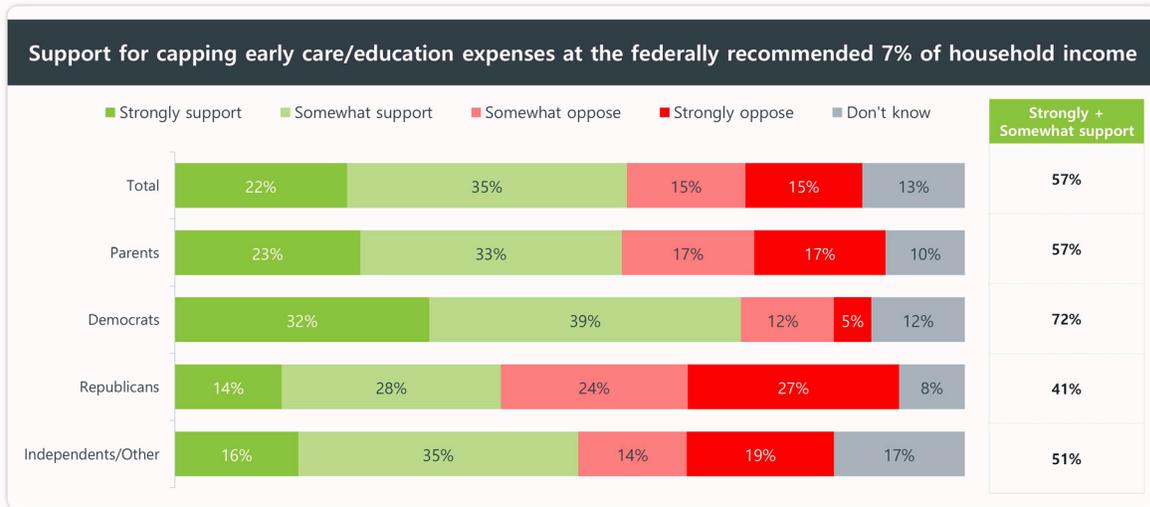


Early Ed Advocates Call For State \$ Bump

by THOMAS BREEN | Oct 18, 2022 1:28 pm

57% of Connecticut voters support capping early care and education expenses at 7% of household income



BASE: Split A: Registered voters (n=455), Parents (n=300), Democrats (n=183), Republicans (n=117), Independents/Other (n=155)
 Q14a. On average early care and education in CT costs \$15,000 per year. One policy being discussed is capping early care and education expenses at the federally recommended 7% of the household income. So a family of 4 making \$125,000 wouldn't pay more than \$8,750 a year or \$162 per week and the rest of the expense would be covered by the state.
 © 2022 HarrisX. All rights reserved.

18

A Connecticut-wide coalition of child care providers and advocates has stepped up its call for state government to increase funding for an industry in “crisis” because the demand from families far exceeds the supply of educators.

