

TO: Interested Parties
FR: Lincoln Park Strategies
RE: Legislative Priorities in Maine: Survey Results
DATE: March 9, 2021

As the 2021 legislative session was starting, State Innovation Exchange (SiX) commissioned Lincoln Park Strategies to conduct a survey of Mainers¹ to gauge voters' feelings about the state's future and their views on the legislative leadership's policy agenda. One thing is clear: a majority of Mainers strongly support progressive policies that the legislature is considering for this year.

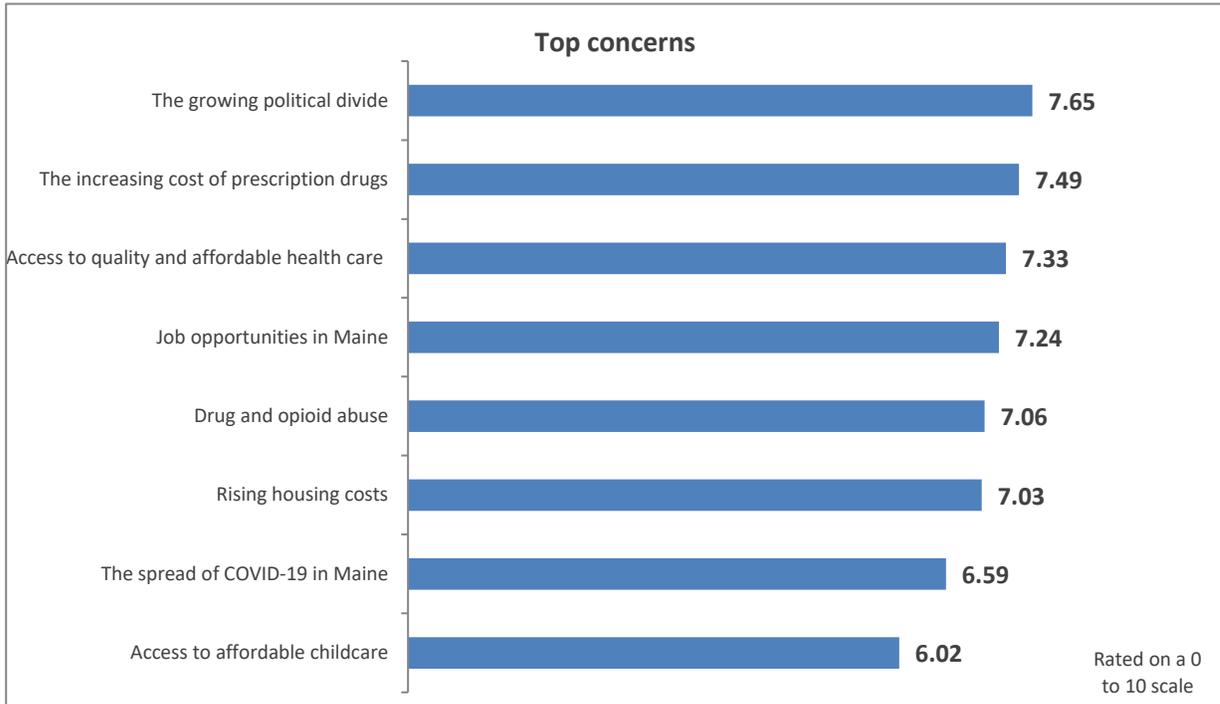
While there were many interesting findings throughout the data, this memo focuses specifically on Mainers' reactions to the legislation considered by the state legislature.

1) Overall, the cost of prescription drugs and health care are two of the largest concerns Mainers have, and health care-focused legislation is among the most popular. These concerns are followed by concerns about jobs, drug and opioid abuse, and rising housing costs.

Key findings on this topic include:

- Across the state, residents are very concerned about the cost of prescription drugs (59%), access to quality and affordable health care (58%), and drug and opioid abuse (53%).
- Mainers over 65 are equally concerned about access to affordable health care (58%) and the increasing cost of prescription drugs (59%). While non-college men (61%) and non-college women (66%), and Non-Partisan Mainers (61%) are more concerned about the increasing cost of prescription drugs. College-educated women (65%), however, are more concerned about access to affordable health care.
- Fifty (50%) percent of respondents are very concerned about job opportunities in Maine, with non-college women (53%) and those making between \$40,000-\$79,999 a year (56%) most concerned. Additionally, Mainers under 65 (52%) are more likely to be very concerned about job opportunities than those over 65 (47%).
- Mainers' top concern, in addition to health care, is the growing political divide as 60% are very concerned about it. Non-college women (58%), those under 45 (52%), and those making less than \$40,000 a year (53%) are least likely to be very concerned about it. For Mainers making less than \$40,000 a year, the increasing cost of prescription drugs and access to affordable health care are much larger concerns than the growing political divide.

