



What About the Children?

**VOTERS' THOUGHTS ON COMMUNITY VS. GOVERNMENT
SOLUTIONS FOR CHILD WELFARE**

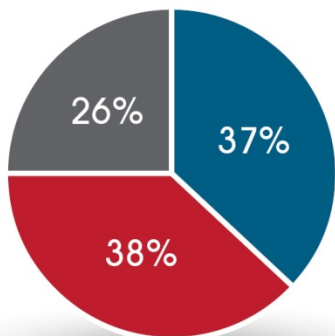
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Poll Overview & Demographics

Sample Size | 2,237

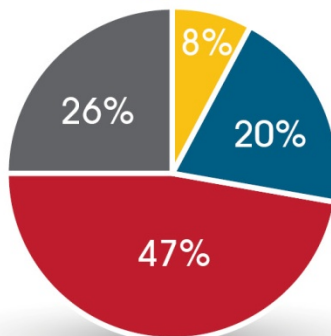
Margin of Error | 2.07%

POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION



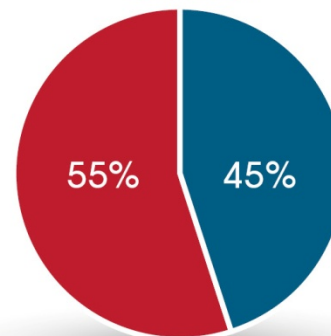
● Democrat
● Republican
● Independent

AGE



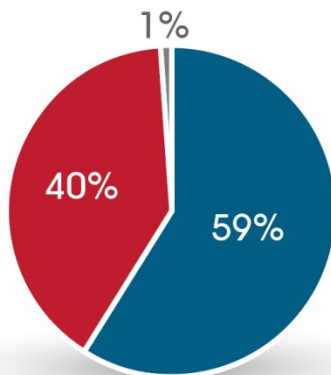
● 18-25 ● 41-64
● 26-40 ● 65+

GENDER



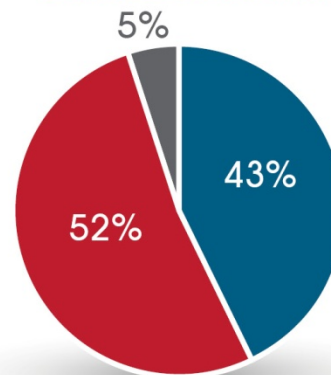
● Male
● Female

HOW OFTEN DO YOU ATTEND CHURCH



● Weekly or monthly
● Rarely or never
● Unsure

PREVIOUS INVOLVEMENT WITH FOSTER CARE



● Yes
● No
● Unsure



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Summary of Results

Voters of all political ideologies don't trust government alone to care for at-risk kids

Americans are willing to step up and help, but as private volunteers rather than through government-run foster care

Voters see Safe Families for Children, a private, volunteer-driven alternative to foster care, as a viable solution for preventing abuse and neglect



While voters have a negative view of government-run foster care, their views on Safe Families are overwhelmingly positive

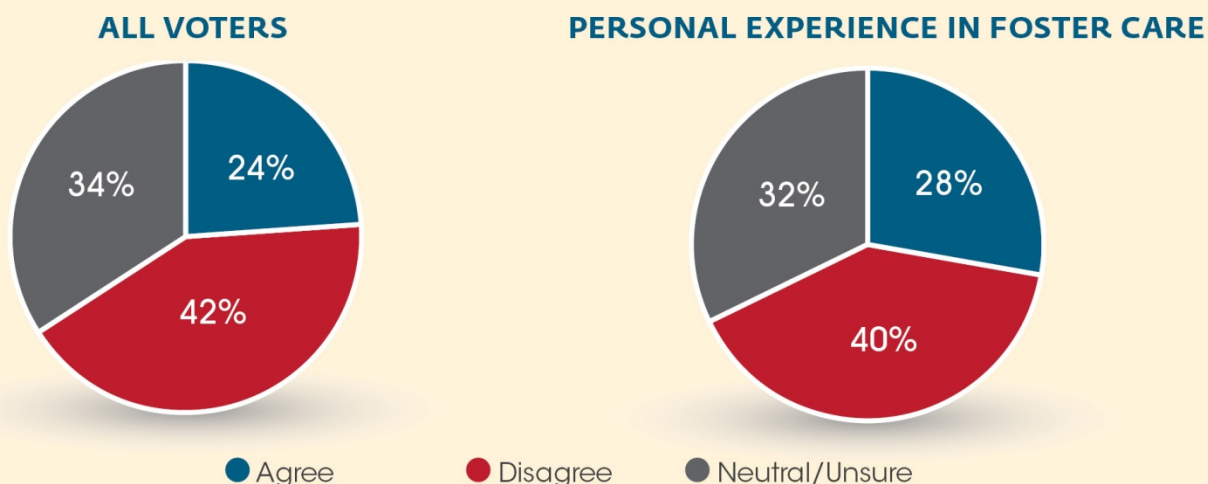
Citizens are more likely to re-elect representatives who make it easier for community and faith-based organizations to serve children and families



Voters don't trust government to care for at-risk kids.

