



TO Common Start Coalition
FROM Beacon Research
DATE Dec. 7, 2022
SUBJECT Key Findings from Statewide Survey of MA Voters

This memo summarizes key findings from our recently completed survey of 817 Massachusetts voters who voted in the Nov. 8th general election. The survey was conducted online between Nov. 14-21, 2022. The sample was weighted slightly to match the Massachusetts electorate in terms of region, gender, age, and race. This poll is a follow-up to a survey conducted for the Common Start coalition in Dec. 2020.

- The survey shows that a majority of Massachusetts voters readily accept three key tenets underlying the push to create a universal childcare program in the state: that most MA families cannot afford the high cost of childcare; that childcare workers are significantly underpaid; and that state government should have a role in addressing this issue.
- Voters' outlook about the state's economy has improved significantly since Dec. 2020, with two-thirds (65%) of voters now saying the economy is in very or fairly good shape, up from 47% two years ago, at the end of the first year of the Covid pandemic.
- A clear majority (63%) of Massachusetts voters believe state government "should be involved in helping people deal with their childcare needs," up from 59% two years ago. An alternate version of this question focusing specifically on cost – asked of half the respondents in the poll – finds a similar result: 60% believe state government "should be involved in helping people pay for and afford the cost of childcare."
- The proportion of voters who favor "increasing taxpayer funding for childcare programs in Massachusetts" has increased to 58% from 48% two years ago.

- A wide majority (83%) of voters believe that Massachusetts families should receive at least some financial assistance to help cover childcare costs; 39% believe childcare should be free to all families, similar to the way K-12 public education is, while 44% believe families should pay some of the costs. Only 1-in-10 voters (11%), by comparison, think families should have to cover all of the cost of childcare themselves.
- After being informed that the average amount families in Massachusetts pay each year for childcare is \$21,000 for infants and \$14,000 for preschoolers, only 23% of voters believe that is “generally affordable for most families in the state.” Close to two-thirds (64%) think it is “more than most families in the state can afford.” When asked at what level they would consider childcare costs to be affordable, most voters cited a range between \$0-\$5,000 (40%) or \$5,000-\$10,000 (25%).
- Barely 1-in-5 voters (19%) believe that childcare workers’ current average salary of roughly \$30,000 a year “is an appropriate level of pay for the work they do”; 72% believe “they should be paid significantly more than \$30,000 a year” (up from 61% two years ago).
- 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 licensed childcare centers, family childcare homes, and public schools, similar to the way childcare is provided now. 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 73% of Massachusetts voters favoring the measure, compared to 18% opposing it. Support is up nearly 10 points from two years ago, when the corresponding margin on this question was 64%-23%.
- A majority of all regional, gender, age, education, ethnic/racial, and income groups support the proposal, including 86% of Democrats, 68% of independents, and 61% of Republicans. Among voters with school-age children, support for the proposal stands at 80%-15%, while among those without young children, support stands at 70%-20%.

