

# Healthcare and the Build Back Better Act

*Key findings from a national survey among 1,200 voters  
Conducted August 30 to September 7, 2021 for Protect Our Care*

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OUR CARE

**HART**  
**RESEARCH**  
ASSOCIATES

## Key Takeaways

1. A large majority of voters support the Build Back Better Act when they hear about its array of provisions, including the \$3.5 trillion price tag.
2. The **healthcare provisions are the most important drivers of support** for Build Back Better, and they need to be **front and center** in making the case for the passage of the bill. When making the overarching case that bill will lower costs for working families, it is important to say “starting with lowering the cost of healthcare.”
3. The healthcare provisions are almost universally supported by voters, in most cases with significant intensity, and majorities of voters say that they will personally benefit from the healthcare provisions.
4. Three-quarters of voters say the prices drug companies charge are unreasonable, and by a margin of better than two-to-one voters worry more that Congress will not go far enough to lower the cost of prescription drugs than that it will go too far in regulating pharmaceutical prices.
5. Telling voters that no Republicans are for the bill has minimal impact on support for the Build Back Better Act. If the choice in the election is between a Democrat who supports the health care provisions and Republican who opposes them, voters say by 47% to 28% they would be more likely to vote for the Democrat. Non-Democrats who would vote for a Democrat on this basis make up 12% of the electorate.

## Basic frame for the health care provisions: lowering the cost of healthcare for working families and seniors; making sure Americans can afford the healthcare they need

### *Describing the five key healthcare provisions:*

- Reduce the cost of prescription drugs by giving Medicare the power to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies for lower prices
- Make dental care, vision care, and hearing care more affordable for seniors by covering them under Medicare
- Establish a cap on how much seniors on Medicare have to pay out of pocket for prescription drugs
- Make health insurance more affordable for people who buy coverage on their own by expanding tax credits and subsidies to offset the cost of premiums
- Give low- and moderate-income Americans, including seniors, children, and people who do not get insurance at work, the opportunity to get health insurance at little or no cost if their state does not offer coverage under Medicaid

## Pushing Back on Opposition Attacks – I

There are strong and successful responses to each of the oppositions' attacks on the healthcare provisions, and it would be malpractice to give our opponents free rein to define these debates.

**Seniors will be denied access to medicines because the bill will give government the power to decide which treatments to cover.**

### The Best Response:

**“Medicines do not work if patients cannot afford them,** and too many seniors today cannot get the medicines they need because drug companies charge excessive prices. This bill will make sure drug companies charge reasonable prices that are more in line with what other countries pay.”

## Pushing Back on Opposition Attacks – II

There are strong and successful responses to each of the oppositions' attacks on the healthcare provisions, and it would be malpractice to give our opponents free rein to define these debates.

**The bill takes money out of Medicare to pay for “a laundry list of liberal social programs.”**

### The Best Response:

“This legislation **strengthens Medicare by covering dental care, vision care, and hearing care**, and it puts a cap on how much seniors have to pay out of pocket for prescriptions.”

Do not say that these added benefits are a “down payment on Medicare for All” or describe them as “Medicare expansion.” They are added benefits that strengthen Medicare and help seniors afford the healthcare they need.

## Pushing Back on Opposition Attacks – III

There are strong and successful responses to each of the oppositions' attacks on the healthcare provisions, and it would be malpractice to give our opponents free rein to define these debates.

**Medicare price negotiations  
will reduce research and  
development of new life-  
saving treatments.**

### The Best Response:

**“Millions of Americans cannot afford their medicines** while drug companies make huge profits. Americans should not have to choose between paying for the medicines they need or pay for their food and rent, and we should not have to pay three times more for medicines than people in other countries.”

