

**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Global Strategy Group & Paid Leave for All Action

**Date:** May 2021

**Re:** New Survey Shows Voters in Senate Battleground States Want Paid Leave Urgently, as Part of Infrastructure Package

When the coronavirus pandemic first hit the United States, tens of millions of Americans did not have access to paid family or medical leave that would allow them to take care of themselves or family members suffering from a serious illness, or for a new child. Support for programs like paid leave, which had always been popular, skyrocketed to near universal levels.

Now, over a year later, with more than half of Americans vaccinated and returning to daily life,<sup>1</sup> a new Global Strategy Group<sup>2</sup> survey of 1,070 likely 2022 voters from seven battleground states (AZ, FL, GA, NV, NC, PA, WI) shows support for paid leave continues to have near universal support. In fact, voters are demanding a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program be created urgently, as part of an infrastructure package. Further, this survey shows that even as the pandemic fades in the rearview, senators who champion paid leave benefit at the ballot box.

**These states will decide control of the Senate and could go either way.** In 2020, Republicans came within 55,000 votes of controlling the Senate, and 2022 could be even closer: Voters in seven battleground states that are likely to decide control of the Senate are currently split on whether they would rather re-elect (40%) or replace (45%) their incumbent Senator. If Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell want Senate control come 2022, each will need to appeal to the 20% of undecided voters across these seven states who are unsure how they would vote were their current Senator running for re-election today.

## Battleground voters – especially persuadable voters – support and prioritize passing paid leave

**Consistent with previous polling, there is overwhelming bipartisan support for paid leave.** At the height of the coronavirus pandemic, 2020 Senate battleground voters expressed overwhelming support for paid leave.<sup>3</sup> Now headed into 2022, 84% of voters, including majorities of Democrats (96%), independents (81%), Republicans (74%), and Trump voters (74%) support paid leave. Support is so strong that undecided voters are more likely to strongly support paid leave (91% support, including 49% strong support) than they are to strongly support overwhelmingly popular elements of the American Jobs Plan, including “building and repairing America’s roads and bridges” (91% support, including 44% strong support).

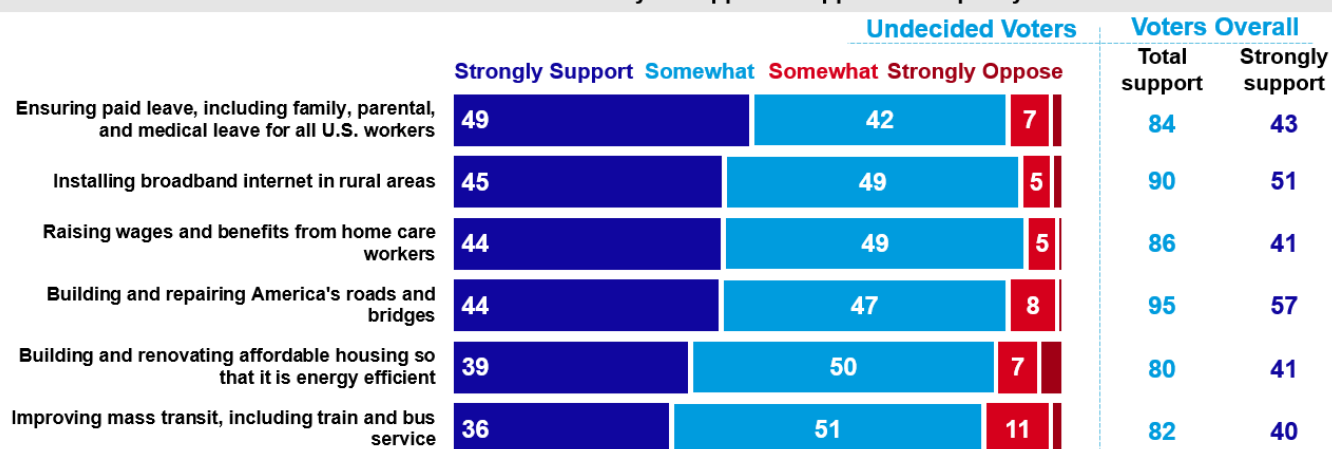
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<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://navigatorresearch.org/pandemic-optimism-reaches-an-all-time-high/>

