

Childcare policies and priorities.

The problem

Across the country, Progressive organizations and politicians are pushing for a massive increase in government involvement in child care.

Although increased government spending, programs, and regulation of child care often sounds beneficial to the average citizen, government intervention reduces child care options while increasing costs and decreasing flexibility for families.

There are better ways to help families find and pay for good child care — for instance, tax credits and deductions, and deregulating some aspects of child care. Direct government spending and interventions make things worse for families overall.

But what are the best ways to explain the upside of *alternative policies* to help families and the *negative consequences* of government intervention in child care?

The Independent Women's Forum commissioned Evolving Strategies to conduct a randomized-controlled experiment testing the effectiveness of 4 different messages explaining why increased government involvement in childcare is counterproductive and harmful to families, and one Progressive message promoting greater government involvement.

Overview of the methodology

We recruited a sample of over 2,600 respondents from an online consumer research panel that approximates the U.S. population of registered voters on major demographic characteristics. Respondents answered a series of demographic and other control questions, and then those in the treatment groups received one, and only one, set of messages.

Each respondent was then *randomly assigned* to one of the treatment conditions (where they read a childcare message) or the Control condition (where they read a non-policy, “placebo” message).

The respondents were *not* asked to evaluate the message. Following exposure to the messages, all respondents answered the same policy support and other “outcome” questions.

The sample was weighted to represent U.S. Census figures for registered voters on gender, race, education, and age. We conducted statistical analyses to compare policy support in the Control group (exposed to “placebo” message) to answers in the treatment groups (exposed to policy message). The difference between the average support levels in the treatment compared to the control group is due to the impact of the messages, as everything else about the two groups is otherwise the same.

Using this randomized-controlled experiment — the same design used for pharmaceutical research trials — allowed us to identify which messages were the most effective at shifting opinion against greater government involvement in child care.

Overview of the results

Voters don't need to be persuaded to support child care tax credits and deductions — support in the Control condition is a remarkable 70 percent, with just 12 percent opposed. Voters are primed for hearing the truth about the tradeoffs and negative impacts of government interventions, and respond well to a message explaining the problems with child care regulations.

- There is no need to argue in detail *for* childcare tax benefits — the public is already on board (70 percent support). The “Deregulation” message boosts support to an astonishing 79 percent.
- Voters are already skeptical about direct government funding of families for childcare (40 percent support, 35 percent opposed).
- The “Daycare” message — which focuses on the downsides of daycare centers — *reduces support for more government spending* on childcare (-6 points) and *boosts support for less spending* (+12 points).
- The “Deregulation” message substantially *increases support for deregulating* child care (+12 points) and *decreases opposition* (-11 points).
- The “Progressive” message is not generally impactful.
- Bottom line: Voters prefer using tax benefits over direct government intervention in child care, and are open to some deregulation.

Section I

Message Treatments

Message Treatment Text — Page I

CONTROL/PLACEBO Message

Wireless charging is overrated — at least in its current form. The dream of wireless power sounds great, but current wireless charging technologies are more “plugless” than “wireless.”

They're also less convenient, slower, and less efficient than just plugging your phone in.

Let's be honest: wireless chargers are more interesting as a proof of concept and a glimpse at future technologies than they are practical.

When you charge your smartphone, you'll want to plug it in with a cable.

PROGRESSIVE Message

Quality, affordable childcare is not a luxury — it's a growth strategy. Women are now the primary or co-breadwinners in two-thirds of families with children. But out-of-pocket child care costs have soared by nearly 25 percent during the past decade.

We need to make investing in childcare a national priority — Families shouldn't have to pay more than 10 percent of their income for child care. After that, government should pick up the tab.

And we should support on-campus childcare and scholarships to meet the needs of the nearly 5 million American college students who are also parents.

We also need to pay childcare workers more, so that day-care centers can attract and retain more high-quality workers. The federal government should provide support to states and localities to increase pay levels for child-care workers and make them equal to kindergarten teachers.

UNFAIR Message

We want parents to be able to choose how to care for their young children, whether that's high-quality, affordable childcare and preschool arrangements, a parent staying home to care for them, or relying on a friend or relative.

So why does Washington only give tax breaks to families that pay a day-care center or a non-relative to look after their child? Don't all parents deserve support? It's not fair that government favors some families at the expense of others.

Many families—including many with modest incomes-- make big sacrifices to have a family member at home when their children are young because they think it's best.

Washington should stop subsidizing day-care facilities. Instead, policymakers should give all parents financial relief and tax breaks so every family can make childcare choices that work best for them — whether that's using a day-care center full-time or part-time, relying on friends or family, or having a family member at home.

Message Treatment Text — Page II

DAYCARE Message

We want parents to be able to choose how to care for their young children, whether that's high-quality, affordable childcare and preschool arrangements, a parent staying home to care for them, or a friend or relative.

Many families have to use day-care facilities to care for their children because both parents need to work.

But policymakers shouldn't try to push more families to use day-care, rather than family care. Research shows that subsidizing day-care and increasing all-day day-care can lead to more aggressive behavior, poorer health outcomes, and even higher crime.

Washington should stop subsidizing day-care facilities. Instead, policymakers should give all parents financial relief and tax breaks so every family can make childcare choices that work best for them – whether that's using a day-care center full-time or part-time, relying on friends or family, or having a family member at home.

TAX RELIEF Message

We want parents to be able to choose how to care for their young children, whether that's high-quality, affordable childcare and preschool arrangements, a parent staying home to care for them, or a friend or relative.

That's why policymakers should increase the child tax credit to help all parents, regardless of what kind of childcare they use. We should consolidate existing tax credits and government spending on children and return that money to families.

We can even target the benefits to help those with the youngest children and lower incomes who often face the biggest challenges.

Washington should stop subsidizing day-care facilities. Instead, policymakers should give all parents financial relief and tax breaks so every family can make childcare choices that work best for them – whether that's using a day-care center full-time or part-time, relying on friends or family, or having a family member at home.

DEREGULATION Message

We want parents to be able to choose how to care for their young children, whether that's high-quality, affordable childcare and preschool arrangements, a parent staying home to care for them, or a friend or relative.

But right now, regulations on childcare are making these services much more expensive than they need to be. A recent study found that many childcare regulations didn't improve quality – they just increased the cost of childcare.

Regulations like group sizes or child-staff ratios tie the hands of day-care providers, and prevent them from making investments in things that are associated with higher quality – like fewer, but better trained and paid staff members.

Removing these counterproductive regulations will result in better childcare quality, more childcare providers, and lower costs for parents.

Section II

Message impacts on policy support, ALL VOTERS

Childcare Spending

"In general, would you prefer that the federal government spend more or less money on childcare programs?"

Impact on desired childcare spending levels – All Voters

The charts to the right show the impact each message treatment had on support for *increasing* government spending on childcare (top chart) and support for *decreasing* childcare spending (bottom chart). The question asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of voters choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for increasing or decreasing spending in each message group.

As you can see, support for *increasing* spending in the Control group (41 percent) is about double the support for *decreasing* spending (20 percent). But nearly as many respondents want to keep spending levels the *same* (39 percent).

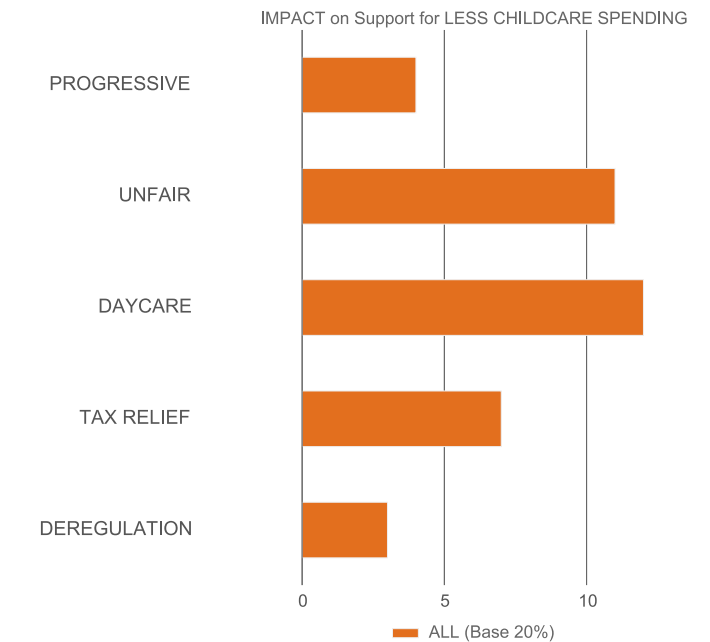
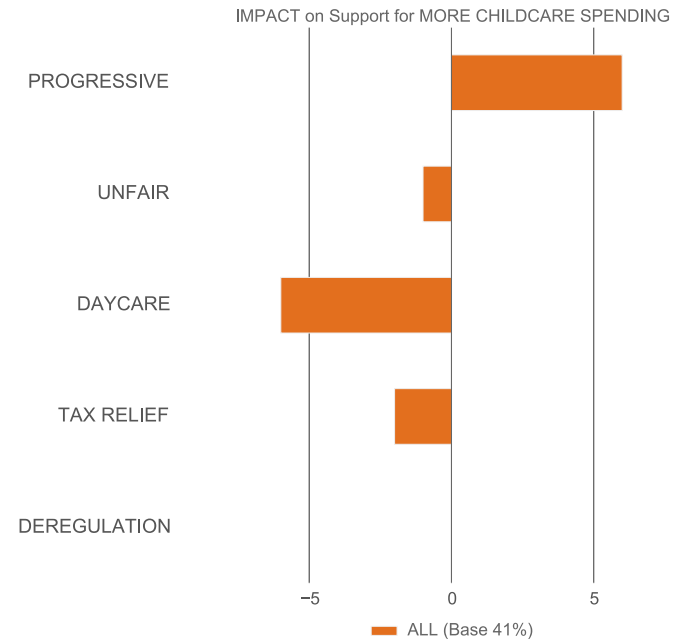
The "Progressive" message boosts support for more spending, but also raises support for less spending.

