



**TO** Common Start Coalition  
**FROM** Beacon Research  
**DATE** Dec. 18, 2020  
**SUBJECT** Key Findings from Statewide Survey of MA Voters

---

This memo summarizes key findings from our recently completed survey of a representative sample of 800 Massachusetts voters. The survey was conducted online between Dec. 3-7, 2020. The sample was weighted to match the overall electorate in Massachusetts in terms of region, gender, age, race, and party identification.

- A majority (59%) of voters in Massachusetts believe state government should be involved in helping people deal with their childcare needs.
- More than 4-in-5 voters (81%) think the Covid-19 pandemic has made it harder for working parents to deal with childcare.
- Fully 75% of the electorate believes that Massachusetts families should receive at least some financial assistance to help cover childcare costs; 29% believe childcare should be free to all families, similar to the way K-12 public education is, while 46% believe families should pay some of the costs. Fewer than 1-in-5 voters (17%), by comparison, think families should have to cover all of the costs of childcare themselves.
- A clear majority of voters believe childcare workers are currently underpaid. After being informed that the average pay for childcare workers is “at or close to minimum wage, about \$15 an hour, or \$31,000 a year,” only 24% of voters think “this is an appropriate level of pay for the work they do,” while 61% believe “they should be paid significantly more than \$31,000 a year.”
- When informed that kindergarten teachers in public schools are currently paid about \$78,000 a year, 40% of voters feel childcare workers should be paid closer to what kindergarten teachers make, and another 30% think they should be paid fully as much as kindergarten teachers.

- We tested voter support for a proposal to provide universal childcare in Massachusetts that was described as follows: *“There is a proposal that may come up in the state legislature next year to create a universal childcare program in Massachusetts. Under this plan, state government would subsidize the cost of providing all Massachusetts families with access to affordable childcare, starting at birth. Programs would be available in childcare centers, private homes, and public schools, similar to the way childcare is provided now. Families would be able to access care during extended hours that go beyond the traditional workday. Families below a certain income level would be able to access childcare options without paying anything. Families with higher incomes would pay a sliding-scale fee based on their income. Do you favor or oppose creating a universal childcare program like this?”*
- There is widespread public support for this proposal, with 64% of Massachusetts voters favoring the measure, compared to 23% opposing it.
- Support is highest among Boston voters (70%), women (67%), voters under age 45 (78%), Democrats (79%), Black (80%) and Latino (81%) voters, and voters in households making under \$50,000 a year (73%). However, a majority of all regional, gender, age, education, ethnic/racial, and income groups support the proposal, including 64% of voters outside of Boston, 61% of men, 57% of voters over age 45, 59% of independents, 61% of white voters, and 62% of those making over \$50,000.
- Among voters with school-age children (31% of our sample), support for the proposal stands at 72%-19%, while among those without young children, support stands at 61%-26%.
- After being informed that the proposal would set an income threshold of \$57,000 for a family of four (half the median income in Massachusetts) as the dividing line between those who would pay nothing for this program and those who would pay on a sliding scale based on their income level, 57% of voters say this is an “appropriate dividing line” and another 13% think the threshold should be even higher; 30% of voters, by comparison, feel the income threshold should be lower.
- 61% of voters say the proposed cap of 7% of total income – i.e., that no family would have to pay more than 7% of their total income for childcare – is an “appropriate percentage of income” to ask families to contribute, and another 14% believe the cap should be set even lower. Only 25% of voters, by comparison, believe the cap should be set somewhere above 7%.
- After testing a series of arguments for and against the proposal, voter support remains high; 61% of voters favor the measure in our final test of voter preferences, while 29% oppose it.