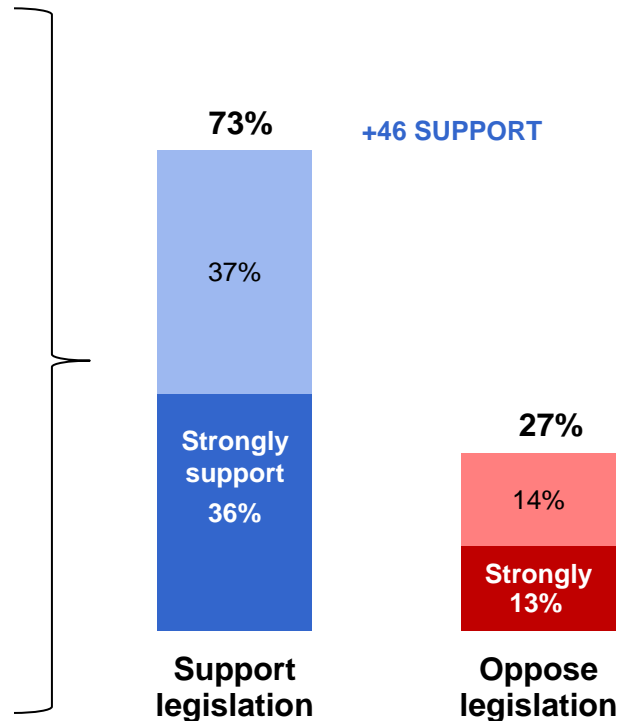
# A large majority of voters support the Build Back Better Act after seeing a list of its provisions, including the price tag.

## Support for Build Back Better Act, after Hearing Provisions\*

\* Main provisions of legislative package Congress is considering:

- Dental, vision, hearing care more affordable for seniors under Medicare
- Reduce Rx costs: give Medicare power to negotiate drug prices
- Limit/cap seniors' out-of-pocket for Rx drugs on Medicare (currently no limit)
- Affordable health insurance thru tax credits/subsidies to offset cost of premiums
- Give low/moderate-income Americans, incl. seniors, children, people not insured thru work, option to get health coverage at little/no cost if state does not offer Medicaid
- Expand clean energy/combat climate change thru wind/solar incentives, clean energy standards for electricity companies
- Lower energy costs: homes, buildings, vehicles more energy efficient
- Expand access to quality, affordable home care for elderly/people with disabilities, while improving pay and training for home care providers
- Expand access to quality child care that working parents can afford
- Continue the new child tax credit of \$3,000 to \$3,600 per child per year
- Provide two years of tuition-free community college
- Provide pre-kindergarten for three- and four-year-old children

This legislation would cost \$3.5 trillion over 10 years, paid for by raising taxes on corporations/wealthy. It would not raise taxes on anyone earning under \$400,000 a year.



## There is broad support for the Build Back Better Act among independents, swing voters, and moderates, and half of Republicans are favorable.

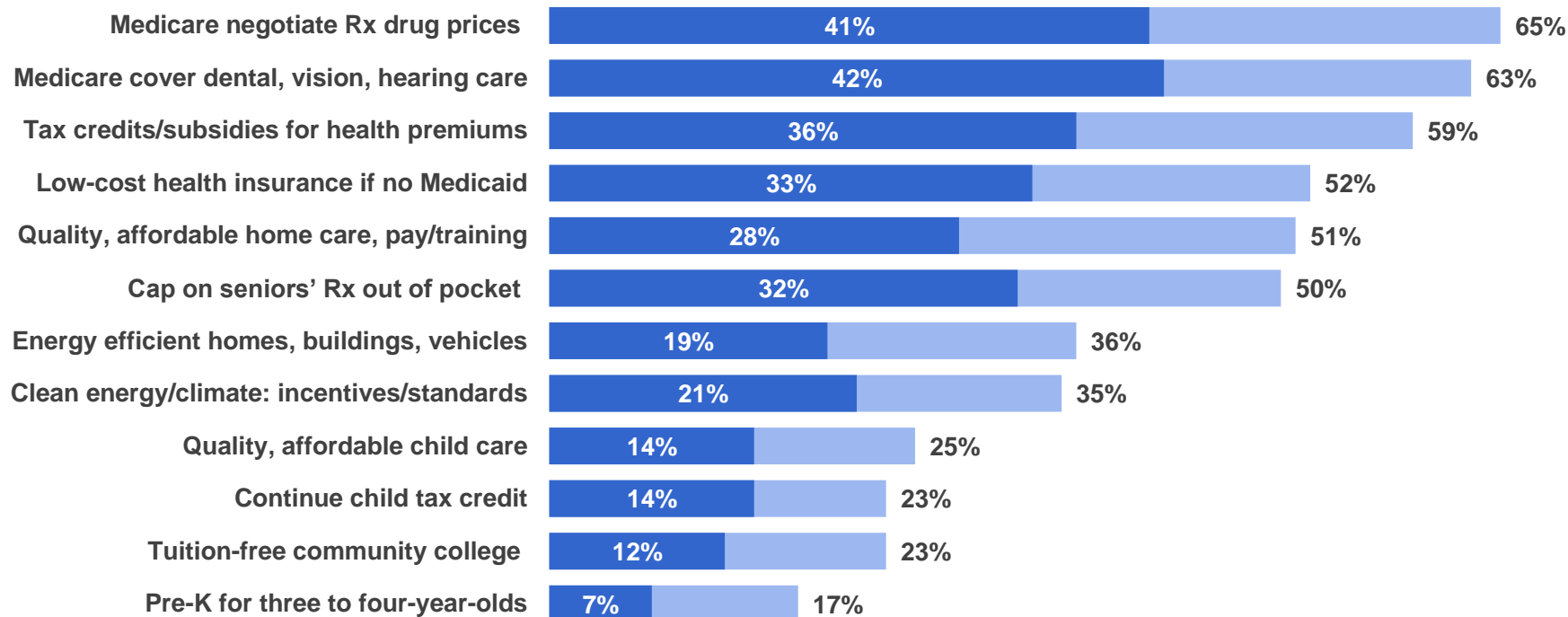
### *Support for Build Back Better Act, after Hearing Provisions*