The "Unfair" and "Daycare" messages are most effective at boosting support for less spending (+11 and +12 points).

The "Daycare" message, however, is also effective at decreasing support for *more* spending (-6 points), almost eliminating the balance of support for increased spending (35 percent) over decreased spending (32 percent).

Although a plurality of voters are ready to spend more government money on childcare programs, many more are skeptical of these increases. And when the downsides of daycare in general and subsidies for daycare are made clear to voters, support for decreased spending spikes to virtual parity.

Bottom line: fiscal responsibility plays well even in regard to childcare spending.



Tax Credits/Deductions

"... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy."

"Give tax relief to families in the form of tax credits or deductions for childcare costs."

Direct Subsidy 10%

"... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy."

"Give money to families to use for childcare costs that are more than ten percent (10%) of their income."

Impact on childcare tax benefits vs direct subsidies — All Voters

The charts to the right show the impact each message treatment had on support for childcare tax credits and deductions (top chart) and support for direct government subsidies of childcare costs (bottom chart). The questions asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of voters choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for each policy in each message group.

As you can see, support for *childcare tax benefits* in the Control group is overwhelming (70 percent), increasing to an astonishing 79 percent in the "Deregulation" message group. The "Progressive" and "Unfair" messages are also quite effective at increasing support for tax benefits.

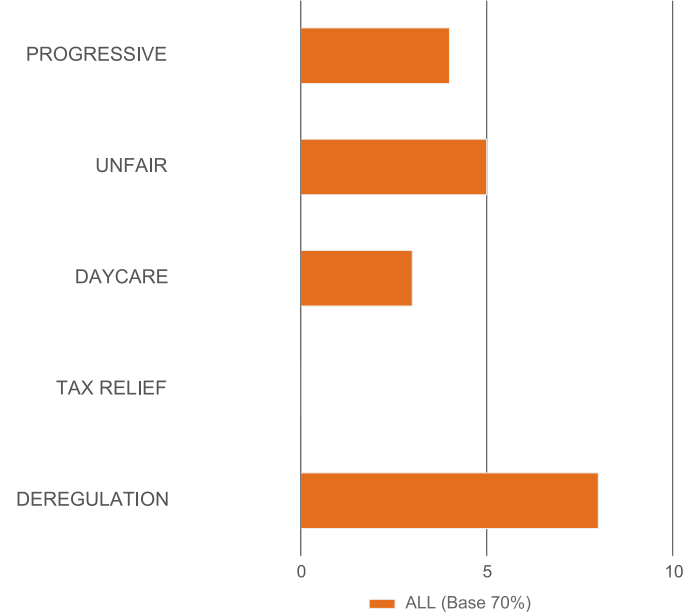
Support for *direct childcare subsidies* in the Control group is much lower (40 percent) than for tax benefits, and opposition to the policy is high (35 percent).

The "Unfair" message actually increases support for direct subsidies (+8 points) and decreases opposition to the policy. Interestingly, the "Progressive" message is the only one that even slightly *decreases* support for direct subsidies (-1 point).

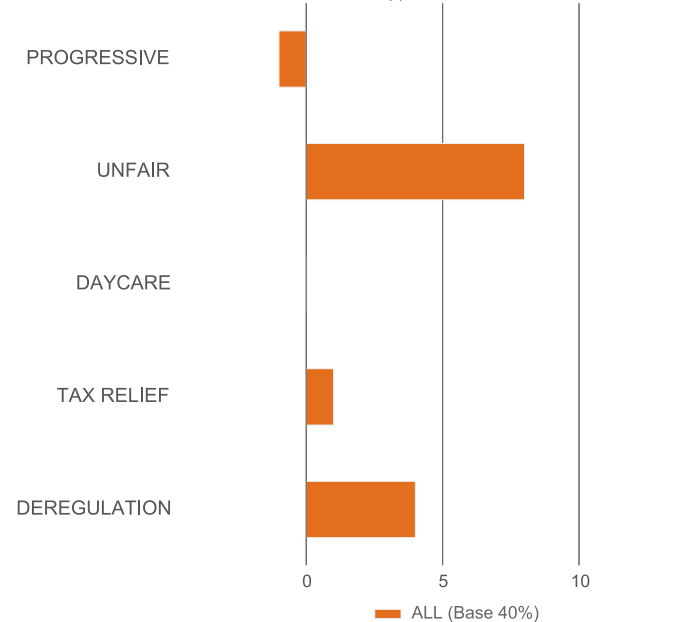
Although not shown in the chart here, the "Progressive" message is also quite effective at boosting *opposition* to direct subsidies (+7 points). In the Control group, there is a small +5 margin of support for direct subsidies (40 percent support/35 percent opposed). In the "Progressive" group, that flips to a -3 point margin of opposition (39 percent support/42 percent opposed).

We will see in later sections that break down the movement in different demographics, the "Progressive" message appears to backfire with some voters, particularly non-parents and Republicans.

IMPACT on Support for CHILDCARE TAX BENEFITS



IMPACT on Support for CHILDCARE SUBSIDY



Deregulation

"... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy."

"Eliminate some of the regulations on childcare providers."

Impact on childcare deregulation — All Voters

The charts to the right show the impact each message treatment had on *support* for eliminating some regulations on childcare providers (top chart) and *opposition* to deregulation (bottom chart). The question asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

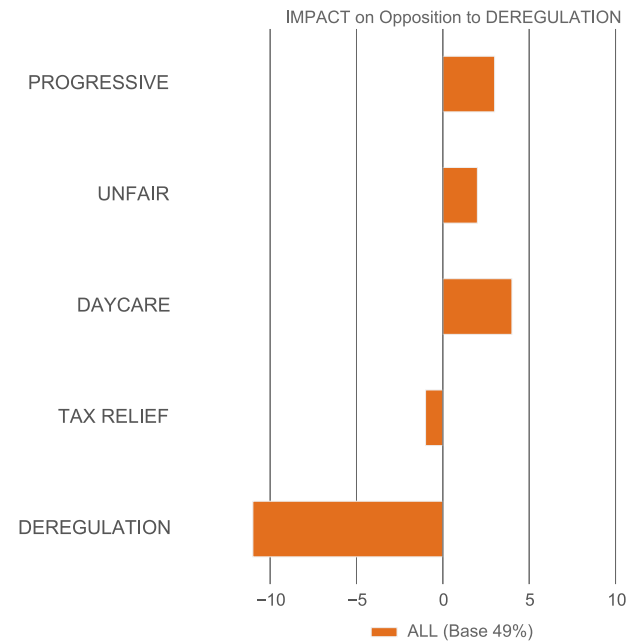
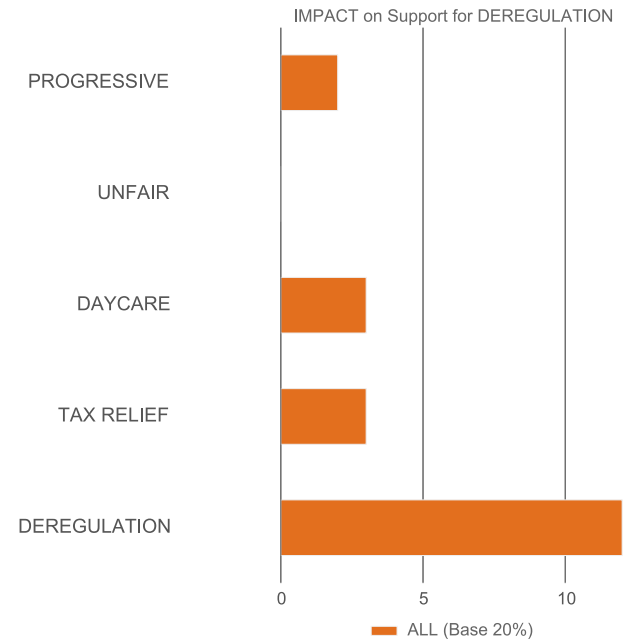
There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of voters choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for each policy in each message group.

As you can see, *support* for deregulation in the Control group is quite small (20 percent), and *opposition* is substantial (49 percent), leading to a -29 point margin of opposition.

Although most of the messages cause some minor movement in support and opposition, the magnitude of the impacts is small and often increase both opposition as well as support.

Only the "Deregulation" message substantially shifts the balance of support, increasing support for deregulation by +12 points while decreasing opposition by -11 points.

These large shifts bring opposition in the "Deregulation" group (39 percent) nearly even with support (32 percent) for a -7 margin of opposition (compared with -29 point margin in the Control group). And a substantial portion of voters (29 percent) remain indifferent to the policy.



A research production by

Section III

Message impacts on policy support, by GENDER

Childcare Spending

"In general, would you prefer that the federal government spend more or less money on childcare programs?"

Impact on desired childcare spending levels – By Gender

The charts to the right show the impact each treatment message had on support for *increasing* government spending on childcare (top chart) and support for *decreasing* childcare spending (bottom chart). The question asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of women (orange bar) and men (blue bar) choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for increasing or decreasing spending.

