

## **First Five Years Fund**

**Key findings from a national survey of 800 registered voters conducted May 28-June 1, 2014.**



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# METHODOLOGY

- National survey of 800 registered voters conducted on both landlines and cell phones
- Interviewing completed May 28-June 1, 2014
- Overall margin of error of  $\pm 3.46\%$
- Sample distributed proportionally throughout the country and is demographically representative of the electorate
- Bipartisan research team of Hart Research and Public Opinion Strategies

**A majority of American voters say that we should prioritize funding needs like education over holding the line fiscally.**

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

**55%**

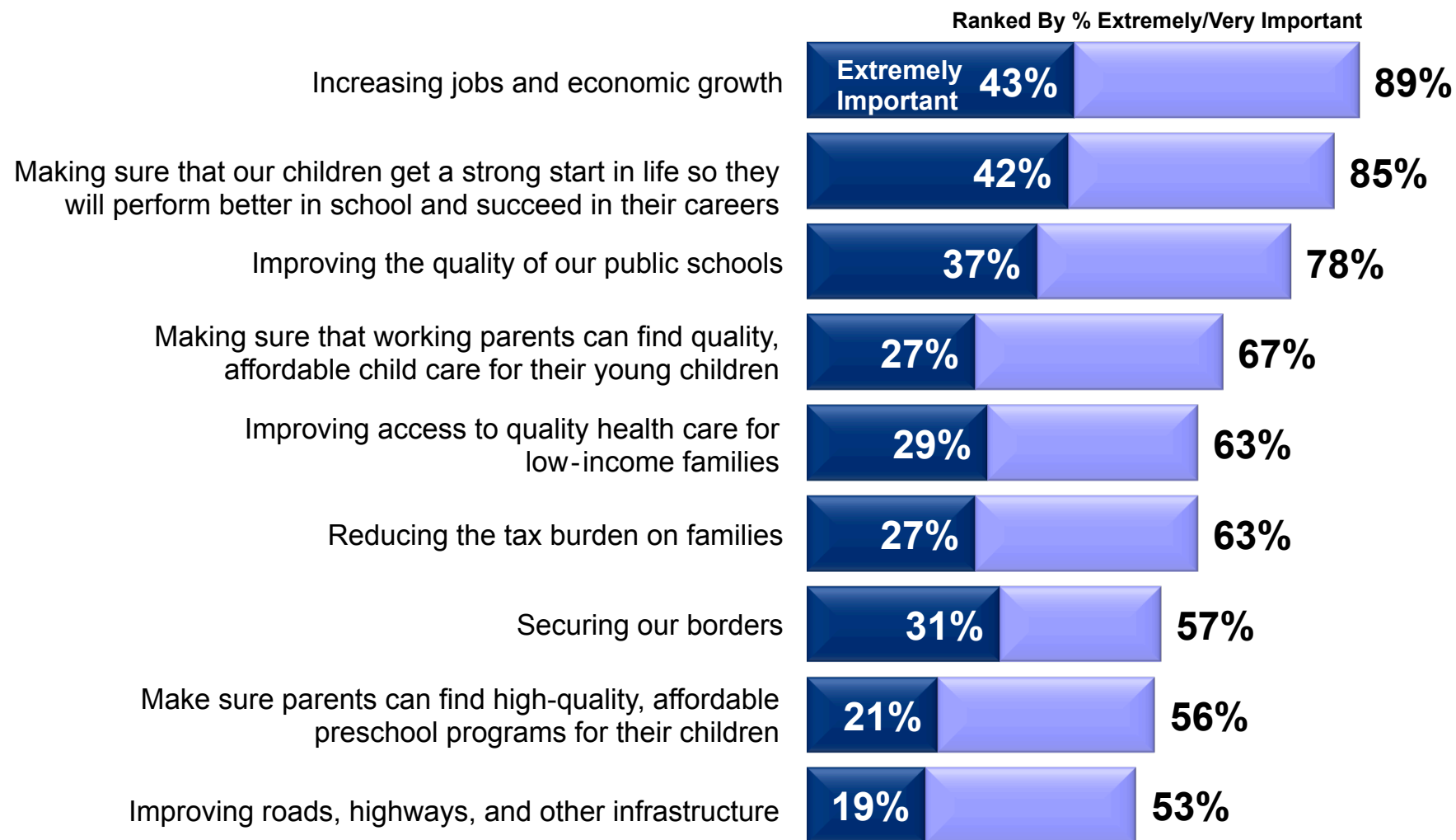
**Holding the line on taxes and spending**

