



Community Catalyst

Health and Economic Justice Survey 2024

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Objectives



UNDERSTAND

1

Understand U.S. voter favorability and support for economic health care policy priorities: Addressing the medical debt crisis by putting more protections in place for people and updating Essential Health Benefits to make sure insurance plans cover what people need to be healthy.

UNDERSTAND

2

Understand how the inclusion of these healthcare policies could garner support for broader economic agendas.

3

IDENTIFY

Identify how voters see these policies impacting their personal finance and cost of living expenses, and how voters prioritize these health policies amongst current economic policies in terms of helping their cost of living.

Methodology

Universe

Registered Voters
Nationally

Sample Size

Total N=1400 (Unweighted)
N = 1000 (Weighted)

N=1000 Base Registered Voters
N=100 OS of Black Reg. Voters
N=100 OS of Latino/a Reg. Voters
N=100 OS of AAPI Reg. Voters
N=100 OS of Young Reg. Voters (18-39)

Methodology

These findings are from a proprietary survey conducted by HIT Strategies on behalf of Community Catalyst. This survey consisted of 1000 registered voters nationally, with 4 National Oversamples: 100 Black registered voters, 100 Latino/a registered voters, 100 AAPI registered voters, and 100 young registered voters (aged 18-39). The survey was conducted via online panel. The survey fielded from February 21st – 28th, 2024 and the margin of error is +/- 2.84%. Margin of error is higher among subgroups.

*Note: party information on each slide is from Self-ID question. Democrats and Republicans include Independent leaners. Weighted sample Party ID:
40% Democrats (N = 397), 21% Independents (N = 212), 39% Republicans (N = 391)*



**Community
Catalyst**

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Key Findings: Cost-of-Living Context

1

Cost of living is top-of-mind for voters currently. There is a strong through line connecting economy and cost of living to healthcare affordability when voters are presented with information.

When given a list of issues, most voters agree that cost of living (52%) and economy (49% selected) are of utmost importance, while 28% say healthcare- lower on the list of priorities. However, most voters say the policies tested will ease their living expenses: they predict that insurance coverage of dental care (66% total impact, 37% big impact) and policies aimed at preventing medical debt (68% total impact, 33% big impact) would have the biggest impact on their own cost of living. Parents, Black voters, and Latino voters predict even higher impact. **This finding emphasizes that, though voters may not organically make this connection at first, healthcare is a cost-of-living issue and should be addressed as one.**

2

Most voters are struggling to afford their healthcare costs and/or insurance plans.

Though almost all are insured (91%), the majority of voters nationally are still struggling to afford healthcare costs and/or their insurance plan (23% can afford insurance but struggle to afford other healthcare costs, and 32% struggle to afford both insurance and other healthcare costs, together making up 55% of the audience). Close to half report they currently have some form of medical debt (43%). **This finding further validates the link between healthcare and cost-of living. It also emphasizes that getting people insured is not enough to make healthcare more affordable, opening the door to policies that go beyond insurance coverage.**



Key Findings: Policy Support



1

Voters across the political spectrum want to see major change in the healthcare system, emphasizing the desire among voters for bipartisan action in this area.

Voters want to see substantial change in the healthcare system (71% say it needs major change or be completely rebuilt). This includes 74% of self-ID Democrats, 75% of Independents, and 66% of Republicans.

This finding points to an opportunity to offer bipartisan solutions that push major change in the healthcare system forward.

2

There is overwhelming support for Community Catalyst's policy priorities when provided contextual information.

Each policy we tested had support from a strong majority of voters (60% or more) and was highly supported across demographics and political ideologies. The most popular policies were: making dental care part of what insurance companies must cover (83% total support, 62% strongly support) and removing all medical debt from credit scores (75% support, 57% strongly support). While these policies were popular across demographics, Black voters, Latino voters, and LGBTQ voters consistently reported even higher support. The questions were framed with contextual information about the purpose and functionality of each policy, contributing to the understanding of each policy and therefore the support. This finding validates that there is a strong case for educating voters on these policies and enacting them.

3

Policymakers can gain favorability by supporting these policies.

For example, 68% of voters nationally would feel more favorable towards a policymaker that supported efforts to make dental care more affordable and accessible. Only 5% say they would feel less favorable. This finding suggests that a supportive stance on these policies will only add to, not take away from, a policymaker's favorability.



Baseline

Healthcare Affordability Prioritization

1. Baseline

2. Affordability

3. Policies

4. Conclusion

Healthcare costs are not initially top-of-mind for most voters when it comes to cost of living. The cost of food is the biggest financial pain-point for most voters, followed by housing costs and taxes.

Q9. Thinking about your own cost of living currently, which two of the following would have the biggest impact on easing your living expenses?

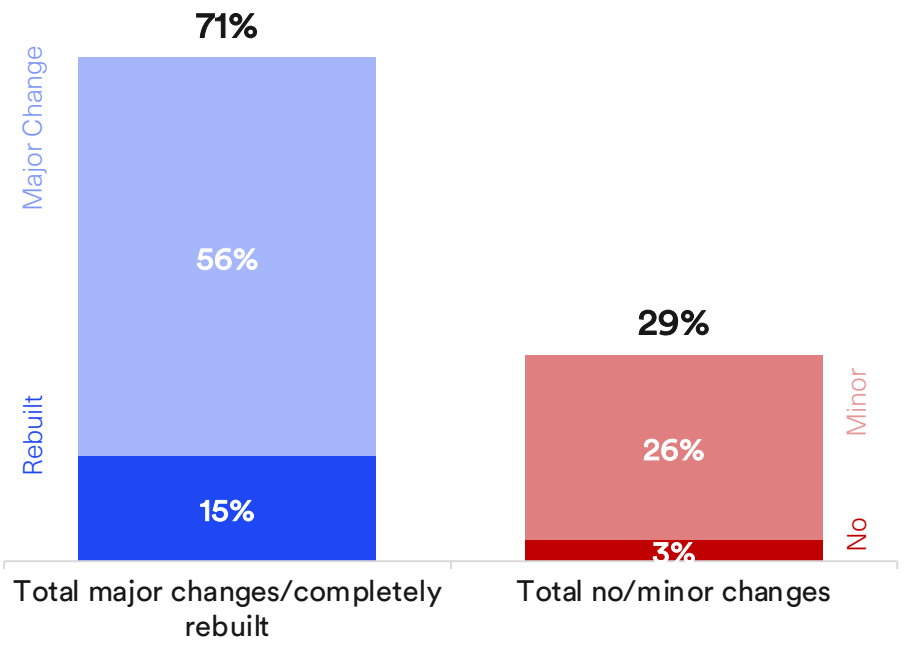
Cost of Living Impact

		DEMS.	IND.	GOP
Lowering food prices	68%	64%	64%	75%
Lowering housing costs	33%	40%	33%	25%
Lowering taxes	31%	23%	33%	39%
Lowering healthcare costs	22%	24%	21%	19%
Making sure corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share in taxes	13%	18%	16%	6%
Reducing national debt	11%	7%	10%	16%
Lowering transportation costs	9%	8%	6%	12%
Lowering education costs	6%	9%	5%	4%
None of the above/DK	3%	3%	6%	2%

Most voters think the healthcare system needs major changes, and a strong majority of voters in each major political party say healthcare affordability is an important factor in their decision on who to vote for in the upcoming elections.