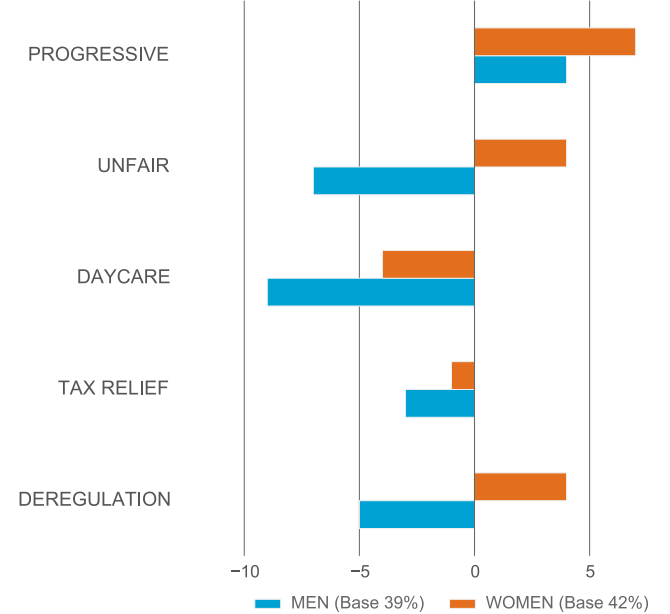
As you can see, both men and women support increasing over decreasing spending in the Control group. But nearly as many respondents want to keep spending levels the same, neither increase nor decrease.

For women, there is no message that successfully tips the balance of support to decreased spending. However, two messages do substantially boost support for decreased spending levels — “Daycare” boosts support for *less* spending 13 points (to 29 percent) and “Tax Relief” gives it a 10 point rise (to 26 percent). The “Daycare” message also saps support for more spending (-4 points), bringing it down to just 38 percent. The “Daycare” message reduces the net preference for more spending over less from 26 points down to just 9 points.

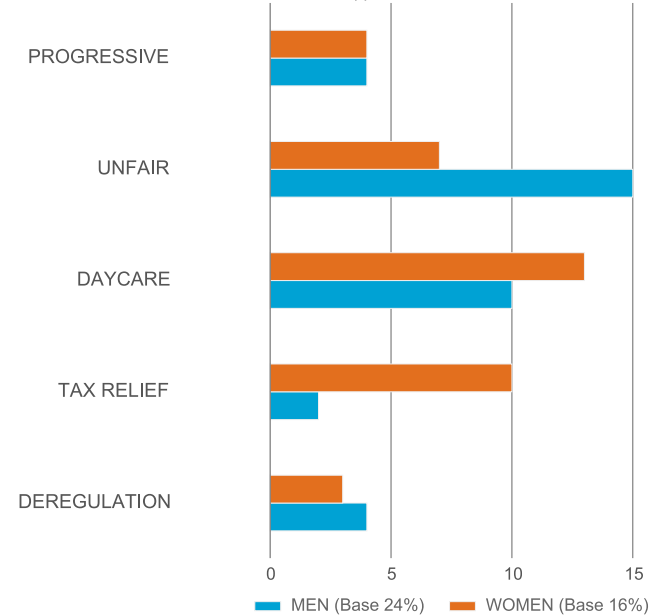
Among men, we see much more movement. The “Daycare” and especially the “Unfair” messages are quite effective at shifting opinion away from more spending (-9 and -7 points respectively) in favor of less spending (+10 and +15 points).

For men, these two message treatments turn a net 15-point margin of support for *more* spending over less spending in the Control group into a net preference for *less* spending over more spending. In the “Daycare” group, a greater percentage of men prefer that the government spend *less* money on childcare programs (34 percent) than *more* money (31 percent). And in the “Daycare” group, 39 percent of men prefer that the government spend *less* money compared to 32 percent that prefer *more* spending.

IMPACT on Support for MORE CHILDCARE SPENDING



IMPACT on Support for LESS CHILDCARE SPENDING



A research production by

Tax Credits/Deductions

"... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy."

"Give tax relief to families in the form of tax credits or deductions for childcare costs."

Direct Subsidy 10%

"... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy."

"Give money to families to use for childcare costs that are more than ten percent (10%) of their income."

Impact on childcare tax benefits vs direct subsidies — By Gender

The charts to the right show the impact each message treatment had on support for childcare tax credits and deductions (top chart) and support for direct government subsidies of childcare costs (bottom chart). The questions asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of women (orange bar) and men (blue bar) choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for increasing or decreasing spending.

As you can see, support for childcare tax benefits is very high for both men (65 percent) and women (75 percent), with negligible opposition among men (18 percent) and women in particular (7 percent).

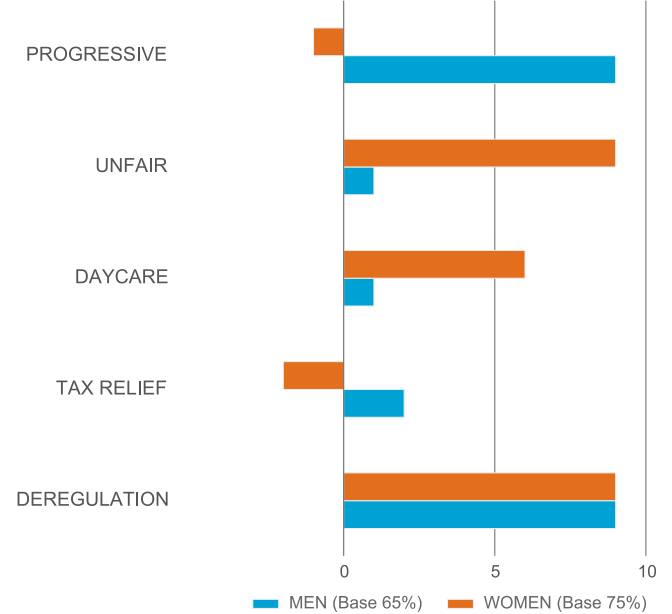
The "Deregulation" message boosts support of tax benefits by +9 points for both women (to 83 percent) and men (to 74 percent). Two other messages are quite effective, although with different genders — the "Progressive" message increases support among men +9 points, while the "Unfair" message increases support +9 points among women.

Support for direct government childcare subsidies is much lower than for tax benefits among men (38 percent) and women (41 percent), while opposition is significantly higher for men (39 percent) and women (31 percent).

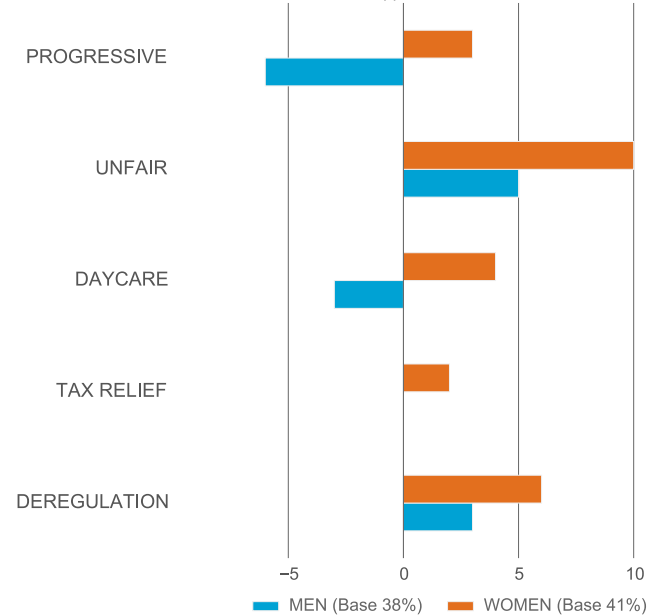
The "Unfair" message makes men slightly more favorable toward direct subsidies (+5 points), and women significantly more favorable (+10 points).

Men are significantly less well-disposed toward direct subsidies, and the "Progressive" message makes them even less so. The "Progressive" message decreases support among men by -6 points (to just 32 percent) and increases opposition by +9 points (to 47 percent), for a net margin of opposition of -16 points.

IMPACT on Support for CHILDCARE TAX BENEFITS



IMPACT on Support for CHILDCARE SUBSIDY



A research production by

Deregulation

"... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy."

"Eliminate some of the regulations on childcare providers."

Impact on childcare deregulation — By Gender

The charts to the right show the impact each message treatment had on *support* for eliminating some regulations on childcare providers (top chart) and *opposition* to deregulation (bottom chart). The question asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of women (orange bar) and men (blue bar) choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for increasing or decreasing spending.