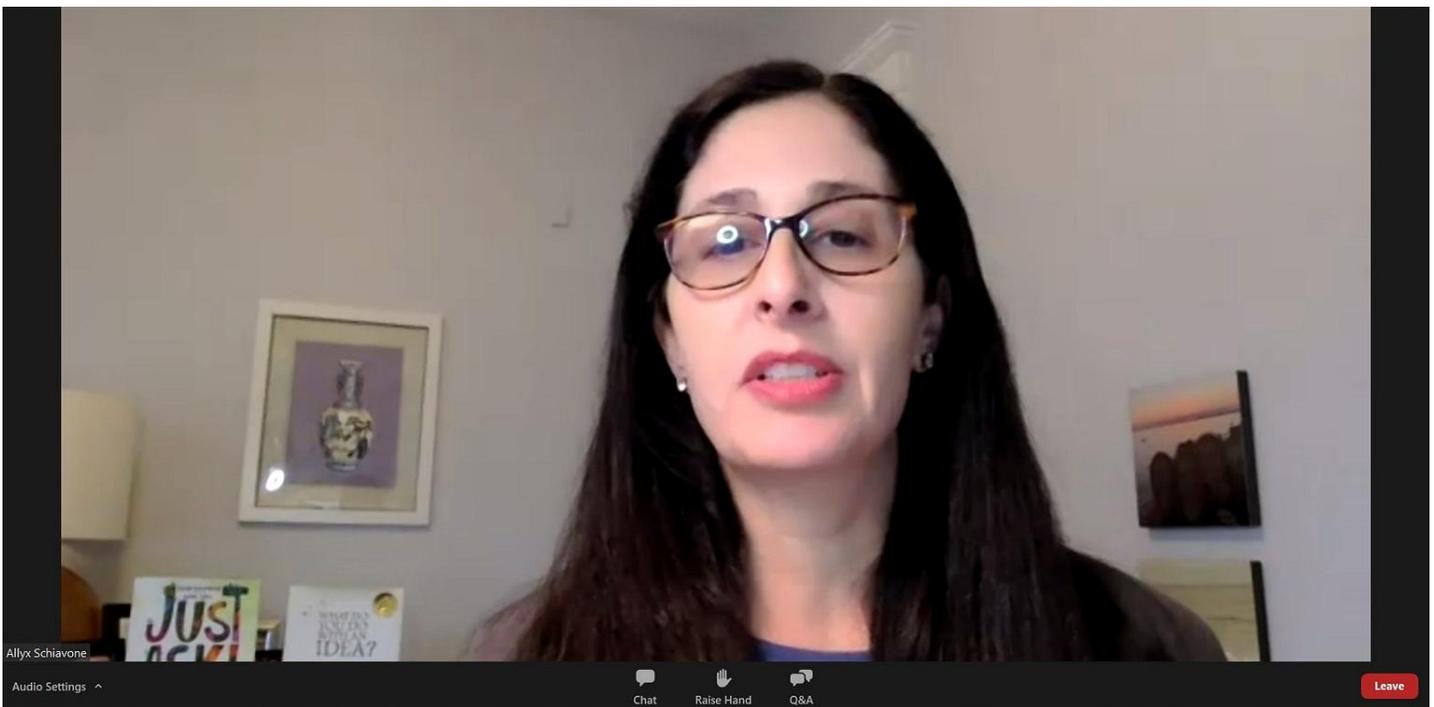
That was the key takeaway from a Zoom-assisted online press conference hosted Tuesday morning by the group Child Care for Connecticut’s Future.

The cause for the presser was the recent publication of poll results from a survey that was commissioned by the child care advocacy organization and that collected feedback from 946 registered Connecticut voters from Sept. 23 through Oct. 3.

According to the presenters at Tuesday’s press conference—which included Friends Center for Children Executive Director Allyx Schiavone, All Our Kin CT Early Care and Education Policy Fellow Jade Thomas, and Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance Executive Director Merrill Gay, among others—the survey found that a majority of those polled support an increase in state government aid for the early education and child care industry.

The survey found that 57 percent of state voters support “capping early care and education expenses at 7% of household income”; 62 percent support “making more people eligible for government subsidized early care and education, even if it means shifting money away from other areas in the Connecticut state budget”; and 75 percent believe “early care/education teachers should make the same hourly wage as public school teachers if they have the same education level.”

Click [here](#) and [here](#) to read those survey results in full, and click [here](#) to watch Tuesday’s presser.



Friends Center Executive Director Allyx Schiavone

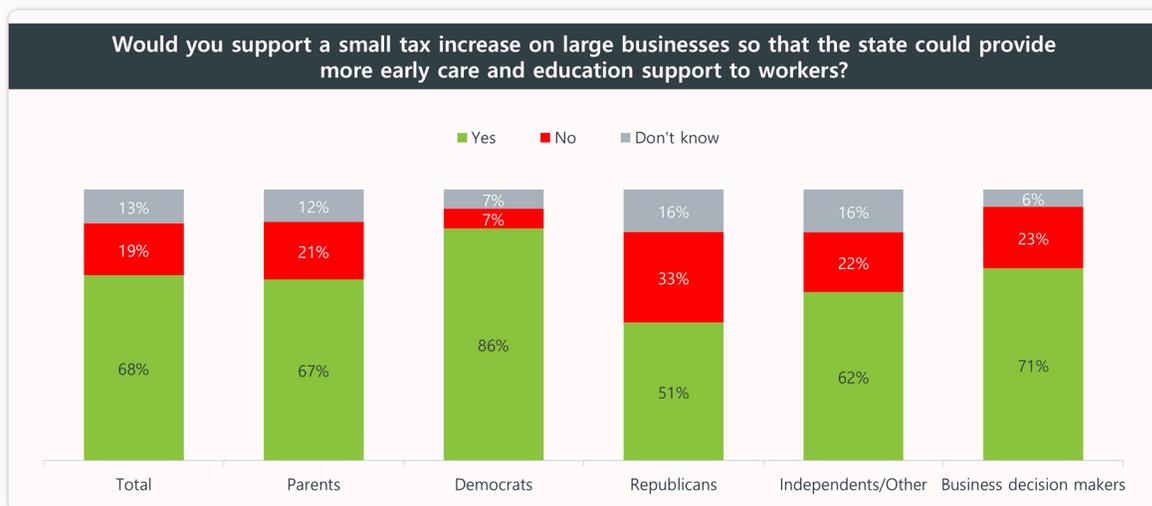
Schiavone, who helps an expanding Fair Haven Heights-based early childhood education nonprofit, took the lead during Tuesday’s presser in sounding the alarm as to just how dire a situation early care providers and families in need of quality, affordable child care are in.

