

ACLU-Washington Baby Bonds Polling

From: YouGov
To: Interested parties
Date: February, 2023
Re: Baby Bonds Polling – Washington State

On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington (ACLU-WA), YouGov fielded a survey of Washington voters to better understand their views on the subject of “baby bonds,” a term commonly used to refer to policies involving state investment strategies for children born into low-income families. The results suggest that a majority of registered voters support baby bonds in the state of Washington. This includes majority support for baby bonds accounting for a variety of demographic factors such as geography, race/ethnicity, and education. While awareness of such a policy is currently low, those who report they know more about baby bonds also say they are more supportive of the policy.

Support for baby bonds is high across Washington state

There is increasing concern about the rising cost of living in Washington. This concern extends to the cost of getting an education, buying a first house, and maintaining or starting a small business - the surest paths out of poverty for most people. Some in Washington have proposed creating a baby bonds program to address these challenges by ensuring families of young children have access to wealth-building opportunities that can be used to access these pathways out of poverty.

The survey offered a brief description of a baby bonds policy and then asked voters how they felt about this policy. Specifically, the survey asked respondents,

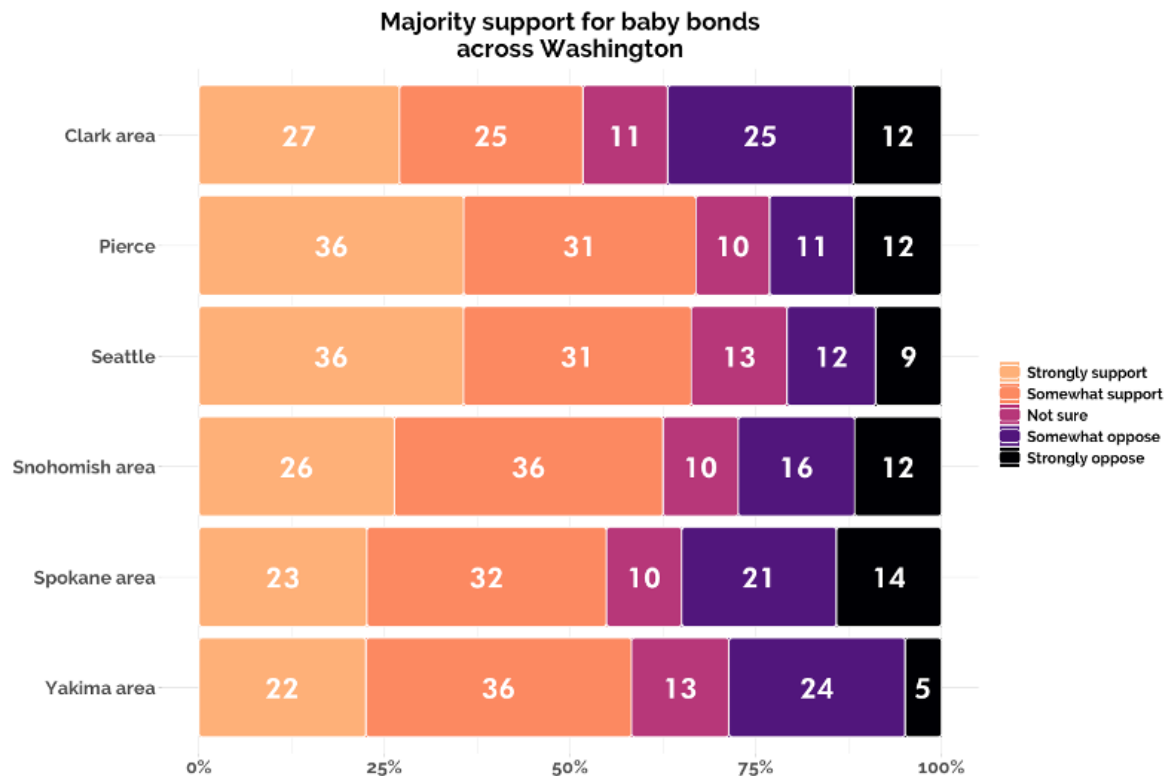
Recently, some have proposed a new policy here in Washington which would create a \$4,000 investment for each newborn child born into poverty in the state. This would include those born to families earning less than about \$36,000 per year. The child would become eligible to receive the bond some time between the age of 18 and 35, when it will be worth about \$30,000. This type of investment is typically known as a “bond” or “baby bond.”