A plurality of voters with experience in the foster care system (40%) don't think government does a good job taking care of at-risk kids.

Q: "Government does a good job protecting children from abuse and neglect."



48% of all independents - a key voting bloc - think government does a bad job caring for children, the highest of any group polled.

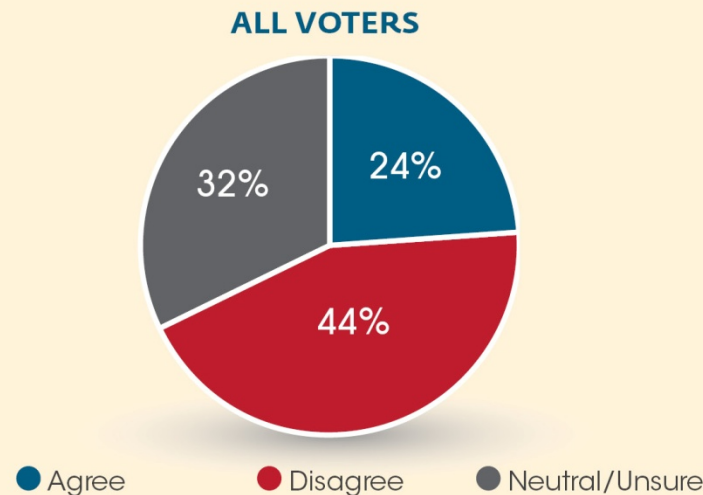
A plurality of self-identified Democrats (45%) express that they either distrust or are unsure of government's ability to protect children



Voters don't trust government to care for at-risk kids.

50% of independents feel that government-run foster care is a bad outcome for at-risk children and only 22% expressed a positive opinion of foster care.

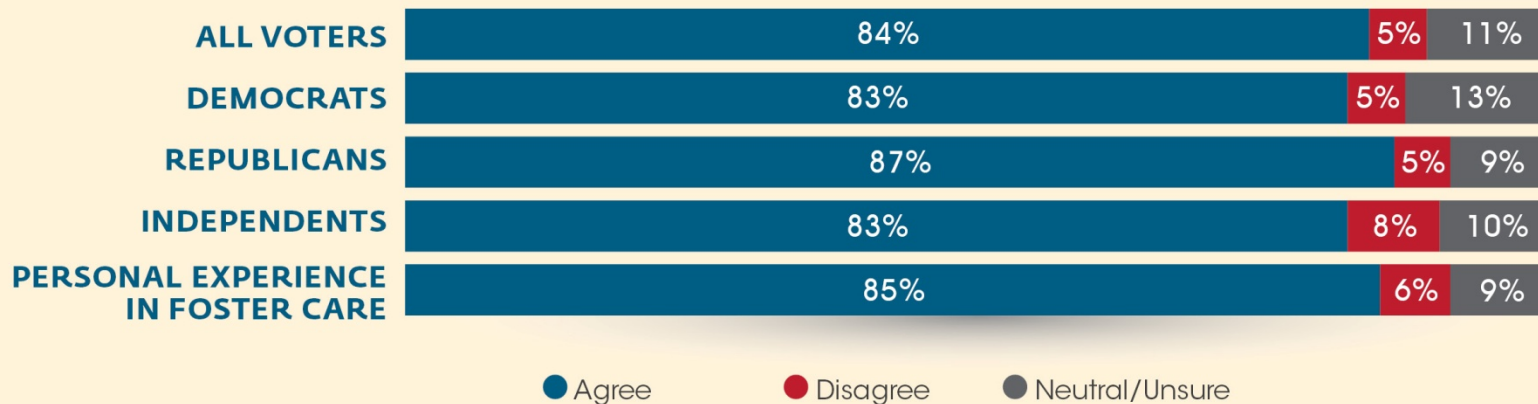
Q: "Government-run foster care is an ideal outcome for children dealing with abuse or neglect."



