

What Will Parents Vote For?

Report on a survey for the National Parenting Association
and Offspring Magazine — MAY 2000

by Charney Research

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ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARENTING ASSOCIATION

The National Parenting Association is working to make parenting a higher priority in our private lives and on the public agenda with a message that unites Americans and a national campaign to value, support, and strengthen parenting.

We're adding parents' voices to the national debate and finding new solutions to the problems facing today's parents — in how we organize our work lives, schools and our communities. We're laying the groundwork to spark and sustain a new social movement with solid research and fresh thinking, expertise in communications to reach parents, opinion-leaders, and the American public, and partnerships with others who care about parents, kids and America's future.

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ONLINE

An online version of this report and a Summary and Analysis can be found on the National Parenting Association web site, www.parentsunite.org. Related stories and an online version of the survey can be found at the *Offspring* Magazine web site, www.offspringmag.com.

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INTRODUCTION

In order to discover what concerns and issues are on the minds of America’s parents, Charney Research, a New York-based polling firm, conducted a nationwide survey for the National Parenting Association. The results suggest that the work-family time crunch has become a major concern of parents today. The survey also found that American parents want more help from employers and government to deal with the concrete problems that they face — education, health insurance, and family finances, as well as the time crunch — while they show little interest in moralistic “family values” proposals. It also shows that more parents believe that they are being ignored by public officials than in 1996, and that many, in turn, do not place much emphasis on their children becoming involved in public affairs. This report presents an analysis of the findings and compares them to the results of the previous National Parenting Association poll in 1996. A technical note at the end of the report describes how the poll was conducted.

THE TIME CRUNCH

- **For American parents, time has emerged as a major issue. They are struggling to balance the demands of work and family.**

Even though America’s parents are trying to find time for their kids, they are in a time bind. A majority — 56% — say they do not have enough time for themselves. (See Table I.) Nearly one in three (32%) says they do not have enough time for their children. Low-income, younger, and single parents are the likeliest to say they lack time for their kids — another sign that work-family pressures are most intense for blue-collar parents and those just starting out.

TABLE I. PARENTAL TIME ISSUES BY WORK STATUS AND GENDER

Q34: Do you feel you have enough time to spend with your kids? Q35: Do you feel you have enough time for yourself?							
	All Parents	Working Full-Time		Working Part-Time		Non-Working	
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Not enough time for self	56%	53%	79%	58%	50%	40%	45%
Not enough time for kids	32	36	48	35	30	14	17

For working parents, the lack of time for family and self is reaching crisis proportions. Moms working full-time are especially squeezed. Nearly four-fifths of them (79%) don't have enough time for themselves and almost half (48%) lack enough time for their kids. The figures are only a little better for full-time working dads (53% and 36% respectively).

Further evidence of the time bind comes from a question that asked parents how they would spend an extra hour in the day. Some 43% would like to spend more time with their family — well above the 32% who say they lack enough time for their kids. Some 38% would spend the extra hour on themselves, reading, watching TV, exercising, etc., while 8% would catch up on their sleep. Only 4% would engage in community activities (religious, political, PTA, and the like), and a mere 3% want more time to work.

There was a big gender difference: women preferred extra time for self to time for family, 48% to 39%, while men preferred family over personal time, 59% to 24%. Busy working fathers seek more family time, while time-crunched working women seem most to want more personal time. Other research suggests this is because working mothers have already given up virtually all their personal time in order to preserve time for their families.¹

- **The reason for the time crunch is clear: parents are committed to spending a lot of time with their kids.**

Parents are clear about their commitment and desire to spend a lot of time with their children. Working or not, single or married, most parents say they find time every weeknight for their children and try to keep tabs on their school work. Very large majorities report that they had dinner with their kids on the most recent weeknight (82%) and checked to see if their kids did their homework on the most recent weekday (78%). We may be seeing some over-reporting by parents of what they perceive as the socially correct answers. Even so, the image sometimes prevalent in the media of a generation of kids growing up on their own as their parents put in overtime, or pump iron at the health club is exaggerated.

Indeed, even among working parents, for the large majority (72%), if there is a time conflict between family and work, family usually wins out. (See Table 2.) They tend to see home as a shelter from worldly pressures. When asked which is more stressful for them, home or work, working parents said work is more stressful by 64% to 27%. (Those who said work wins out over home or found home more stressful, tended to be younger, less educated, and minorities — one of several findings in the poll

¹ Juliet B. Schor, "Time Crunch Among American Parents," paper prepared for the National Parenting Association, September 18, 1998.

suggesting that the most severe work-family conflicts are faced by low-end parents with meager wages and longer hours, not by driven young professionals.)

When working parents were asked where they get more respect for their efforts, equal proportions responded “at home” and “at work” — 41% each. Younger parents say they get more respect for their efforts at home, while older ones, further in their careers, say they get more respect at work. Responses also vary with gender and education. Work yields more respect for college-educated men — the old top dogs — and non-college women — no longer just homemakers, while the reverse is true for college-educated women — traditionalists despite their careers — and non-college men — on the lower occupational rungs.

TABLE 2. PARENTS’ ROLES: HOME VS. WORK (Q23-25)

	Home	Work
Usually wins out if time conflict	72%	20%
More stressful	27	63
Get more respect from people for efforts	41	41

Base = 348 working parents (weighted), 446 (unweighted)

Arlie Hochschild has suggested that, facing a stressful home environment, parents may actually choose to spend more time at work, fleeing a demanding home life and focusing their efforts on a workplace where they get more respect and care.² But the poll’s findings show that most parents find work more stressful than home and choose home when time conflicts arise. Moreover, those who say home is more stressful do not work longer hours than those who say that work is. While there may be anecdotal evidence of the “work becomes home” effect described by Ms. Hochschild, the poll found little hard data to support it.

ROLE OF EMPLOYERS AND GOVERNMENT

- **Parents believe the right employer policies could do a lot to help parents and families, but they say employers could be much more purposefully family-friendly than they have been.**

Nearly four parents in five (79%) believe employers can do “a great deal” or “something” about the concerns of parents, but less than half (44%) say employers are actually doing that much. (See Table 3.)

² Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1997).

These figures are almost unchanged from 1996. Some 38% say employers could do “a great deal,” but only 8% say that they are doing so. Responses here reflect, in part, personal experience: workers in the most family-friendly firms say employers are doing a great deal or something, 53% to 39%, while those in the least family-friendly say they are not, 46% to 43%.³

TABLE 3. EMPLOYER AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS TO PARENTAL CONCERNS

<i>Q13-16: How much do you think employers are doing/can do about the concerns of parents? How much do you think government is doing/can do about the concerns of parents?</i>				
	A Great Deal/Somewhat		Not Very Much/Nothing At All	
	2000	1996	2000	1996
Employers...				
Are doing	44%	43%	48%	53%
Can do	79	80	14	19
Government...				
Is doing	46	52	50	46
Can do	81	84	14	13

- **Fewer parents think government is responsive to their concerns than four years ago.**

More than eight parents in ten (81%) say government can do a great deal or something about their concerns. Yet less than half (46%) say the government is doing this — a six-point decline since the same question was posed in 1996. Parents clearly still want government to address their needs — but fewer think it is doing so.