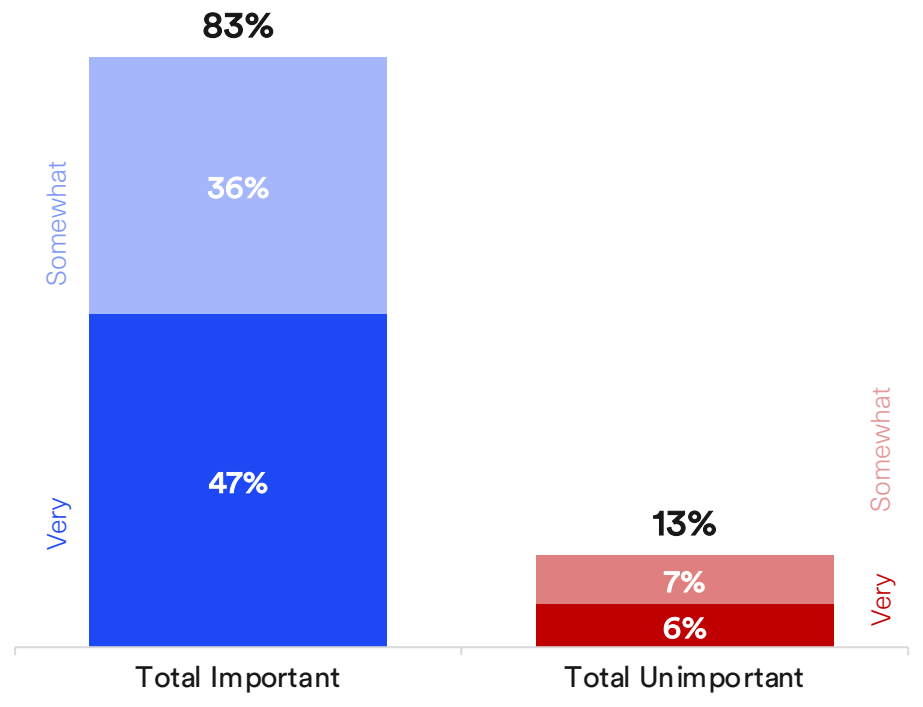
Q12. Thinking about the health care system in the United States, how much, if at all, do you think the health care system needs to change to make quality care more affordable?

Women were more likely to report wanting major change in the health care system (x%)



	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Total Major/Rebuilt	74%	75%	66%
Total No/Minor Change	26%	25%	34%

Q13. As you may know, in 2024 there will be a general election for the office of president and representatives in Congress. If you plan to vote, how important is healthcare affordability to you when deciding who to vote for in 2024?



	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Total Important	90%	76%	80%
Total Unimportant	7%	14%	19%

*Will not vote/Don't know not included in graph (4% total)



Affordability

1. Baseline

2. Affordability

3. Policies

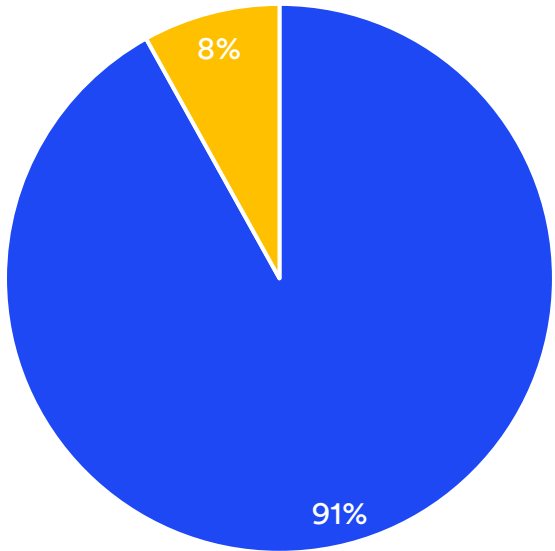
4. Conclusion

Though the vast majority of voters report being insured, close to half (43%) have some form of medical debt.

Q37. Are you currently covered by any form of health insurance or health plan, including prepaid plans such as HMOs, or government plans such as Medicare or Medicaid, or plans through your employer?

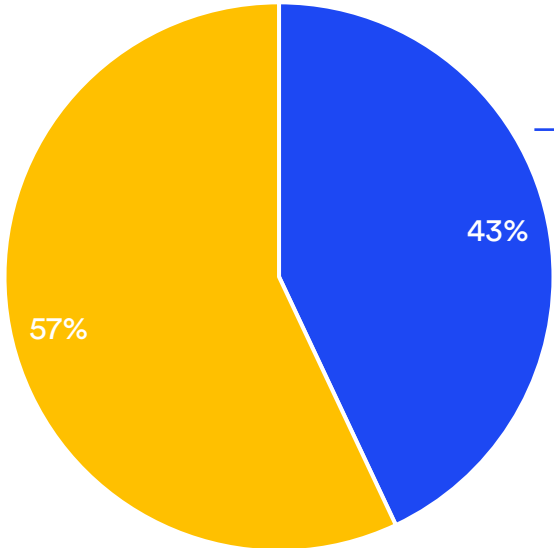
Q39. Please think about any money you currently owe or debt you have due to medical or dental bills. This may include bills for your own medical or dental care or someone else's care, such as a child, partner, or parent. Do you currently have any of the following?

Insurance



- Yes, covered by health insurance
- No, NOT covered by health insurance

Medical Debt



- Currently has medical debt
- Has no medical debt

More likely to report **having medical debt**:

- **Parents** with children under 18 (65%), especially **Latino/a parents** (71%) and **Black parents** (62%)
- Voters **under the age of 50** (54%)
- **Uninsured** voters (60%)
- Residents of **urban areas** (53%)

45% of Democrats, 41% of Independents, and 40% of Republicans report having some form of medical debt

The burdens of healthcare costs exist for majorities of voters of all political ideologies: over half of voters across the political spectrum report struggling to afford insurance and/or healthcare costs.