¹ 500 interviews among adults were conducted from February 18 – 23, 2021 via both internet and phone survey. The results were weighted to ensure proportional responses. The margin of error is ±4.4 percent at the 95% confidence level.



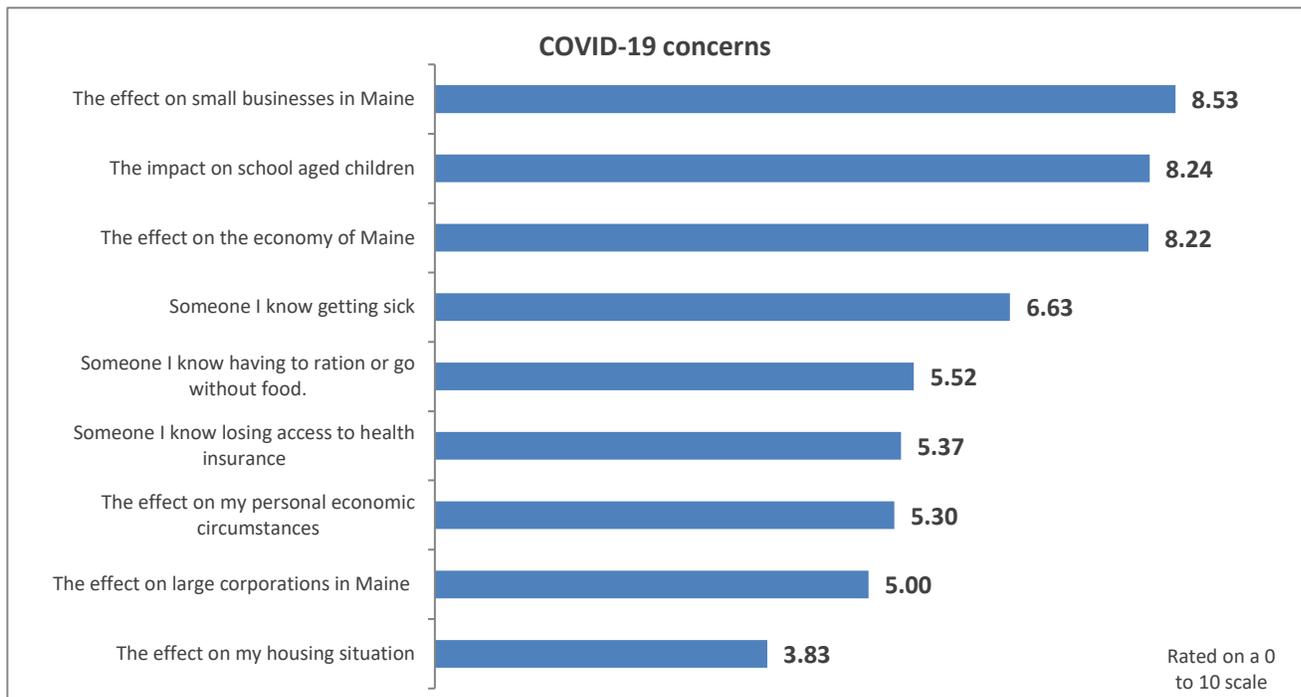
- In addition, Mainers are very concerned about issues around drug and opioid abuse (53%), rising housing costs (49%), the spread of COVID-19 (51%), and access to affordable childcare (38%).
- College women (60%) and Mainers 65 and older (61%) are most likely to be very concerned about drug and opioid abuse. While the rising housing costs are very concerning to non-college women (57%), Mainers under 45 (55%), and those making less than \$40,000 a year (57%). College-educated men (39%) are least likely to be very concerned with rising housing costs.
- A majority of Mainers are also very concerned about the spread of COVID-19 (51%) with non-college women (55%), Mainers 65 and older (62%), and those making less than \$40,000 a year (60%) most concerned.
- Access to affordable childcare is very concerning for Mainers under 45 (42%), those making less than \$80,000 a year (41%), and Mainers who have needed assistance² in the past year (50%).