Political alienation among parents has also grown since our last survey. Nearly two-thirds of parents (64%) now agree that public officials “do not care much about what parents like me think” — up 7 points since 1996. Acceptance of this view prevails across the board, including among parents who vote and are interested in politics.

One specific public policy measure to help parents which has been debated is allowing new mothers to draw unemployment benefits while on maternity leave. The poll tested this proposal by presenting arguments for and against the idea. We asked, “Since many working mothers can’t afford to take

³ We measured the family-friendliness of a respondent’s employer by the number of family-friendly options the firm offered.

maternity leave without pay, some people say new mothers should be allowed to draw unemployment benefits while on maternity leave. Others say this could leave the unemployment insurance fund low when recession strikes, and that unemployment benefits should be reserved for the jobless. Which is closer to your view?” Despite this rigorous test, 54% expressed support for the measure, while 34% opposed it. It received majority support across all demographic groups except for parents aged over 50, who are past childbearing age.

FLEXIBILITY AT WORK

- **Workplaces are now commonly described as offering some flexible practices that are helping parents balance work and family.**

After years of advocacy and discussion, the survey showed that some flexible work time options are now available to the majority of working parents. (See Table 4.) Offered most frequently is the option to work fewer hours regularly if family needs require it: 69% of working parents say they have this possibility. Two out of three working parents (67%) have the option to work flexible hours — starting earlier or later than usual to meet family needs — and nearly half (48%) are currently doing so. A majority of parents (53%) also report that they can take paid leave from their jobs to meet important family needs. The option of working from home is less common: only one parent in five (21%) can do this. Almost all of those who have this option (19%) say they do so, at least occasionally, suggesting that many find this a way to balance work and family needs.⁴

Companies with under 25 employees, less rigid than bigger firms, are the likeliest to offer flexible options for work time and allow home work. But paid leave for family needs tends to be given by big firms (over 50 workers), which can more easily absorb the cost and disruption.

Parents who lack family-friendly options strongly want them, the survey found. Fully 72% of those who cannot now work fewer hours regularly to meet family needs would do so if they could, and 75% of those without flexible hours would take advantage of them if offered.

The survey findings also suggested why parents seek these policies: family-friendly policies clearly benefit families. We measured the family-friendliness of a respondent’s employer by the number of family-friendly options the firm offered. The results showed that parents who work for the most family-friendly companies are much likelier to say family wins out when there are work-family time conflicts (84% vs. 56% of parents working for the least family-friendly companies). Those in the least family-

⁴ But work from home may be involuntary overtime for some: one-third of parents with full-time jobs who can work at home regularly do so, and they face a time crunch for their kids more often than other parents do.

friendly companies also are almost twice as likely to say that work-family issues are among their biggest concerns as parents as those working for the most family-friendly (21% vs. 11%).⁵

TABLE 4. EMPLOYER POLICIES TO HELP PARENTS (Q26-32)

Where you work, can you...?	Yes	Take Advantage
Work fewer hours regularly if family needs require it	69%	N/A
Work flexible hours, starting earlier or later than usual to meet family needs	67	48%
Take paid leave for meeting important family needs	53	N/A
Work from home	21	19

Base = 348 working parents (weighted), 446 (unweighted)

The rise of family-friendly practices has been matched by more understanding attitudes among employers towards family needs. Parents say it would not hurt their careers if they told their boss they need more time for their children, by 65% to 27%. (The exceptions tended to be lower income, younger, and single parents, which helps explain the class and age aspects of the time crunch.) The connection between employer policies and attitudes was equally evident. Parents in the least family-friendly companies said seeking more time for their kids would hurt their careers, 55% to 26%; those in the most family-friendly firms felt the reverse, 93% to 7%.

While helpful, the transition we are beginning to see in the workplace does not reach everyone. Our data show that the folks left out tend to be lower income and younger parents — precisely those who need help the most. Thirty percent of parents with family incomes over \$60,000 a year, compared to only six percent of parents with incomes under \$20,000, work for firms that rank high on an index measuring the availability of family-friendly options. Parents under age 35, who generally have younger children, are also less likely to have on-the-job flexibility.

Apart from limited child care subsidies and the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993, the government has not done much to address the time bind squeezing today’s families. The FMLA guaranteed that new parents could have 12 weeks of job-protected leave, but time off is unpaid and the law only applies to those working in firms with 50 or more employees. That means that people working for smaller firms — over half the parents in our sample — are excluded.

⁵ See section on Parental Concerns and Challenges, below.

PARENTAL CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES

- **Crime and drugs still top parents' concerns — and are mentioned by even larger proportions than four years ago. After that come family values, the quality and cost of education, and work-family issues, all cited with roughly equal frequency.**

To find out the concerns on American parents' minds, the survey took two approaches. One was a direct question on the subject; the other was asking them to identify their biggest daily challenge from a list of family-related issues.

To make sure that parents voiced their opinions with no lead from the survey, we first asked them to express their biggest concerns or worries as parents in an open-ended question, allowing up to three responses. Table 5 shows all those mentioned by 5% or more.

Crime and drugs, mentioned by 40% and 28% respectively, easily led the list of concerns. Parental worry about them has risen sharply since 1996, by 10 points for crime and 7 for drugs. These results make sense in light of our findings on post-Columbine fears (see Kids and Guns, below): despite the reported drop in crime overall and leveling off of youth drug use, parents are increasingly worried about the danger of youth getting involved in dangerous activities.

After those came a second tier of concerns, each mentioned by roughly one-fifth of parents. Declining moral values were cited by 22%, up from 14% in 1996. The quality of schooling was mentioned by 20%, up 3 points, and its cost — from preschool to college — by 17%, an increase of 2 since 1996. Time for children and coping with work and family is also much more of a concern today than it was in 1996. Some 19% of parents mentioned time-related issues in the most recent poll, compared to only 6% of parents in the 1996 poll, a 13-point jump in four years.

Economic issues rank lower during a time of affluence, yet still attract more concern than four years ago, especially among the less prosperous. Making ends meet is among the biggest worries for 9% of parents, up 5 points since 1996. Health insurance and health care are concerns for 7%, a 4 point rise. TV and movie sex and violence are the remaining items on the list, each mentioned by 5%.