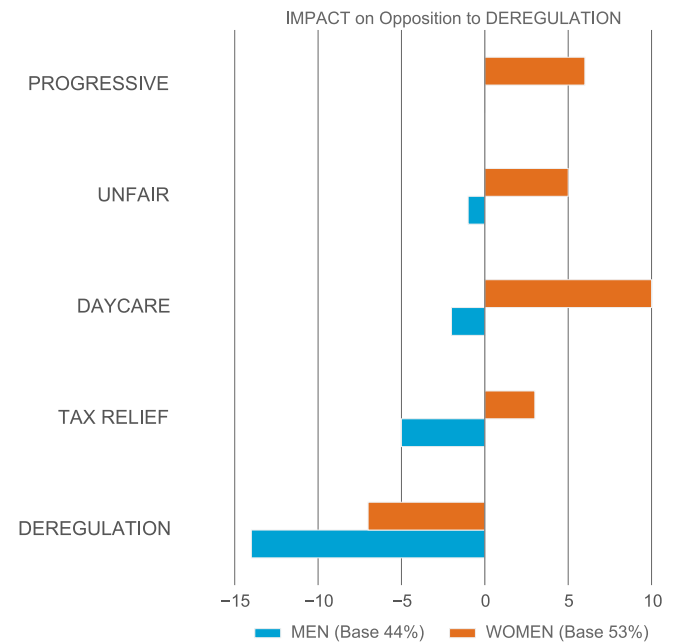
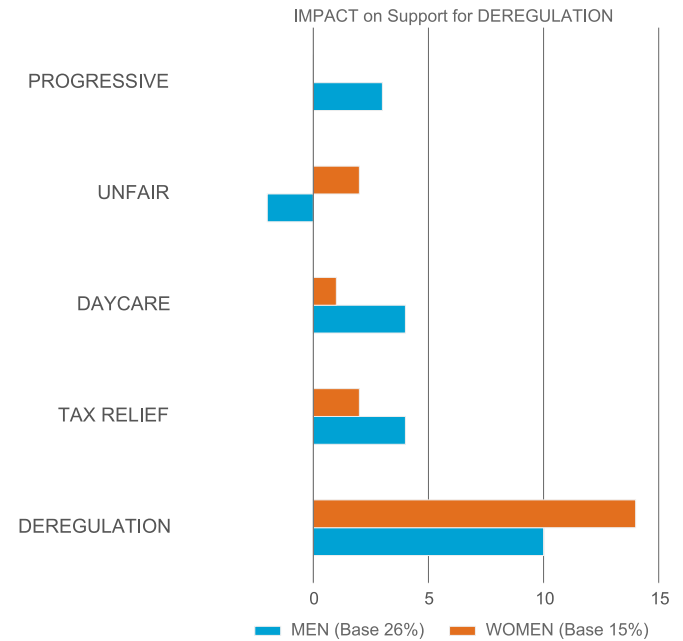
As you can see, *support* for deregulation in the Control group is quite small for both women (15 percent) and men (26 percent), while opposition is substantial for women (53 percent) and men (44 percent).

Although most of the messages cause some minor movement in support for deregulation for women and men, the magnitude of the impacts is small and often increase opposition to as well as support for deregulation

Only the "Deregulation" message substantially shifts the balance of support. The "Deregulation" message nearly doubles support for deregulation among women (+14 points) to 29 percent, and brings opposition down -7 points to 45 percent. But women are still much more opposed to deregulation than they are supportive.

Men start out much more disposed toward deregulation. The "Deregulation" message shifts support for deregulation +10 points to a plurality (36 percent) compared with opposition, which drops -14 points to 31 percent.

In all groups, for both genders, between a quarter and a third of voters remain indifferent to the policy.



A research
production by

Section IV

Message impacts on policy support, by PARENTS vs NON-PARENTS

Childcare Spending

"In general, would you prefer that the federal government spend more or less money on childcare programs?"

Impact on desired childcare spending levels – By Parents/Non-Parents

The charts to the right show the impact each treatment message had on support for *increasing* government spending on childcare (top chart) and support for *decreasing* childcare spending (bottom chart). The question asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of parents (orange bar) and non-parents (blue bar) choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for increasing or decreasing spending.

As you can see, both parents and non-parents support increasing over decreasing spending in the Control group.

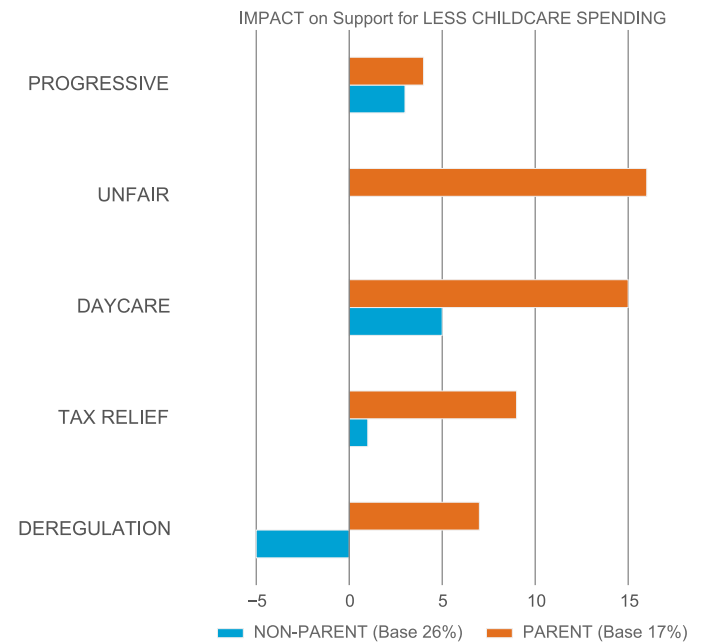
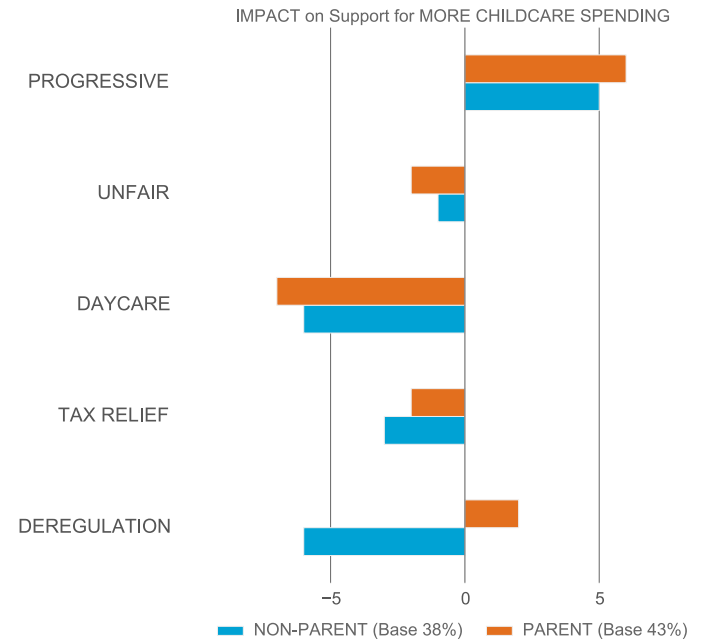
The level of support for more spending is similar among both groups, but the percentage of non-parents who want *less* spending (26 percent) is significantly higher than among parents (just 17 percent).

Interestingly, the messages generally impact parents much more than non-parents in terms of increasing support for *less* spending. The "Unfair" and "Daycare" messages *increase* parental support for *less* spending by 16 and 15 points respectively.

The "Daycare" message also significantly *reduces* support for *more* spending (-7 points). In fact, the "Daycare" message brings support for *less* spending (32 percent) almost to parity with a preference for *more* spending (36 percent) among parents.

The "Daycare" message is also the most effective treatment for non-parents, reducing support for *more* spending -6 points (to 32 percent) and increasing support for *less* spending +5 points (to 31 percent).

A consistently very large percentage of both parents and non-parents, across all groups, prefer to keep spending at the same levels.



Tax Credits/Deductions

“... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy.”

“Give tax relief to families in the form of tax credits or deductions for childcare costs.”

Direct Subsidy 10%

“... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy.”

“Give money to families to use for childcare costs that are more than ten percent (10%) of their income.”

Impact on childcare tax benefits vs direct subsidies — By Parents/Non-Parents

The charts to the right show the impact each message treatment had on support for childcare tax credits and deductions (top chart) and support for direct government subsidies of childcare costs spending (bottom chart). The questions asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of parents (orange bar) and non-parents (blue bar) choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for increasing or decreasing spending.

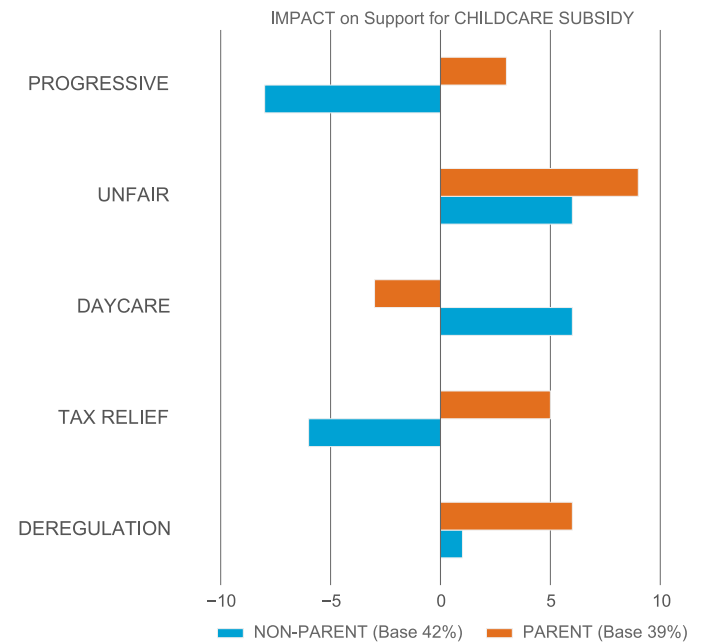
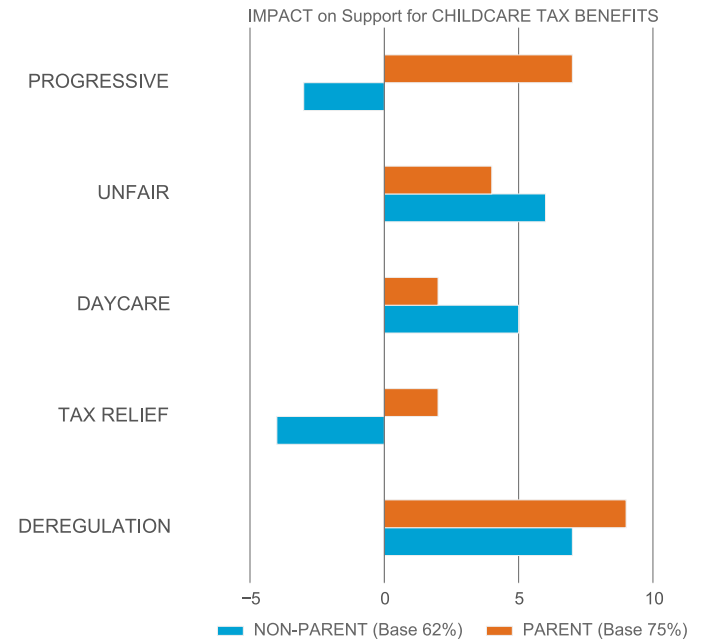
As you can see, baseline support in the Control group for childcare tax benefits is very high for both non-parents (62 percent) and parents (75 percent), with negligible opposition among non-parents (16 percent) and parents in particular (11 percent).