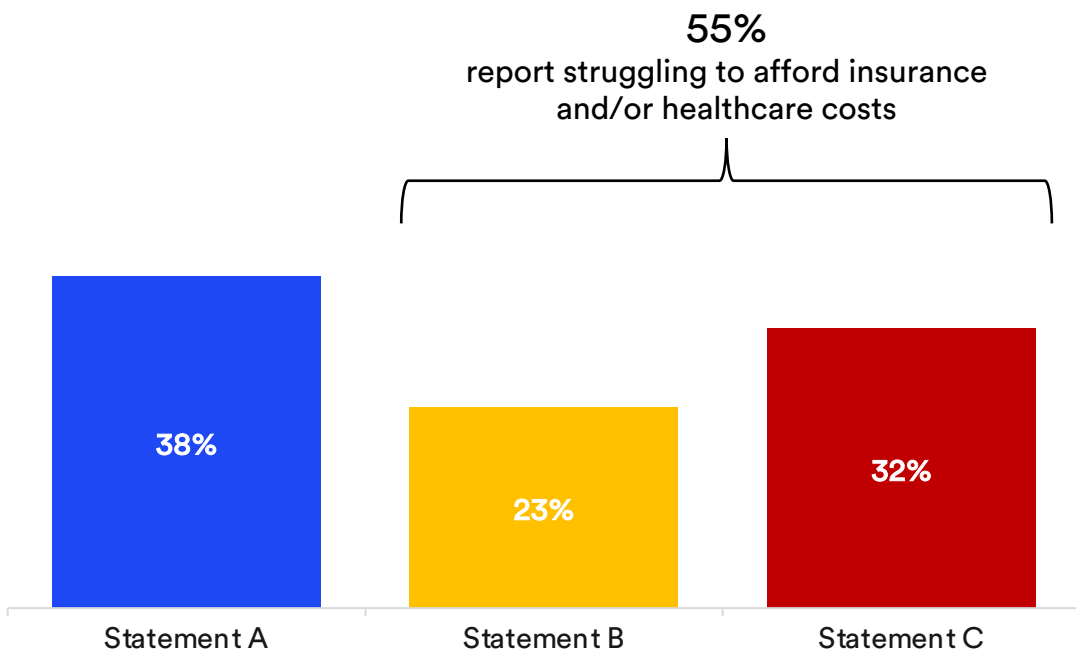
Q17. Which of the following statements best describes your experience when it comes to affordability of insurance and health care?

Statement A: I can comfortably afford my/my family's insurance plan and other healthcare costs

Statement B: I can comfortably afford my/my family's insurance plan but struggle to afford my/my family's other health care costs.

Statement C: I struggle to afford my/my family's insurance plan and other health care costs.

Total Audience



	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Statement A: Comfortable with all Healthcare Costs	36%	35%	42%
Statement B: Insurance Affordable, Struggle with Other Healthcare Costs	28%	18%	22%
Statement C: Struggle with both Insurance and Healthcare Costs	30%	37%	31%

The following groups were especially likely to report **struggling to afford both insurance and healthcare costs**:

- Latina women (49%)
- Gen X women (47%)
- Folks making less than \$45k annually (45%)
- Latino respondents making less than \$75k annually (46%)
- Under age of 50 with lower than college education (42%)
- LGBTQI individuals (42%)

Parents (38%), especially Dads (43%) were more likely to report **affordable insurance but struggling to afford healthcare costs**.

Dental care is one of the medical services most often foregone by voters due to the cost.

Q16. Please select any of the following medical services that you have delayed or gone without in the past 12 months because of the cost.

	TOTAL		Struggling to Afford (Q17)	Has Medical Debt	Uninsured
Dental care	33%	LGBTQI individuals (44%), POC moms (43%), Latina women (42%), and Women under the age of 50 (43%) especially likely to have foregone dental care due to cost	56%	46%	57%
Vision services (including eyeglasses)	22%		35%	30%	38%
Doctor's office visit	20%		32%	28%	44%
Prescription drugs	18%		30%	29%	29%
Mental health care	16%	Gen Z (36%), LGBTQI individuals (29%), and Moms (25%) especially likely to report having foregone mental health care due to cost	27%	26%	28%
Specialist visit	16%		25%	26%	25%
Over-the-counter medicine	12%		18%	18%	17%
Hospital services	11%		15%	18%	19%
Physical or occupational therapy	10%		13%	15%	18%
Treatment for a chronic condition (including diabetes, cancer, long COVID, etc.)	9%		14%	15%	16%
None of the above	39%		17%	17%	17%

