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# VOTERS STRONGLY SUPPORT THE ESSENTIAL WORKERS BILL OF RIGHTS

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April 2020

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- ▶ The Essential Workers Bill of Rights is very popular, with 75 percent support overall, and even 73 percent support among Republicans
- ▶ This is a non-partisan issue-- more Republicans than Democrats report that they or a family member are an essential worker
- ▶ Support is building for making these protections permanent--68 percent of voters support making \$15 minimum wage and paid family leave permanent

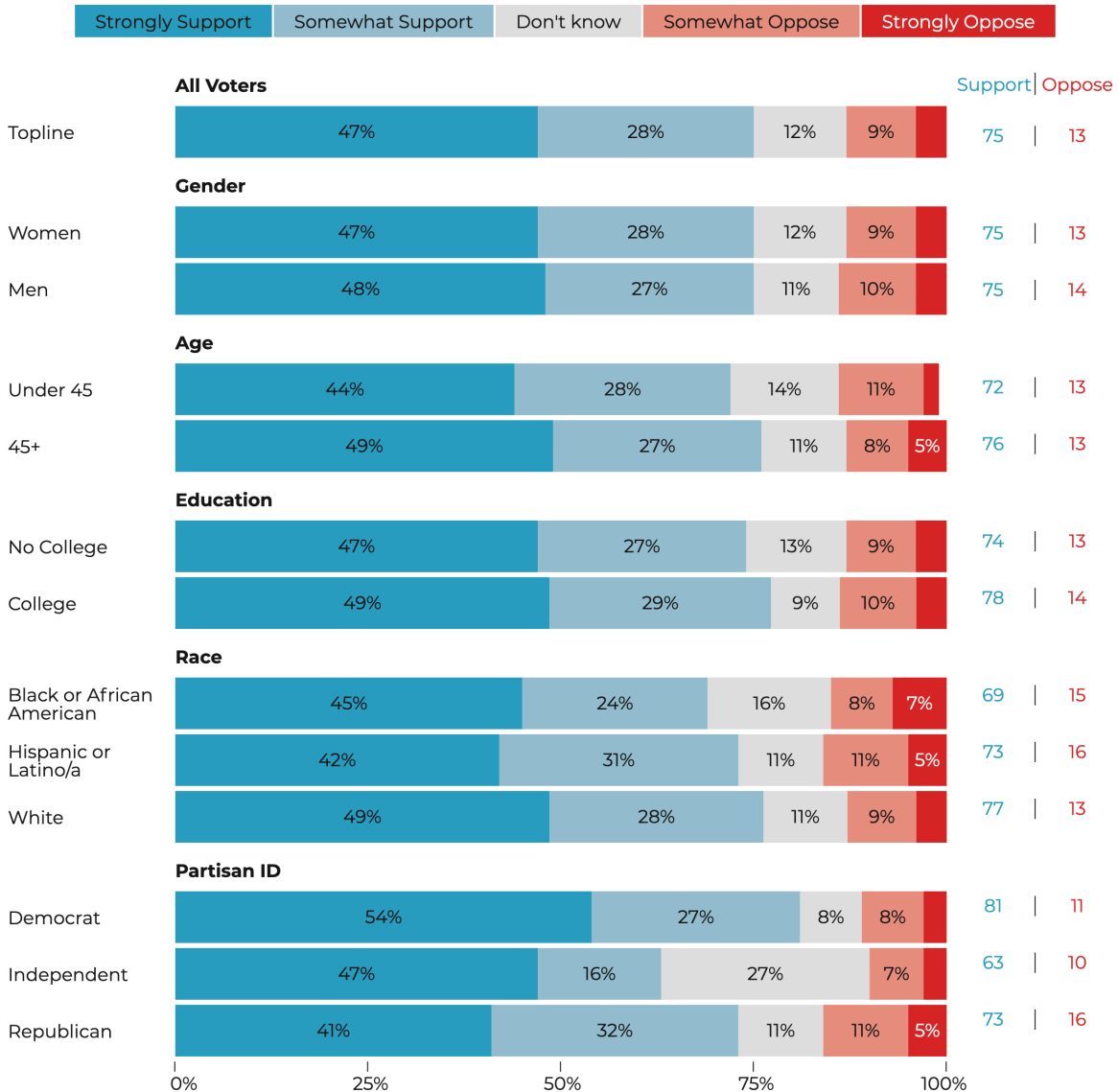
While office workers are figuring out Zoom calls and creating improvised desks, essential workers, defined as those performing work that may involve the safety of human life or the protection of property, are continuing to show up at their workplaces in order to keep grocery stores, hospitals, and other important services running. Many of these workers receive low wages and are offered few protections by their employers. They are unable to stay home for fear of losing their jobs, and are at increased risk of contracting coronavirus due to face-to-face interactions and frequent inability to social distance.

Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Congressman Ro Khanna of California have proposed an “Essential Workers Bill Of Rights” designed to protect these workers by extending protections like paid sick leave, pay increases, free access to personal protective equipment like masks and gloves, and family and medical leave. They’ve called for this to be included in the fourth stimulus package to pass Congress, which many lawmakers have widely acknowledged as a necessary step.

In our April 2020 survey, we find strong support for this Bill of Rights, with a total of 75 percent of voters in support. Support is marginally lower among Republicans, but still extremely strong at 73 percent. This is a remarkable level of non-partisan unity. Voters seem very on board with extending protections to this important class of employees as a centralized government measure, rather than waiting for individual employers to do so.

## Voters Support The Essential Workers Bill Of Rights

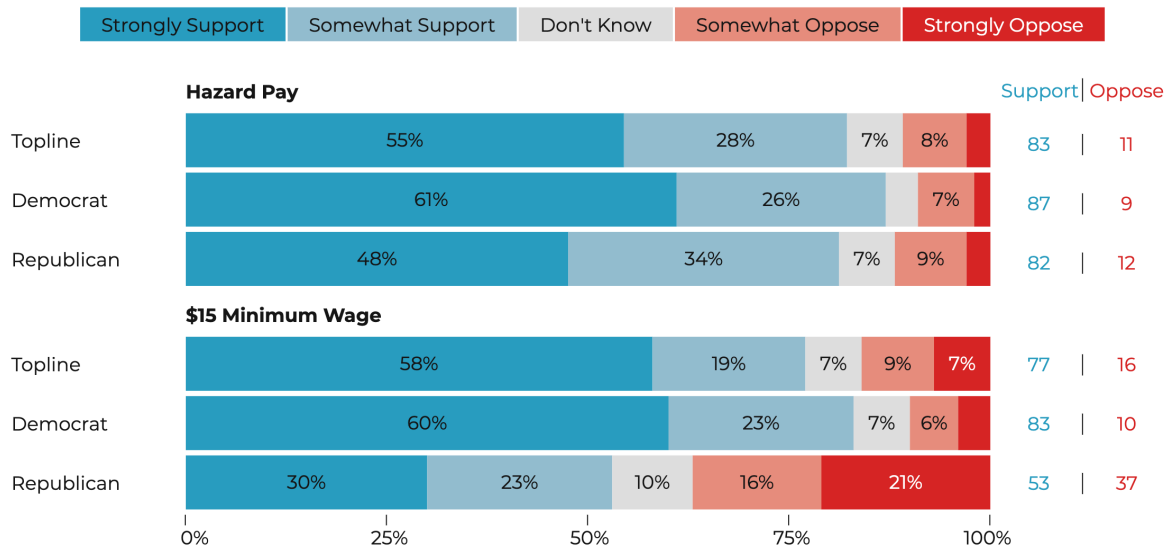
Some members of Congress are proposing an Essential Workers Bill of Rights to ensure that the workers who are required to keep society functioning during the coronavirus pandemic have the resources and safety net they need to continue doing their jobs. Do you support or oppose this policy?



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## Voters Support Increasing Pay For Essential Workers



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We also polled several specific policies, including “hazard pay” which is included in this bill of rights, and a “\$15 minimum wage,” which both show overwhelming support.

We find strong support for increasing the wages of essential workers during the pandemic. 83 percent of voters support giving workers hazard pay

