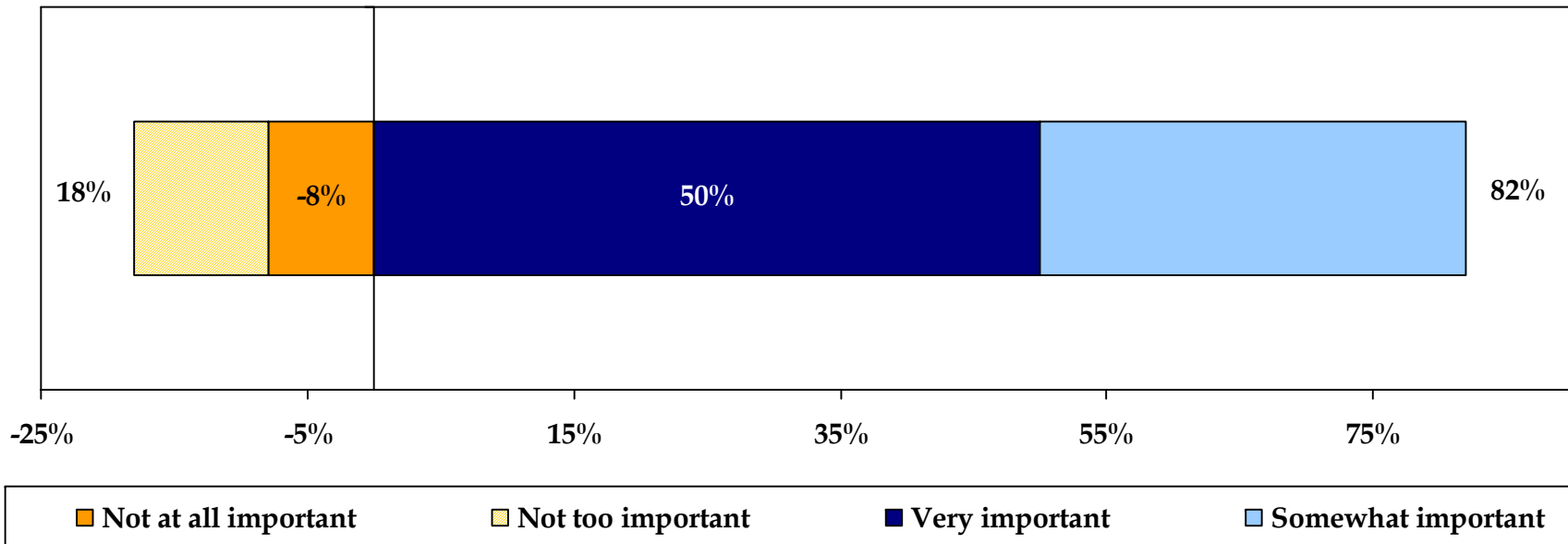


Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Organization: June 2007 (Survey of 1,005 adults)

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The majority of Americans believe that it is very important for a presidential candidate to show their support for expanding and improving access to voluntary universal pre-school and improved head start.