**Options selected by fewer than 6% not included in graph*



Policies

1. Baseline

2. Affordability

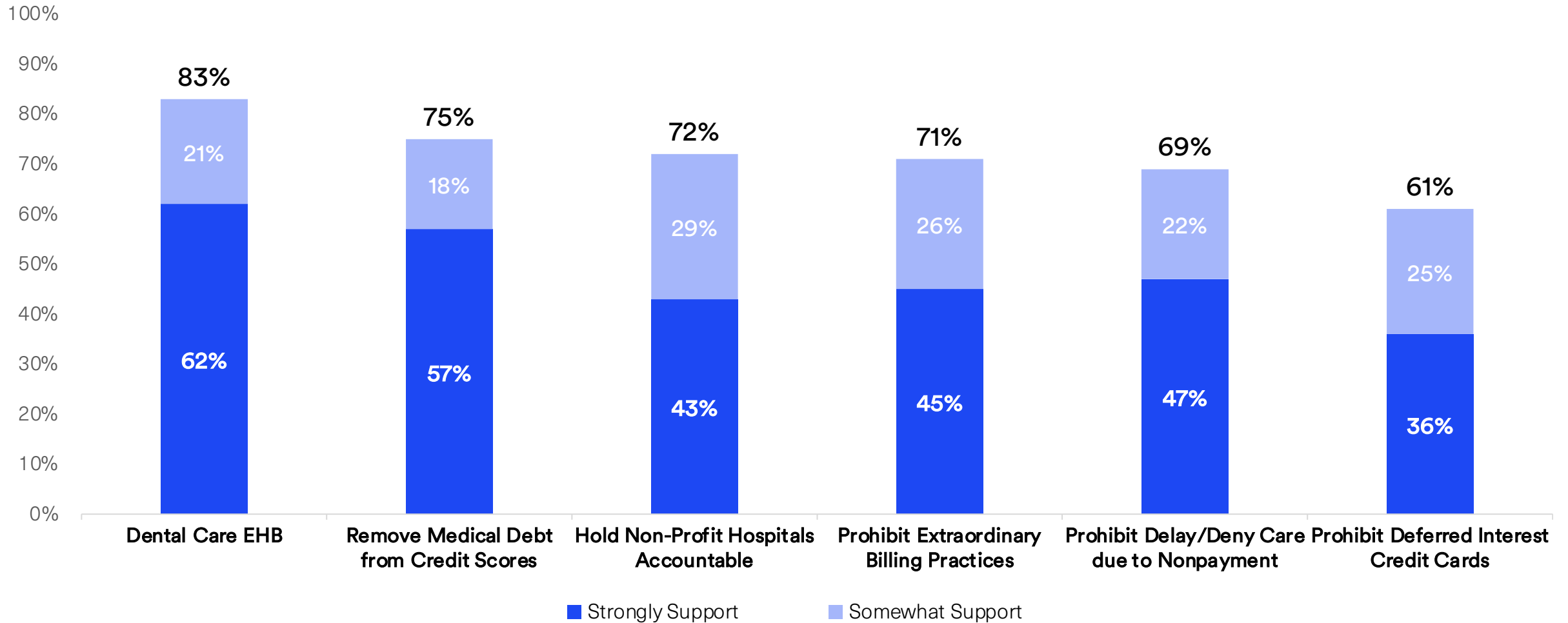
3. Policies

4. Conclusion

Strong majorities support all proposed policies when provided contextual information, especially including dental care as an Essential Health Benefit and removing medical debt from credit scores.

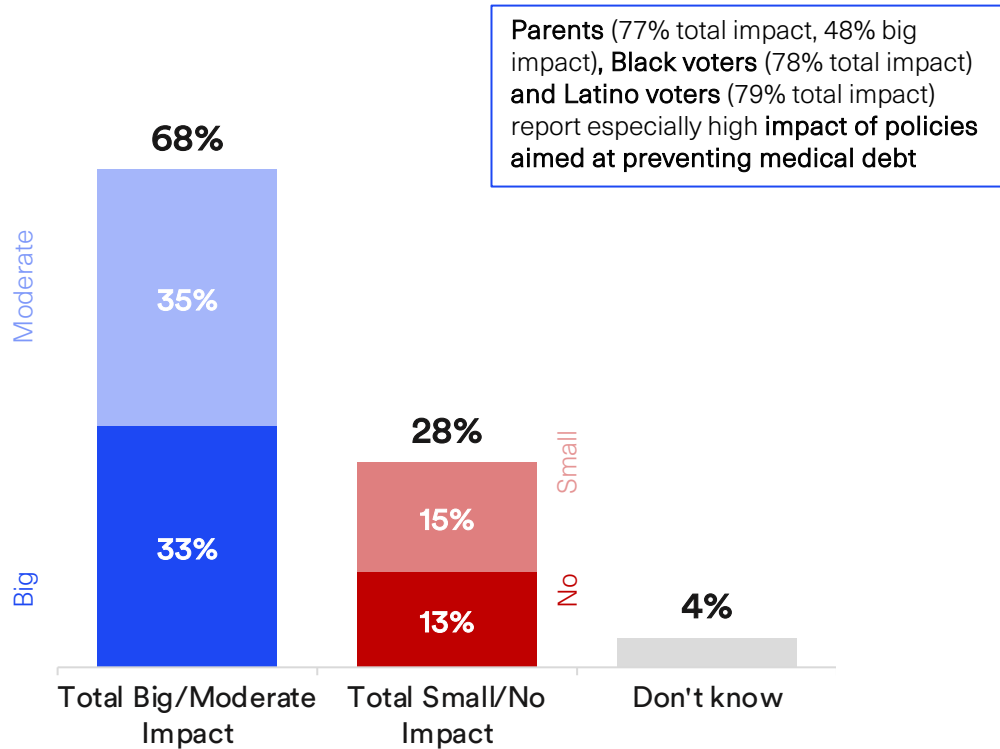
Q18, 23, 26, 28, 29, 30. How much do you support or oppose the proposal to [POLICY]?

Policy Support Summary Total Audience



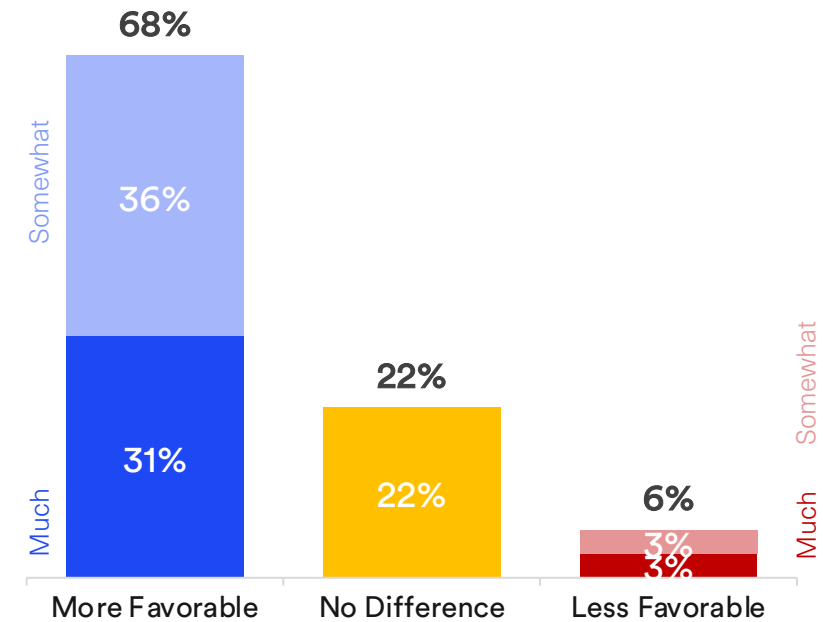
Most voters predict policies aimed at preventing medical debt would ease their cost-of-living expenses, and majorities across the political spectrum would feel more favorable towards a representative supporting them.

Q21. How big of an **impact** would policies aimed at preventing medical debt have on easing your living expenses?



	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Big/Mod. Impact	76%	68%	59%
Small/No Impact	21%	27%	36%

Q22. If you learned a candidate for political office **SUPPORTED** efforts to prevent medical debt, how would that affect your feelings towards that candidate, if at all?