Voters agree: parents in need deserve help without threat of losing kids.

87% of Republicans and 83% of Democrats agree.

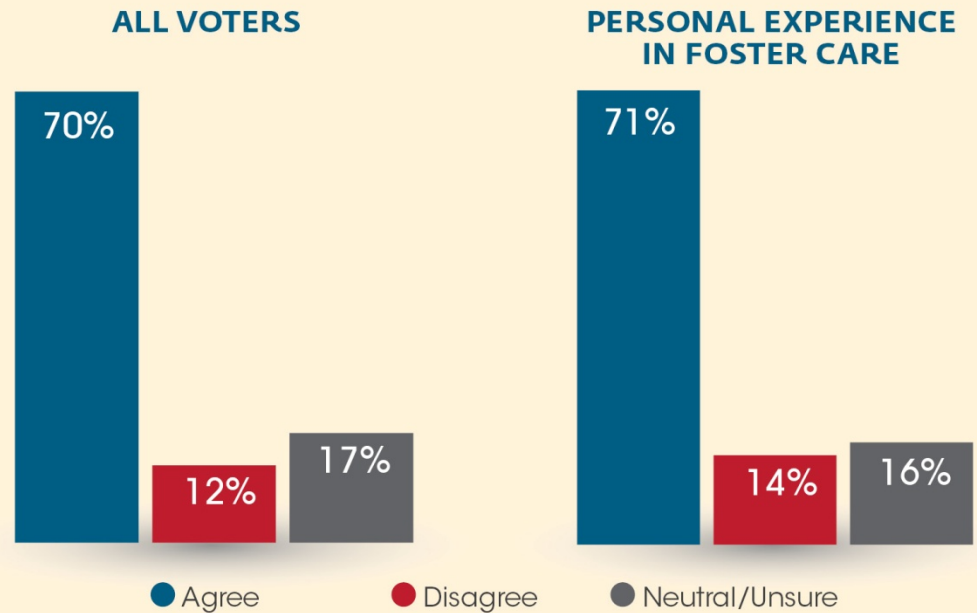
Q: “A parent in crisis who is seeking help deserves the right to get help caring for their children without the fear of losing them to foster care, as long as physical or sexual abuse has not occurred.”



Voters prefer private charity to government.

Even a large majority (71%) of those who have experience with the foster care system say private options are better for kids and families.

Q: “Local community organizations, like charities and churches, are better equipped than government to respond to the needs of families in their communities and should play a greater role in serving these needs.”



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A majority of both Democrats (53%) and Independents (72%) have greater faith in community organizations to meet the needs of disadvantaged families than they do in government.

Voters are willing to step up and help, but they want a private, non-governmental option.

A majority of voters are unwilling to help within the confines of government-run foster care.

Q: "Are you willing to be a foster parent?"



Only 14% said they were willing to be a foster parent.

However, a large majority of voters are willing to help out their friends and neighbors outside of the foster care system.

Q: "If a family member, friend, or acquaintance is experiencing hard times, including hospitalization, drug treatment, jail, homelessness or unemployment for a few weeks, would you be open to caring for their child if it might help avoid the child going into foster care and being separated from their family?"



Those most willing to volunteer to help are women (71%), self-identified Republicans (72%), and individuals with personal experience in foster care (75%).

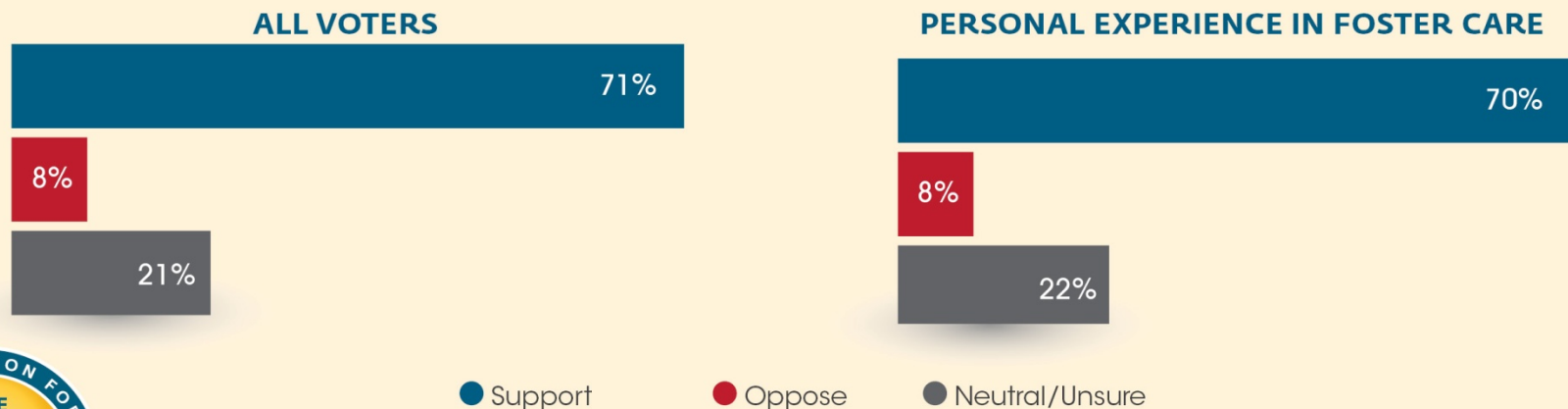
69% of churchgoers - those most often involved in the operations of a Safe Families chapter - are willing to help.