Thus the concerns of American parents in 2000 are largely similar to those found in our 1996 survey. Once more safety concerns top the list, not moral decline, which again forms part of a second tier of issues rather than the dominant theme which some so-called “family values” advocates suppose.⁶ (Ironically, the prominent place “moral decline” occupies in some polls on the principal issues facing the country largely reflects the emphasis given it by senior citizens.) If there is any surprise in these results, it

⁶ For more details, see *What Will Parents Vote For?* (New York: National Parenting Association, 1996).

is that family time now rivals in importance the concerns on values and education which figured in the previous study.

TABLE 5. PARENTAL CONCERNS

<i>Q11: Speaking as a parent, what are your biggest concerns or worries? (Concerns cited by 5% or more of parents in 2000)</i>		
	% Mentioning Concern in...	
	2000	1996
Crime/violence/gangs/safety	40%	30%
Drugs	28	21
Declining family/moral values	22	14
Quality of schooling	20	17
Time/having time for my kids/coping with work and family	19	6
Paying for preschool/schooling and college	17	15
Making ends meet	9	4
Health insurance/health care	7	3
TV/movie sex and violence	5	1
Teenage sex/childbearing	5	3
All other mentions	29	42

- **Parents consider balancing work and family to be their biggest challenge, ranking it ahead of instilling “family values.”**

In another measure of parental concerns, respondents were asked to name their biggest daily challenge as parents from a list of five family-related issues. (See Table 6.) Balancing work and family was named the most often, by 30% of all parents — another sign of the severity of the time pressures parents face today. Among working parents, the proportion calling it their biggest daily challenge reaches 40%. The results on this question indicated that juggling work and family is a major problem for parents of all income levels and races, even if outright lack of time for children is an issue for those at the low end most often. Arranging childcare, another work-related concern, is mentioned by 3% of parents.

In second place came instilling moral values in children, which 27% of parents consider their biggest challenge. They tend to be older, white, and affluent. In contrast, 19% say that making ends meet is their biggest everyday challenge — particularly younger, lower income and less educated parents. Another

16% consider their child’s education as their biggest challenge; they come from all income levels and racial groups.

Altogether, the practical challenges on the list, time, education, finances and child care, outrank moral concerns by 58% to 27%, or more than two-to-one. The results of the survey’s question on parental challenges is another clear indication that moralistic rhetoric about “family values” misses the mark.

TABLE 6. PARENTAL CHALLENGES

<i>Q12: Which of the following is the biggest daily challenge that you face as a parent?</i>	
	All Parents
Balancing work and family	30%
Instilling moral values	27
Making ends meet	19
Child’s education	16
Arranging childcare	3

Indeed, these findings may even help explain why the proportion of parents alienated by public officials has grown: the politicians may have been talking past America’s parents. The politicians who have often dominated the debate about families have stressed restoring “family values,” and the minority of parents citing such values as their principal challenge make up almost the only group in the poll where a majority says that public officials take heed of what they think. But among the large majority of parents with more practical concerns, most say that public officials are not paying attention.

PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT

- **The parents’ agenda for the next President stresses government action on education, health insurance, and gun control — over tax cuts, restoring morality, or restricting abortion. Family-friendly policies might also prove to be a “sleeper” issue.**

To learn more about where parents stood in the political debate about family issues, respondents were given a list of seven issues prominent in those discussions and asked which, as parents, they thought should be the next President’s top priority. (See Table 7.) Improving public schools came first, mentioned by 29%. It was followed by health insurance for all (17%), tax cuts (16%), strengthening moral values (16%) and gun control (12%). Family-friendly workplaces were mentioned by 5%, and restrictions on abortion by 3%.

While the top-scoring responses show what is currently on parents’ minds, the responses to the two lowest-testing issues, abortion restriction and family-friendly workplaces, were also revealing. Despite three decades of intense campaigning against abortion, halting it is not a parental priority; nor was it spontaneously cited as a concern or challenge. In contrast, the survey showed that work-family issues are of vital concern to parents, but they are not yet seen as presidential issues (much like the case with health care before 1992). These findings suggest that a work-family agenda could prove a “sleeper” issue that might provide a boost to candidates prepared to raise the issue.

The political issues now stressed by the so-called “family values” groups — moral leadership, tax cuts, and abortion restriction — together are seen as top priorities for the next President by only 35% of parents. In contrast, an alternative agenda that speaks to many of parents’ major preoccupations — education, health insurance, and gun control — would be favored by 58%. Thus, by roughly five-to-three, American parents prefer more government activism on their concrete concerns to the “family values” agenda of stronger morality, tax cuts and less government.⁷

TABLE 7. PRESIDENTIAL PRIORITIES

<i>Q17: I am going to read some priorities that the next President might have. As a parent, please tell me which one should be the next President’s top priority.</i>	
	All Parents
Improving public schools	29%
Health insurance for all	17
Tax cuts	16
Strengthening moral values	16
Gun control	12
Family-friendly workplaces	5
Restricting abortion	3

⁷ In fact, it is striking that only 16% saw moral values as a top priority for the next President, since 22-27% of parents were very concerned with imparting these values. It thus seems that even many of the parents worried about moral decline do not think that teaching morality should be the job of a public official.

KIDS AND GUNS

- **A large majority of parents fear that a Columbine-type shooting could occur in their children's schools.**

One of the biggest concerns on parents' minds is guns in schools: fully 69% of American parents worry that a school shooting like the one at Columbine High School could happen at a school in their area. Concern is massive and across the board: at least two-thirds of every demographic group and region fear that such a shooting could take place locally. The incident at Columbine, and those which preceded it in other schools, touched a nerve nationwide.

Parents blame parents most of all for school violence. Some 53% of them blame parents' "failure to teach and watch their kids." One in five (20%) views violent TV, movies and computer games as the primary cause, while smaller proportions point to kids' access to guns (14%) and lack of discipline in the schools (9%). (Gun-owning parents are much more likely to blame parents — 64% vs. 48% of non-gun owners — and much less likely to blame kids' access to guns — 6% of gun owners mentioned this vs. 18% of non-gun owners.) However, although access to guns is not seen as the *cause* of youth violence, most parents do see gun control as a possible *solution* to the problem (see Policies Parents Want, below).

POLICIES PARENTS WANT

- **Parents support policies addressing their most pressing practical concerns: controlling children's access to guns, improving education, assisting with health insurance and family finances, and making the workplace more family-friendly.**

To get a more specific sense of the policy agenda of American parents, the survey asked respondents to react to twenty ideas that have been proposed to help families. Twelve were included in the 1996 survey, and eight were new. (A complete summary appears in Table 8.)