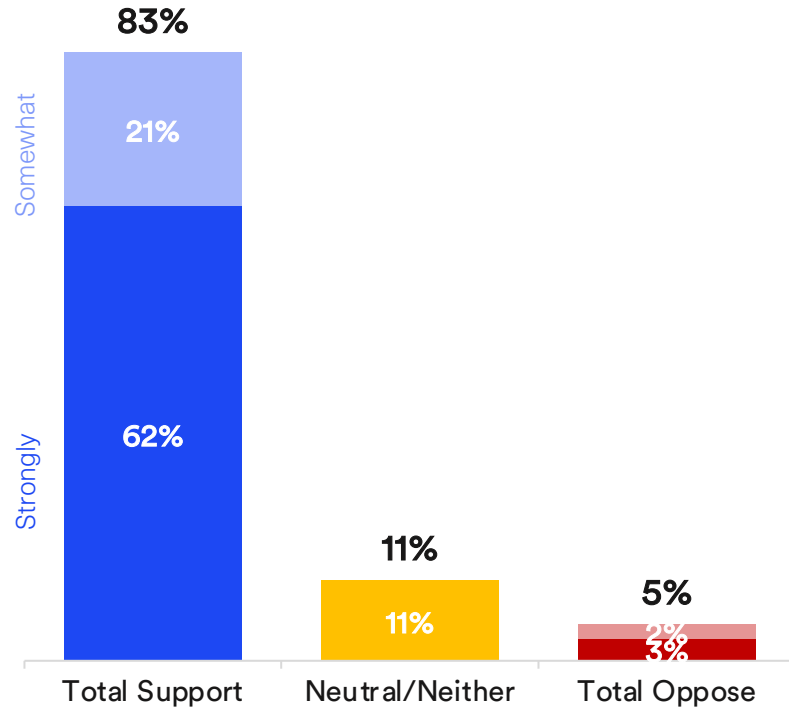


	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Total Favorable	77%	63%	60%
No Difference	15%	24%	29%
Total Less Fav.	5%	5%	7%

Dental care being included as an Essential Health Benefit is a very popular policy across demographics.

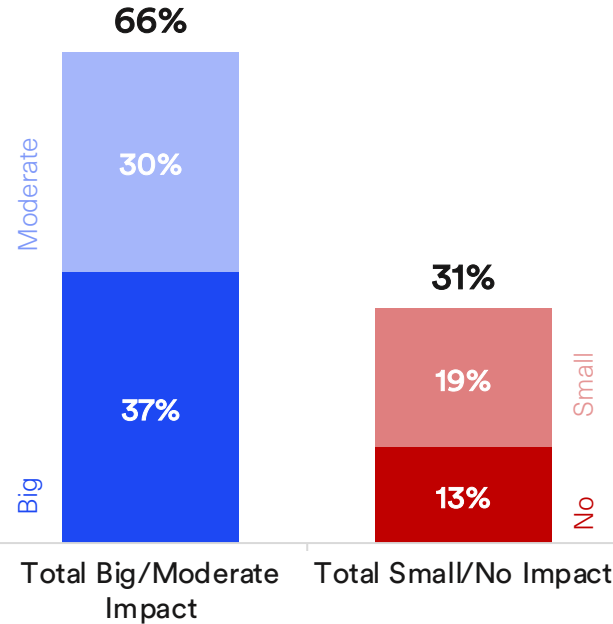
Currently, dental care is not typically included in most health insurance plans. Some policymakers have proposed including dental care, like cleanings and cavity fillings, as part of the benefits insurance plans are required to cover.

Q18. How much do you **support or oppose** the proposal to make dental care more affordable by making it part of what insurance companies must cover?



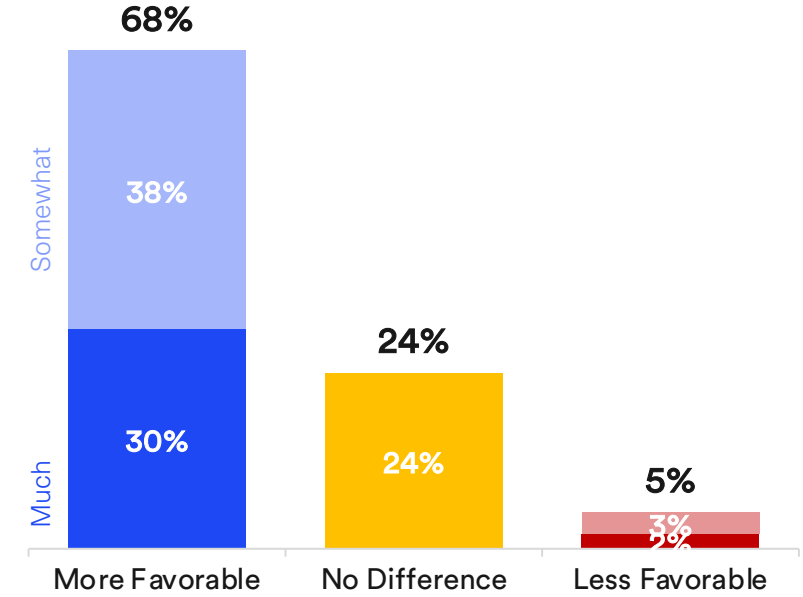
	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Total Support	90%	79%	78%
Neutral	6%	13%	15%
Total Oppose	3%	4%	6%

Q19. How big of an **impact** would insurance coverage of dental care, to cover things like cleanings and cavity fillings, have on easing your living expenses?



	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Big/Mod. Impact	74%	65%	58%
Small/No Impact	23%	32%	40%

Q20. If you learned a candidate for political office **SUPPORTED** efforts to make dental care – like cleanings and cavity fillings – more affordable and accessible to more people, **how would that affect your feelings towards that candidate**, if at all?



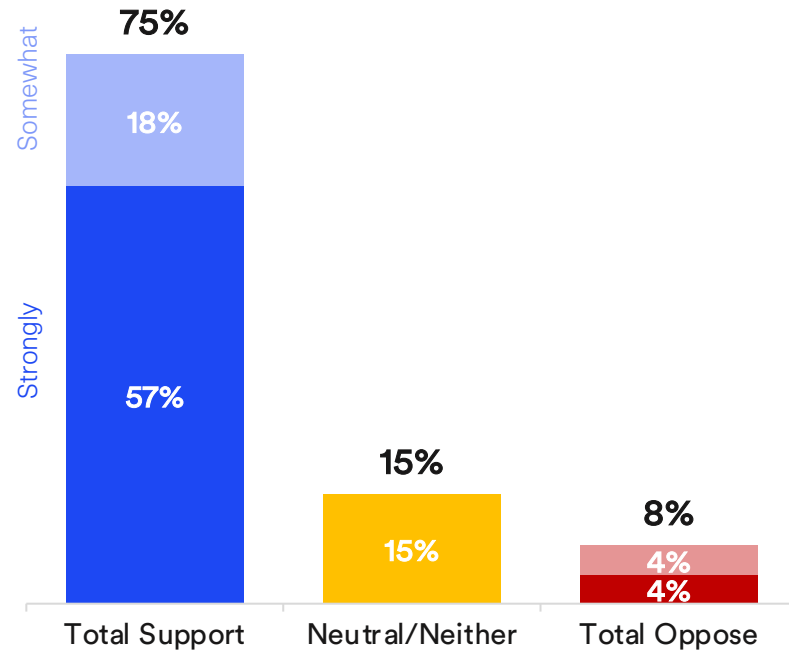
	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Total Favorable	80%	61%	60%
No Difference	15%	29%	32%
Total Less Fav.	4%	3%	6%

Removing medical debt from credit scores is also a highly supported policy.