	Total support	Strong support		Total support	Strong support
<b>All voters</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>36%</b>	White voters	67%	32%
Democrats	95%	61%	Black voters	92%	51%
Independents	79%	34%	Latinx voters	83%	48%
Republicans	51%	14%	White suburban women	76%	35%
Swing voters	79%	32%	White small town/rural voters	59%	23%
Moderates	83%	39%	White seniors	58%	25%

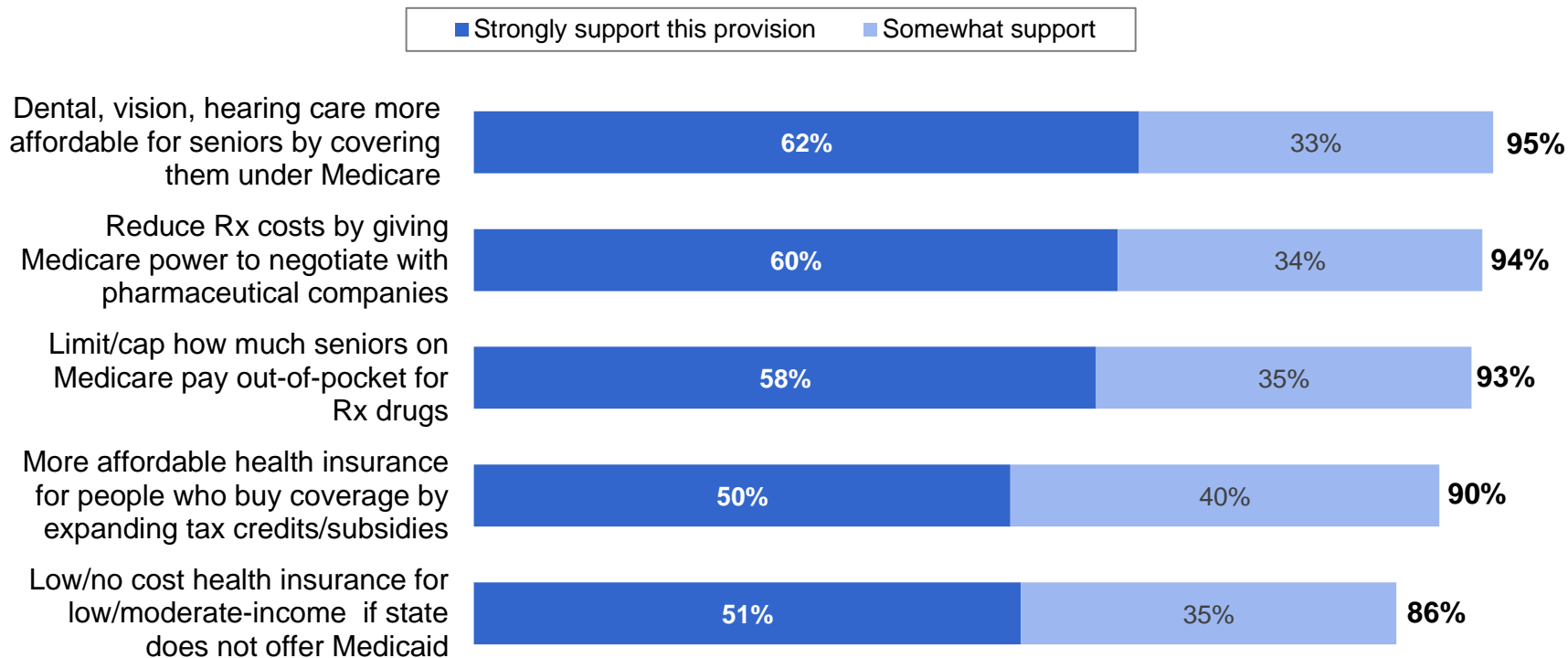


# The healthcare provisions are the most important elements in driving support for the package.

■ Three most important provisions of legislation    ■ Five most important provisions