Recipients would be allowed to use the value of the bond towards purchasing a home, starting or buying a business, or education such as a college degree or vocational training.

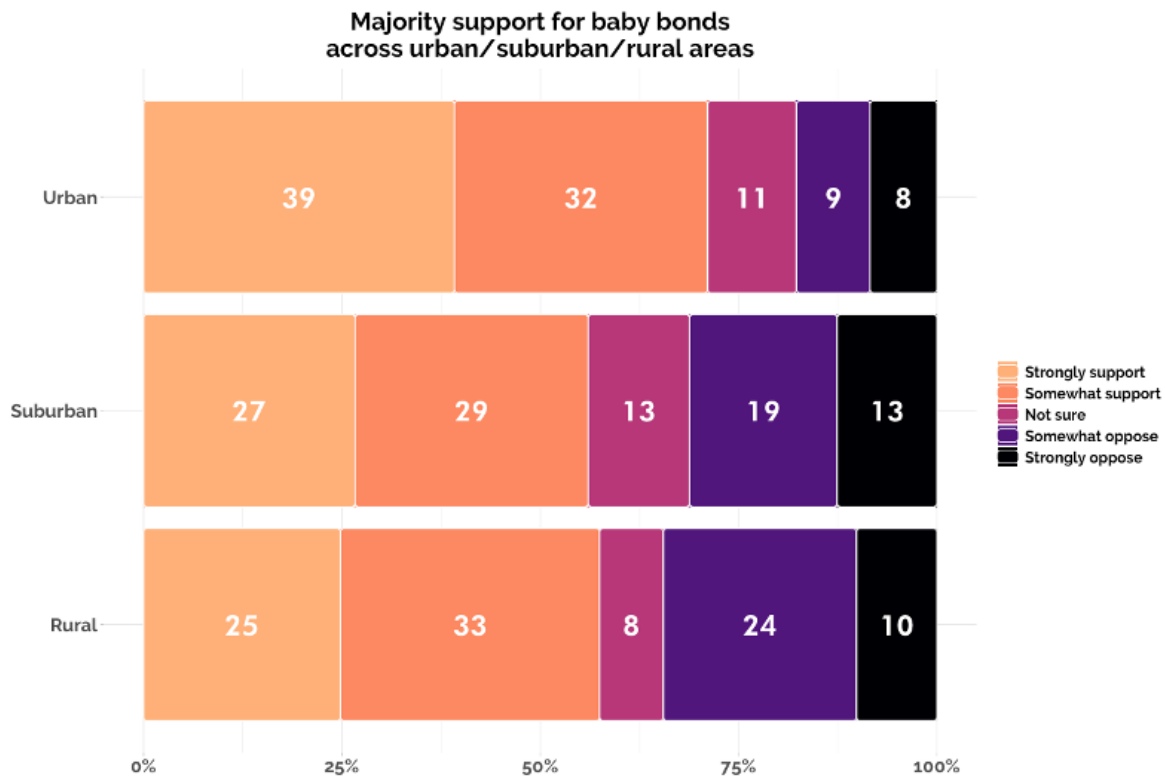
Generally speaking, do you [support or oppose] creating a “baby bond” for newborn children in Washington?

Fully 61 percent of Washington voters support baby bonds, with just 28 percent opposing baby bonds, and the remainder reporting they are unsure how they feel.

Majorities of voters across the state of Washington support the adoption of a baby bonds policy. This includes the support of about 67 percent of voters residing in the Pierce county area, as well as majorities from the Clark area (about 52 percent support), Yakima area (58 percent), and the Spokane area (about 55 percent support). From the state's urban centers to its more rural regions, majorities of voters support providing baby bonds to new families in Washington.