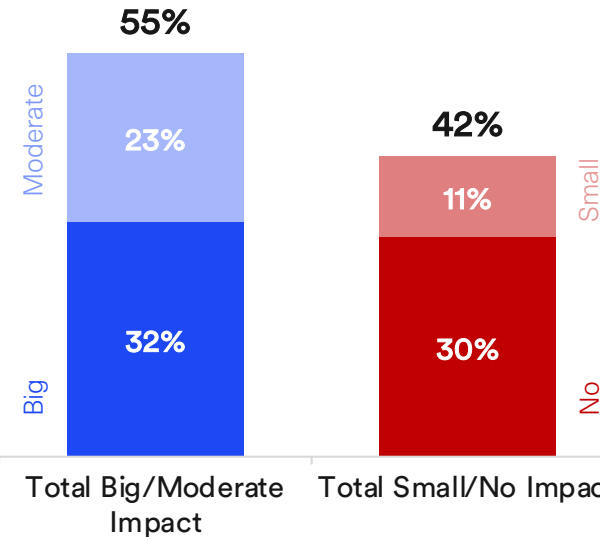
Currently, unpaid medical bills over \$500 can show up on credit reports and have resulted in individuals facing challenges when it comes to buying a home, signing a lease, or even getting a job due to downgraded credit. Some policymakers have proposed establishing protections for people by preventing all medical debt from impacting an individual's credit score – meaning all unpaid medical bills, including those for medically necessary procedures, would no longer show up on credit reports.

Q23. How much do you **support or oppose** the proposal to remove all medical debt from credit scores?



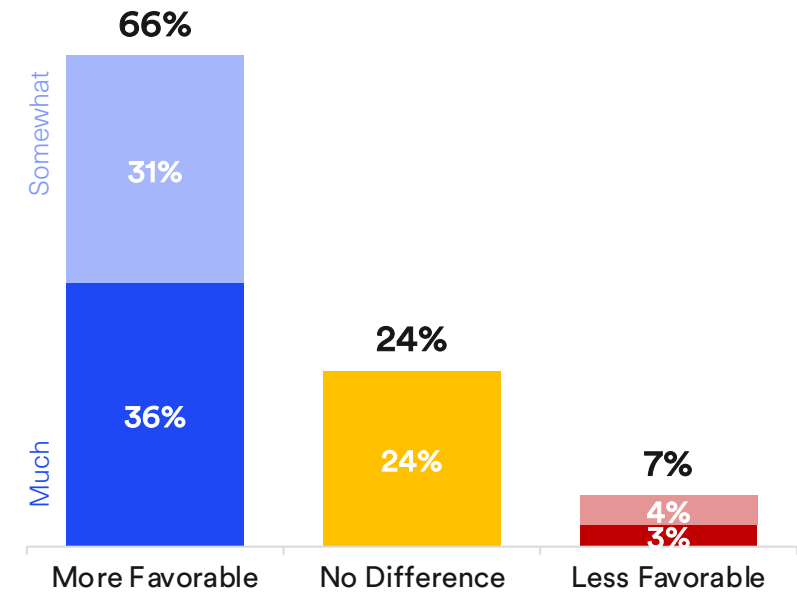
	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Total Support	84%	68%	70%
Neutral	11%	23%	15%
Total Oppose	4%	6%	14%

Q24. How big of an **impact** would removing all medical debt from credit scores have on easing your living expenses?



	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Big/Mod. Impact	63%	54%	48%
Small/No Impact	34%	41%	49%

Q25. If you learned a candidate for political office **SUPPORTED** removing all medical debt from credit scores, **how would that affect your feelings towards that candidate**, if at all?



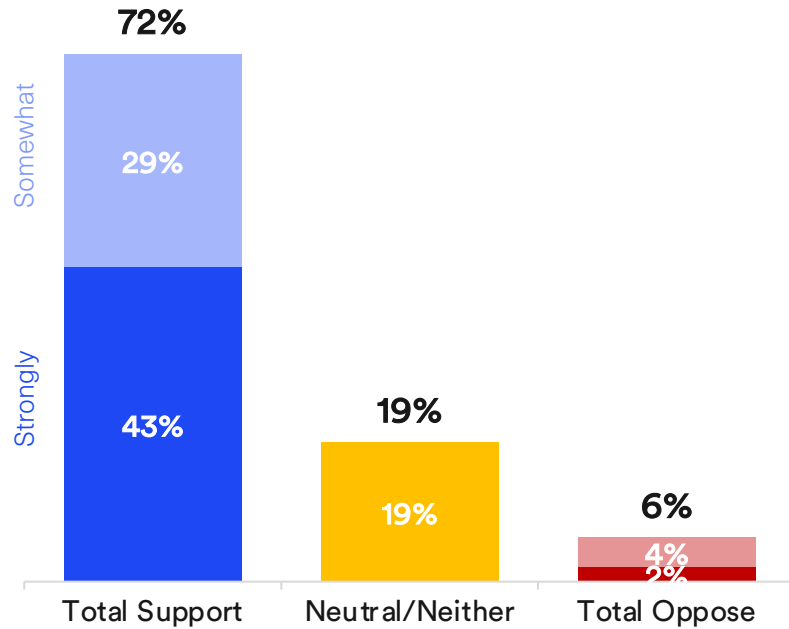
	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Total Favorable	77%	60%	59%
No Difference	17%	30%	27%
Total Less Fav.	4%	5%	12%

Voters want to see non-profit hospitals held accountable in their duty to provide charity care, and protections from extreme billing practices and denial of necessary care.