² Respondents who report having needed assistance in the past 12 months with food, utilities, paying rent/house payments, unemployment, health care, childcare, or in some other way.

2) When it comes to the COVID-19 pandemic, overall, Mainers are most concerned about the effect it is having on small businesses in Maine, the impact on school-aged children, and the effect on the economy of Maine. These concerns are followed by concerns about someone they know getting sick, someone they know having to ration or go without food, someone they know losing access to health insurance, and the effect on their personal economic circumstances.

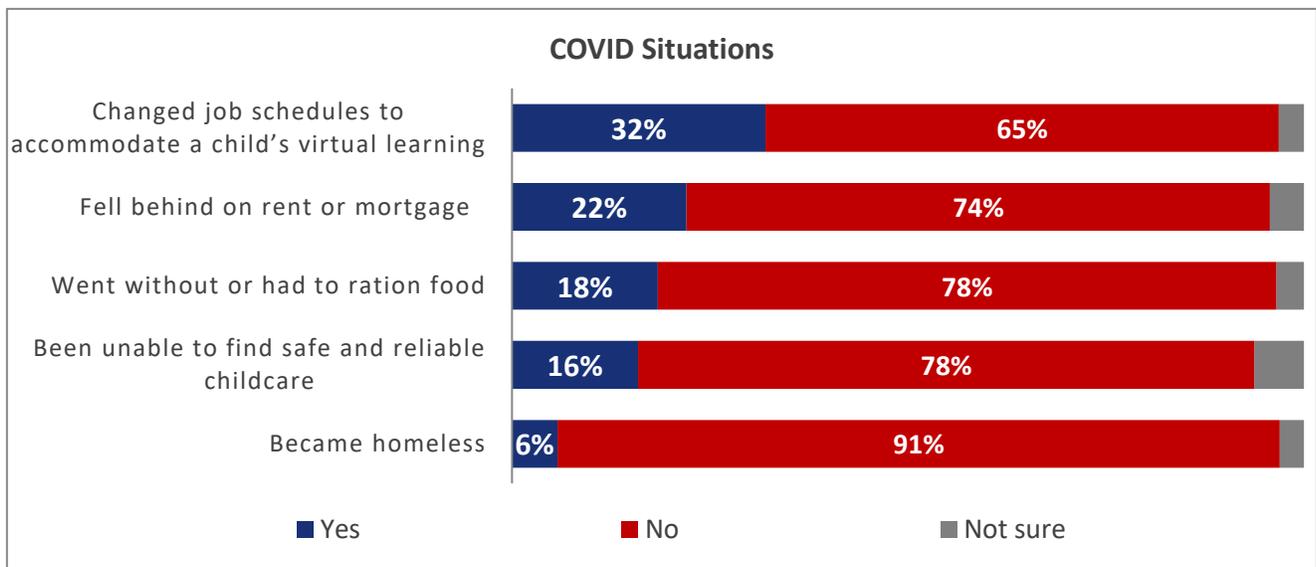
Key findings on this topic include:

- Across the state, residents are very concerned about the pandemic’s effect on small businesses (76%), the impact on children (72%), and the effect on the Maine economy (68%). These are the top concerns of Mainers across the state.
- In addition, a majority of Mainers (51%) are very concerned about someone they know getting sick, particularly non-college women (57%), Mainers 65 and older (56%), and those making less than \$40,000 a year (56%).
- Over a third of Mainers are very concerned about someone they know rationing food (37%) or losing their health insurance (35%). Non-college women, those making less than \$40,000, and those making between \$40,000-\$79,999 are most concerned about both. Mainers under 45 (48%) are also very concerned about someone they know rationing food.
- A third of Mainers (33%) are very concerned about the effect on their personal economy, with Mainers who have needed assistance in the past year (59%) most likely to be very concerned in addition to Mainers under 45 (40%).



