

VECF: BIPARTISAN POLL SHOWS WIDESPREAD, STATEWIDE SUPPORT FOR POLICIES THAT EXPAND ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

Voters Increase Support for Gubernatorial Candidates That Make Issue Focal Point of Their Campaigns

A new poll of 600 likely 2025 voters from Global Strategy Group and GS Strategy Group on behalf of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) demonstrates voters' strong support for policies that expand access to child care for working parents. Importantly, the poll also shows a boost in candidate performance when child care policies are included in candidates' economic platforms.

Key takeaways from the poll include:

- **While Spanberger currently leads Earle-Sears, the race remains up for grabs, and neither candidate has a majority of the vote.** Spanberger holds an initial 6-point advantage over Earle-Sears (49% Spanberger/43% Earle-Sears), with votes largely falling along partisan lines – Democrats support Spanberger (96%), while Republicans back Earle-Sears (90%). Independents are more divided (30% Spanberger/33% Earle-Sears), but the plurality (37%) remain undecided.
- **Policies to increase access to child care are widely popular across party lines.** Nearly 9 in 10 voters (88%) support policies to increase access to quality, affordable options for child care for working parents, with over half (54%) who strongly support such policies. This issue achieves majority support among swing voters – those who are not yet firmly solidified behind either candidate or party in the gubernatorial race (88% support, 51% strongly) and across partisan lines: 97% of Democrats support, 83% of Independents, and 81% of Republicans.
- **Voters believe a candidate who advocates for affordable child care better embodies the traits that are most important to them in a governor, such as working to improve the economy and looking out for middle-class families.** Half of respondents in the survey were shown a profile of a hypothetical candidate for Governor that included child care policies as part of the candidate's campaign platform, while the other half were shown the same profile without mention of these policies. Voters were more likely to see the candidate as honest and trustworthy, putting the people of Virginia before party, having the right priorities, and a host of other positive characteristics when child care was central to the candidate's introduction.
- **These policies are widely popular across genders, ethnicities, education levels, and across different regions of the state.** 92 percent of women and 85 percent of men support policies to increase access to child care. 87 percent of white voters and 98 percent of black voters support these policies, including 87 percent of black voters who *strongly* support them. Meanwhile, 86 percent of college educated voters and 91 percent of non-college educated voters support these policies. In addition, these policies receive widespread support across different regions of the state, including 91 percent support in the Washington, D.C. DMA (both metro area and surrounding suburbs), 88 percent support in the Norfolk DMA, and 95 percent support in the Roanoke DMA and other outer markets.
- **While these policies are supported across age groups, there is significant support for them among young voters.** 89 percent of voters in the 18–44-year-old age group support policies to increase access to quality, affordable options for child care, with nearly two-thirds expressing strong support for these policies.

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The phone and text- to-web survey of 600 likely 2025 voters in Virginia was conducted between February 11th and February 16th, 2025.

The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is +/- 4.0% for the overall sample. The margin of error on sub-samples is greater.