**38%**

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

## Voters place children getting a strong start in life as one of the highest national priorities.

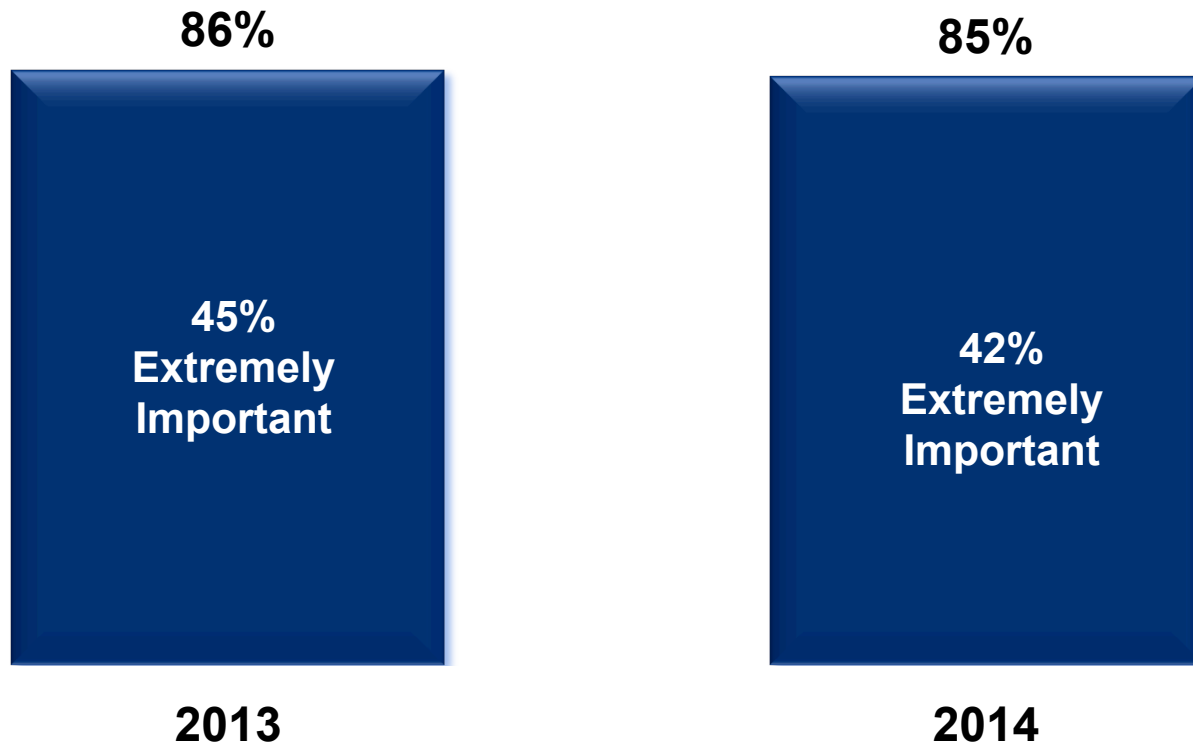


*Now I'm going to read you some goals that people might have for our country right now, and I'd like you to rate how important you personally consider each goal to be – is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important or not that important to you.*

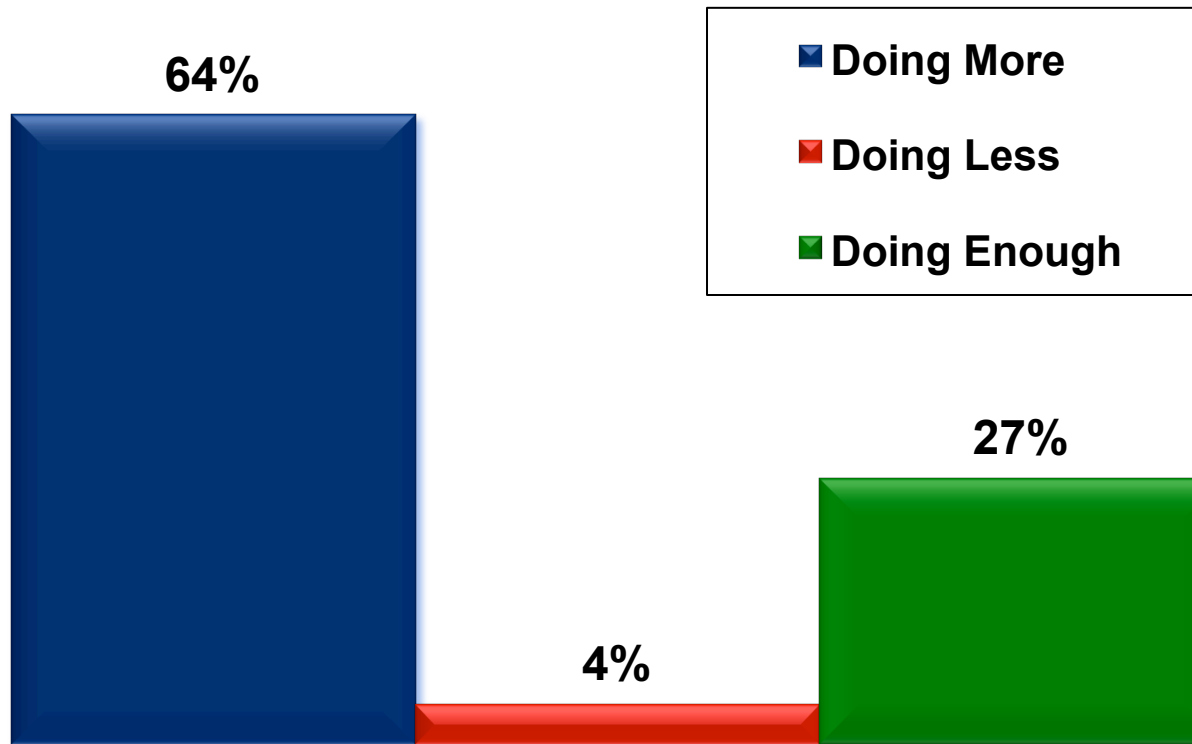
# American voters have consistently expressed that children getting a good start in life is very important.