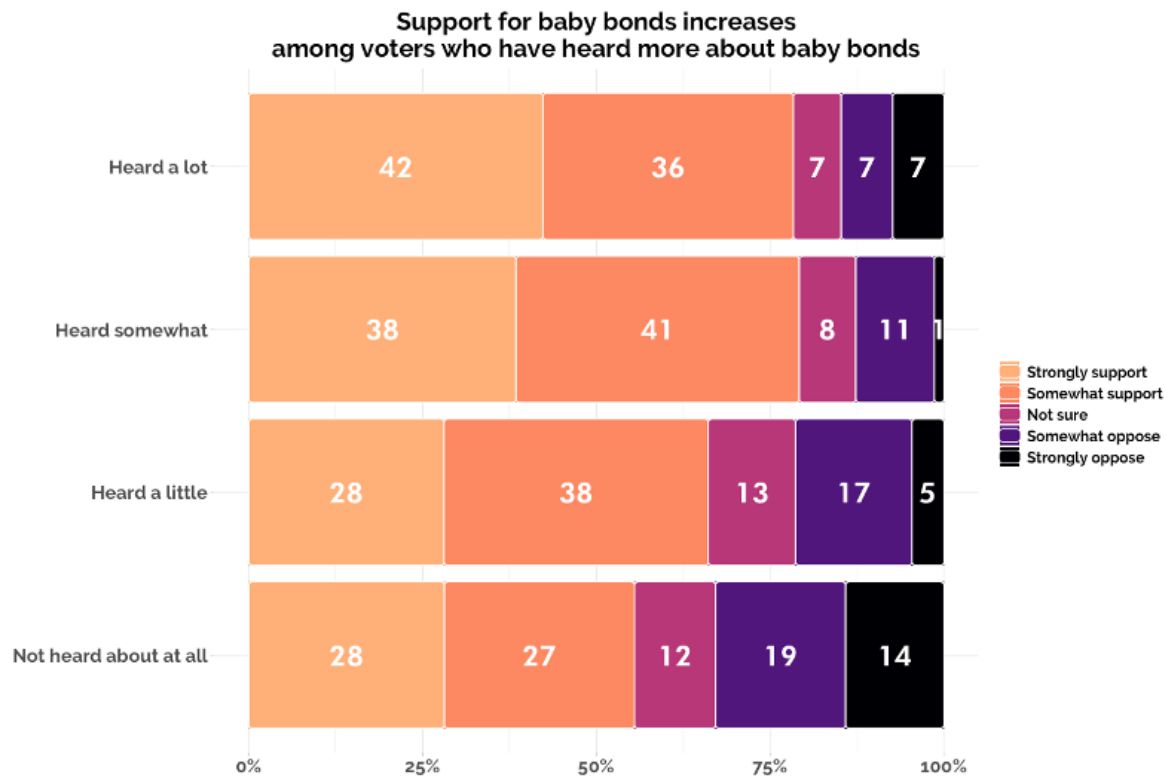
In total, 71 percent of respondents living in urban areas across Washington support the baby bonds policy. About 56 percent of suburban voters and 58 percent of rural-area voters support the policy as well. Support for the policy is high accounting for a variety of different geographic attributes.



The more people have heard about baby bonds, the more they support them

Prior to the informative wording included within the survey, most respondents reported they did not know much about baby bonds. Only about 14 percent of voters report they have heard “a lot” or “some” about baby bonds. General awareness of the policy is low.