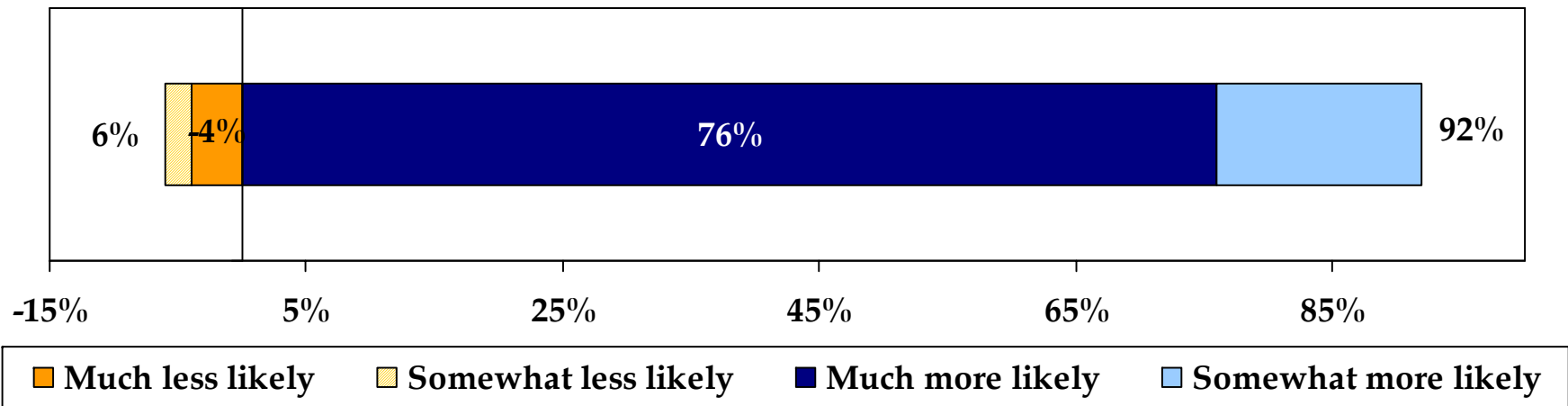
Regardless of which (2008) candidate you currently support for President, how important is it that a candidate possess each of the following characteristics--is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all...Favors expanding and improving voluntary universal pre-school and improved head start so all children arrive at school ready to learn.



Democracy Corps, September 2007 (Survey of 1,000 likely voters)

Over three fourths of Hispanic voters say they would be much more likely to support a candidate that was committed to expanding education opportunities, including pre-school, for our children.

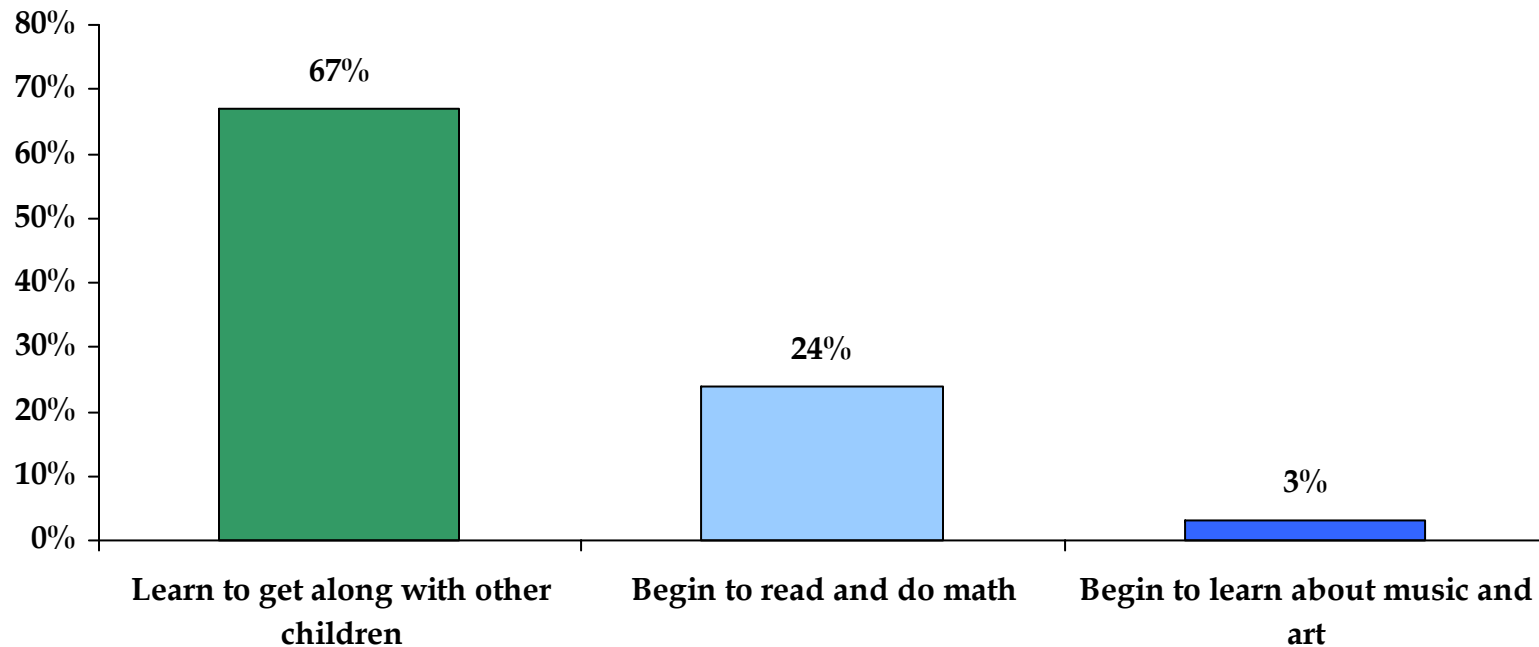
Now, let me read you some statements from a Democratic candidate for Congress. After each statement please tell me whether it would make you more likely or less likely to support this Democratic candidate...The key to expanding opportunity is to provide every child with a world-class education. We have an obligation to give our schools the resources they need to help our kids meet high standards, make college tuition affordable, and expand access to pre-school....If More/Less likely, ask: Is that much more/less likely or somewhat more/less likely? (Split-sampled question)