- Just a quarter of Mainers (26%) are very concerned about the pandemic’s effect on large corporations, with non-college men (32%) and Mainers 65 and older (33%) most likely to be concerned.
- One in five Mainers (21%) are very concerned about the effect on their housing situation. Non-college men (27%) and women (28%), Mainers making less than \$40,000 a year (29%), and Mainers who needed assistance in the last year (43%) are most likely to be very concerned.

3) Not only are these concerns that Mainers have, but many have experienced these difficult situations in the past year or someone in their family has. Indeed, a third of Mainers (32%) report having to change their job schedules to accommodate a child’s virtual learning while 16% report being unable to find safe and reliable childcare. In addition, 22% report falling behind on their rent or mortgage and 18% say they have gone without or had to ration food, or someone in their family has. Six percent (6%) say they have become homeless in the last year, or someone in their family has.



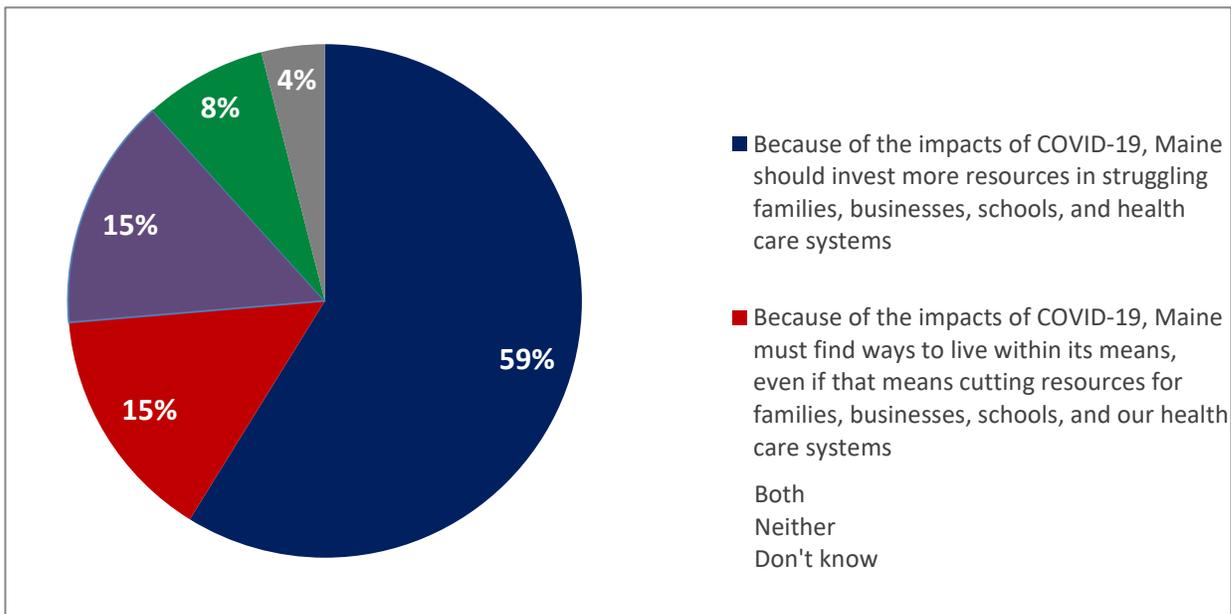
- College educated women (39%), are more likely to have had to change their job schedules to accommodate a child’s learning while non-college men (25%) are least likely. Non-college women (20%), on the other hand, are most likely to say they have been unable to find childcare while just 11% of college women say the same.
- Non-college women are also most likely to say they have fallen behind on their rent or mortgage (33%) or became homeless (12%). Having to ration food was most common among non-college women (26%), residents of CD 1 (21%), Mainers under 45 (29%), and those making less than \$40,000 a year (26%).
- A third of Mainers report needing assistance over the past year with help with food (18%), utilities (14%), rent/house payments (14%), and unemployment (13%) the most common.

One in ten (10%) report needing help with health care and 5% say they needed help with childcare.

- A majority of Mainers who make less than \$40,000 a year and half of non-college women and those under 45 have needed assistance in a least one way in the last year.

4) Given voters’ strong concern around the coronavirus pandemic, it is not surprising that they would like to see the state invest more resources in struggling areas, even if it means some Mainers will have to pay more in taxes.