Since most of the policies are supported by the majority of parents, our analysis uses a more demanding test, the proportion of parents who "strongly favor" each measure. It focuses on the proposals favored by at least 75% and strongly favored by 50% or more. The policies which met this standard fell into four major themes:

Gun Control: Two gun control measures topped the poll. Requiring gun makers and sellers to install trigger locks or safety devices is favored strongly by 71% of parents, and 64% strongly favor registering all guns and licensing gun owners. Another gun control measure designed to keep guns out of kids' hands — raising the age of possession for handguns and assault weapons to 21 — is supported almost as

strongly, with 59% of parents strongly in favor.⁸ (It is noteworthy that even among gun-owning parents, 60% strongly favor trigger locks and 49% strongly support registration and licensing, despite the gun lobby's hostility to these measures.)

Education: America's parents strongly back more Federal involvement in education and an expansion of preschool education. Some 56% strongly favor increasing tax deductions or credits to help more families pay for higher education, while 51% strongly favor allocating Federal funds for school construction and renovation. Roughly half (49%) strongly favor extending public education to include pre-kindergarten or early childhood education for all children. Half strongly favor doubling the Federal income tax credit for childcare and preschool expenses to \$1,000 per child for families earning under \$100,000 per year.

Health Insurance and Family Finances: Proposals to assist families with their finances are also quite popular among parents. Providing health insurance for every child, with a full or partial government subsidy to parents who can't afford it, is favored strongly by 63% of parents. Some 59% support a proposal to eliminate state and local taxes on kids' necessities, like diapers, school materials and car seats. The same proportion — 59% — strongly favor raising the minimum wage so that all full-time workers are above the poverty level. Almost as many — 52% — strongly favor banning new credit cards or mortgages for fathers who owe child support.

Family-Friendly Workplaces: Proposals to encourage family-friendly policies also enjoy strong support among parents. The greatest backing was found for offering employers tax incentives for family-friendly policies, such as benefits for part-time workers and flexible working hours (55% strongly in favor). Some 53% strongly favor a law to ensure 24 hours or three days paid leave annually for family needs.

Other proposals received less intense support among parents, and some proved controversial. For example, support is weaker for the creation of a tax incentive for marriage by taxing married couples less than two single people with the same income (39% strongly favorable). Parents reacted with roughly equal intensity to two proposals concerning time off from work: letting workers take time off instead of extra pay for overtime (39% strongly in favor); and letting workers take up to two weeks unpaid leave per year in addition to their paid vacation (37% strongly favor). An all-out ban on handguns is less popular than the gun control measures mentioned earlier. Though a narrow majority of parents (51%) supports such a ban, only 30% strongly favor it.

Several education-related proposals also proved less popular among parents. A proposal to require a

⁸ Federal law only bans private ownership of all assault weapons and ammunition clips with over ten rounds made after September 13, 1994 and a loophole allows importation of undated high-capacity clips.

set amount of community service from all high school students to graduate is strongly favored by only 30%. Keeping schools open longer for classes, homework or clubs to better match the typical work day attracted a similar level of strong support (29%). Least popular among all the measures presented to parents was a proposal to lengthen the school year by 20 days, strongly favored by only 18% of parents. Despite parents' increased focus on work-family issues, these measures are less popular than in 1996, suggesting that parents now prefer adjusting work time to devote more time to their families over increasing the school hours of their children. This shift may reflect changes in personal values of parents as well as increasing concern about the quality and safety of schools.

TABLE 8. POLICIES TO HELP PARENTS (Q39-58)

	Favor		Oppose		Strongly Favor	
	2000	1996	2000	1996	2000	1996
Legislation requiring gun makers and sellers to install trigger locks or safety devices to make it harder for kids to fire them	88%	89%	11%	11%	71%	78%
Registering all guns and licensing gun owners, as is done with cars	84	N/A	15	N/A	64	N/A
Health insurance for every child, with a full or partial government subsidy to parents who can't afford it	88	N/A	9	N/A	63	N/A
Eliminating state and local sales taxes on kids' necessities like diapers, school materials, and car seats	87	82	10	16	59	56
Raising the minimum wage so that all full-time workers are above the poverty level	86	83	12	16	59	61
Raising the age of possession for handguns and assault weapons to 21	82	N/A	15	N/A	59	N/A
Increasing tax deductions or credits to help more families pay for higher education	89	N/A	08	N/A	56	N/A
Tax incentives to encourage family-friendly policies by employers, such as benefits for part-time workers and flexible working hours	90	90	7	9	55	52
A law to ensure 24 hours or three days paid leave annually for family needs, like parent-teacher conferences or taking kids to the doctor	84	87	13	12	53	68
Banning new credit cards or mortgages for fathers who owe child support	77	N/A	17	N/A	52	N/A
Federal funds for school construction and renovation	85	N/A	13	N/A	51	N/A
Doubling the Federal income tax credit for child care and preschool expenses to \$1,000 per child for families with a total income of less than \$100,000 per year	83	89	13	10	50	58
Extending public education to include pre-kindergarten or early childhood education for all children	81	N/A	16	N/A	49	N/A
Letting workers take time off instead of extra pay for overtime	78	79	15	17	39	45
Creating a tax incentive for marriage, by taxing married couples less than two single people with the same income	67	65	27	32	39	36
Letting workers take up to two weeks unpaid leave per year in addition to their paid vacation	76	71	18	28	37	38
Requiring a set amount of community service from high school students to graduate	62	N/A	34	N/A	30	N/A
Keeping schools open longer for classes, homework, or clubs to better match the typical work day	66	75	28	24	29	47
Banning all handguns	51	53	47	47	29	36
Lengthening the school year by 20 days	44	55	49	41	18	30

THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

- **Swing voters, who may well determine the outcome in the next elections, are even more concerned than other parents about violence and schools.**

The outcome of what’s shaping up as a tight race for the Presidency and control of Congress is likely to be determined by the ability to attract crucial swing voters among the nation’s 63 million parents. With that in mind, we looked at where parents in this pivotal group stand on the issues. “Swing voters” — defined as people who called themselves either independents, “weak” Democrats or “weak” Republicans — comprised 58% of our sample.

Like parents in general, swing voters most often say that their toughest daily challenge is balancing work and family. What sets them apart is the salience of two issues: violence and schools. Swing voters are even more worried about violence than those squarely in either the Democratic or Republican camps. Not surprisingly, they favor tougher gun control. Swing voters are also significantly more likely to say that improving public schools should be the next President’s top priority. They voice strong support for proposals to provide federal dollars for rebuilding schools, universal early childhood education, and tax deductions to help pay college costs. Parents, and particularly those in the center with their votes up for grabs, are saying here are the problems we want addressed: the time crunch, gun violence and educating our kids.