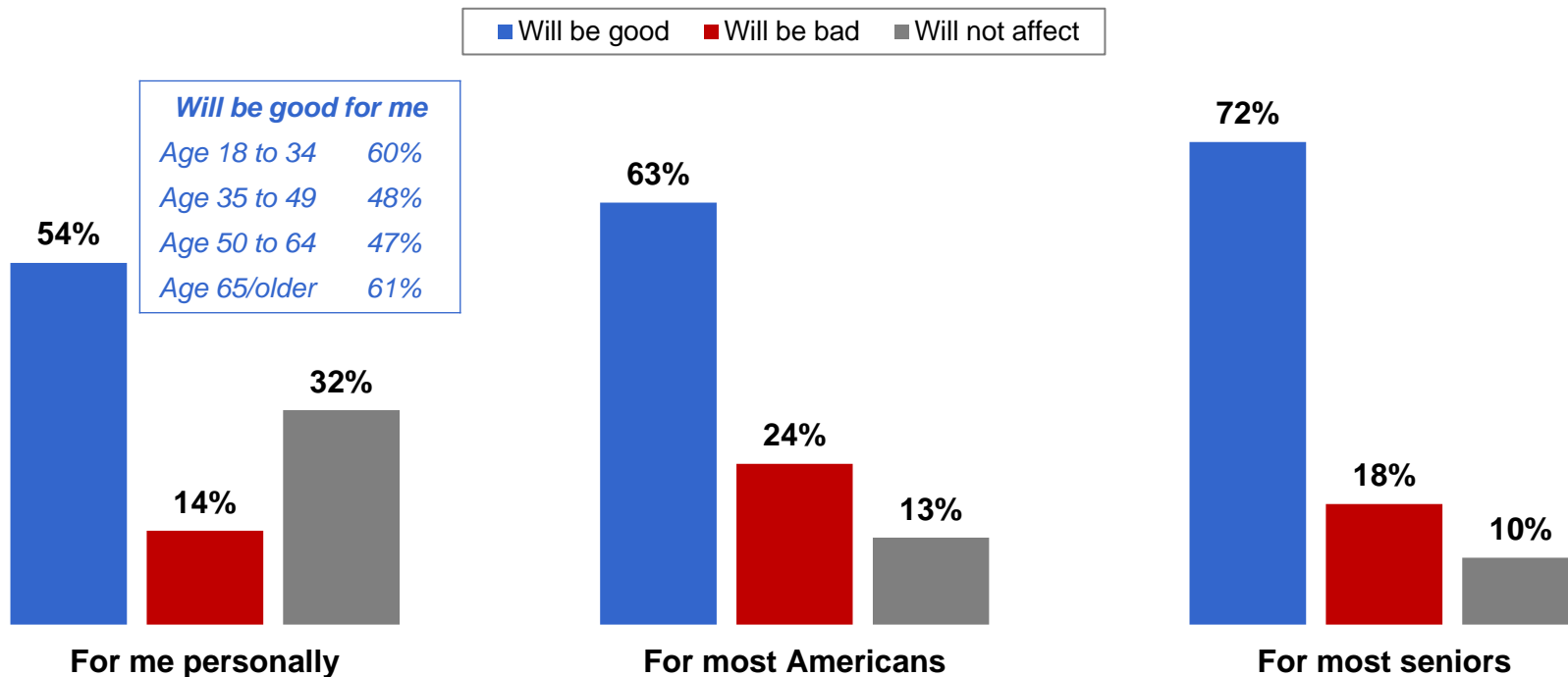


## There is overwhelming support for each of the healthcare provisions, with strong support among majorities of voters.



# A majority of voters say they personally would benefit from the healthcare provisions, and large majorities say others with benefit.

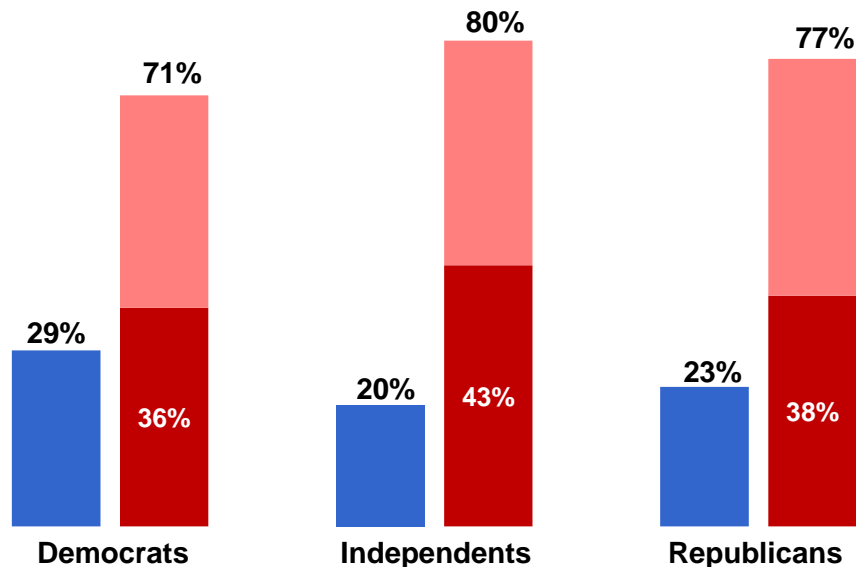