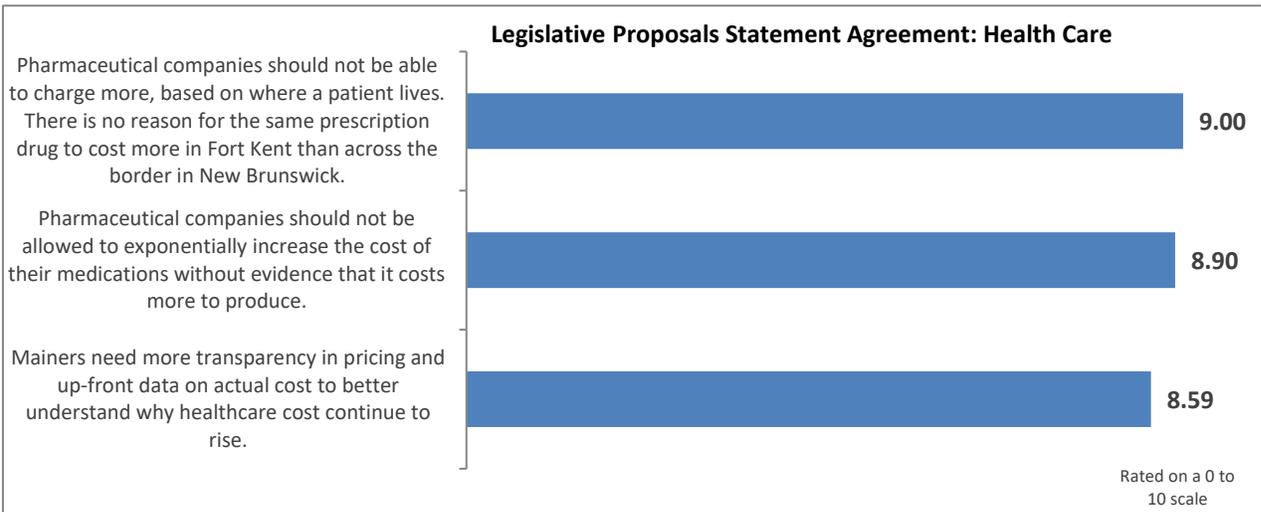
- When asked to choose between Maine investing more resources in struggling families, businesses, schools, and health care systems and Maine finding a way to live within its means, even if that means cutting resources for families, businesses, schools, and health care systems, nearly three in five Mainers (59%) chose to invest more resource while just 15% said living within its means. Another 15% said both, and 8% said neither. Support for investing more resources is consistent across the state and among various demographic groups.



- A majority of Mainers continue to support investing more resources when asked about the impact on taxes. Indeed, 52% of Mainers say the state government in Maine should invest more in the state and its residents, ensuring they are safe, healthy, are economically secure, even if it means some people have to contribute more in taxes. While just 21% say the state government in Maine should keep taxes low, even if it means cutting funding for education and infrastructure and cutting unemployment insurance and health care coverage. Twelve percent (12%) of Mainers chose both, while 10% said neither.
- More voters in every demographic group supports investing more resources over keeping taxes low, with college women (61%) and Mainers 65 and older (59%) most supportive.