Support for direct childcare subsidies is much lower than for tax benefits among both parents (39 percent) and non-parents (42 percent), and opposition is much higher for parents (36 percent) and non-parents (33 percent).

As we might expect, given that they will receive the benefits, parents are substantially more supportive of and less opposed to tax benefits for childcare (+64 point margin of support) than are non-parents (+47 point margin of support). This unexpectedly reverses in regard to direct childcare subsidies — non-parents are actually more supportive of and less opposed to direct subsidies (+9 point margin of support) than are parents (+3 point margin of support).

The messages also impact parents and non-parents differently — among non-parents, the “Progressive” and “Tax Relief” messages *decrease* support for both tax benefits and direct subsidies by between -3 and -8 points, whereas these messages *increase* support among parents by between +2 and +7 points.

The “Unfair” and “Deregulation” messages appear the most broadly effective, substantially increasing support for tax benefits for both parents and non-parents.



A research production by

Deregulation

"... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy."

"Eliminate some of the regulations on childcare providers."

Impact on childcare deregulation — By Parents/Non-Parents

The charts to the right show the impact each message treatment had on *support* for eliminating some regulations on childcare providers (top chart) and *opposition* to deregulation (bottom chart). The question asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

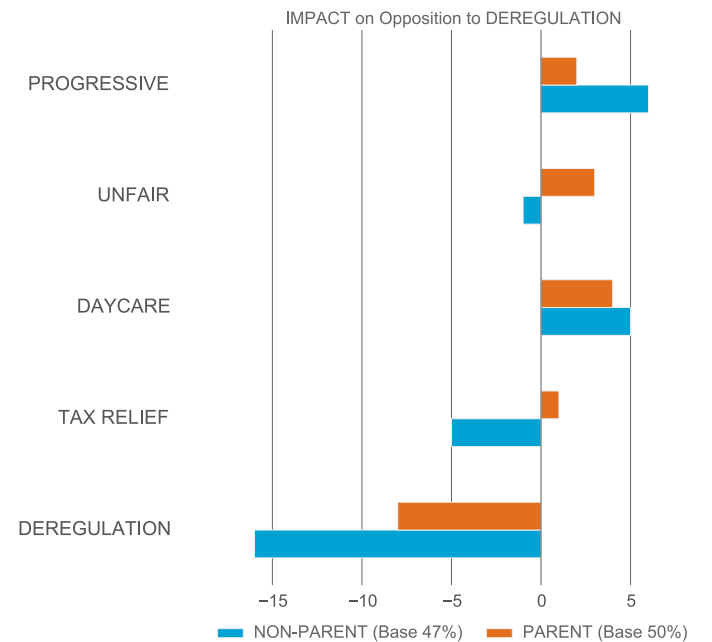
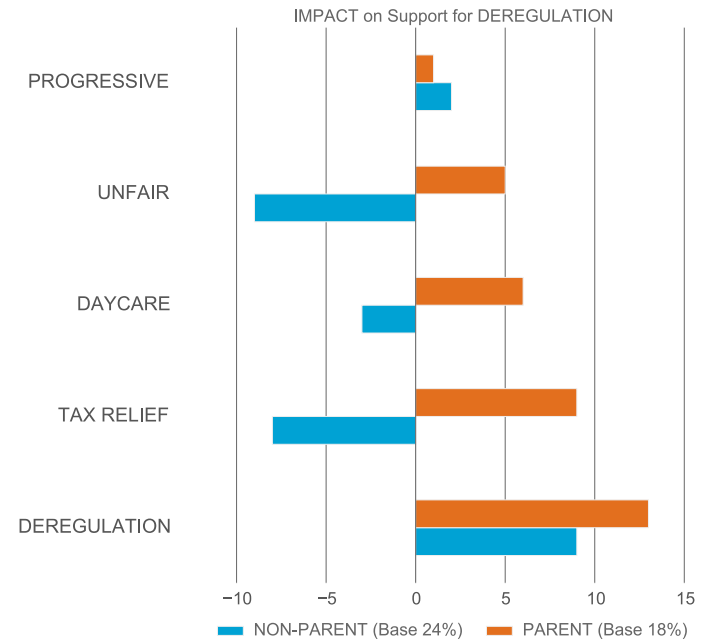
There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of parents (orange bar) and non-parents (blue bar) choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for increasing or decreasing spending.

As you can see, *support* for deregulation in the Control group is quite small for both parents (18 percent) and non-parents (24 percent), while opposition is substantial for parents (50 percent) and non-parents (47 percent).

Among parents, all of the messages at least somewhat increase *support* for deregulation, but only the "Deregulation" (+13 points) and "Tax Relief" (+9 points) messages stand out. And only the "Deregulation" message decreases *opposition* to deregulation (-8 points) among parents. This brings the margin of opposition to deregulation down from -32 points to -11 points (32 percent support and 43 percent opposed).

Non-parents are more well-disposed toward deregulation even in the Control group, but are still heavily opposed on balance (a -23 percent margin of opposition). The "Deregulation" message shifts this significant margin of opposition to a slight +3 point preference for deregulation (33 percent support and 30 percent opposed), with a slightly larger percentage neither opposed nor supportive (37 percent).

Clearly, voters start out with a bias against deregulating childcare providers, but there is a good deal of ambivalence even in the Control group, and both parents and non-parents move significantly when exposed to a message that explains why deregulation is helpful to children and families.



Section V

Message impacts on policy support, by MOTHERS vs FATHERS

Childcare Spending

"In general, would you prefer that the federal government spend more or less money on childcare programs?"

Impact on desired childcare spending levels – By Mothers/Fathers

The charts to the right show the impact each treatment message had on support for *increasing* government spending on childcare (top chart) and support for *decreasing* childcare spending (bottom chart). The question asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

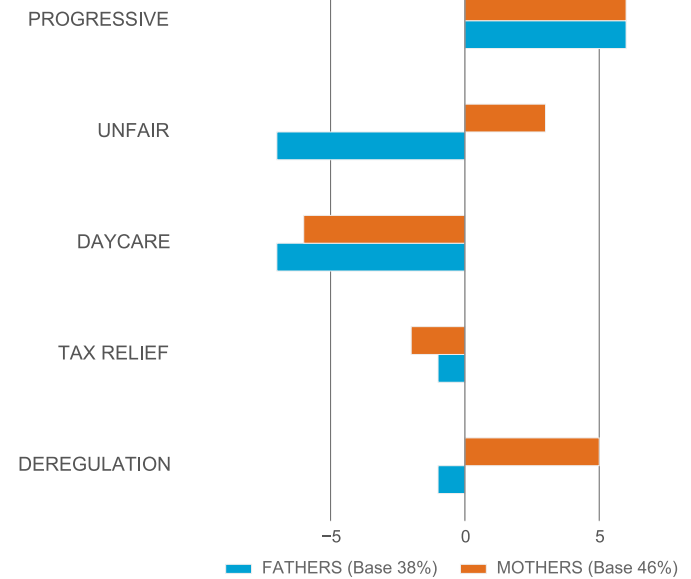
There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of mothers (orange bar) and fathers (blue bar) choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for increasing or decreasing spending.

As you can see, both fathers and mothers support increasing over decreasing spending in the Control group. But nearly as many respondents want to keep spending levels the same. The percentage of fathers who want less spending (23 percent) is about double that of mothers (12 percent).