“The current system works for no one,” she said. “The economics are simple. The childcare industry is about supply and demand.” The demand comes from families in need of high-quality, accessible, affordable care, and the supply comes from educators able to provide that care.

“The supply side of this free market system is in crisis,” Schiavone said. “The system is broken and we’re on the verge of collapse. What we as a state decide to do about it is to be determined.”

She said that most early care givers are paid poverty wages, the industry has a “staffing crisis,” and—with the median wage of childcare workers across the country being just \$13.22 an hour—that means that these critical workers “make

Voters and business decision makers express strong support for a small tax on large businesses to help provide early care and education support to workers



BASE: Registered voters (n=946), Parents (n=611), Democrats (n=355), Republicans (n=239), Independents/Other (n=352), Business decision makers (n=150)
 Q27c. Would you support a small tax increase on large businesses so that the state could provide more early care and education support to workers?

She also said that in Connecticut, “a family with one infant toddler has to have an annual income of \$315,000 to cover the true cost of high-quality care. It’s too expensive. So women are dropping out of the workforce.” Parents can’t afford to pay any more than they already do, she said, and child care providers can’t afford to be paid any less than they currently make.

That’s why this child care advocacy group is calling on the state legislature to “commit to certain broad funding principles,” Schiavone said. “If we don’t put money into the system and fix the house, it will collapse and the economic and social impact will be devastating.”



CT Early Childhood Alliance Executive Director Merrill Gay

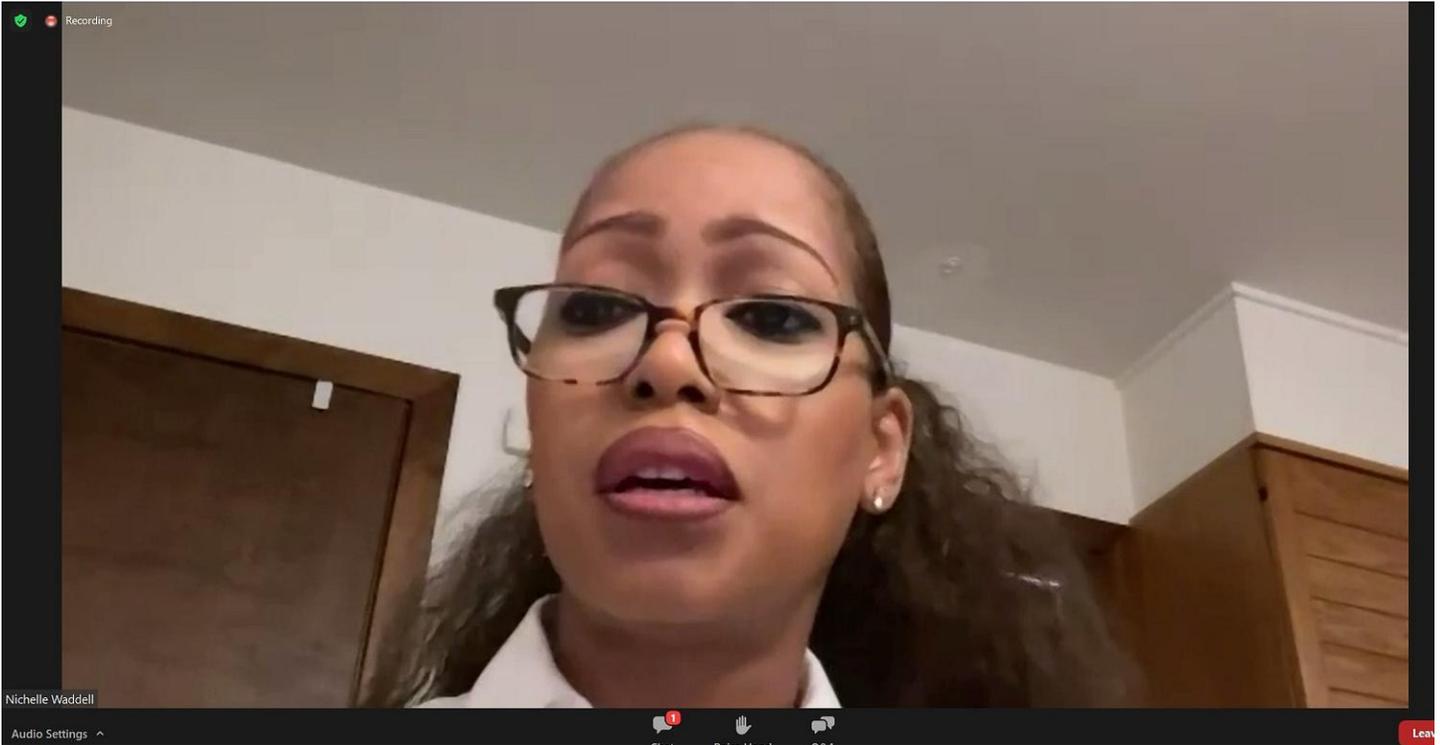
Is there a specific dollar amount of policy that this group will be lobbying for as the state legislature returns to Hartford for a full session in January?