## Making Sure that our Children Get a Strong Start in Life (Trend)

■ Extremely/Very Important



**Overwhelmingly, voters say we should be doing more to ensure children start kindergarten ready to do their best – virtually no one says do less.**



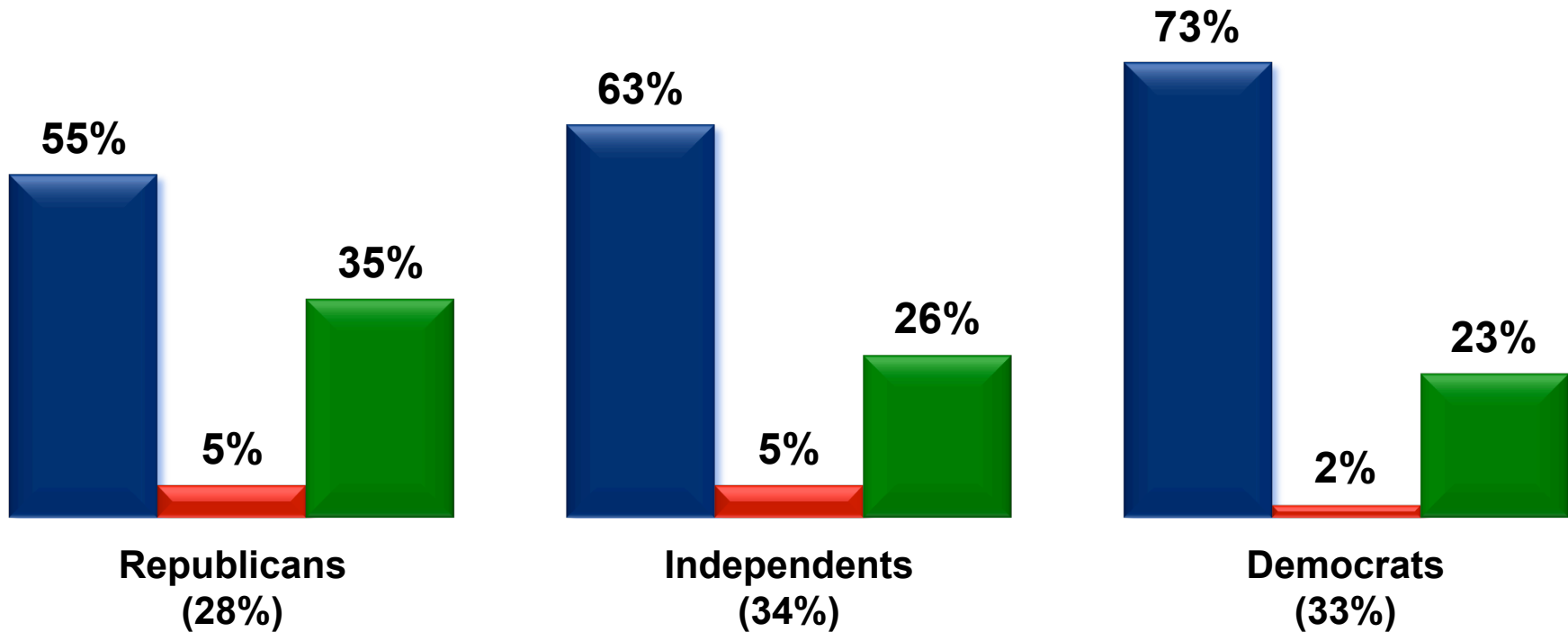
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*And when it comes to ensuring that children begin kindergarten with the knowledge and skills they need to do their best in school, do you think we should be... doing more, doing less, or are doing enough?*