## Expected Impact of Healthcare Provisions of Build Back Better Act



# Across party lines, voters say drug company prices are unreasonable and worry that Congress won't go far enough to lower drug

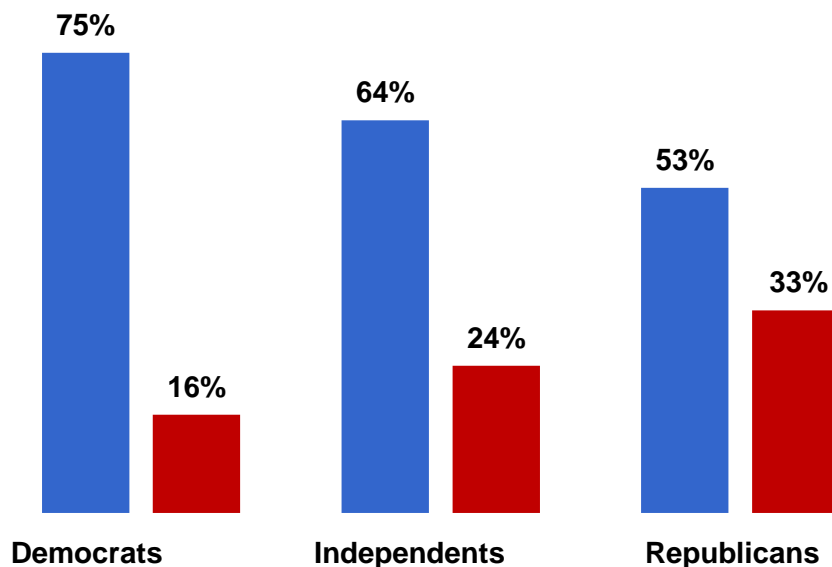
*Amount Pharma Companies Charge for Rx Drugs*