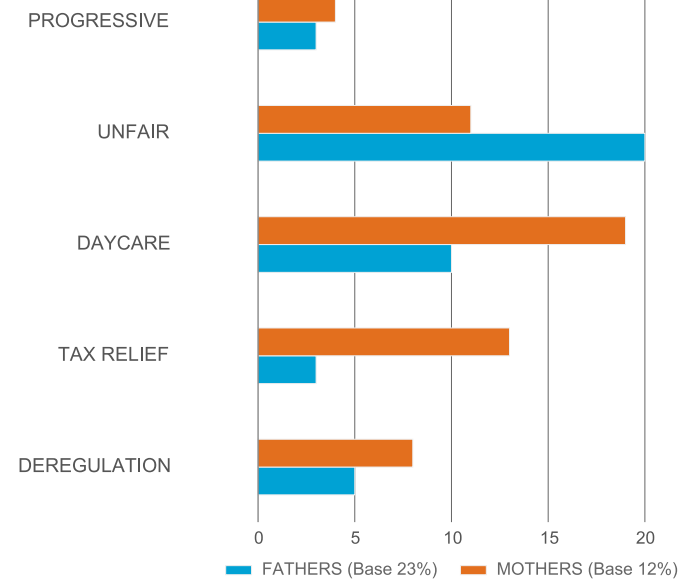
For mothers, there is no message that successfully tips the balance of support to decreased spending. However, three messages do substantially boost support for *less* spending — “Daycare” boosts support for less spending +19 points, “Tax Relief” pushes it up +13 points, and “Unfair” +11 points. The “Daycare” message, is the clear overall winner, as it also decreases support for *more* spending by -6 points. The “Daycare” message brings the margin of support among mothers for more spending over less spending down from +34 points to just +9 points (40 percent for *more* spending and 31 percent for *less* spending).

Fathers are more skeptical of the need for increased spending, and two messages — “Unfair” and “Daycare” — actually turn the +15 point preference for more spending in the Control group into a net preference for *less* spending. The “Daycare” message reduces support for *more* spending -7 points (to 30 percent) and increases support for *less* spending +10 points (to 33 percent). The “Unfair” message reduces support for *more* spending -7 points (to 31 percent) and increases support for *less* spending +20 points (to 43 percent) — that’s a +13 point preference for *less* spending.

IMPACT on Support for MORE CHILDCARE SPENDING



IMPACT on Support for LESS CHILDCARE SPENDING



A research production by

Tax Credits/Deductions

"... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy."

"Give tax relief to families in the form of tax credits or deductions for childcare costs."

Direct Subsidy 10%

"... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy."

"Give money to families to use for childcare costs that are more than ten percent (10%) of their income."

Impact on childcare tax benefits vs direct subsidies — By Mothers/Fathers

The charts to the right show the impact each message treatment had on support for childcare tax credits and deductions (top chart) and support for direct government subsidies of childcare costs (bottom chart). The questions asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of mothers (orange bar) and fathers (blue bar) choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for increasing or decreasing spending.

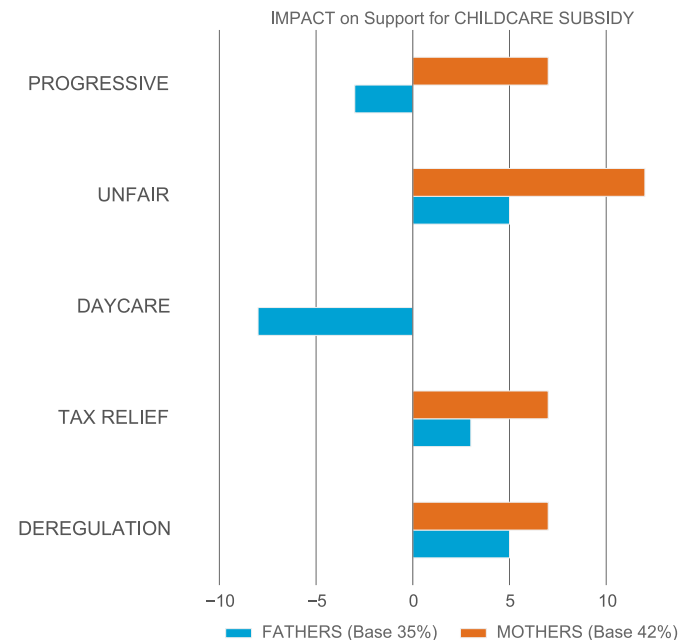
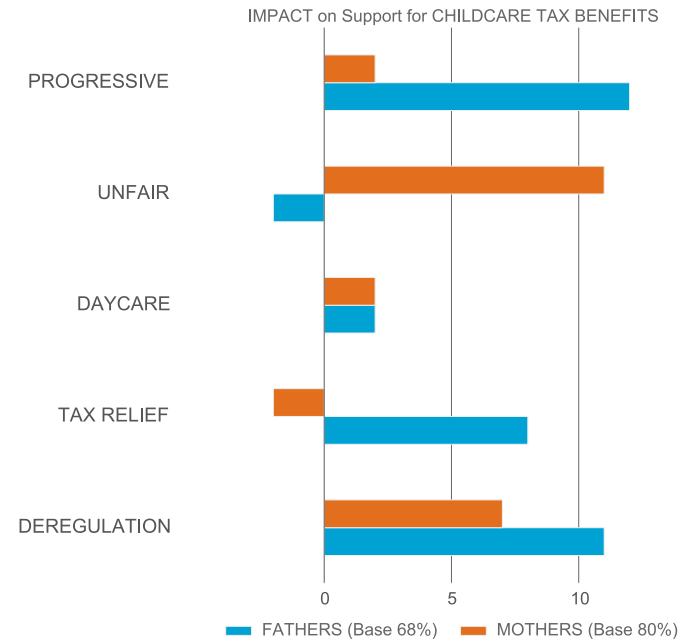
As you can see, baseline support in the Control group for childcare tax benefits is very high for both fathers (68 percent) and especially mothers (80 percent), with negligible opposition among fathers (17 percent) and nearly non-existent opposition among mothers (6 percent).

Two messages actually push support for tax benefits among mothers even higher than baseline. The "Deregulation" message increases support +7 points to 86 percent. The "Unfair" message boosts support +11 points (to 90 percent), with just 6 percent opposition. The margin of support among mothers for childcare tax benefits is a truly stunning +84 points.

Mothers in the Control group are much more ambivalent about direct subsidies for childcare, with less than majority support (42 percent) and quite significant opposition (31 percent). No messages are effective at decreasing support or increasing opposition to the policy. The "Unfair" message, in fact, significantly boosts support for the subsidies (+12 points) and decreases opposition (-8 points).

Three messages boost tax benefit support among fathers — "Progressive" (+12 points), "Tax Relief" (+8 points), and "Deregulation" (+11 points) — while decreasing opposition.

Fathers are more skeptical than mothers about direct subsidies (35 percent support and 41 percent opposed in the Control group), and are primed to become even less supportive. The "Progressive" message *boosts opposition* +8 points, and the "Daycare" message *boosts opposition* +6 points and *decreases support* -8 points.



Deregulation

"... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy."

"Eliminate some of the regulations on childcare providers."

Impact on childcare deregulation — By Mothers/Fathers

The charts to the right show the impact each message treatment had on *support* for eliminating some regulations on childcare providers (top chart) and *opposition* to deregulation (bottom chart). The question asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

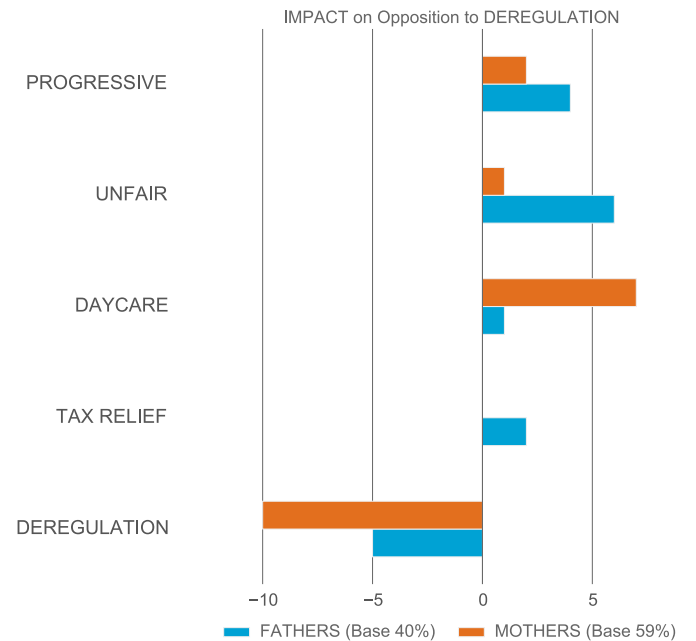
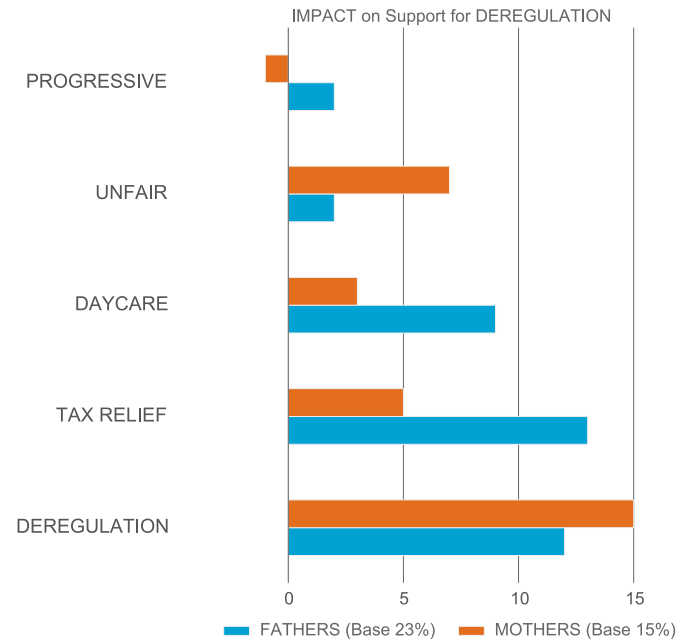
There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of mothers (orange bar) and fathers (blue bar) choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for increasing or decreasing spending.