<sup>2</sup> Global Strategy Group is the go-to public opinion research firm for candidates running in some of the toughest seats in the country. GSG has twice been named pollster of the year by the nonpartisan American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC) and was involved in all four of the 2020 Senate races that flipped from red to blue. For more information, please see <https://www.globalstrategygroup.com/>. For more information about the accuracy of issue polling, please see Pew Research’s March 2021 study showing that “errors of the magnitude seen in some of the 2020 election polls would alter measures of opinion on issues by an average of less than one percentage point” here: <https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/2021/03/02/what-2020s-election-poll-errors-tell-us-about-the-accuracy-of-issue-polling/>.

<sup>3</sup> See appendix for description of past polling.

Please indicate whether you support or oppose each policy

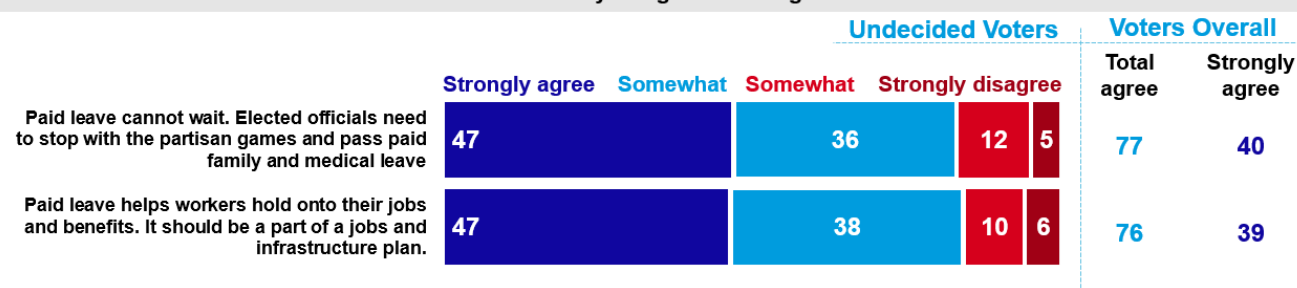


And support for paid leave is even higher for specific elements of the program. A majority of undecided voters, Democrats, independents, and Republicans all *strongly* support creating a program that provides U.S. workers with paid leave when they're suffering from a serious illness.

% total support   % strong support for creating a program that provides U.S. workers with paid leave when...										
	Overall		Dem.		Ind.		GOP		Undecided	
Caring for a new child	88	52	94	64	90	57	81	41	95	60
Caring for a seriously ill family member	91	53	97	66	87	50	86	42	91	66
Suffering from a serious illness	94	65	97	78	92	63	92	54	94	74

**Battleground voters are calling on elected officials to urgently pass paid leave as part of an infrastructure plan.** After a more than year-long pandemic that killed nearly 600,000 Americans and left tens of millions unemployed at its peak, battleground voters believe we need paid leave and we need it now. In fact, undecided voters split on whether they believe “rebuilding American transportation, including repairing and improving roads, bridges, and mass transit” or “passing a national paid leave policy to ensure U.S. workers have paid family and medical leave” would do more to help their community (50% rebuilding American transportation/50% passing paid leave).

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement



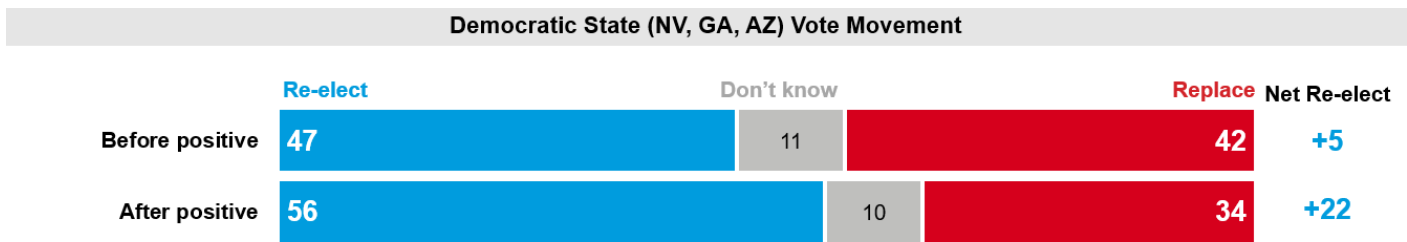
Key Senate races can be won or lost on paid leave