TABLE 9. CAPTURING THE SWING VOTE (Q 12, 11 AND 17)

Percent who say...	All Parents	“Swing Voters”	Strong Democrats	Strong Republicans
Biggest daily challenge is balancing work and family	30%	31%	30%	30%
Biggest worry is violence	40	43	33	36
Next President’s top priority should be...				
Improving public schools	29	33	24	22
Cutting taxes	16	15	20	20

PARENTS, CHILDREN, AND POLITICS

- **Parents want their children to be compassionate, but they are also passing political apathy and inequality on to the next generation.**

Finally, the survey looked not only at parents' own political views, but also to their aspirations regarding their children's involvement in public affairs. To examine parents' attitudes towards instilling civic values in their children, the survey asked them to rate the importance of five aspects of community and political involvement. (See Table 10.)

Parents' highest concern was that their children care about the less fortunate: 60% rated this very important. But compassion for others did not necessarily mean responding politically — getting their kids involved in politics is a lower priority for parents. Barely half (51%) regard it as very important that their children become regular voters, and just 43% think it is very important that they become involved in local community issues. Regularly attending religious services rates almost as high (51%) as voting as a value desired for children, while participation in sports was the lowest rated value at 23%.

TABLE 10. CIVIC VALUES

<i>Q2-6: How important is it to you that your children...? (Percent saying each activity is very important to them.)</i>					
	All Parents	Interest in Politics		Voted in 1996	
		Very Interested	Not Interested	Yes	No
Care about the less fortunate	60%	69%	41%	63%	52%
Become regular voters	51	81	20	58	25
Regularly attend religious services	50	58	42	53	41
Become interested in local community issues	43	64	24	47	27
Participate in sports	23	23	33	22	28

The rather low percentages who stress civic involvement for their kids reflect parents' own lack of interest in politics and voting behavior. Among parents who are very interested in politics, 81% want their kids to be regular voters — but these make up only 18% of all parents. More than twice as many (39%) are not interested in politics — and just 20% of them think their children should become regular voters. Similarly, 58% of 1996 voters say their kids should become regulars at the polling place, against just 25% of non-voters. (In contrast, concern for the poor and religious observance was only weakly

associated with political activity, and emphasis on sports was actually stronger among non-voters and those bored with politics.)

Lifestage is also an important influence on parents' views on the importance of participation and concern. The survey showed that older parents stress these values much more than younger ones. The older parents are, the likelier they are to vote and be interested in politics, and thus place more importance on their children becoming informed and involved. Their children are also likely to be older, better able to understand politics and soon eligible to vote. Younger parents, who participate less and have younger kids, give less priority to teaching their children civic responsibility.

The patterns of socialization priorities the survey found also point to sharp differences by class and race. Better educated, more affluent, and white parents are much more interested in seeing that their children vote and become interested in local issues than are less educated, lower income, and black or Hispanic parents. Thus, the political disadvantages which exist today are likely to be replicated in the next generation.

The problems which exist in the transmission of political values in American families were also underlined by the disconnect the poll revealed between what parents say should be done about civic education and what they actually do. Almost all parents (87%) believe that their children should learn about civic responsibilities and current events at home, far more than those who cite any other source. Yet only 53% frequently discuss national news with their children. The pattern of talk about the news is like that for political involvement: younger parents are less likely to do so, as are less educated, low-income, and minority group parents. (After the home, school is mentioned second most often as a civic education source, but by just 48% of parents. Some 17% said it was the job of the media, and a small 7% suggested religious groups.) In short, parents are not only alienated from politics; many are passing that alienation on to their children.

CONCLUSION

***What Will Parents Vote For?* points to the emergence of the time crunch as a major issue for America's parents shows that they want something done about it. They also want action on their concerns for their children's safety and education. But they do not feel that they are being heard by political leaders, and they are doing much less than they could to draw their children into the political process.**

To sum up, the major findings of *What Will Parents Vote For?* include the following:

- Parents are giving a high priority to spending time with their children and families — but the result is that they are battling with a time bind between the demands of work and home.

- Many managers understand the problem, and family-friendly practices are increasingly an established, whether formal or informal, part of a large number of American workplaces. Where they exist, they are making a real contribution to easing work-family pressures.
- Nonetheless, parents think employers could do a lot more to help them than they are at present.
- They also think government could do far more to help them — and fewer think it is responding to their concerns than four years ago, for all the talk of “family values” in political debate.
- Worry about the risk of a Columbine-type school shooting is very widespread, and crime, violence, and drugs are of increasing concern for their kids despite actual declines in some of these measures. Work-family issues, moral values, providing and paying for education, and making ends meet are also major challenges.
- Reflecting their emphasis on practical concerns, parents’ priorities for the next President focus on issues such as education, health insurance, and gun control far more than on the so-called “family values” agenda (instilling morality, tax cuts, and restricting abortion). Family-friendly policies are not yet seen as “political,” though their importance to parents could turn them into a “sleeper” issue with some punch.
- The policy proposals most popular among parents involve limiting children’s access to guns, increasing tax credits for higher education, health insurance for all children, raising the minimum wage, and legislation promoting family-friendly workplaces.
- There was also considerable support for eliminating taxes on children’s necessities, banning credit cards for deadbeat dads, greater Federal support for school construction, bigger tax credits for child care, and the expansion of preschool education.
- Parents want their children to care about the less fortunate, but they give less stress to voting regularly or being involved in local affairs. This tendency reflects the political apathy and alienation many parents feel, and it is most common among minorities and the poor, so the children of the disempowered get the least encouragement at home to join in civic affairs.

Thus the National Parenting Association’s second poll of American parents indicates that they are doing their best to face up to the conflicting requirements of family and work, but they need and want more support from government and employers. The time bind is on their minds more than ever — and they are also more worried about guns, drugs, values, and schools than four years ago. As in 1996, they are far more interested in practical proposals to help them fulfill their responsibilities as parents — gun control, more aid to education, family-friendly workplaces, health insurance and other measures to make ends meet — than in the moralistic “family values” agenda. But they do not think that politicians are paying attention, and many are not bothering to try to get their kids involved in the political process. If America’s politicians hear America’s parents, they may reap a rich reward in votes; if not, they may find that the next generation pays little heed to those who purport to lead it.

HOW THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED

What Will Parents Vote For? Update 2000 was conducted for the National Parenting Association from January 26 to February 8, 2000 by Charney Research, a New York-based polling firm. It consisted of a total of 650 telephone interviews, divided among a national random sample of 500 American parents and oversamples of 50 black parents, 50 Latino parents, and 50 parents who were welfare recipients. All respondents were American citizens 18 or older with children who were living at home or as their dependents. The margin of sampling error for the national sample is +/-4.5%.

The oversamples were conducted to provide sub-samples large enough to allow comparison of separate findings concerning African-Americans, Hispanics, and welfare beneficiaries. The oversamples are weighted down to their correct proportions of the national population in the data on all parents.