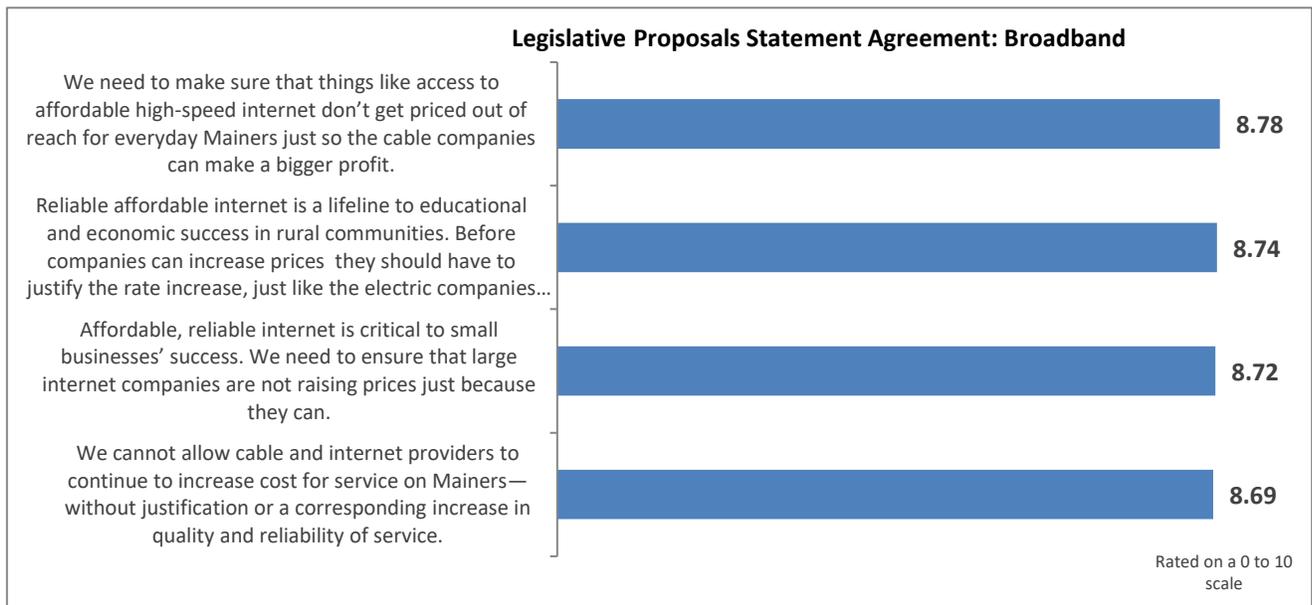
5) **Not only do Mainers want the state legislature to invest more resources for those struggling during the pandemic, but they want to see them act on legislation that will increase transparency and affordability in health care.** That includes bills making prescription drugs more affordable, increasing transparency in drug pricing, and increasing transparency on health care costs. Each policy received strong support by at least three in four Mainers.

- When asked to rate various statements around legislative policies that are pending, over four in five Mainers (84%) strongly agreed that pharmaceutical companies should not be able to charge more based on where a patient lives. Strong agreement was nearly universal among non-college women (89%), residents of the second congressional district (86%), and Mainers over 45 (88%).
- Similarly, over four in five Mainers (84%) also strongly agreed that pharmaceutical companies should not be allowed to exponentially increase the cost of their medications without evidence that it costs more to produce. While at least three-quarters of each demographic group strongly agreed, non-college women (89%), Mainers in CD 2 (86%), Mainers over 45 (86%), and Mainers making less than \$40,000 a year (90%) were most supportive.
- Over three-quarters of Mainers (78%) also strongly agreed that Mainers need more transparency in pricing and up-front data on the actual costs to better understand why health care costs continue to rise. At least seven in ten Mainers across the state and demographic groups strongly agree with non-college women (83%), Mainers in CD 1 (81%), and those over 65 (85%) most likely to strongly agree.



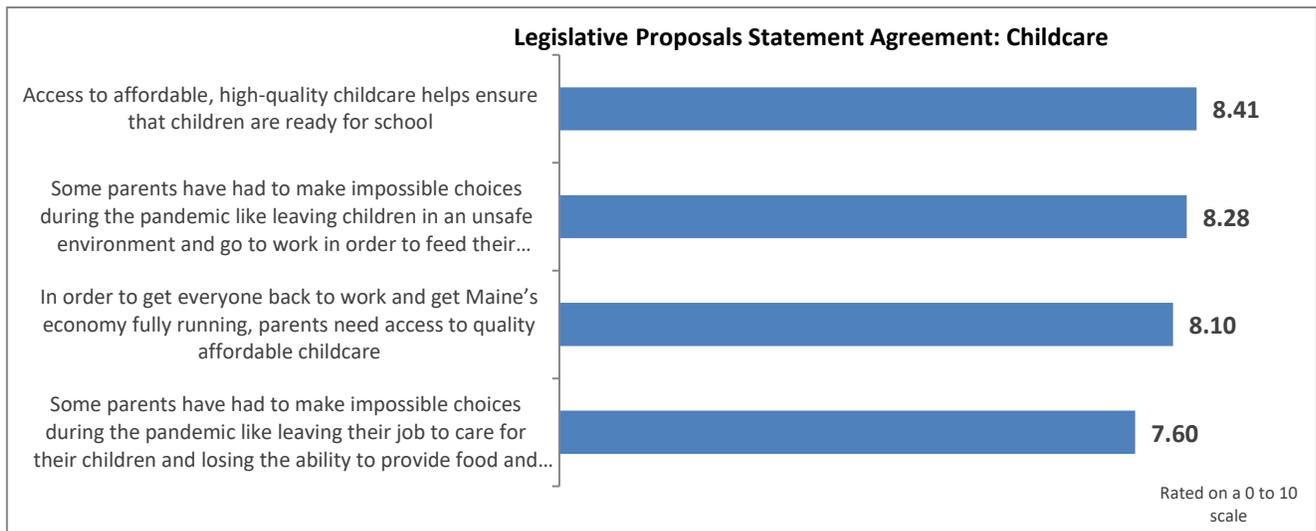
6) Mainers are also strongly supportive of policies focused on expanding affordable broadband access. That includes bills making sure affordable high-speed internet doesn't get priced out of reach for everyday Mainers and small businesses and not allowing providers to increase costs without a justification or corresponding increase in quality and reliability. Each policy received strong support by at least three in four Mainers.