**When Democrats support paid leave and Republicans oppose, Democrats win decisively.** Absent any other information about candidates, battleground voters are one point more likely to prefer a generic Republican over a generic Democrat (48% Republican/47% Democrat). But when a Republican candidate opposes paid leave and a Democrat supports, as has historically been the case, Republicans lose their advantage: Democrats suddenly win undecided voters by 46 points.

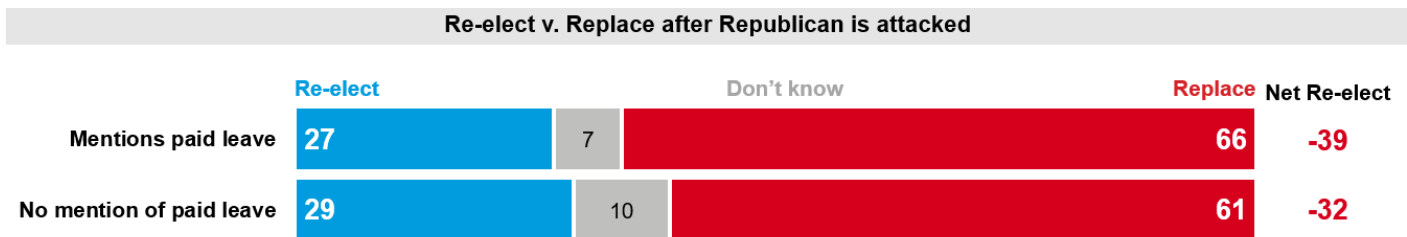
Vote	Overall	Undecided
<b>Generic ballot</b> (Democrat v. Republican)	<b>R+1</b>	<b>D+2</b>
<b>Paid leave generic ballot</b> (Democrat who supports paid leave including paid family and medical leave v. Republican who opposes paid leave in any form)	<b>D+24</b>	<b>D+46</b>

**Democrats who champion paid leave benefit.** A plurality of battleground voters across Arizona, Georgia, and Nevada would currently like to re-elect Senators Catherine Cortez Masto (NV), Raphael Warnock (GA), and Kyrsten Sinema (AZ) but the lead is narrow – only a five-point margin (47% re-elect/42% replace). Pushing for comprehensive paid leave could help widen the gap: Voters who hear a positive statement about how their senator worked to pass paid leave are far more likely to view their Senator positively on a number of traits than those who don't. They are five points more likely to say their senator “will work with anyone to get things done for the people of [their state],” 12 points more likely to say they “understands the people of [their state],” and six points less likely to say they are “ beholden to special interests.”

Perhaps more importantly, though, their votes change as well. A single positive message around how their senator led the charge to pass paid family and medical leave improves their lead by 17 points – suggesting a tremendous opportunity for Senate Democrats.



**And Republicans who refuse to come along are at even greater risk of losing.** Unlike Senate Democrats in these battleground states, Senators Marco Rubio (FL), Richard Burr (NC), Pat Toomey (PA), and Ron Johnson (WI) are starting at a disadvantage. A plurality of voters would rather replace the Senators than re-elect them, were they running for Senate today (35% re-elect/47% replace). And their prospects become even darker when they oppose paid leave: Voters in these states are five points more likely to say they would replace their Senator when the attack mentions the Senator’s opposition to paid leave than when it doesn’t.<sup>4</sup>



### Disparaging paid leave won’t work; it stands up even under attack

**Support for paid leave is so strong, it holds up even when it is falsely portrayed as raising taxes.** Often, voters support a proposal until they are told it could cost them something. Not the case here: Two-thirds of battleground voters, three-quarters of undecided voters, and even a majority of Republicans and Trump voters support paid leave even if they erroneously believe they would have to pay more in taxes.