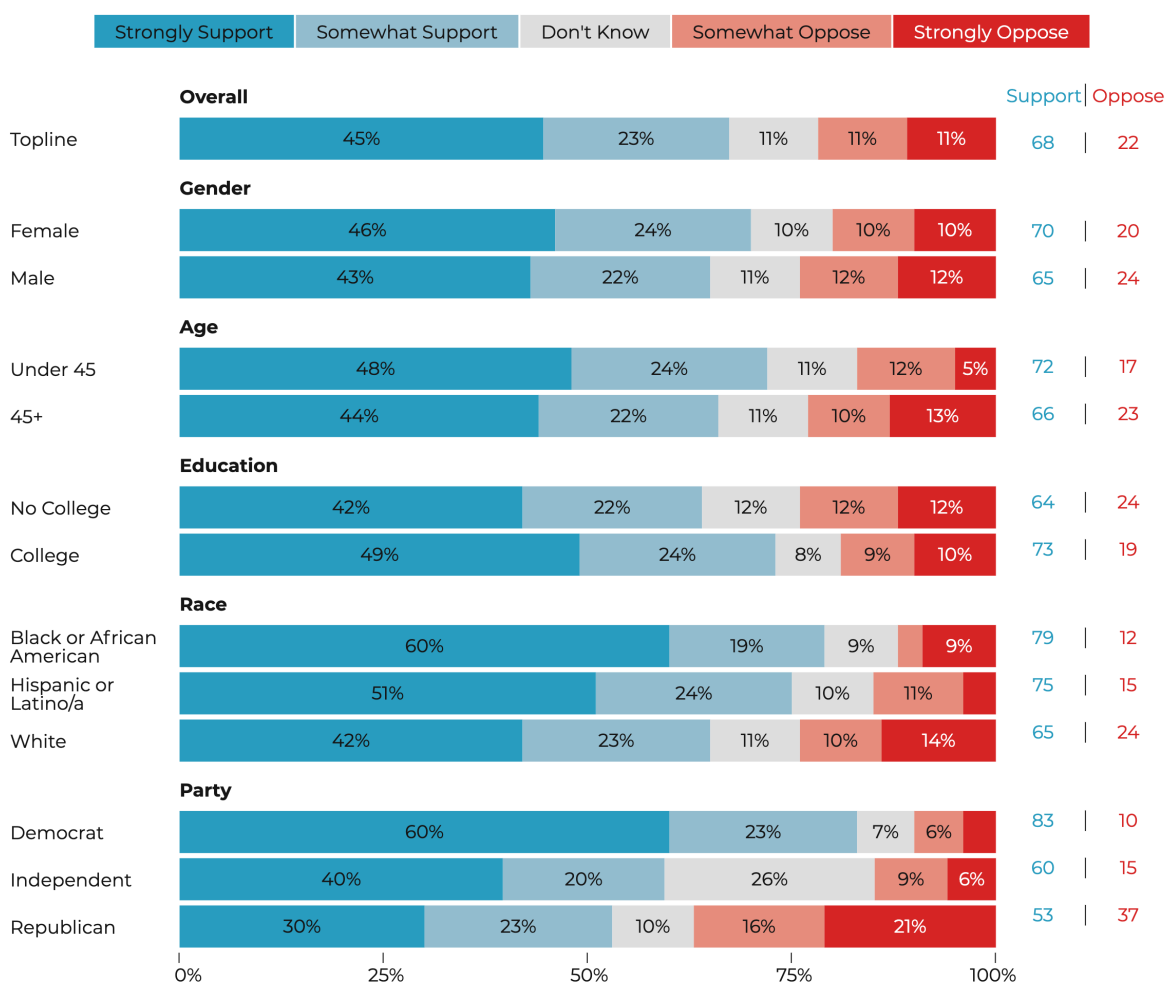
during the pandemic, and this support is fairly even across party with slightly more Democrats in support at 87 percent. A \$15 minimum wage for essential workers during the pandemic is also very popular, at 77 percent, but has less even partisan support than hazard pay. Voters seem to overwhelmingly support paying essential workers in accordance with the risks they are taking.

Making these changes (increased minimum wage and paid family leave) permanent and eventually expanding them to all workers are popular, with 68 percent support, but have more of a partisan divide than time-limited interventions for the duration of the pandemic. They're most popular with Democrats, at 83 percent, and narrowly above water with Republicans at 53 percent. This is higher support than we've [previously seen](#) for

the \$15 minimum wage alone among Republicans, and higher support for paid family leave than what we saw in a recent DFP poll which found 39 percent support among Republicans. The crisis seems to be driving an increase in support for making these emergency measures permanent and providing a safety net for workers before they're plunged into another crisis.

## Voters Support Giving Workers Paid Leave And A \$15 Minimum Wage

Would you support or oppose making benefits such as a \$15 min wage and paid family leave permanent for essential workers and eventually expanding them to everyone?