The sample structure is similar to that of the 1996 survey of American parents conducted for the National Parenting Association, except in one respect. The 1996 parents poll excluded welfare recipients, who then made up 5% of parents. They currently make up 3% of parents. Since they are so few, even if welfare recipients are excluded from the 2000 data, none of the national results change by more than one percentage point. Hence the 2000 findings, although they include welfare recipients, are comparable to the 1996 results.

This analysis was prepared by Craig Charney and Joan Zacharias of Charney Research, with the assistance of Nancy Rankin, Ruth Wooden, and Peggy Shiller of the National Parenting Association.

SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESULTS
500 Respondents (Weighted), 650 (Unweighted)
Interviewing Dates: January 26-February 8, 2000

Note: The poll consisted of a national random telephone sample of 500 American parents, and oversamples of 50 black parents, 50 Latino parents, and 50 welfare parents. The oversamples are weighted down to their correct proportions of the national population in the data presented below.

The 1996 poll excluded welfare recipients, who then made up 5% of parents. They currently make up 3% of parents. Since they are so few, even if welfare recipients were excluded from the 2000 data, there would be no significant changes in the results.

CIVIC VALUES AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

I'd like to ask you about things some people do.

1. How often do you talk about the national news with your children? Almost all the time, often, not very often, or almost never?

Almost all the time	25%	
Often	28	<u>53%</u>
Not very often	26	
Almost never/Never	20	<u>46%</u>
Don't know	1	

2. How important to you is it that your children become regular voters? Very important, important, somewhat important, or not very important?

Very important	51%	
Important	26	<u>77%</u>
Somewhat important	15	
Not very important	7	<u>22%</u>
Don't know	1	

3. How important to you is it that your children become interested in local community issues? Very important, important, somewhat important, or not very important?

Very important	43%	
Important	36	<u>79%</u>
Somewhat important	17	
Not very important	4	<u>20%</u>
Don't know	1	

4. How important to you is it that your children participate in sports? Very important, important, somewhat important, or not very important?

Very important	23%	
Important	30	<u>54%</u>
Somewhat important	24	
Not very important	21	<u>45%</u>
Don't know	2	

5. How important to you is it that your children regularly attend religious services? Very important, important, somewhat important, or not very important?

Very important	50%	
Important	28	<u>78%</u>
Somewhat important	13	
Not very important	9	<u>22%</u>
Don't know	1	

6. How important to you is it that your children care about the less fortunate? Very important, important, somewhat important, or not very important?

Very important	60%	
Important	30	<u>90%</u>
Somewhat important	8	
Not very important	1	<u>9%</u>
Don't know	1	

CIVIC EDUCATION

7. How old are your children?

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1996</u>
Under 4	33%	32%
5-11	55	42
12-17	38	32
18-22	17	16
22+	8	13
Don't know / refused	1	0

8. How many of them live at home?

0	2%
1	33
2	43
3+	21
Mean	<u>1.9</u>

9. From where do you think children should learn about civic responsibilities and current events?

Home / Parents / Family	87%
Schools / Teachers	48
Media / Newspapers/ TV / Radio	17
Religious organizations	7
Friends	4
Politicians	2
Other	1
Don't know	1

PARENTS' CONCERNS AND PRIORITIES

Now I'd like to ask you about things on parents' minds nowadays.

10. I don't think public officials care much about what parents like me think. Would you say you agree completely with this statement, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree completely?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
Agree completely	19%		23%	
Agree somewhat	45	<u>64%</u>	34	<u>57%</u>
Disagree somewhat	23		24	
Disagree completely	6	<u>29%</u>	16	<u>40%</u>
Don't know	7		2	

11. Speaking as a parent, what are your biggest concerns or worries? (*Open-ended, up to three responses allowed*).

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1996</u>
Crime / Violence / Gangs / Safety	40%	30%
Drugs	28	21
Declining family/moral values	22	14
Quality of schooling	20	17
Having time for my kids	10	3
Coping with work and family	9	3
Making ends meet	9	4
Paying for college	8	9
Health insurance / health care	7	3
Paying for schooling	5	5
TV/movie sex and violence	5	1
Teenage sex / childbearing	5	3
Paying for child care/ preschool	4	1
Problems of single parents	3	1
Teenage smoking	2	1
Welfare	2	1
Availability of child care / latchkey children	2	1
The future / success of children	2	0
Abortion	1	0
Drinking and driving	1	0
Safety	1	0
Religion	1	0
The economy	1	0
For the children's general well-being	1	0
Providing opportunities	0	7
Health / AIDS / pollution	0	5
Keeping my job	0	1
Missing children	0	1
Child abuse	0	1
Homosexuality	0	0
Peer pressure	0	0
Social security	0	0
Taxes	0	0
Women working outside the home	0	0
Environmental concerns	0	0
Immigration	0	0

Racial discrimination	0	0
Wanting children to do better than parents	0	0
Making correct decisions for children	0	0
Encroaching of government / corruption of government	0	0
Other	8	22
Don't know	4	1

12. And which of the following is the biggest daily challenge that you face as a parent?

Balancing work and family	30%
Instilling moral values	27
Making ends meet	19
Your child's education	16
Arranging child care	3
Don't know	5

13. How much do you think government at any level is doing about the concerns or worries of parents? A great deal, somewhat, not very much, or nothing at all?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
A great deal	3%		6%	
Somewhat	43	<u>46%</u>	46	<u>52%</u>
Not very much	39		36	
Nothing at all	11	<u>50%</u>	10	<u>46%</u>
Don't know	4		2	

14. How much do you think government can do about the concerns of parents? A great deal, somewhat, not very much, or nothing at all?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
A great deal	44%		47%	
Somewhat	37	<u>81%</u>	37	<u>84%</u>
Not very much	11		9	
Nothing at all	3	<u>14%</u>	4	<u>13%</u>
Don't know	5		2	

15. How much do you think employers are doing about the concerns of parents? A great deal, somewhat, not very much, or nothing at all?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
A great deal	8%		6%	
Somewhat	36	<u>44%</u>	37	<u>43%</u>
Not very much	37		35	
Nothing at all	11	<u>48%</u>	18	<u>53%</u>
Don't know	7		4	

16. How much do you think employers can do about the concerns of parents? A great deal, somewhat, not very much, or nothing at all?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
A great deal	38%		39%	
Somewhat	41	<u>79%</u>	41	<u>80%</u>
Not very much	12		14	
Nothing at all	2	<u>14%</u>	5	<u>19%</u>
Don't know	7		2	

17. I'm going to read some priorities that the next President might have. As a parent, please tell me which one should be the next President's top priority.

Improving public schools	29%
Health insurance for all	17
Tax cuts	16
Strengthening moral values	16
Gun control	12
Family-friendly workplaces	5
Restricting abortion	3
Don't know	2

YOUTH VIOLENCE / SCHOOL VIOLENCE

18. Are you worried that a school shooting like the one at Columbine High School in Colorado could happen at a school in your area?