■ Reasonable ■ Very unreasonable ■ Mostly unreasonable



*Bigger Worry about Congress and Pharma Company Prices*

■ Won't go far enough to lower Rx costs ■ Will go too far regulating, hamper R&D of life-saving drugs



## There are three points Democrats should make repetitively about drug prices:

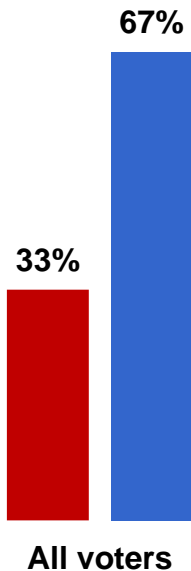
- **Americans should not pay three times more** for medicines than people in other countries do. *(82% convincing, including 59% very convincing)*
- **Millions of Americans cannot afford their medicines** while drug companies make huge profits. Americans should not have to choose between paying for the medicines they need or paying for their food and rent. *(77% convincing, including 53% very convincing)*
- **Drug companies raise the price of existing drugs like insulin year after year**, with no reason other than that they can. Even during the pandemic and economic crisis, drug companies raised the prices of more than 1,000 medicines. *(77% convincing, including 49% very convincing)*

# There are winning responses to opposition claims that action on drug prices will suppress discovery of new treatments. Response are stronger when they focus on the impact on people.

*Which side's argument is more convincing?*

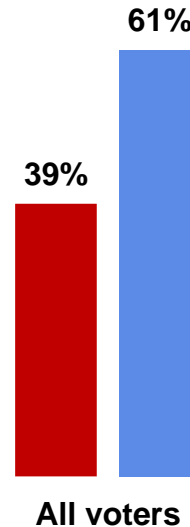
- (same in both pairs) **OPPONENTS** say that by establishing government price controls on prescription drugs, this legislation will **reduce the ability of pharmaceutical companies to invest in the discovery** of new life-saving medicines to treat cancer, Alzheimer's, and other diseases.

- **SUPPORTERS** say **millions of Americans cannot afford their medicines**, while drug companies make huge profits. Americans should not have to choose between paying for the medicines they need or paying for their food and rent, and we should not have to pay three times more for medicines than people in other countries do.



Agree with:	Soft supporters	Moderates
Supporters	71%	79%
Opponents	29%	21%

- **SUPPORTERS** say the **drug companies are making record profits** and using the money to reward shareholders and pay gigantic CEO bonuses. They will continue to have plenty of incentive to invest in the development of new drugs, and the government will continue its funding of the research that is responsible for the discovery of many new cures.



Agree with:	Soft supporters	Moderates
Supporters	64%	69%
Opponents	36%	31%

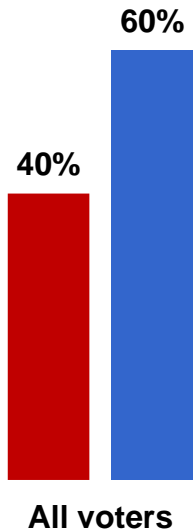
# We also win the argument over the opposition’s claim that the bill will restrict what drugs are covered (again, most effectively by emphasizing the real world impacts of high drug prices).

*Which side’s argument is more convincing?*

- (same in both pairs) **OPPONENTS** say this legislation **will prevent seniors from getting the drugs they need** by giving the government the power to decide which medicines it will cover under Medicare.

- **SUPPORTERS** say medicines do not work if patients cannot afford them, and too many **seniors today cannot get the medicines they need because drug companies charge excessive prices**. This legislation will make sure drug companies charge reasonable prices that are more in line with what other countries pay.

Agree with:	Soft supporters	Moderates
Supporters	64%	67%
Opponents	36%	33%



- **SUPPORTERS** say this is just a **scare tactic by the drug industry** that has been declared false by independent fact checkers. The legislation simply requires the drug companies to negotiate with Medicare to set a reasonable price, and it does not impact which drugs Medicare will cover.

