

**To:** Lisa Guide, Women Effect Action Fund  
**From:** Jill Normington, Normington, Petts and Associates  
**Date:** November 19, 2020  
**Subject:** How “Care Economy” Voters Fueled Biden’s Win in 2020’s Battleground Suburbs--and are Here to Stay

*The survey, conducted for the Women Effect Action Fund (WEAF), by Normington, Petts and Associates, interviewed 2,000 voters in ten battleground states from Nov. 4 to 12: Florida, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin (including an oversample of Wisconsin voters). Topline battleground state results can be found [here](#). Topline results from the Wisconsin oversample can be found [here](#).*

### **A New Force in 2020: “Care Economy” Voters**

Joe Biden is President-elect because of his narrow victories in a string of key battleground states. One decisive factor was a rising cohort of voters--key to Biden’s suburban victories--battered by COVID and focused on “care economy” issues like child care, elder care, family and medical leave and paid sick days.

This battleground states survey shows that these care economy voters helped Biden win the election in key states, where many of his victories were narrow, by supporting him 61%-37% over Trump. **(This improved margin among care economy voters--who supported Clinton by a smaller 54%-40% margin four years ago--was a decisive factor in Biden’s string of narrow battleground wins.)**

***It’s clear that running on care economy issues was critical to Biden’s victory.*** And a majority of Biden voters said that they were thinking about these issues when they voted--not just President Trump.

Across party lines, **74% of battleground voters supported programs in a care economy package that is a critical part of the Build Back Better economic recovery plan that Biden ran on.** This included large majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans--and 57% of Trump voters. When voters assessed the policies one by one, support went even higher.

Suburban voters--who swung decisively to Biden and were a key to his victory in battleground states--were extremely supportive of every element of the care economy agenda. Biden’s victory was also supported by care economy voters in rural and urban areas.

These care economy voters--31% of all voters surveyed--came from all demographics and backgrounds, but they were especially likely to be white, female, and lack college degrees.

This is an energized electorate: 79% of battleground voters said they would “definitely” vote in the next election.

## **DATA AND DETAILS**

### **This Election was About Issues, not Just Trump**

A majority of Biden voters (53%) said they were thinking about care economy issues when they voted--not just about President Trump.

60% of Biden voters said that issues generally, not just the candidate, mattered to them.

### **Three in Four Americans Endorsed a Care Economy Agenda Investment Package**

When asked about several initiatives to promote economic recovery and rebuild from the coronavirus, **74% of battleground state voters endorsed the care economy agenda:** Investing at least \$775 billion in building a more resilient care system, including programs like childcare, elder and home care, and establishing a national paid family and medical leave program that covers all workers, so all Americans can care for their families.

This support included 91% of Democrats, 76% of Independents, and 58% of Republicans.

### **Even More Americans Endorsed Each Care Economy Priority Individually**

Voters across party lines resoundingly supported each pillar of a successful care economy investment agenda.

- **Tax credits to care for older/disabled relative -- 86%**
  - Federal income tax credits for caregiving to offset some of the costs of taking care of an older or disabled family member
- **Caregivers for older adults -- 83%**
  - Investing in supports for family caregivers and higher wages for paid caregivers so that more older and disabled adults can age at home
- **Paid sick leave -- 78%**
  - Requiring all employers to provide paid sick leave so that everyone who has a job gets paid time off if they get sick.
- **Affordable childcare -- 77%**
  - Investing in childcare programs and helping to offset the costs for families so that all children have access to high-quality, affordable childcare
- **National paid family and medical leave -- 76%**
  - Establishing a national paid family and medical leave program that covers all workers and enables all businesses, especially small ones, to ensure their employees have access to paid leave from work to care for themselves, a loved one, or a new child

	<b>Strg Fav</b>	<b>Smwt Fav</b>	<b>Smwt Opp</b>	<b>Strgl Opp</b>	<b>Total Fav</b>	<b>Total Opp</b>
<b>Paid sick leave</b>	40%	38%	15%	7%	<b>78%</b>	22%
<b>Tax credits to care for older/disabled relative</b>	36%	50%	11%	3%	<b>86%</b>	14%
<b>Affordable childcare</b>	34%	43%	17%	6%	<b>77%</b>	23%
<b>Caregivers for older adults</b>	36%	47%	13%	4%	<b>83%</b>	17%
<b>National paid family and medical leave</b>	36%	39%	17%	8%	<b>76%</b>	24%

### **Care Economy Suburban Voters Were a Key to Biden's Victory**

Suburban voters were key to Biden's victory across the battleground. In 2016 they supported Trump, 46% to 45% with minor parties garnering 9% in these battleground states. In 2020, they swung decisively towards Biden supporting him 56% to 42%.