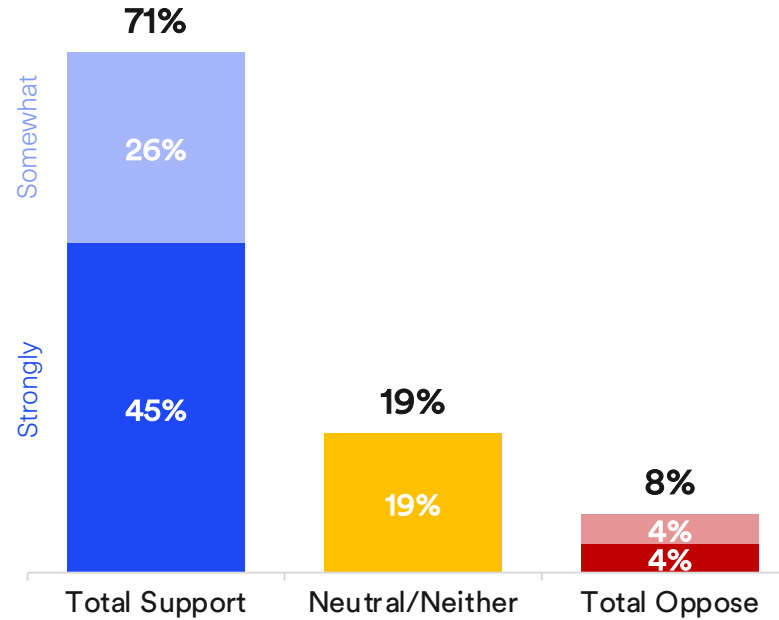
In exchange for not having to pay taxes, non-profit hospitals are required to provide free or discounted health services, known as “charity care”, to some patients that are unable to pay for all or a portion of the services they receive. But many patients do not know these options for financial support exist.

Q28. Some policymakers have proposed policies that **hold non-profit hospitals more accountable in their duty to provide free or discounted services**, such as **obligating hospitals to directly inform patients of their payment options** – including financial assistance and if they are eligible for free services. How much do you support or oppose the proposal to hold non-profit hospitals accountable in their duty to provide charity care?



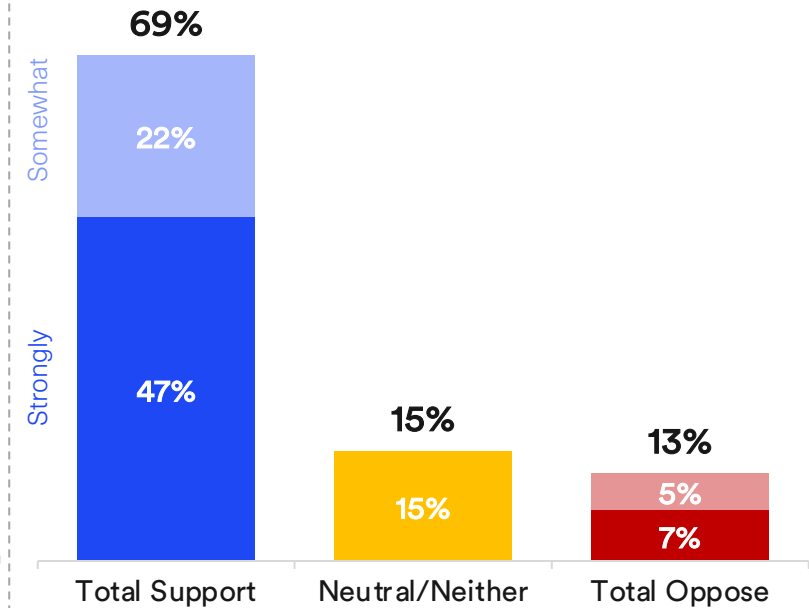
	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Total Support	81%	64%	68%
Neutral	12%	27%	23%
Total Oppose	5%	5%	8%

29. Some policymakers have proposed policies that **prohibit hospitals from certain billing and collection practices that can lead to home foreclosures and bank account seizures** of patients with unpaid medical bills. How much do you support or oppose the proposal to prohibit hospitals from these types of billing and collection practices?



	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Total Support	79%	61%	68%
Neutral	13%	30%	20%
Total Oppose	6%	5%	11%

30. Some policymakers have proposed policies that **prohibit hospitals from delaying or denying medically necessary care for patients that have not yet paid past medical bills**. How much do you support or oppose the proposal to prohibit hospitals from delaying or denying medically necessary care due to nonpayment on past bills?



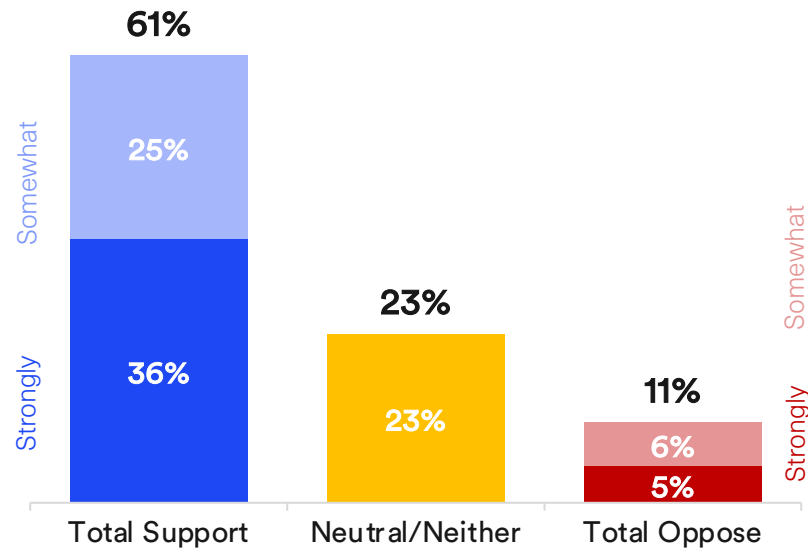
	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Total Support	75%	60%	68%
Neutral	10%	24%	16%
Total Oppose	13%	11%	14%

The majority of voters support the policy to prohibit promotion of deferred interest credit cards in medical settings, though these feelings are not as strong as they are for the other policies.