Yes	69%
No	29
Don't know	2

19. What is most to blame for school violence?

Parents' failure to teach and watch their kids	53%
Violent TV, movies, and computer games	20
Kids' access to guns	14
Lack of discipline in schools	9
Don't know	4

WORKPLACE ISSUES

20. On a different topic: since many working mothers can't afford to take maternity leave without pay, some people say new mothers should be allowed to draw unemployment benefits while on maternity leave. Others say this could leave the unemployment insurance fund low when recession strikes, and that unemployment benefits should be reserved for the jobless. Which is closer to your view?

New mothers should be allowed to draw unemployment	54%
Unemployment benefits should be reserved for the jobless	34
Don't know	12

21. Are you currently working? **IF YES:** How many hours a week?

No	30%
<u>Employed Part-Time (under 35 hrs.)</u>	<u>18%</u>
Yes, up to 20 hours a week	9
Yes, between 21 and 34 hours a week	9
<u>Employed Full-Time (35+ hours)</u>	<u>51%</u>
Yes, 35 to 40 hours a week	27
Yes, between 41 and 49 hours a week	15
Yes, between 50 and 59 hours a week	7
Yes, 60 hours a week or more	3
Don't know	1

Asked of 348 respondents who are working:

22. How many people are employed where you work: under 25, 25 to 49, or over 50?

Under 25	33%
25 to 49	21
Over 50	43
Don't know	3

23. Which is more stressful for you: home or work?

Home	27%
Work	63
Don't know	10

24. Do your efforts at work or at home get you more respect from people generally?

Home	41%
Work	41
Don't know	18

25. If you have a conflict between time for work and time for family, which usually wins out?

Home	72%
Work	20
Don't know	8

26. Where you work, can you work fewer hours regularly if family needs require it?

Yes	69%
No	27
Don't know	4

Asked of 94 respondents lacking the option to work fewer hours regularly if family needs require it:

27. If you could, would you take advantage of it?

Yes	72%
No	19
Don't know	9

Asked of 348 respondents who are working:

28. Where you work, can you have flexible hours, starting earlier or later than usual to meet family needs? **IF YES:** Are you taking advantage of it?

<u>Yes, combined</u>	<u>67%</u>
Yes, and taking advantage of it	48%
Yes, not taking advantage of it	19
No	31
Don't know	3

Asked of 107 respondents who are not offered flexible hours:

29. If you could, would you take advantage of it?

Yes	75%
No	16
Don't know	9

Asked of 348 respondents who are working:

30. Where you work, can you take paid leave for meeting important family needs?

Yes	53%
No	43
Don't know	4

31. In your job, would it be possible for you to work from home?

Yes	21%
No	77
Don't know	2

Asked of 73 respondents who can work from home:

32. Do you do so? **IF YES:** How many hours per week? **IF NO:** Would you like to?

Yes, occasionally	23%
Yes, up to 10 hours a week	30
Yes, 11 — 20 hrs a week	12
Yes, 21 — 34 hrs a week	5
Yes, 35 hrs a week or more	19
No, would like to do so	4
No, would not like to do so	4
Don't know	3

Asked of 348 respondents who are working:

33. Do you feel it would hurt your career if your employer heard you wanted more time with your kids?

Yes	27%
No	65
Don't know	8

PARENTAL TIME ISSUES

Asked of all respondents:

34. Do you feel you have enough time to spend with your kids?

Yes	67%
No	32
Don't know	1

35. Do you feel you have enough time for yourself?

Yes	43%
No	56
Don't know	2

36. Now imagine something: if you could have an extra hour in the day, how would you spend it?

With my family: kids / spouse / parents etc	43%
For myself: hobbies / fitness / studying / reading / relaxing / TV / writing / driving / etc	38
Sleeping	8
In community activities: religion / church / organizations / politics / school or PTA / etc	4
Working	3
Shopping	0
Other	0
Don't know	4

Asked of 375 respondents with children between 5 and 17 years old:

37. Did you check if your kids did their homework on (MOST RECENT WEEKDAY) night?

Yes	78%
No	18
Don't know	4

Asked of all respondents:

38. Did you have dinner with your kids on (MOST RECENT WEEKDAY)?

Yes	82%
No	15
Don't know	2

POLICIES TO HELP PARENTS

Now I'd like to ask what you think about some specific proposals people have offered to make things easier for parents. For each, tell me if you are strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed.

OLD

39. Doubling the Federal income tax credit for child care and preschool expenses to \$1,000 per child for families with a total income of less than \$100,000 per year. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
Strongly in favor	50%		58%	
Somewhat in favor	34	<u>83%</u>	31	<u>89%</u>
Somewhat opposed	8		7	
Strongly opposed	4	<u>13%</u>	3	<u>10%</u>
Don't know	4		1	

40. Creating a tax incentive for marriage, by taxing married couples less than two single people with the same income. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
Strongly in favor	39%		36%	
Somewhat in favor	28	<u>67%</u>	29	<u>65%</u>
Somewhat opposed	18		16	
Strongly opposed	9	<u>27%</u>	16	<u>32%</u>
Don't know	6		4	

41. Legislation requiring gun makers and sellers to install trigger locks or safety devices to make it harder for kids to fire them. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996*</u>	
Strongly in favor	71%		78%	
Somewhat in favor	18	<u>88%</u>	11	<u>89%</u>
Somewhat opposed	6		4	
Strongly opposed	5		7	
Don't know	1		1	

* 1996: "...or prevent accidental firing by children."

42. Banning all handguns. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
Strongly in favor	29%		36%	
Somewhat in favor	22	<u>51%</u>	17	<u>53%</u>
Somewhat opposed	22		18	
Strongly opposed	25	<u>47%</u>	29	<u>47%</u>
Don't know	3		0	

43. Keeping schools open longer for classes, homework, or clubs to better match the typical work day. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
Strongly in favor	29%		47%	
Somewhat in favor	37	<u>66%</u>	28	<u>75%</u>
Somewhat opposed	16		14	
Strongly opposed	12	<u>28%</u>	10	<u>24%</u>
Don't know	6		1	

44. Lengthening the school year by 20 days. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
Strongly in favor	18%		30%	
Somewhat in favor	26	<u>44%</u>	25	<u>55%</u>
Somewhat opposed	27		18	
Strongly opposed	22	<u>49%</u>	23	<u>41%</u>
Don't know	7		3	

45. A law to ensure 24 hours or three days paid leave annually for family needs, like parent-teacher conferences or taking kids to the doctor. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
Strongly in favor	53%		68%	
Somewhat in favor	31	<u>84%</u>	19	<u>87%</u>
Somewhat opposed	8		6	
Strongly opposed	5	<u>13%</u>	6	<u>12%</u>
Don't know	3		1	