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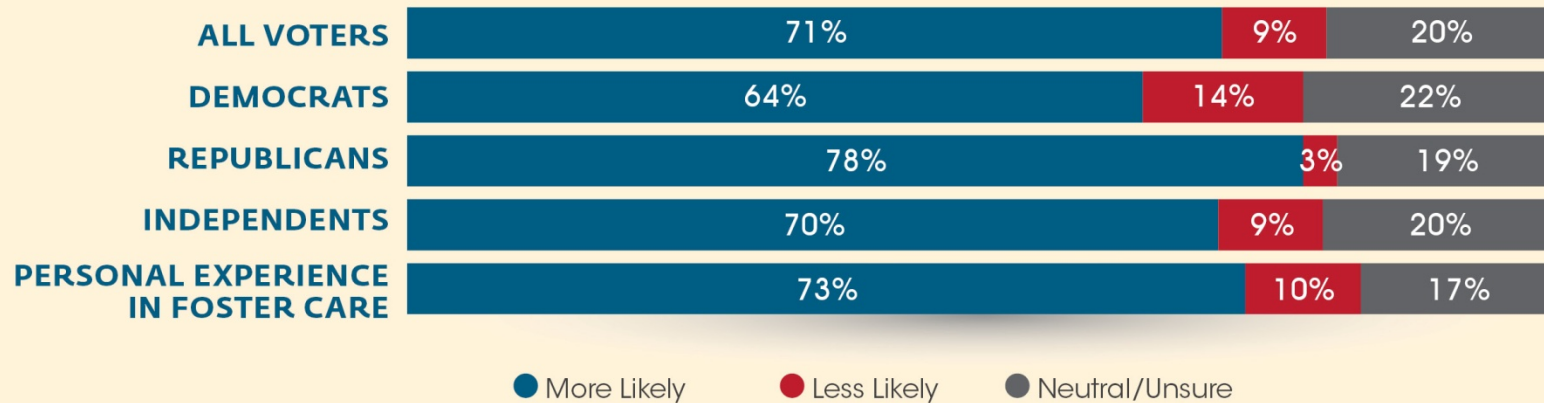
Safe Families is seen as a real, viable solution for families and children.

Q: “Safe Families is a community and faith-based private charity that works with volunteer host families to help keep children at risk of foster care safe while parents in crisis get the help they need. Host families are often recruited through their churches, are not paid, and 90% of kids successfully return home to their parents within a few weeks. Since 2002, nearly 20,000 kids have been helped by Safe Families in more than 20 states. This program is privately funded and not licensed by the state. Host families are screened and trained by professional social workers and receive extensive background checks. Knowing this, what do you think of the Safe Families program?”



Voters will support legislators who bring Safe Families to their community.

Q: “Would you be more or less likely to vote to re-elect your state legislator if he or she supported legislation to make it easier for community and faith-based organizations to help kids at risk of going into foster care?”



Methodology

Results for this poll are based on automated telephone interviews conducted among a multi-state sample of 2,237 likely voters. Data for this survey research was collected by Cor Strategies Inc.

Interviews were conducted via a computer-assisted telephone interviewing system utilizing techniques designed to achieve the highest possible respondent cooperation. The surveys were conducted July 28-30, 2015. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.07 percentage points. The margin of sampling error may be higher for certain subgroups. Results presented may not always appear to total 100 percent due to rounding.

Data was sampled using weighted demographic information from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement and states' official election authorities. Demographic information for actual voters in past elections were used to construct sample target weights.

The Foundation for Government Accountability paid for all costs associated with this survey.



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