



Polls: Support for EITC with automatic filing, caregiver credit

New public opinion research reveals broad public support for measures to modernize the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), making it more available to family caregivers and more easily accessible to recipients through simplified, automatic filing.

70% OF VOTERS BACK EXPANDING EITC TO INCLUDE FAMILY CAREGIVERS

Data for Progress polling of 1,390 likely voters nationally in July, 2020, finds that **voters are strongly in favor of expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and other tax credits to full-time caregivers**. They find majority support for these policies across age group, party identification and other demographics.

“The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) provides tax refunds to people who do paid work. Do you support or oppose expanding the credit to people who are caring for a family member full-time?”

- 70% support (38% strongly), 15% oppose.
- Support includes 76% of Democrats and 71% of Republicans. Support is comparably strong between women and men, older and younger voters, and Black and white voters.
- Similar results are found for a question specific to the pandemic: *“Currently, family caregivers -- those who care for a family member full-time -- don't qualify for many tax credits. Since many schools may not reopen full-time in the fall, would you support or oppose making family caregivers eligible for existing tax credits?”* 71% support/16% oppose

A Public Policy Polling survey of 2,361 voters in 32 battleground congressional districts in September, 2020, found similarly **high levels of support for a family caregiver credit in the EITC as a pandemic response**:

“The Earned Income Tax Credit provides support to people who do paid work. Do you support or oppose expanding the credit during the pandemic to people who care for a family member full-time?”

- 66% support, 17% oppose
- Regional support: 66% California, 67% Mid-Atlantic, 63% Midwest, 67% Southwest.

67% OF VOTERS BACK SIMPLIFIED FILING TO ENSURE ALL RECIPIENTS GET THEIR EITC

The same Public Policy Polling survey of battleground congressional district voters found **widespread support for simplified, automatic filing for the EITC**, paying the credits automatically to eligible recipients to make it easier for people to access the credits they have earned:

“The Earned Income Tax Credit (or EITC) provides tax refunds to low- and middle-income workers. Because tax laws are complicated and many people do not know they could get the tax credit, 1 in 5 people eligible for the Credit do not actually receive the money they have earned. Would you support or

oppose a policy where federal and state agencies automatically pay out the Earned Income Tax Credit to people they determine have earned it but not received it?"

- 67% support, 17% oppose

Data for Progress polling of 1,225 likely voters nationally in July, 2020, finds that voters are **strongly in favor of sending pre-filled forms to eligible recipients**, a different variation of automatic filing,:

"There are a number of tax credits available to working class families. Because tax laws are complicated and many people do not know they could get the credits, studies show that participation in these credits would increase if the IRS sent tax forms with wage information already filled out to people who are eligible for the credits. Would you support or oppose a policy where the IRS helps eligible people gain access to tax credits by mailing them tax forms pre-filled with wage information that they could choose to use or not?"

- 64% support (34% strongly), 17% oppose.
- Support includes 70% of Democrats and 69% of Republicans.

A MAJORITY OF LOW-INCOME PEOPLE WANT A PERIODIC PAYMENT OPTION IN THE EITC

In a 2019 nationwide [online poll](#) via Google Consumer Surveys of adults with self-reported income below \$50,000, a majority indicated a **preference for advance periodic payments**, compared to a lump sum.

- 53% prefer periodic payments (24% prefer a monthly payment, 29% prefer a quarterly payment)
- 47% prefer an annual lump sum payment.

A similar survey in Illinois in 2018 found a **majority of survey respondents would prefer a periodic option**. This preference has shown up in focus group research as well. In a series of California focus groups in 2017 conducted by David Binder Research, low-income voters showed deep concern about the rising cost of living, including housing and gas. Across all groups, especially women of color, participants felt that they were one bad break away from financial ruin, and that **regular payments would help with cash flow, paying off debt, and items for their children**.

SWING DISTRICT VOTERS PRIORITIZE ADDITIONAL FEDERAL AID OVER DEBT CONCERNS

The same Public Policy Polling survey found **swing district voters prioritize additional federal aid over debt concerns**:

"If you had to choose, do you think the federal government should spend what it takes right now to help Americans who are struggling to afford basic needs like food and housing, or do you think the federal government should scale back support to reduce the national debt?"

- 70% say spend what it takes to help people meet basic needs
- 20% say scale back support to reduce the national debt

Support includes:

- Party: 90% support/4% opposed among 2016 Clinton voters, 73/16 among 3rd party/non-voters, and even among 2016 Trump voters a 48/37 plurality is in support.
- Region: 74/18 Mid-Atlantic, 67/21 Midwest, 71/19 Southwest, 67/21 California
- Demographics: 72/18 women, 68/21 men. 76/16 Latinx, 80/11 Black, 67/22 white, 82/11 Asian. 72/22 age 18-45, 66/21 age 45-65, 75/14 over age 65. 72/18 landline, 68/21 text.

METHODOLOGY

Public Policy Polling survey Sept. 10-11 (half automated dialer to landlines, half text to mobile phones) of 2,361 likely voters in:

- California (CA10, CA21, CA39, CA45, CA48, CA49)
- Midwest (IA01, IA03, IL06, IL14, KS03, MI08, MI11, MN02)
- Mid-Atlantic (CT05, NJ03, NJ05, NJ07, NJ11, NY11, NY19, NY22, PA07, PA08, PA17, VA02, VA07)
- Southwest (CO06, NM02, NV03, NV04, UT04)

Data for Progress conducted surveys of 1,390 likely voters (July 10-12, 2020, margin of error is +/- 2.6 percent) and 1,225 likely voters (July 17, 2020, margin of error is +/- 2.8 percent), both using national web panel respondents. The samples were weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, and voting history.