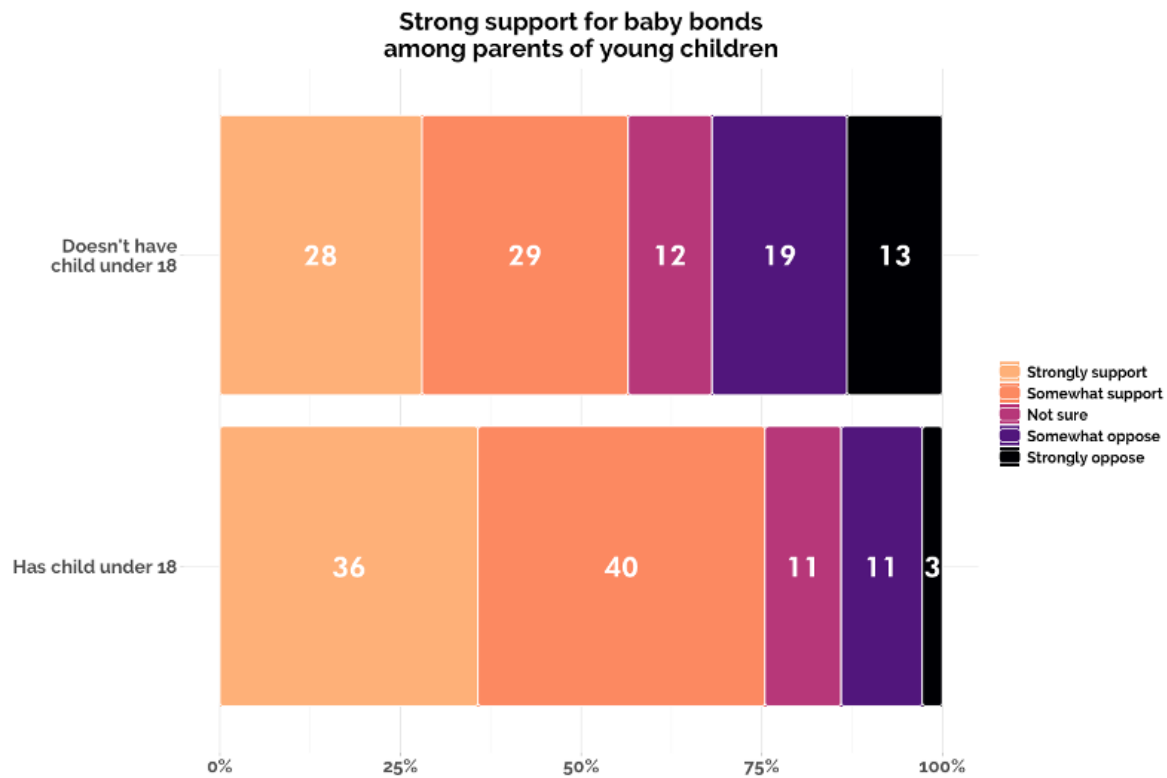
But Washington voters who know more about baby bonds are more supportive of the policy than those who don't. For example, while about 55 percent of those who say they haven't heard of baby bonds “at all” support the policy once they see a description of it, the same is true for 78 percent of those who say they have heard “a lot” about the policy. The more voters know about the policy, the more they support it.



Parents of young children overwhelmingly support baby bonds

Parents of young children overwhelmingly support the idea of baby bonds. This is particularly notable as one of the policy's key objectives is to help provide new parents with peace of mind as they raise their children in Washington. While a majority (57 percent) of voters who aren't currently the parents of a young child support baby bonds, fully 76 percent of the parents of young children support the policy.