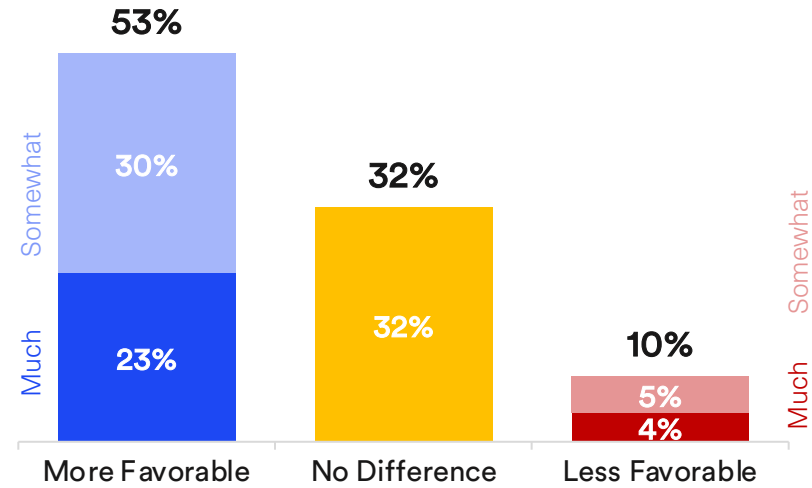
Deferred interest medical and dental credit cards promise patients “0% interest” during a promotional period. However, if the entire balance is not fully paid off by the end of the promotional period, high interest rates are applied to all charges, including those that have already been paid off, often leaving patients with even higher debt. Some policymakers have proposed prohibiting the promotion of deferred interest credit cards in medical settings – including emergency rooms, hospitals, dental and doctor’s offices – to protect people from these misleading practices that often result in additional debt.

Q26. How much do you **support or oppose** the proposal to prohibit the promotion of deferred interest credit cards in medical settings?



	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Total Support	68%	52%	58%
Neutral	17%	32%	26%
Total Oppose	10%	11%	12%

Q27. If you learned a candidate for political office **SUPPORTED** prohibiting the promotion of deferred interest credit cards in medical settings, **how would that affect your feelings towards that candidate**, if at all?



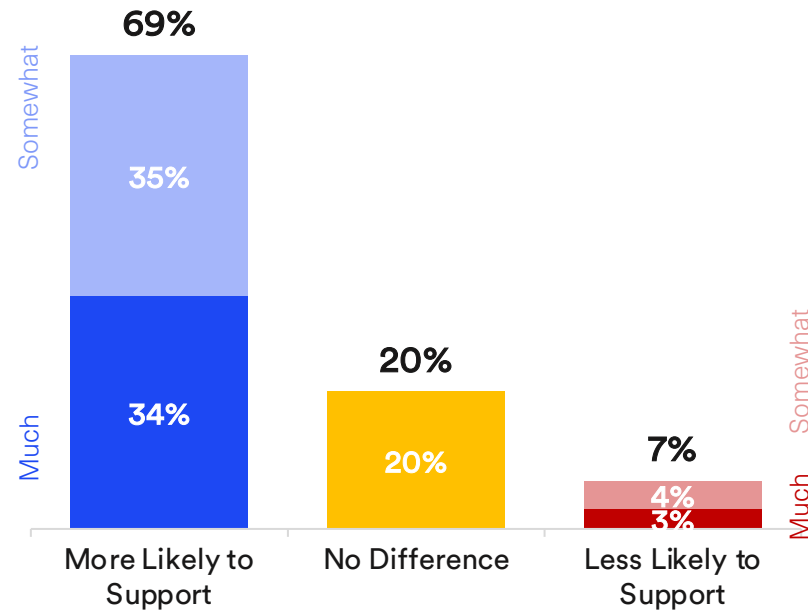
	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Total Favorable	62%	45%	49%
No Difference	24%	36%	38%
Total Less Fav.	9%	10%	10%

Voters are more likely to support a candidate running for office if the candidate supports enacting all of these healthcare policies together.

Please think back on all the policies you just reviewed, listed here, as you answer the next few questions:

- Insurance coverage of dental care
- Removing medical debt from credit scores
- Prohibiting the promotion of deferred interest credit cards in medical settings
- Obligating hospitals to directly inform patients of their payment options, including financial assistance
- Prohibiting hospitals from billing and collection practices that can lead to home foreclosures and bank account seizures
- Prohibiting hospitals from delaying or denying medically necessary care for patients that have not yet paid past medical bills

Q31. Thinking about the policies you just reviewed, if you heard a **candidate running for office** SUPPORTED enacting all of these healthcare policies, how would that impact your likelihood to support that candidate?



	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Total More Likely to Support	81%	59%	61%
Neutral	12%	28%	25%
Total Less Likely to Support	4%	6%	11%



Conclusion

1. Baseline

2. Affordability

3. Policies

4. Conclusion

Concluding Takeaways

1 Voters care about and are affected by healthcare affordability. It will be an important issue in their 2024 vote choice, regardless of party affiliation.



2 Voters support policies that alleviate healthcare costs, bolster economic wellbeing, and hold non-profit hospitals accountable.



3 Policymakers and candidates can gain favor with voters by supporting and taking action on these policies.

Thank you

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Policy Storytelling & Summary Table



Policy	Context & Scene Setting	Support & Favorability
Dental Care as Essential Health Benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? Dental care is not typically included in most health insurance plans • What? Make dental care more affordable • How? Include dental care, like cleanings and cavity fillings, as part of the benefits insurance plans are required to cover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83% Total Support • 68% Total More Favorable of Policymaker
Remove Medical Debt from Credit Scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? Unpaid medical bills show up on credit reports and have resulted in individuals facing challenges when it comes to buying a home, signing a lease, or getting a job • What? Establish protections for people • How? Prevent all medical debt from impacting an individual's credit score and showing up on credit reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% Total Support • 66% Total More Favorable of Policymaker
Hold Non-Profit Hospitals Accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? In exchange for not having to pay taxes, non-profit hospitals are required to provide free or discounted health services, but many patients do not know these options for financial support exist • What? Hold non-profit hospitals more accountable in their duty to provide free or discounted services • How? Obligate hospitals to directly inform patients of their payment options, including financial assistance and if they are eligible for free services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 72% Total Support
Prohibit Extraordinary Billing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? Certain billing and collection practices can lead to home foreclosures and bank account seizures of patients with unpaid medical bills • How? Prohibit hospitals from these types of billing and collection practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71% Total Support
Prohibit Delaying/Denying Care due to Nonpayment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? Hospitals can delay or deny medically necessary care for patients that have not yet paid past medical bills • How? Prohibit hospitals from delaying or denying medically necessary care due to nonpayment on past bills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 69% Total Support
Prohibit Promotion of Deferred Interest Credit Cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why? High interest rates are applied to all charges, including those that have already been paid off, often leaving patients with even higher debt • What? Protect people from these misleading practices that often result in additional debt • How? Prohibiting the promotion of deferred interest credit cards in medical settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61% Total Support • 53% Total More Favorable of Policymaker