Agree with:	Soft supporters	Moderates
Supporters	57%	62%
Opponents	43%	38%



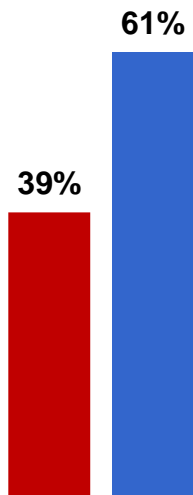
# The best rebuttal to the charge that the bill take money from Medicare to pay for liberal social program highlights the ways BBB strengthens Medicare with added benefits.

*Which side's argument is more convincing?*

■ (same in both pairs) **OPPONENTS** say this legislation takes money out of Medicare to **pay for a laundry list of liberal social programs**.

■ **SUPPORTERS** say this legislation **strengthens Medicare by covering dental care, vision care, and hearing care**, and it puts a cap on how much seniors have to pay out of pocket for prescriptions.

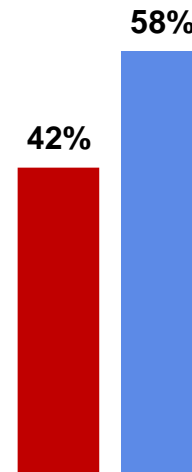
Agree with:	Soft supporters	Moderates
Supporters	66%	72%
Opponents	34%	28%



All voters

■ **SUPPORTERS** say this legislation will **save taxpayers money** by stopping drug companies from charging Medicare outrageous amounts for prescription medicines.

Agree with:	Soft supporters	Moderates
Supporters	62%	68%
Opponents	38%	32%



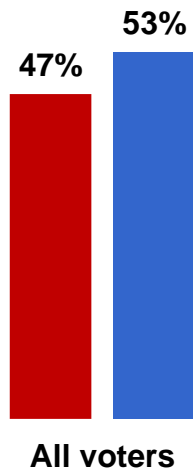
All voters



# We get a narrower split on a point-counterpoint debate on the overall cost of the legislation and its impact on prices, but at least are arguing these to a draw.

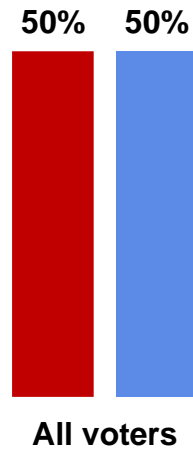
## Which side's argument is more convincing?

- **OPPONENTS** say this \$3.5 trillion legislation is a **huge increase in government spending** at time when the deficit and debt already are at record highs, and comes on top other multi-trillion-dollar spending bills. Eventually regular people's taxes will be increased in order to pay for all of this.
- **SUPPORTERS** say this legislation is **paid for by making sure the wealthy and multi-national corporations pay their fair share**. If you earn less than \$400,000 per year, you will not pay a penny more in taxes, and many people's taxes will actually go down. Top economists agree that the long-term benefits will far surpass the costs of the investments.



Agree with:	Soft supporters	Moderates
Supporters	60%	60%
Opponents	40%	40%

- **OPPONENTS** say that this legislation **will hit consumers in their wallets** and make the problem of rising prices even worse because another \$3.5 trillion in government will further fuel inflation, and higher taxes on businesses will force them to raise prices for the goods and services they buy.
- **SUPPORTERS** say that this legislation **will lower costs for working families and seniors**--starting with lower prescription drug prices and lowering the cost of health insurance premiums. It will make child care, elder care, and education more affordable for working families, and give tax cuts to families with children.

