CORONAVIRUS STUDY: ADVOCACY ISSUES

April 2020
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Executive Summary

As the U.S. nears its third month of facing the coronavirus outbreak, there is widespread public support for legislative initiatives that address safely reopening the economy; ensuring the health and safety of “front-line” workers; supporting individuals in nursing homes and other residential facilities; and the greater use of public funds to support those in need.

• Roughly seven in ten adults ages 50 and over support reopening the economy only after widespread testing indicates those who can safely return to work. The cautious approach to reopening the economy is widespread; however, about one-fifth of Republicans say the economy should reopen right away.

• Although there is overwhelming support for the six legislative proposals that respondents were asked about, there are minor variations in support by political affiliation depending upon the recipient of the assistance.
  o There is nearly universal support for making sure that healthcare workers get the personal protective equipment that they need and for providing time off for front-line workers (such as healthcare, grocery store, delivery, and restaurant workers).
  o Nine in ten (or more) respondents—irrespective of political affiliation—support requiring nursing homes and assisted living facilities to report the number of active coronavirus cases and to make video visitations available to family members.
Executive Summary, continued

- More than nine in ten respondents also support providing a **federal income tax credit to family caregivers**, with only slight variations by political affiliation. While there is strong support across the board for **government subsidies to caregivers to replace all of their pay while they are caregiving**, Democrats are the most likely to agree (91%) that caregivers should be eligible to receive the subsidies, followed by Independents (81%) and Republicans (65%).

- When considering extending **unemployment insurance benefits to those who have lost their jobs** during the coronavirus outbreak or temporarily **increasing federal funding for food assistance to low-income workers**, support is slightly less among Republican respondents.

- While more than nine in ten Democratic respondents agree that Congress should provide **additional stimulus payments**, agreement drops among Independents and Republican respondents, albeit remaining at relatively high levels.
Nearly (99%) all Democratic respondents say the economy should reopen when there is widespread testing or when there is a vaccine. This figures is in comparison to more than three-quarters (77%) of Republicans who say the same thing.

Q8. Leaders in states and the federal government are now talking about “reopening the American economy.” Which statement best describes your view? n=2,796
Overwhelming support for six legislative proposals.

Nine in ten (or more) respondents ages 50 and older strongly or somewhat support all six of the legislative proposals about which they were asked.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Support (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making sure healthcare workers get the personal protective equipment they need.</td>
<td>99%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requiring nursing homes, assisted living, and other residential care facilities to publicly disclose the number of active cases of coronavirus infections, if any.</td>
<td>96%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requiring nursing homes, assisted living, and other residential care facilities with visitor restrictions to make video visitation available for residents and their loved ones.</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extending unemployment insurance benefits for people who have lost their jobs until this crisis is over.</td>
<td>96%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing a federal income tax credit to family caregivers who incur expenses for the care and support of a family member.</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily increasing federal funding for food assistance to low income families.</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Q9. Congress is considering legislation that would help Americans during the coronavirus pandemic. How much do you support each of these proposals? Please tell me how much you support or oppose each of these proposals.
Support for legislative proposals high among all groups.

Even though there are some differences by political affiliation, in general, support is high for all six legislative proposals.

Q9. Congress is considering legislation that would help Americans during the coronavirus pandemic. How much do you support each of these proposals? Please tell me how much you support or oppose each of these proposals.
Nearly universal agreement for sick leave for workers on the “front line” of the coronavirus outbreak.

When considering sick leave for health care, grocery store, delivery, and restaurant workers who cannot take time off, nearly all Democrats, Independents, and Republicans agree they should receive the benefit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Disagreement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total n=2,786</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrats n=1,284</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents n=352</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans n=1,154</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Q16. People who work in health care, grocery stores, delivery, or restaurants, often cannot take time off. Do you agree or disagree these workers should be able to take time off from work if they get sick just like other workers?
Strong agreement for additional stimulus payments.

While more than nine in ten Democratic respondents agree (92%) that Congress should provide Americans with additional stimulus payments, agreement drops among Independents (84%) and Republican respondents (71%), albeit remaining at relatively high levels.

Q13. Recently, Congress passed legislation that provided most Americans with stimulus payments. Do you agree or disagree that Congress should provide Americans with additional stimulus payments?
Strong support for financial subsidies to caregivers.

Democrats are the most likely to agree (91%) that caregivers should be eligible to receive government subsidies to replace all of their pay while they are caregiving, followed by Independents (81%) and Republicans (65%).

Q15. Some members of Congress think employed people who provide unpaid care for a family member who is sick with the coronavirus should be eligible for government subsidies that would replace their pay while they are caregiving. Do you agree or disagree caregivers should be eligible to receive all of their pay while they are caregiving?
Objectives and Methodology

Objective: To learn more about midlife and older adults’ attitudes and behaviors related to the coronavirus outbreak and its effects.

Methodology: Phone, nationally representative survey among U.S. adults ages 50 and older.

Sample: Panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak; 2,796 completed the survey—2,748 via the web and 48 via telephone.


Language: Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference.

Weighting: Data were weighted by age, gender, race/ethnicity, census division, and education to reflect national population estimates for adults age 50 and older.

Questionnaire length: 4 minutes (median).

Confidence Interval: Total sample: ± 2.59%. The margin of error among subgroups is higher.

Note: Some percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.
About AARP

AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With nearly 38 million members and offices in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also works for individuals in the marketplace by sparking new solutions and allowing carefully chosen, high-quality products and services to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the nation’s largest circulation publications, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.

Acknowledgements

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This research was designed and executed by AARP Research