Democracy Corps: May 2006 (Survey of 984 Hispanic likely voters)

Two thirds believe learning to get along with other children is the most important skill to learn in pre-school programs.

Many young children attend pre-school programs to get ready to start kindergarten or first grade. Which one of the following do you think is most important for children to do in pre-school programs...Learn to get along with other children, begin to learn how to read and do math, begin to learn about music and art?



Knight Foundation: January 2002 (Survey of 1,211 adults)



In the States

Across the country, there is strong support for early learning and pre-school/pre-kindergarten programs.

Alabama



- The majority of Alabama voters do not think the state is doing enough to ensure that high quality pre-K programs are available to all four year olds (61 percent too little; 22 percent right amount; 3 percent more than necessary).
- Almost two thirds say that expanding pre-K programs for all four year olds is an important priority for the state to address now to help prepare children for K-12 success.
- Seventy six percent of voters believe that the Alabama state government should fund voluntary pre-K for all families, just as it does for K-12 education.

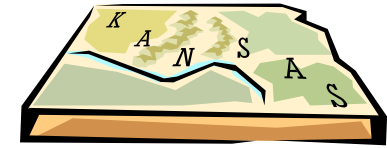
Voices for Alabama's Children: December 2006 (Survey of 604 registered voters in Alabama)

California



- Sixty two percent of Californians say that ensuring that all children in CA start kindergarten ready to do their best in school is highly important.
- More than half of residents believe that the state should make some form of organized education available to all children at age four or younger (60 percent).
- Over eighty percent of parents of children age four and under say that they would enroll their child if free, voluntary pre-school for four-year-olds were available (83 percent). Seventy two percent of parents with children between the ages of five and 12 say that they would have enrolled their children if such programs had been available when their kids were four.
- Cost is among one of the top obstacles residents think parents encounter when trying to find quality pre-school programs.

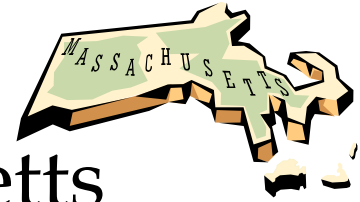
First 5 California: January 2004 (1,317 adults in California)



Kansas

- Ninety percent of voters in Kansas think it is important for children to attend high quality pre-kindergarten to ensure that they are prepared to do their best in school.
- Almost two thirds say that half or fewer of all children enter kindergarten without the knowledge and skills they need to do their best in school (65 percent).
- Over three fourths believe in making pre-kindergarten and pre-school education available to all children (79 percent).
- Seventy eight percent of Kansan voters support state funding for pre-kindergarten programs so that all parents who want to can afford to enroll their children.

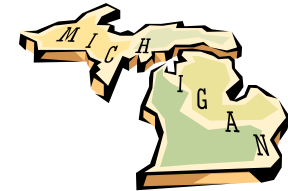
Kansas Action for Children: July 2004 (Survey of 503 registered voters in Kansas)



Massachusetts

- Latino and black parents are more likely than white parents to say it is important that early education and care programs prepare children for school, and they are less likely to think their current arrangements are doing so.
- The factors most likely to be very important to parents when selecting early learning and childcare arrangements include safety (93 percent), opportunities for social and emotional development (80 percent), and getting your child ready to go to school (64 percent).
- Eighty one percent of parents of children under age six say they would be interested in enrolling their child in a free, high-quality early education program for three to five year olds.
- Interest in universal pre-school is especially high among non-married parents (88 percent), Latinos (89 percent), and those with household incomes of \$25,000 or less (89 percent).