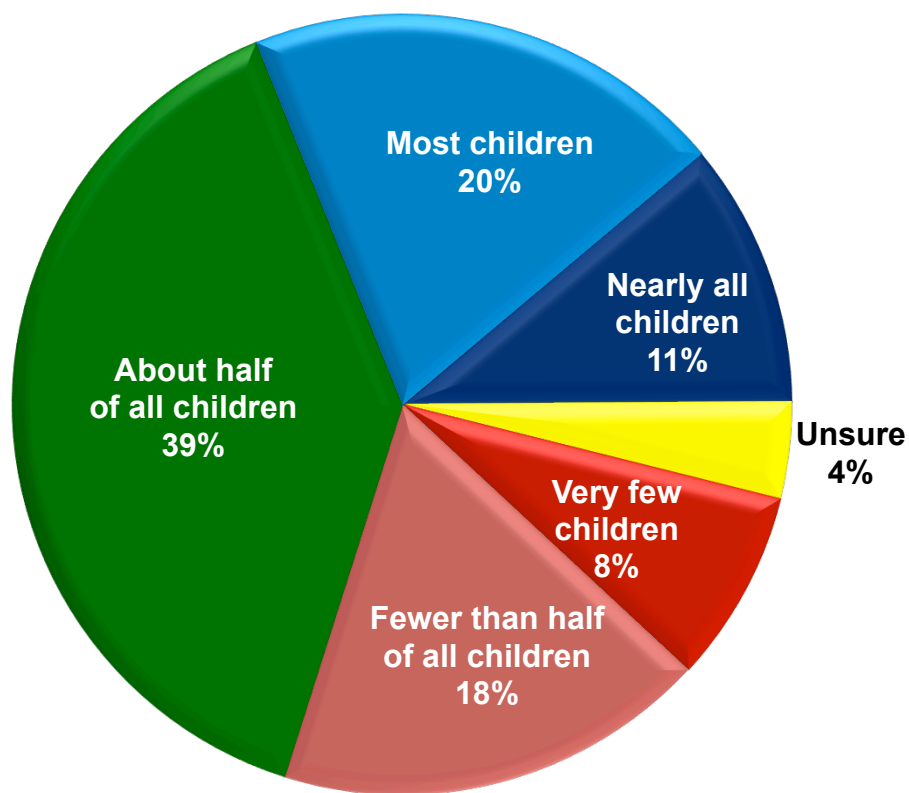
A majority of voters across the political spectrum call for us to do more to help children be ready for kindergarten.

### Start Kindergarten with Skills/Knowledge To Succeed By Party

■ Doing More   ■ Doing Less   ■ Doing Enough



## Two thirds say that most children do NOT begin kindergarten with the knowledge and skills they need.



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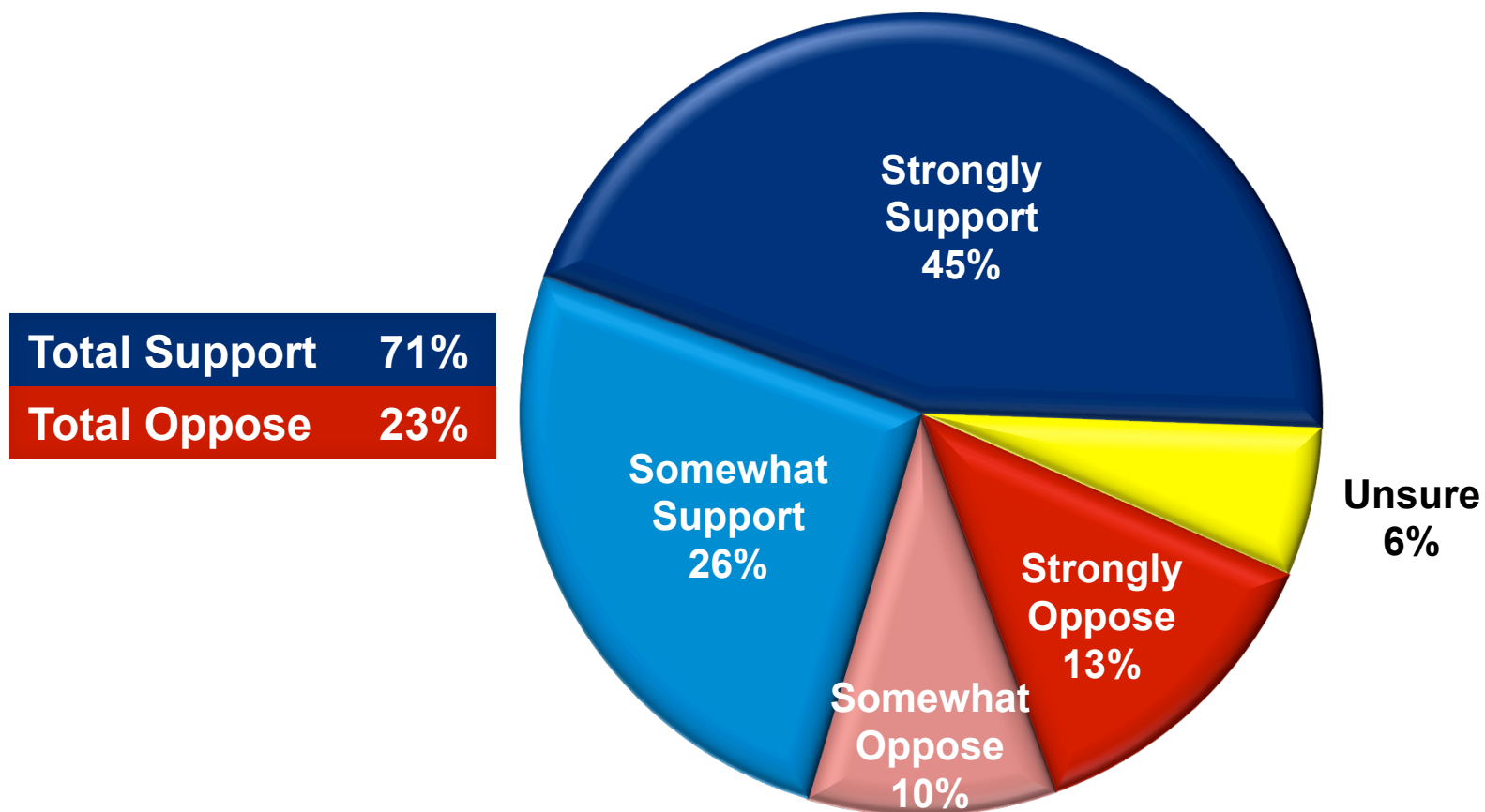
*What proportion of children do you think begin kindergarten with the knowledge and skills they need to do their best in school--nearly all children, most children, about half of all children, fewer than half of all children, or very few children?*