<sup>4</sup> See appendix for full text of statements tested.

% total agree with...	Overall	Undecided	Dem	Ind	GOP	Trump
I would support paid leave even if it cost me a bit more in taxes.	69%	76%	86%	62%	55%	55%

Voters even volunteer to pay for it themselves: 81% of all voters, 85% of undecided voters, and even 69% of Trump voters say they would contribute money from their own paycheck to a national paid leave policy that covers all American workers. Further, 75% of voters support “providing family, parental, and medical leave, funded by raising taxes on, and closing tax loopholes for major corporations.” Another 71% support providing it by “raising taxes on the wealthiest Americans.”

**Voters want the Senate to pass paid leave, even in the face of attacks.** When presented with two statements, voters say they agree more with a statement asking the government to step in and protect workers and businesses over one that mischaracterizes paid leave and falsely argues – using the opposition’s language – that we can’t afford to “increase taxes” and “put small businesses at risk.”

Which statement comes closest to your opinion, even if neither is exactly right?	Overall	Undecided
It is imperative that government step in now and provide businesses the means to keep workers on the payroll so that American workers can stay safe and our economy as a whole can recover.	62%	60%
It’s foolish to increase taxes that cost American families thousands each year and put small businesses at risk of closure right as we are finally emerging from the pandemic. We cannot afford a costly, \$225 billion new D.C. mandate for paid leave.	38%	40%

*Global Strategy Group conducted an online survey of 1,070 likely voters in battleground states (AZ, FL, GA, NV, NC, PA, WI) between May 14th and May 20th, 2020. The survey has a confidence interval of +/-3.0%. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of the populations of likely voters are properly represented.*

## Appendix:

### Previous Polling

In early May 2020, Global Strategy Group conducted an online survey of 1,000 likely voters from 11 then-Senate battleground states (AZ, CO, GA, IA, KS, ME, MI, MN, MT, NC, TX). Eighty-five percent of these voters said they support “paid leave,” including 62% who said they supported extending paid leave to all American workers permanently, past the pandemic.

### Positive Statement Tested in States with Democratic Incumbents

“As you may know, Senator [INSERT BASED ON STATE] believes no one should have to put their health at risk to put food on the table. That’s why [s/he] worked with Republicans and Democrats alike to ensure all [STATE] workers have paid leave, including paid family and medical leave. Now, thanks to Senator [INSERT BASED ON STATE]’s leadership, [STATE] workers and small business owners – whether they’re a recent graduate caring for an ailing parent, a veteran getting treatment for a serious medical condition, or a new parent – can take the time they need to care for their family and themselves without fear of losing a paycheck.”

*NOTE: respondents saw the name of their incumbent Senator and state in the survey.*

## Negative Statement Tested in State with Republican Incumbents

### **Attack not mentioning paid leave:**

[SENATOR BASED ON STATE] says he looks out for the people of [STATE], but he has taken tens of thousands of dollars from major corporations and voted for their agenda at every turn. He voted to take health care away from hundreds of thousands in [STATE] and even voted for a corporate tax break that AARP called an age tax.

### **Attack mentioning paid leave:**

[SENATOR BASED ON STATE] says he looks out for the people of [STATE], but he has taken tens of thousands of dollars from major corporations and voted for their agenda at every turn. He voted to take health care away from hundreds of thousands in [STATE] and voted for a corporate tax break that AARP called an age tax. [SENATOR BASED ON STATE] even voted with his corporate donors to deny [STATE'S] working families and small businesses the paid leave they need to get our economy moving again. Now workers will once again have to choose between putting food on the table and caring for an ailing family member, bonding with their newborn, or even infecting others with a new strain of the virus.

*NOTE: respondents saw the name of their incumbent Senator and state in the survey.*