“At this point, we do not have a specific dollar amount,” said Merrill Gay. “There’s a bunch of moving parts. We want the state to commit to paying for the cost of quality care.”

He said that the state’s Care 4 Kids program currently offers subsidies to parents in need at rates that “are far below the federally recommended level. We believe that we need to move from a system based on paying a percentile of the market rate to actually paying for the cost of quality care.” He also said that the “state needs to do the study that the federal government requires to figure out the amount” that Connecticut’s child care industry needs.

Gay said that, according to a recent study by Connecticut’s Office of Early Childhood, many childcare providers work **68 hours per week**—making their average earning around \$8.50 an hour.

“That’s just unacceptable,” he said.

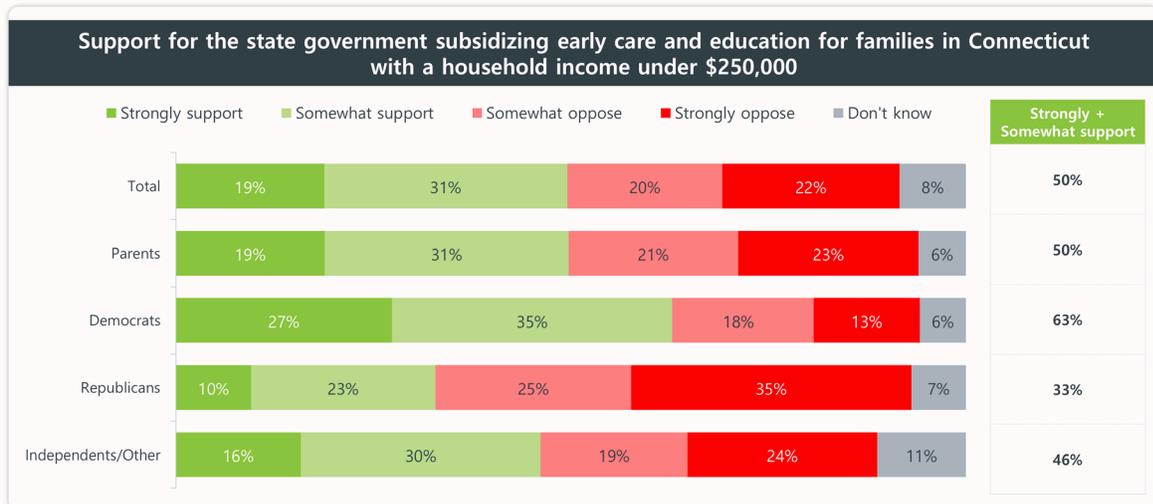


Watch Me Grow Daycare Owner Nichelle Waddell

Stamford-based childcare provider Nichelle Waddell said during Tuesday’s presser that she takes just a little bit of solace in the fact that many people at least recognize there is a problem with the way the early education industry is currently funded and operates.

“We all do admit there’s a problem,” she said. “We want to work together to fix it. I just don’t understand why we cannot. I have to stay optimistic that this will get better, because at least we’re talking about it.”

Voters are more split on subsidizing early care and education for families making up to \$250,000 per year hix



BASE: Registered voters (n=946), Parents (n=611), Democrats (n=355), Republicans (n=239), Independents/Other (n=352)
 Q17. Do you support or oppose the state government subsidizing early care and education for families in Connecticut with a household income under \$250,000?