# THE PROPOSAL

*“Congress is considering a plan that helps states and local communities provide better early childhood education programs to parents of children from birth to five. It provides ten billion dollars per year for ten years in grants to states to provide all low and moderate income four year olds with voluntary access to high-quality preschool programs. It also makes available voluntary programs in high-quality early education and child care for infants and toddlers, as well as home visiting and parent education.”*

**Seven-in-ten American voters support this proposal.  
Nearly half strongly support it.**



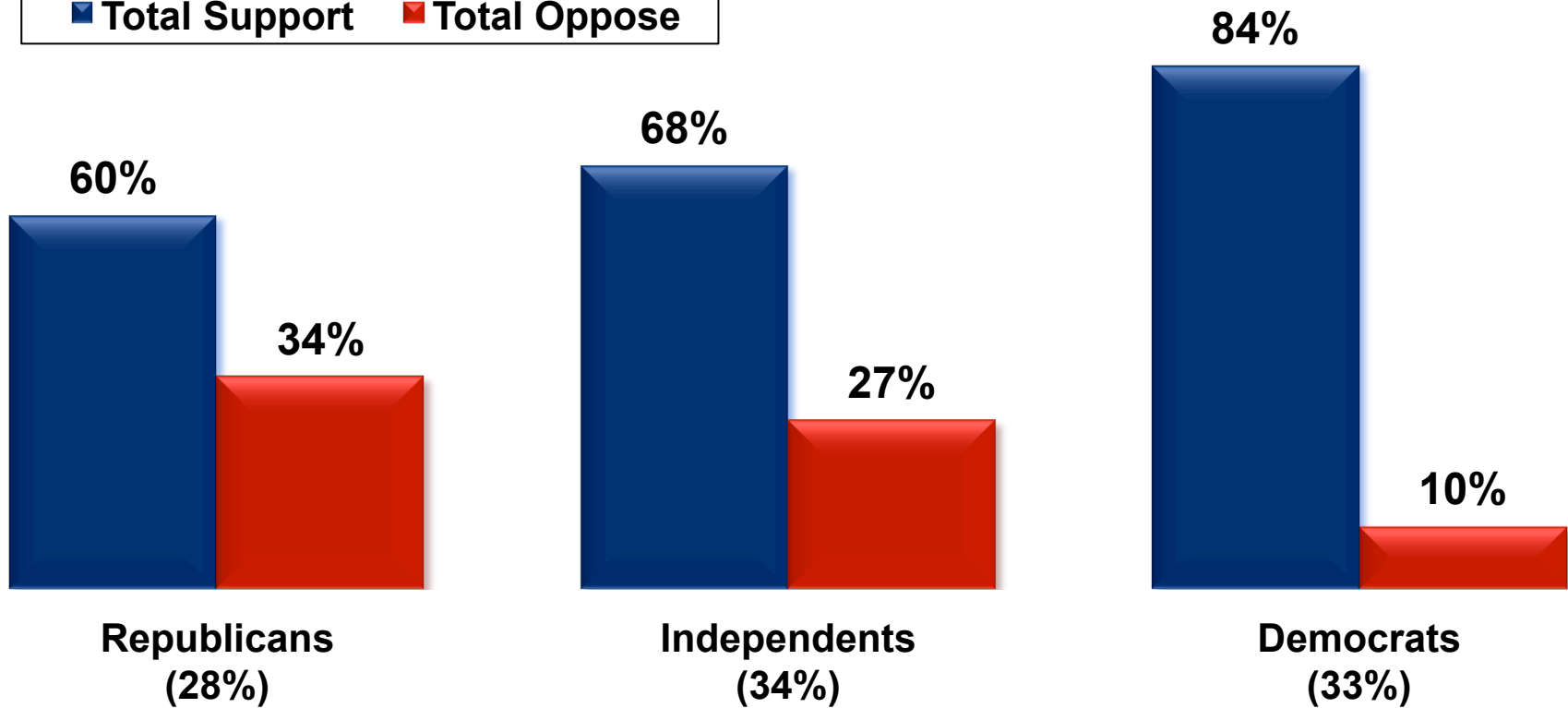
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*Would you support or oppose this plan to help states and local communities provide better early childhood education?*