46. Letting workers take time off instead of extra pay for overtime. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
Strongly in favor	39%		45%	
Somewhat in favor	38	<u>78%</u>	34	<u>79%</u>
Somewhat opposed	11		8	
Strongly opposed	4	<u>15%</u>	9	<u>17%</u>
Don't know	7		4	

47. Tax incentives to encourage family-friendly policies by employers, such as benefits for part-time workers and flexible working hours. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
Strongly in favor	55%		52%	
Somewhat in favor	35	<u>90%</u>	38	<u>90%</u>
Somewhat opposed	5		7	
Strongly opposed	2	<u>7%</u>	2	<u>9%</u>
Don't know	3		1	

48. Extending public education to include pre-kindergarten or early childhood education for all children. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

Strongly in favor	49%	
Somewhat in favor	33	<u>81%</u>
Somewhat opposed	10	
Strongly opposed	6	<u>16%</u>
Don't know	3	

49. Raising the minimum wage so that all full-time workers are above the poverty level. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996*</u>	
Strongly in favor	59%		61%	
Somewhat in favor	26	<u>86%</u>	22	<u>83%</u>
Somewhat opposed	6		10	
Strongly opposed	6	<u>12%</u>	6	<u>16%</u>
Don't know	2		1	

* 1996: "Government should provide tax incentives to companies so that all full-time workers are paid a wage above the poverty level."

50. Letting workers take up to two weeks unpaid leave per year in addition to their paid vacation. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
Strongly in favor	37%		38%	
Somewhat in favor	39	<u>76%</u>	33	<u>71%</u>
Somewhat opposed	12		17	
Strongly opposed	6	<u>18%</u>	11	<u>28%</u>
Don't know	6		2	

51. Eliminating state and local sales taxes on kids' necessities like diapers, school materials, and car seats. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

	<u>2000</u>		<u>1996</u>	
Strongly in favor	59%		56%	
Somewhat in favor	28	<u>87%</u>	26	<u>82%</u>
Somewhat opposed	6		8	
Strongly opposed	4	<u>10%</u>	8	<u>16%</u>
Don't know	3		2	

NEW

52. Registering all guns and licensing gun owners, as is done with cars. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

Strongly in favor	64%	
Somewhat in favor	20	<u>84%</u>
Somewhat opposed	7	
Strongly opposed	8	<u>15%</u>
Don't know	1	

53. Health insurance for every child, with a full or partial government subsidy to parents who can't afford it. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

Strongly in favor	63%	
Somewhat in favor	26	<u>88%</u>
Somewhat opposed	5	
Strongly opposed	4	<u>9%</u>
Don't know	3	

54. Increasing tax deductions or credits to help more families pay for higher education. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

Strongly in favor	56%	
Somewhat in favor	33	<u>89%</u>
Somewhat opposed	6	
Strongly opposed	2	<u>8%</u>
Don't know	3	

55. Raising the age of possession for handguns and assault weapons to 21. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

Strongly in favor	59%	
Somewhat in favor	23	<u>82%</u>
Somewhat opposed	8	
Strongly opposed	7	<u>15%</u>
Don't know	2	

56. Requiring a set amount of community service from high school students to graduate. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

Strongly in favor	30%	
Somewhat in favor	32	<u>62%</u>
Somewhat opposed	18	
Strongly opposed	16	<u>34%</u>
Don't know	5	

57. Banning new credit cards or mortgages for fathers who owe child support. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

Strongly in favor	52%	
Somewhat in favor	25	<u>77%</u>
Somewhat opposed	11	
Strongly opposed	7	<u>17%</u>
Don't know	5	

58. Federal funds for school construction and renovation. Are you strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed?

Strongly in favor	51%	
Somewhat in favor	34	<u>85%</u>
Somewhat opposed	6	
Strongly opposed	6	<u>13%</u>
Don't know	3	

DEMOGRAPHICS

The remaining questions are for statistical purposes only.

59. How old are you?

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1996</u>
Under 25	7%	7%
25-34	26	26
35-49	50	51
50-64	14	14
65+	2	2

60. What is the last grade in school you completed?

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1996</u>
Grade school	1%	1%
Some high school	5	5
High school graduate	28	27
Some college	24	24
College graduate	26	27
Graduate school	14	14
Technical school	2	2

61. What is your current marital status — are you married, single, widowed, or divorced?

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1996</u>
Married	80%	78%
Single	10	9
Widowed	3	1
Divorced	6	11
Living together though unmarried	1	1

62. Are you registered to vote?

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1996</u>
Yes	88%	86%
No	12	14

63. Did you vote in the 1996 Presidential election?

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1996*</u>
Yes	79%	77%
No	20	23
Don't know	2	0

* 1996: "Did you vote in the 1992 Presidential election?"

64. Do you consider yourself a strong Democrat, weak Democrat, weak Republican, strong Republican, or Independent?

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1996</u>
Strong Democrat	15%	21%
Weak Democrat	14 <u>30%</u>	8 <u>29%</u>
Weak Republican	11	11
Strong Republican	20 <u>30%</u>	17 <u>28%</u>
Independent	33	38
Don't know	7	5

65. How interested are you in politics? Very interested, somewhat interested, not very interested, or not interested at all?

Very interested	18%	
Somewhat interested	50	<u>69%</u>
Not very interested	22	
Not interested at all	9	<u>31%</u>

66. What is your religion?*

Protestant	50%
Catholic	28
Other Christian	9
Jewish	1
Buddhist	1
Moslem	0
Hindu	0
Other	1
None/Atheist	7
Don't know/refused	2

* 1996 results not comparable due to differences in question wording.

67. Do you own a gun?

Yes	32%
No	66
Don't know	1

68. What is your race?

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1996</u>
White	81%	80%
Black/African-American/Caribbean-American	10	9
Hispanic/Latino	7	6
Asian	1	1
Other	0	3
Don't know/ refused	1	1

69. Do you live in a city, a suburb, or a rural area?*

City	42%
Suburb	33
Rural area	23
Don't know	3

* 1996 results not comparable due to differences in question wording..

70. Do you receive cash assistance such as welfare or SSI?

Welfare	3%
SSI	6
Housing assistance	2
No	82
Don't know	6

71. For statistical purposes only, we need to know your total family income for 1999. Please stop me when I read the category which includes your total family income.*

Less than \$20,000	10%
\$20,000-\$34,999	16
\$35,000-59,999	27
\$60,000-99,999	22
\$100,000 plus	6
Don't know / refused	18

* 1996 results not comparable due to differences in income categories used.

POST-CODES

72. **SEX**

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1996</u>
Male	46%	46%
Female	54	54

73. **REGION**

	<u>2000</u>	<u>1996</u>
Northeast	20%	21%
Midwest	24	24
South	33	28
West	22	27