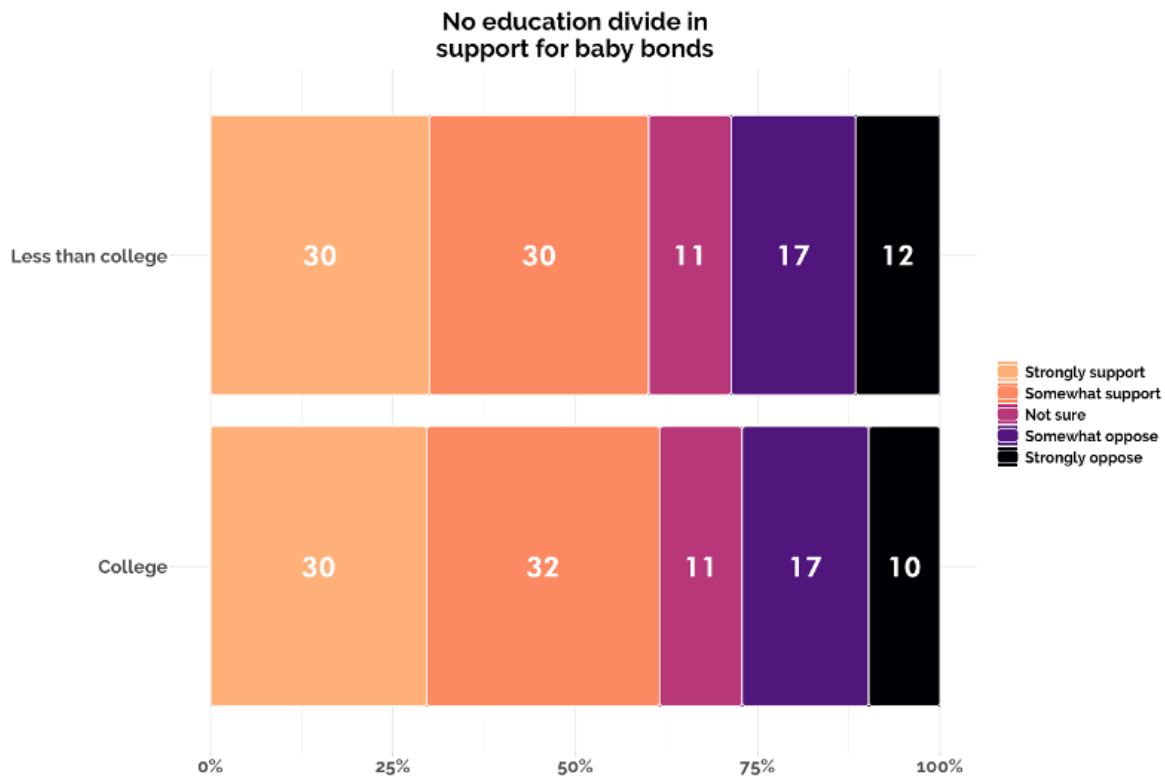
This suggests that, once given a few basic facts about the policy, voters overwhelmingly understand the kinds of benefits baby bonds could provide for parents of young children. Helping young people invest in their future through an education, starting a business, or buying their first home overwhelmingly appeals to the parents of young people in Washington. Parents are particularly excited at the prospect of baby bonds being available in Washington.