# Three-in-five or more of voters across every political affiliation support this proposal.

## Early Education Proposal By Party

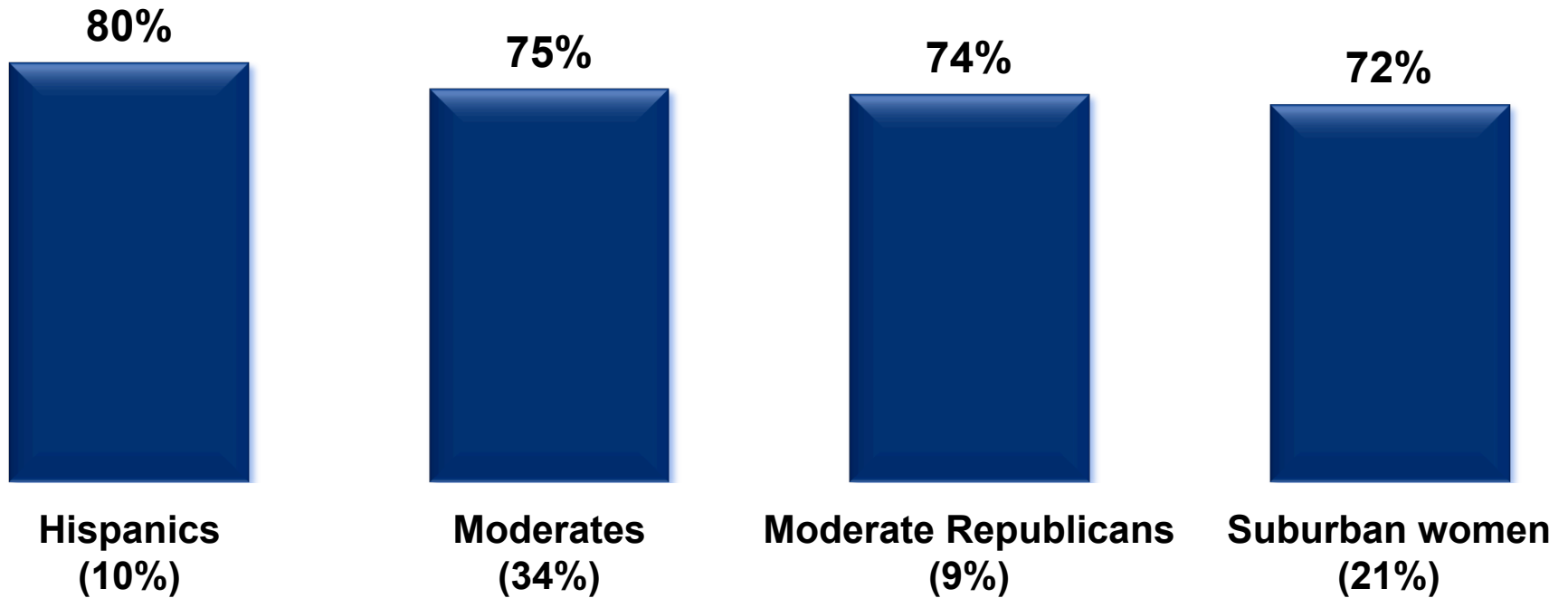
■ Total Support ■ Total Oppose



# Key sub-groups of swing voters overwhelmingly support this proposal.

## Early Education Ballot By Key Sub-groups

■ Total Support

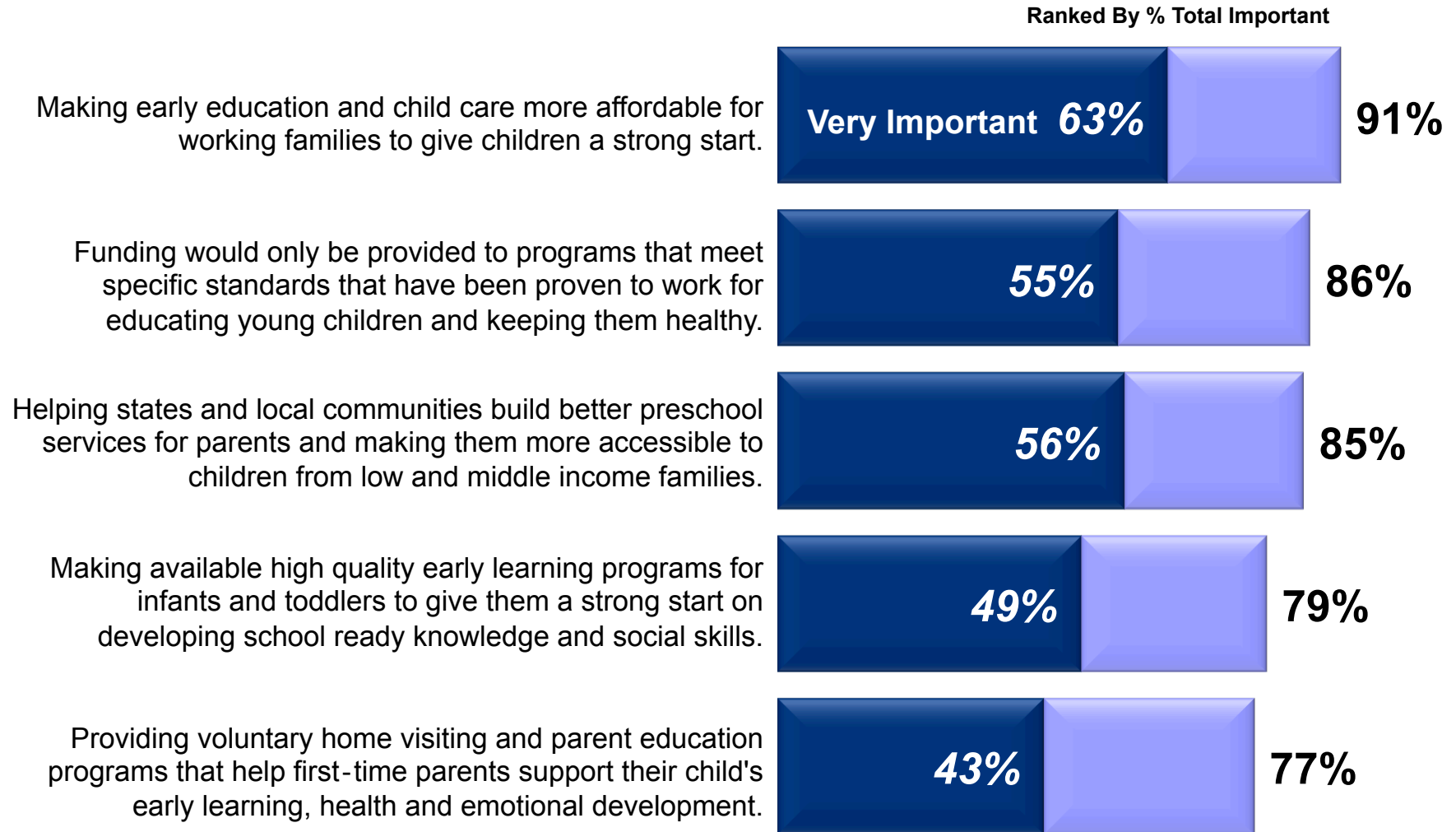


**We see that the electorate finds a number of aspects of this proposal to be acceptable, but are less enthusiastic if it comes at the expense of other programs.**

Aspects Ranked By Total Acceptable	Total Acceptable
If it were paid for in a way that did not add to the deficit or increase debt.	84%
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.	71%
If it were paid for by closing tax breaks for corporations and targeted tax increases.	59%
If it were paid for by prioritizing funding for this program and cutting funding for other programs.	46%

*Let me read you a few different aspects of this plan. For each one, please indicate whether that particular aspect of the proposal is...acceptable or unacceptable to you.*

## Three-quarters or more rate each element of the plan that was tested as important.



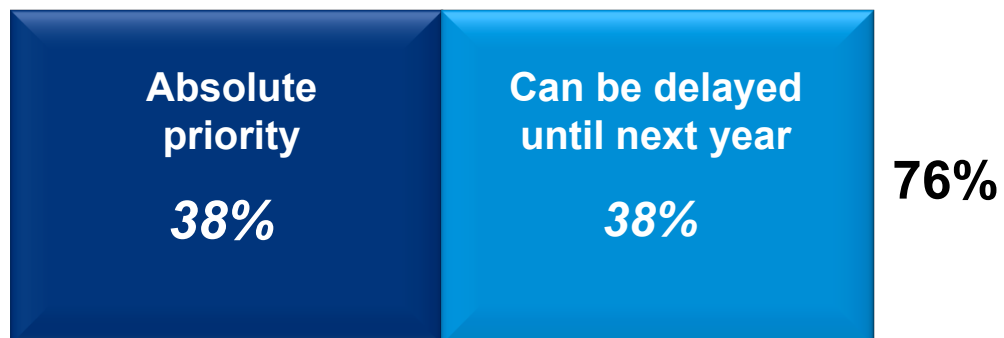