Strategies for Children: April-May 2006 (Survey of 585 primary caregivers of children under age seven living in Massachusetts)

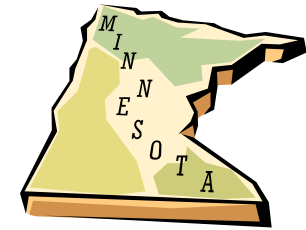


Michigan

- Forty-six percent of Michiganders think the state should create mandatory, universal pre-kindergarten education in all public schools.
- Eighty-two percent believe that public spending on early childhood education is a wise investment.
- Three out of four Michiganders believe that government should take care of K–12 schools before spending money on new or expanded early childhood programs.

Michigan Education Poll: March 2004 (Survey of 680 Michigan adults)

Minnesota



- Minnesotan voters rate making sure children are ready to start kindergarten as a very important goal for the state right now (71 percent).
- Over half of voters believe that it is important for children to spend time in an organized learning program outside of the home before kindergarten (63 percent).
- Seventy eight percent say that children experience an advantage in school after attending early education programs (56 percent large advantage, 22 percent small advantage).
- The majority think that establishing voluntary pre-k for all is an important priority to address now because getting children ready for school will help improve K-12 (59 percent).

Ready for K/Pre-K Now: January 2006 (Survey of 604 voters in Minnesota)

New Jersey



- Sixty six percent of New Jersey voters agree that all children, regardless of background, benefit from quality pre-school.
- Over two thirds rank getting kids ready for kindergarten as important as reducing taxes and improving the quality of K-12 education (69 percent).
- The majority of New Jersey voters say they would pay higher taxes to provide high-quality pre-k to all families who want to send their children (55 percent).

Association for Children of New Jersey/Pre-K Now: April 2005 (Survey of 600 voters in New Jersey)

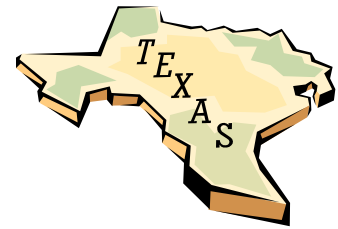
New York



- Over half of New Yorkers strongly support increasing state funding for pre-kindergarten programs in the state (77 percent support, 52 percent strongly support).
- They prove supportive of increasing funding for these programs even if it means increasing taxes (72 percent support, 41 percent strongly support).
- New Yorkers are more likely to get behind a gubernatorial candidate who will increase funding for programs designed to help high school students graduate on time, funding pre-kindergarten, and increasing funding for programs that serve children after school, even if it means an increase in taxes over a candidate who favors keeping expenditures on all of these programs at current levels because he believes it would lead to higher taxes for New Yorkers (60 percent to 34 percent).

Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy/Zogby International: May 2006 (Survey of 705 likely voters in New York State)