- When asked to rate various statements around legislative policies that are pending, four in five Mainers (80%) strongly agreed that we need to make sure that things like access to affordable high-speed internet don't get priced out of reach for everyday Mainers just so the cable companies can make a bigger profit. Non-college women (84%), Mainers aged 45-64 (85%), and those making less than \$40,000 a year (87%) were most likely to strongly agree.
- Similarly, four in five Mainers (80%) also strongly agreed that reliable and affordable internet is a lifeline to educational and economic success in rural communities, and before companies can increase prices, they should have to justify the rate increase just like the electric companies do. While at least three-quarters of each demographic group strongly agreed, non-college women (86%), Mainers over 65 (84%), and Mainers making less than \$40,000 a year (84%) were most supportive.
- Over three-quarters of Mainers (79%) also strongly agreed that affordable, reliable internet is critical to small businesses' success, and we need to ensure that large internet companies are not raising prices just because they can. At least seven in ten Mainers across the state and demographic groups strongly agree with those over 65 (82%) and Mainers making less than \$80,000 a year (82%) most likely to strongly agree.
- Over three-quarters of Mainers (79%) also strongly agree we cannot allow cable and internet providers to continue to increase the cost for service on Mainers without justification or a corresponding increase in quality and reliability of service. At least three-quarters of Mainers across the state and demographic groups strongly agree.



7) Mainers are also strongly supportive of policies focused on expanding access to quality, affordable childcare as at least three in five Mainers strongly agree that high-quality childcare helps ensure children are ready for school and that access to affordable childcare allows parents to not have to make tough decisions and gets everyone back to work.

- When asked to rate various statements around legislative policies that are pending, three-quarters of Mainers (75%) strongly agreed that access to affordable, high-quality childcare helps ensure that children are ready for school. Non-college women (82%) and Mainers making \$40,000-\$79,999 a year (81%) were most likely to strongly agree.



- Similarly, seven in ten Mainers (71%) also strongly agreed some parents have had to make impossible choices during the pandemic like leaving children in an unsafe environment to go to work in order to feed their family. While at least a majority of each demographic group strongly agreed, non-college women (78%), Mainers in CD 2 (74%), and Mainers making less than \$40,000 a year (81%) were most supportive. Mainers making at least \$80,000 a year were least likely to strongly agree (59%).
- Over two-thirds of Mainers (69%) also strongly agreed in order to get everyone back to work and get Maine's economy fully running, parents need access to quality and affordable childcare. At least a majority of Mainers across the state and demographic groups strongly agree with non-college (78%) and college (72%) women, Mainers 65 and older (75%), and those making less than \$40,000 a year (76%) most likely to strongly agree.
- Over three in five Mainers (62%) also strongly agree that some parents have had to make impossible choices during the pandemic like leaving their job to care for their children and losing the ability to provide food and shelter for their family. Non-college women (75%) and Mainers who have needed assistance (74%) most likely to strongly agree, while just 47% of college men strongly agree.

In conclusion, progressive legislative policies are popular in Maine, and legislators will garner strong support from their constituents, including harder-to-convince cohorts which are not typically viewed as being supportive of progressive lawmakers. These polling results show strong support for a progressive legislative agenda in the current session.