*There are a few different parts to this plan. Please tell me if you think each of the following is very important, somewhat important, not that important, or not important at all.*

## There is little variation in response by partisan affiliation.

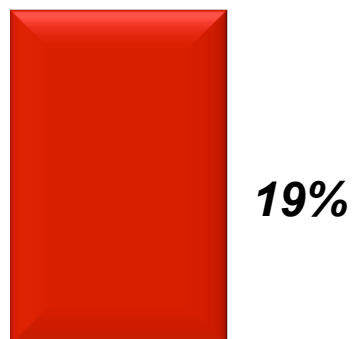
Plan Items By Party (% Total Important)	GOP	IND	DEM
Making early education and child care more affordable for working families to give children a strong start.	87%	89%	97%
Funding would only be provided to programs that meet specific standards that have been proven to work for educating young children and keeping them healthy.	83%	83%	93%
Helping states and local communities build better preschool services for parents and making them more accessible to children from low and middle income families.	78%	83%	93%
Making available high quality early learning programs for infants and toddlers to give them a strong start on developing school ready knowledge and social skills.	71%	76%	89%
Providing voluntary home visiting and parent education programs that help first-time parents support their child's early learning, health and emotional development.	70%	73%	89%

## Three in four say this proposal should be handled this year or next.

It is something that should happen within two years.