Texas

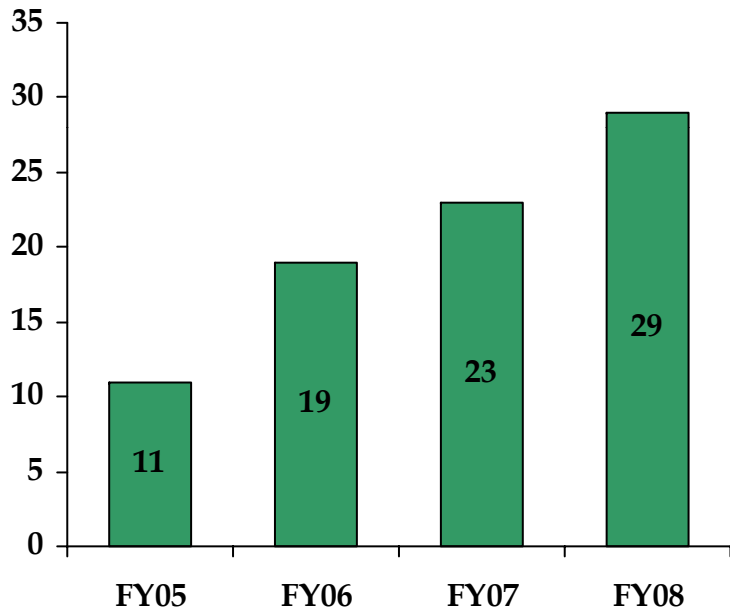


- An overwhelming majority of voters in Texas believe the state should be doing more to prepare its children to be productive citizens (87 percent).
- Texas voters also see pre-k as important to the overall learning potential of children (81 percent).
- Almost three fourths of voters say that that Texas should fund high-quality pre-k for all children (73 percent).
- Sixty eight percent think that it is important that pre-k be available in non-school settings, like non-profit or for-profit child care centers or faith-based organizations.

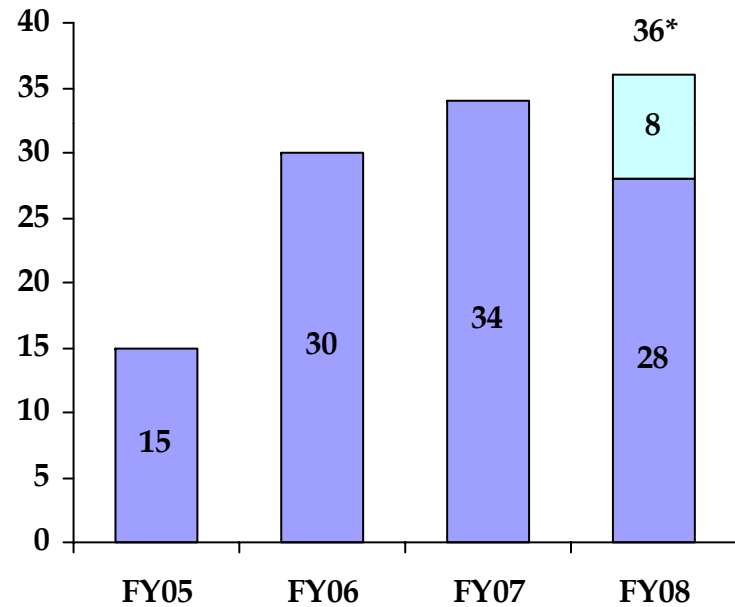
United Ways of Texas/Pre-K Now: March 2006 (Survey of 1,200 registered voters in Texas)

In the last few years, states have sought to match public demand for pre-K programs with funding commitments. In fiscal year 2008, total state investments in early education across the country are projected to be \$4.8 billion.

Growth in State Support for Pre-K Across the Country



Number of Governors Proposing Increased Funding for Pre-K



Number of States Increasing Funding for Pre-K

Source: Pre-K Now/"Vote Counts: Legislative action on Pre-K Fiscal Year 2008

*At press time, 28 states increases are confirmed, and another eight are anticipated in school funding formula states.

Strategic Summary



Strategic Summary

- While children's programs, including S-CHIP, continue to have widespread support, Iraq, health care overall and the economy push out "children's issues" per se.
- Education, including early childhood education, and health care are major issues for children.
- Childcare and early learning do well as part of a greater educational frame, which is critical to increase saliency around these issues among the public.
- Support for early childhood education is widespread and includes seniors and unmarried women.
- Children's issues consolidate and mobilize the progressive base and appeal to swing voters – especially married women and Independent women.

Strategic Summary

- The public proves receptive to spending money now on early childhood to save money later.
- Highlighting affordability and accessibility of quality early childhood programs as well as its impact on school readiness resonates with voters. Keeping children safe is also an issue.
- Readiness to learn is a significant benefit across early childhood programs.
- Residents in individual states support investments in early learning.
- States are making investments to meet increasing public demand around early education, and some are also moving toward a more comprehensive approach to early childhood development (which includes health, education and other development needs).

PAES/Invest in Kids Working Group



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