No differences in support for baby bonds across education levels

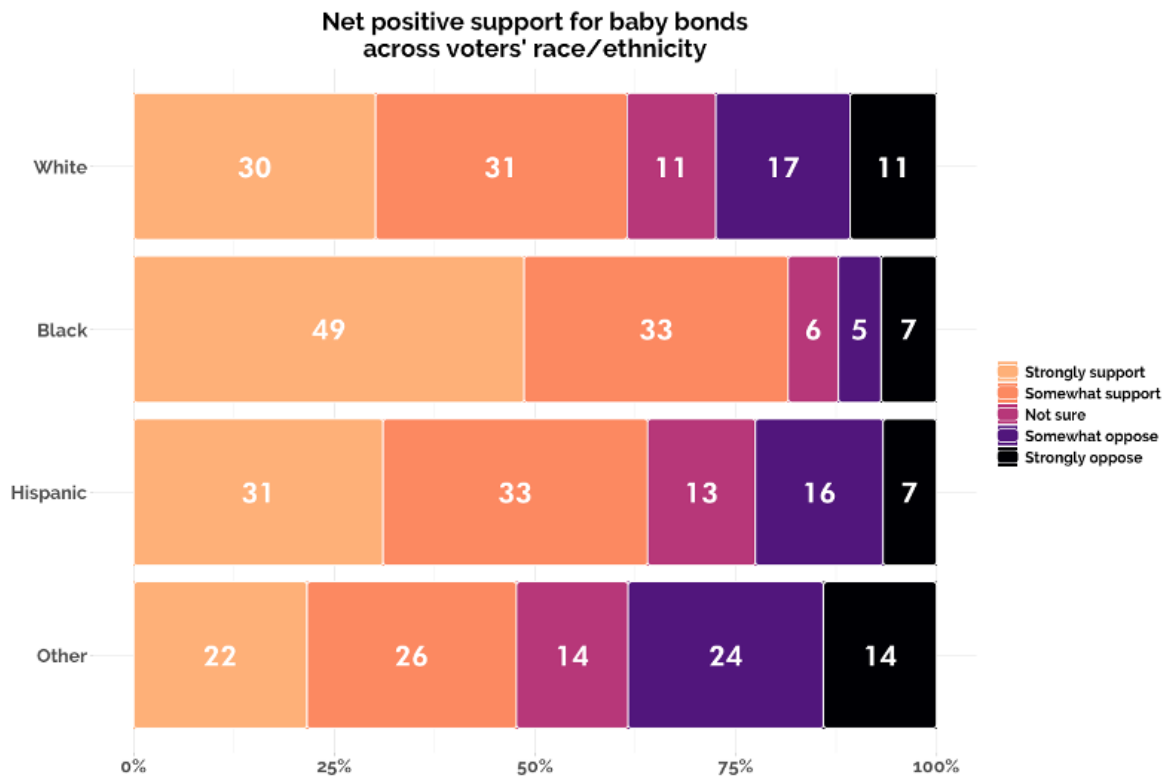
Some have suggested that baby bonds may not have the support of those who don't have access to the kinds of programs the bonds are designed to support, such as access to a college education. These results suggest this is not a concern among Washington voters. Across different education levels, support for baby bonds is nearly identical. About 60 percent of voters without a college degree support the policy, as do 62 percent of those with a college degree or above.

This suggests that voters support making these benefits available to the next generation even if they did not have those benefits themselves. Those without a college degree, for example, believe others should have help getting access to such opportunities. Voters without a college degree are just as supportive of baby bonds as those with a college degree.



Respondents across race/ethnicity lines support baby bonds

On net, Washington voters of many racial and ethnic backgrounds support the baby bonds policy. About 82 percent of the state's Black population, 64 percent of the Latino population, and 61 percent of the White population support the policy. Baby bonds also have the support of those of other races, including Asian, Indigenous and Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern voters, by a 48-34 margin.



Conclusion

Washington voters support implementing a baby bonds policy. This support is robust accounting for a variety of different factors such as race/ethnicity, education, and geography. Majorities of voters across key segments of the Washington population support the policy. Voters who report they have heard more about baby bonds tend to also be more supportive of the policy. Even when given only a small amount of information about the policy, as voters were in the survey, nearly two-thirds of Washington voters agree the state should have a baby bonds policy.

Appendix: Methods statement

This survey is based on 1,030 interviews conducted by YouGov on the internet of registered voters in Washington. The sample was weighted according to gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, and Washington state region based on voter registration lists, the U.S. Census American Community Survey, and the U.S. Census Current Population Survey, as well as 2020 Presidential vote. Respondents were selected from YouGov to be representative of registered voters. The weights range from 0.18 to 4.83 with a mean of 1 and a standard deviation of 0.45. Some questions in this survey have been held for future release.

The margin of error (a 95% confidence interval) for a sample percentage p based upon the subsetting sample is approximately 3.3%. It is calculated using the formula:

$$\hat{p} \pm 100 \times \sqrt{\frac{1 + CV^2}{n}}$$

where CV is the coefficient of variation of the sample weights and n is the sample size used to compute the proportion. This is a measure of sampling error (the average of all estimates obtained using the same sample selection and weighting procedures repeatedly). The sample estimate should differ from its expected value by less than margin of error in 95 percent of all samples. It does not reflect non-sampling errors, including potential selection bias in panel participation or in response to a particular survey.