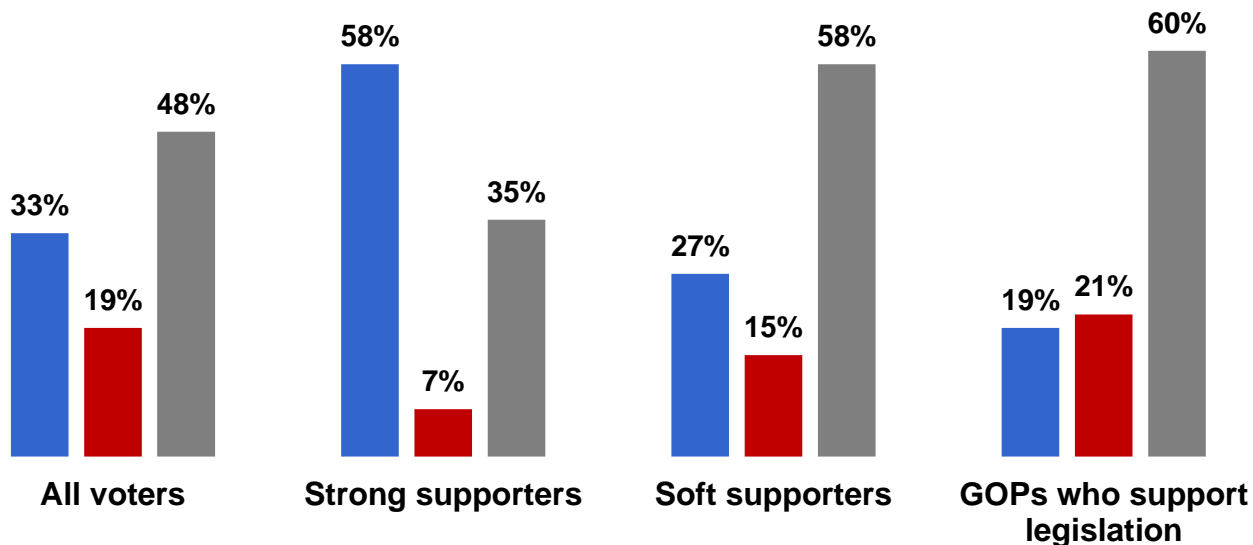


Agree with:	Soft supporters	Moderates
Supporters	52%	59%
Opponents	48%	41%

## The fact this BBB is backed by Biden and Democrats, with no Republican support, has little impact on support for the bill.

President Biden and nearly all Democrats in Congress support this legislative package, but no Republicans in either the U.S. Senate or U.S. House of Representatives support this legislative package.

■ Makes me more favorable to the legislation ■ Makes me less favorable ■ Makes no difference

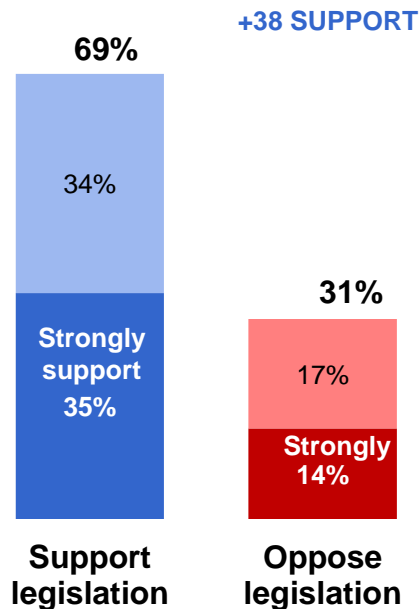
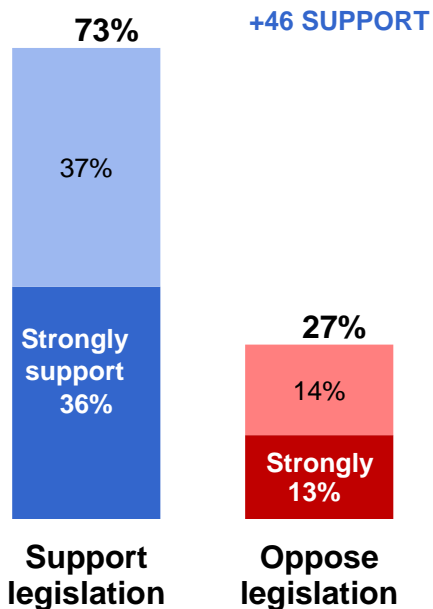


# Support for the Build Back Better Act remains durable, even after voters hear the pro-con debates and are told about the partisan dynamics.

*Support for Build Back Better Act, after Hearing Provisions*

## INITIAL SUPPORT

## POST-MESSAGING SUPPORT



	Initial support	Post-message support
Democrats	95%	94%
Independents	79%	76%
Republicans	51%	44%

Results early in the survey show that Democrats have lost some of their previous advantage on healthcare. Reestablishing that advantage is crucial for 2022, and the best way to do that is to deliver on more affordable healthcare for Americans.

*Who do you trust more on dealing with the issue of healthcare?*