It is something that you think the Obama administration and Congress should NOT pursue.



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*Obviously, there are many important issues facing the country, but not every single one can be a top priority for the President and Congress. So in thinking about this early childhood education proposal, do you think...*



## Given two competing viewpoints, a solid majority side with those who support the investment in early education.

This proposal is a good idea. Investing in our children is investing in our future. We must do more to make sure our children begin kindergarten with the knowledge and skills they need to do their best in school. Too many families can't afford the quality early childhood education their children need to get a strong start in life. This proposal will help states expand their local early childhood programs so that children who need them can participate and do well in school and life.

**58%**

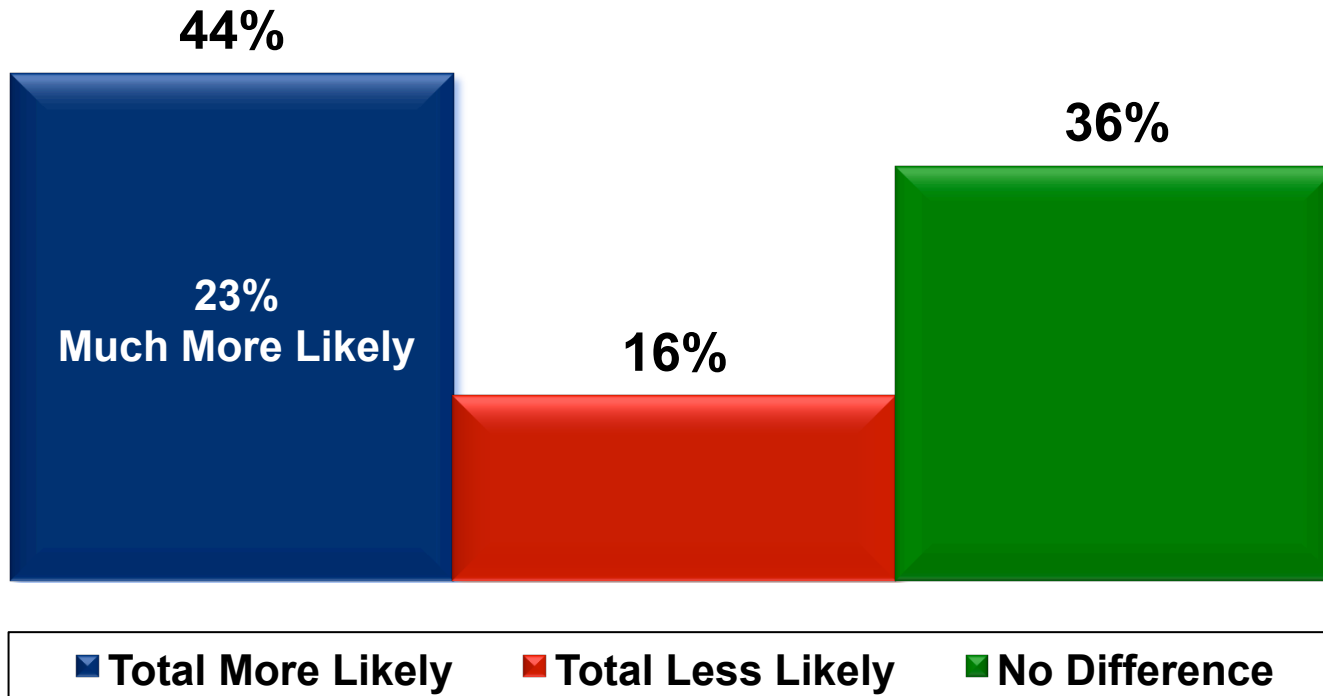
This proposal is a bad idea. We can't afford another huge government entitlement program that costs billions of dollars. This is particularly true in the instance of early childhood education when we already have federal programs serving children birth to five. If we want to do more to help low income children have access to quality early learning opportunities we should be working within these existing programs.

**36%**

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*Thinking more about the proposal to invest in early childhood education. Please tell me which of the following statements comes closer to your opinion, even if neither one matches your opinion exactly.*

**A plurality of voters say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supported this early childhood education measure.**



*If a candidate for Congress voted in favor of the early childhood education proposal we have been discussing, would you be more likely to vote for him or her, less likely to vote for him or her, or would that not make a difference in your vote one way or the other?*

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- Voters view early childhood learning as important. They are focused on economic concerns, so anything our nation can do to ensure American children have a solid start in life is perceived to be critical.
- Support for the proposal withstands criticism – and a majority place greater emphasis on making sure there are sufficient funds for education and related needs over holding the line on taxes and government spending.
- Voters find the proposal even more acceptable if it is deficit neutral, or pays for itself in the long-term. They say this is something the Administration should do.

**THANK YOU**



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