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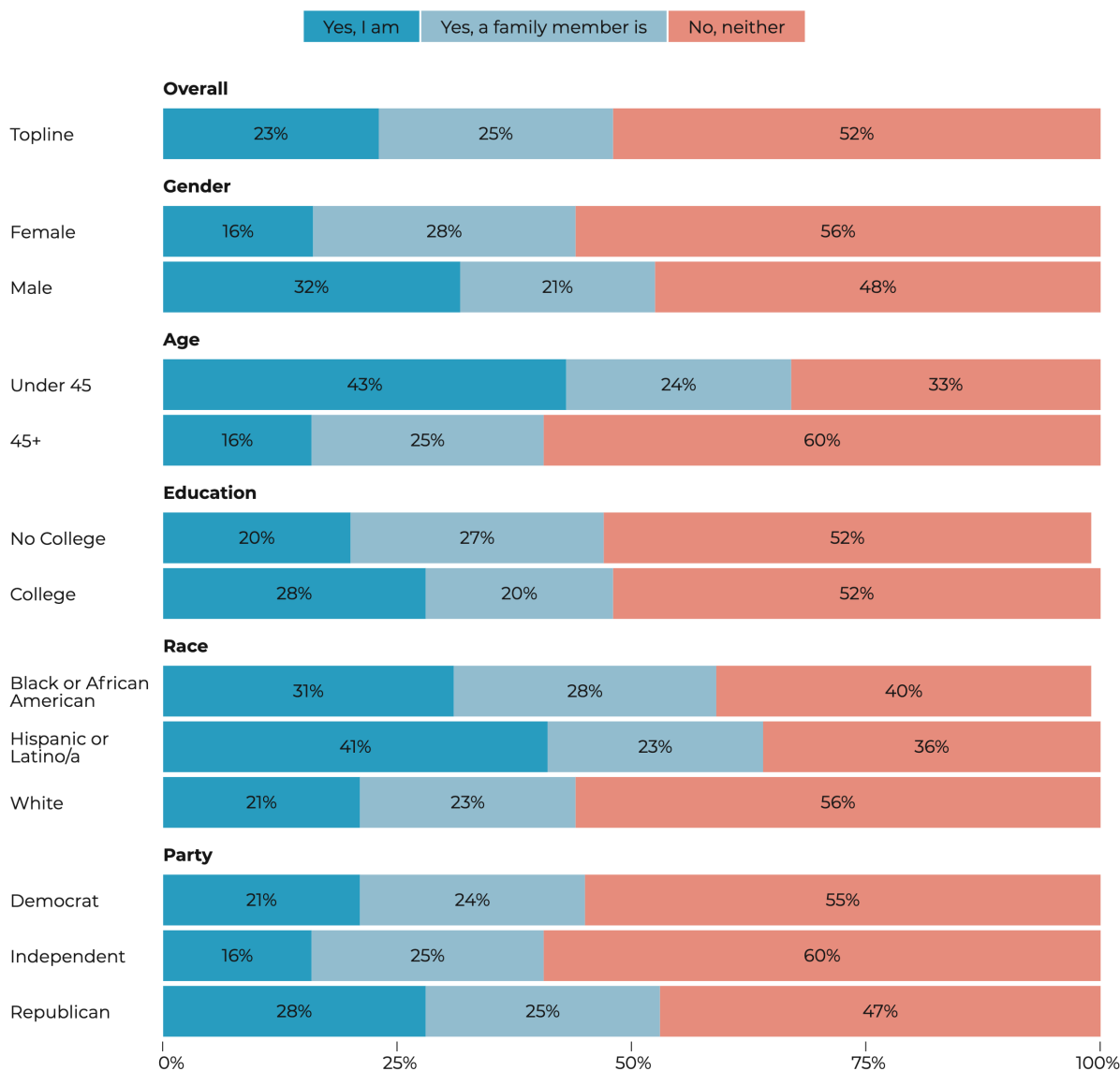


To get a sense of the salience of this bill of rights, we asked respondents if they or a family member were an essential worker. Interestingly, Republicans were slightly more likely to report that they were an essential worker, or that a family member was. This may explain the very

strong bipartisan support for aid to essential workers and mandating increased pay. It seems the partisan politics of minimum wage and worker protections are being somewhat shifted by the magnitude of the current crisis.

## Nearly Half Of Voters Have Ties To An Essential Worker

Are you or one of your immediate family members considered an "essential worker"?



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## CONCLUSION

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Voters recognize the strain that the pandemic has put on essential workers, and support government action to provide more protections for this typically under protected group. There's bipartisan support for the Essential Workers Bill of Rights and its component policies, likely driven by the bipartisan experience of knowing or being an essential worker.

## METHODOLOGY

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On April 11, 2020, Data for Progress conducted a survey of 2409 likely voters nationally using web panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, urbanicity, race, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is  $\pm 2$  percent.