As you can see, *support* for deregulation in the Control group is quite small for both mothers (15 percent) and fathers (23 percent), while opposition is substantial for mothers (59 percent) and fathers (40 percent).

For mothers, the "Unfair" message increases *support* significantly (+7 points), but fails to decrease opposition. The "Deregulation" messages, in contrast, doubles *support* for deregulation among mothers (+15 points) from 15 to 30 percent and pulls *opposition* down -10 points to just below a majority (49 percent).

We see a greater total shift in preferences among mothers than we do with fathers, but fathers are much more supportive of deregulation at baseline. Fathers are susceptible to persuasion in response to a number of messages — the "Daycare" and "Tax Relief" messages both increase support among fathers significantly (+9 and +13 points, respectively).

The "Deregulation" message, however, is the only message that increases support for deregulation among men (+12 points) as well as decreases opposition (-5 points). These movements bring support for and opposition to deregulation to parity (34 percent for both), leaving nearly a third of fathers neither supportive of nor opposed to deregulation.



Section VI

Message impacts on policy support,
by DEMOCRATS vs REPUBLICANS

Childcare Spending

"In general, would you prefer that the federal government spend more or less money on childcare programs?"

Impact on desired childcare spending levels – By Democrats/Republicans

The charts to the right show the impact each treatment message had on support for *increasing* government spending on childcare (top chart) and support for *decreasing* childcare spending (bottom chart). The question asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of Republicans (orange bar) and Democrats (blue bar) choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for increasing or decreasing spending.

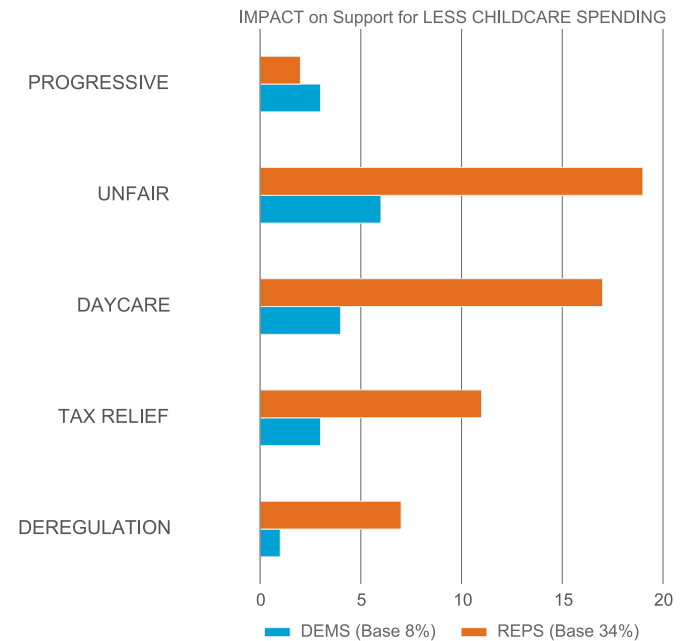
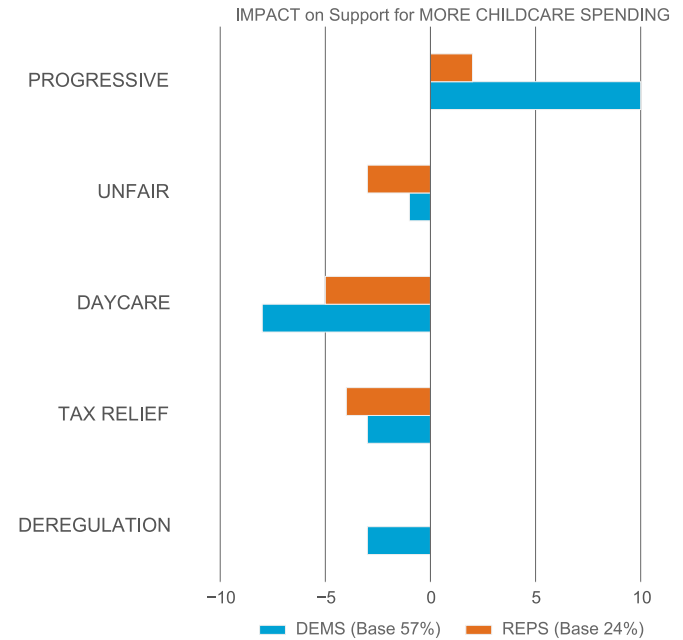
As you can see, a majority of self-identified Democrats support increased spending on childcare programs, but more than a third (35 percent) want to keep spending at the same levels. A negligible percentage of Democrats support *less* spending (8 percent).

Democrats are relatively stable in their spending preferences. The "Progressive" message substantially boosts support for *more* spending (+10 points), and all of the messages very modestly increase support for *less* spending. Only the "Daycare" message significantly cuts into support for *more* spending, bringing it down -8 points to 49 percent while boosting support for *less* spending +4 points.

Republicans are more conflicted — a plurality wish to keep spending the *same* (42 percent), with those preferring *less* spending (34 percent) outweighing those who want *more* spending (24 percent).

While support for *more* spending among Republicans is relatively low, it is also fairly stable — the "Daycare" message has the largest impact at just -5 points.

Republicans are much more likely to move out of the large pool of support for keeping spending levels the same into support for *less* spending. The "Deregulation" and "Tax Relief" give a modest boost to support for *less* spending of +7 and +11 points, respectively. The "Daycare" and "Unfair" messages are much more persuasive, boosting support for *less* spending +17 and +19 points, respectively, for a +32 point margin of support for *less* over *more* spending.



A research production by

Tax Credits/Deductions

"... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy."

"Give tax relief to families in the form of tax credits or deductions for childcare costs."

Direct Subsidy 10%

"... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy."

"Give money to families to use for childcare costs that are more than ten percent (10%) of their income."

Impact on childcare tax benefits vs direct subsidies — By Democrats/Republicans

The charts to the right show the impact each message treatment had on support for childcare tax credits and deductions (top chart) and support for direct government subsidies of childcare costs (bottom chart). The questions asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

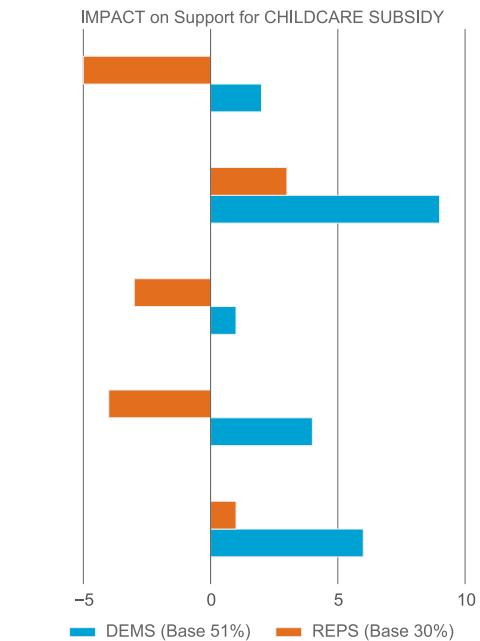
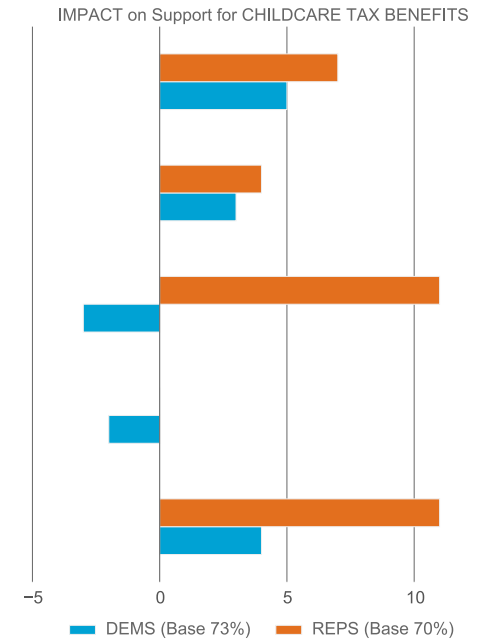
There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of Republicans (orange bar) and Democrats (blue bar) choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for increasing or decreasing spending.

As you can see, baseline support in the Control group for childcare tax benefits is very high for both Republicans (62 percent) and Democrats (75 percent), with minor opposition among Republicans (14 percent) and Democrats (13 percent).

Among Republicans, the "Daycare" and "Deregulation" messages perform best, increasing support for tax benefits by +11 points to 81 percent. Among Democrats, there is less substantial movement — the "Progressive" message increases support +5 points and the "Deregulation" message provides a +4 point boost.

Support for direct childcare subsidies is much more mixed, even among Democrats — support in the Control group just tops a majority at 51 percent, but is balanced by substantial opposition (24 percent) and those choosing neither option (25 percent). The "Unfair" message substantially increases Democratic support for direct subsidies (+9 points) to 60 percent and slightly decreases opposition (-4 points).

A near-majority of Republicans in the Control group oppose direct subsidies (48 percent), with a substantial minority in support (30 percent). A few messages drain some support for direct subsidies, but the "Progressive" message stands out. The "Progressive" message shaves -5 points from Republican support for subsidies (to 25 percent) and has an even greater impact on opposition, which is not presented in the chart. The "Progressive" message increases Republican opposition to direct subsidies by +13 points to 60 percent.



Deregulation

"... please indicate how much you support or oppose the policy."

"Eliminate some of the regulations on childcare providers."

Impact on childcare deregulation – By Democrats/Republicans

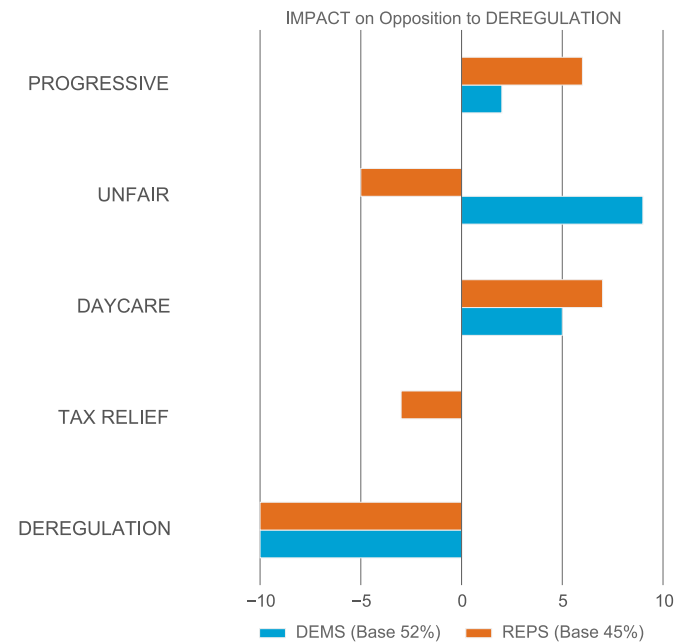
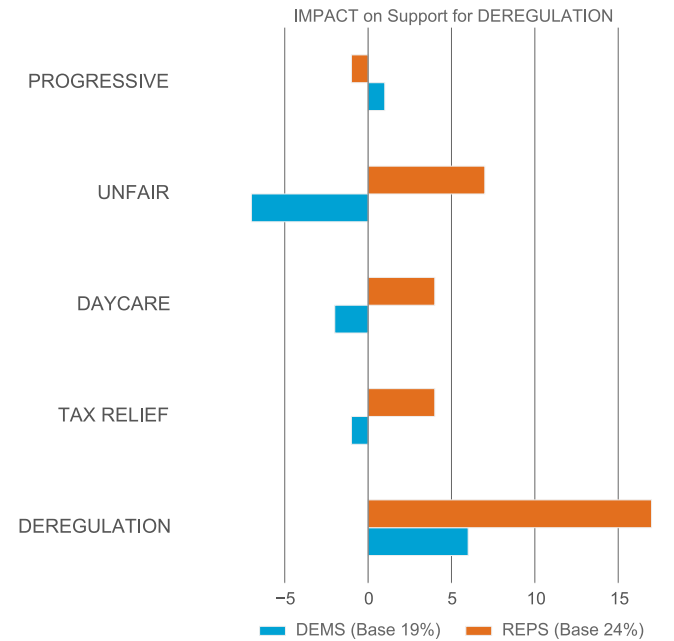
The charts to the right show the impact each message treatment had on *support* for eliminating some regulations on childcare providers (top chart) and *opposition* to deregulation (bottom chart). The question asked in the survey can be seen to the left, in blue italic text.

There is a legend below each chart that gives the baseline, Control group percentage of Republicans (orange bar) and non-Democrats (blue bar) choosing each option. Adding the total impact to that baseline will give you the total support for increasing or decreasing spending.

As you can see, *support* for deregulation in the Control group is quite small for Democrats (19 percent) and even Republicans (24 percent), while opposition is substantial for Republicans (45 percent) and Democrats (52 percent) as well.

Republicans do, however, move substantially when exposed to the "Deregulation" message. Support for deregulation among Republicans surges +17 points to 41 points, while opposition sags -10 points to 35 percent. The "Deregulation" message thereby turns a Control group baseline -21 point margin of *opposition* to deregulation into a +6 margin of *support* for the policy among Republicans. The "Unfair" message is somewhat effective with Republicans, moderately increasing support for deregulation +7 points and decreasing opposition -5 points.

Although Democrats also respond to the "Deregulation" message, the movement is not nearly as dramatic, and still leaves a balance of opposition to deregulation. The "Deregulation" message increases Democratic support +6 points and decreases opposition -10 points, cutting a -34 margin of opposition to deregulation in the Control group down to a margin of -18 points. The "Unfair" message actually seems to backfire with Democrats, decreasing support for deregulation -7 points and increasing opposition +9 points.



About the Researchers

Adam B. Schaeffer

Adam Schaeffer is founder and director of research for Evolving Strategies. He is consumed by an itch to understand what makes people tick, why they think and do the things they do.

Adam has spent the last ten years running sophisticated experiments in the field and in the “lab” to maximize the impact of advertising and optimize messaging tactics. He led the design, execution and analysis of the largest applied political science field experiment in history, involving more than half a million test subjects.

Adam’s focus and passion is designing experiments that go beyond mundane A/B testing to get at bigger questions and much greater ROI for clients. He helps clients discover not just what works, but why it works, and that understanding provides hugely valuable strategic advantages.

Adam received his Ph.D. from the University of Virginia in political psychology and behavior. His dissertation assessed how different combinations of school choice policies and messages can expand and mobilize elite and mass support. He received his M.A. in Social Science from the University of Chicago, where his thesis integrated aspects of evolutionary theory and psychology with political theory and strategy.

Adam’s academic research and teaching centered around social psychology and human behavior, and this emphasis continues to animate his applied research. He considers himself akin to a research biologist who happens to have the great privilege of studying the behavior of the most complex and fascinating animal on the planet; *Homo sapiens*.

Alexander J. Oliver

Alex Oliver is director of experimental research at Evolving Strategies. He tends to be a bit preoccupied — colleagues might say borderline obsessed — with precision and details: from the exotic ink in his fountain pen to managing public opinion during wars and natural disasters.

Over the last seven years in both academic and private sector contexts, he’s executed survey and field experiments to gain global strategic insights about how people think and act during crises—from political campaigns to combat missions abroad—and how to respond to them.

Alex co-authored the definitive review article on the politics of disaster relief for the forthcoming *Emerging Trends* project, which New York Times bestselling author and neuroscientist Daniel J. Levitin has called “an indispensable reference work for the 21st century” and the director of the Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Science Gary King has called an “unconventional guide to the future.”

He’s held faculty positions at Brandeis University and Boston University where he taught both undergraduate and graduate courses in the use of force abroad, public opinion, voter behavior, congressional behavior, and campaign strategy. His research has been presented at both national and international conferences.

Alex received his MA in economics from Tufts University, where he received the department’s most prestigious endowed scholarship, and his BA in mathematics and economics from Merrimack College. He will receive his PhD from Boston University in quantitative methods and public opinion in 2015.

The ES Network

Evolving Strategies taps a broad network of academics with a range of specialized skills and domain expertise – experimental designs, political behavior/psychology, statistics, etc. – across disciplines such as political science, psychology, economics, marketing, statistics and computer science. Every project is unique, and we bring the best set of people and skills together for each engagement.



About IWF

IWF's mission is to improve the lives of Americans by increasing the number of women who value free markets and personal liberty. By aggressively seeking earned media, providing easy-to-read, timely publications and commentary, and reaching out to the public, we seek to cultivate support for these important principles and encourage women to join us in working to return the country to limited, Constitutional government. IWF is a non-partisan, 501(c)(3) research and educational institution.

The current project touches three of IWF's six issue pillars.

Dollars and Sense Economics

IWF's Dollars and Sense Economic Project highlights the problems with costs of government overreach, including how government's overspending impacts the economy and taxpayers and how programs that sound compassionate, such as extended unemployment benefits and generous welfare programs, can discourage work and ultimately harm those they are intended to help.

IWF offers an alternative vision of how government can be scaled back, so that aid and intervention is targeted where it is really needed and a thriving private sector and civil society can emerge. IWF highlights ways that government could be cut (including reform of our entitlement programs) and how the tax code could be made fairer and less burdensome, and encourage greater growth and innovation. IWF also explains how regulations are strangling the private sector, preventing job creation, and needlessly constricting Americans' private life. IWF highlights how regulations in particular make the economy less dynamic and less flexible. IWF also analyzes other government attempts to micromanage the way Americans live (from the content of our food to the cars we drive) and highlights how these policies erode our freedom and quality of life.

Women at Work

Through IWF's Women at Work project, IWF helps shape conversations about women in the economy and particularly how government helps and hinders women's opportunities. IWF provides an important voice in explaining that the disproportionate number of women who take time out of the work place to raise children, care for elderly parents or opt for lower-paying, more-flexible and fulfilling jobs has more to do with preferences and choice than unequal opportunities.

Government efforts to close the wage gap by micromanaging wages or mandating benefits end up backfiring on women by diminishing choice and opportunity and creating a less flexible, dynamic workplace, which is what women really want and need. IWF is the leading group discrediting and explaining what Progressive proposals, such as the Paycheck Fairness Act and the FAMILY Act, would actually do and helping make the case for developing alternative, conservative solutions to give women greater economic opportunity.

Women and Politics

The role of women in the public and political sphere is also an increasingly important issue that influences Americans' support for different political philosophies. IWF encourages an appreciation for the unprecedented opportunities the United States provides women, as well as how we can continue to improve our society to help women reach their full potential.

IWF has a common sense approach to discussing natural differences between men and women, as well as society's role in encouraging both sexes to make the most of their talents. IWF is a leader in discussing how to engage women in conversations about politics and policy, and encouraging women not to see themselves as victims, but as empowered individuals with many options and opportunities.