Suburban voters are extremely supportive of the care economy:

- 86% support tax credits for caring for older and disabled relatives
- 83% support for caregivers for older and disabled adults
- 78% support paid sick leave
- 77% support national paid family and medical leave
- 76% support affordable childcare

### **Profile of the Care Economy Voter**

For the purposes of this survey, battleground state care economy voters--31% of all voters surveyed--were defined as people who indicated that elder care, paid family and medical leave and childcare were important issues to them as they cast their ballot in 2020.

These care economy voters can be found in every region, political party and demographic across the battleground states.

- 62% Women, 38% Men
- 80% White, 9% Black, 5% Hispanic, 3% Indigenous, 1% AAPI
- 44% Democrat, 28% Independent and 28% Republican
- 18% Urban, 18% Suburban, 63% Rural
- 70% No degree, 30% College graduate
- 46% Earn less than \$50,000, 48% Earn more than \$50,000
- 48% Married, 14% Living together, 14% Divorced, 5% Widowed, 18% Never married
- 27% 18-34, 23% 35-49, 26% 50-64, 24% 65+

## **Care Economy Messages Were Effective Persuaders for Undecided Women Voters**

The care economy message proved to be a potent message to convert women to supporting Biden. In pre-election polling this year, we [tested](#) for WEAFF six different Biden positive messages with persuadable women voters in Wisconsin (childcare, paid leave, Biden's "soul of the nation" messaging, health care, the economic rebuild and Biden's history of taking personal responsibility for his family).

Of the voters who moved to support Biden during the poll, ***the best testing message was the one about his paid leave plan.*** The second best message with this group was the economic rebuild message, which also mentioned paid leave.

WEAF focused on testing Biden positives because previous polling found that negative Trump messages failed to persuade women to either abandon Trump or support Biden. WEAFF's data suggests that dislike of Trump was not sufficient to move these women--but that a care economy message helped persuade them.

This messaging model was successfully tested in the 2017 Virginia governor's race, when messaging focused on care economy issues like paid leave helped create an 11.4 percent swing in favor of the winner, Democrat Ralph Northam.

## **Focus on Wisconsin**

In Wisconsin--where Biden flipped Hillary Clinton's narrow 2016 loss into a razor-thin 0.7% win, a margin of 20,000 out of nearly 3.3 million votes--the survey showed that care economy voters played a critical difference in Biden's victory.

An oversample of Wisconsin voters commissioned by WEAFF showed that support for care economy issues was quite similar to that in the ten-state battleground survey (of which Wisconsin was one).

### **The Election Focused on Issues, Not Trump**

A majority of Biden voters (53%) said they were thinking about care economy issues when they voted--not just about President Trump. 57% of Biden voters said that issues generally, not just the candidates, mattered to them.

### **Broad Bipartisan Support for the Care Economy Agenda**

71% of battleground state voters endorsed the omnibus care economy package that was part of the Build Back Better platform that Biden ran on: investing at least \$775 billion in building a

more resilient care system, including programs like childcare, elder and home care, and establishing a national paid family and medical leave program that covers all workers, so all Americans can care for their families.

Individual support for each item was also high:

- Paid sick leave: 75%
- Tax credits to care for older/disabled relative: 83%
- Affordable childcare: 73%
- Caregivers for older adults: 81%
- National paid family and medical leave: 74%

	<b>Strg Fav</b>	<b>Smwt Fav</b>	<b>Smwt Opp</b>	<b>Strgl Opp</b>	<b>Total Fav</b>	<b>Total Opp</b>
<b>Paid sick leave</b>	36%	40%	17%	8%	<b>75%</b>	25%
<b>Tax credits to care for older/disabled relative</b>	32%	52%	13%	4%	<b>83%</b>	17%
<b>Affordable childcare</b>	30%	43%	20%	8%	<b>73%</b>	27%
<b>Caregivers for older adults</b>	32%	49%	14%	5%	<b>81%</b>	19%
<b>National paid family and medical leave</b>	32%	41%	19%	8%	<b>74%</b>	26%

### **More on Methodology**

*All interviews were conducted online. The sample’s margin of error should fall within ±2.2 percentage points of those that would have been obtained from interviewing the entire population of 2020 voters in these battleground states.*

*All surveys were weighted to the actual election returns for President and U.S. Senate by region in each state so that the full sample is reflective of the margin at the presidential and senate level (where applicable). As voter file information for who voted becomes available in the coming months, these data will be re-weighted to accommodate known factors such as the actual percentage of the electorate that was female or male. The size of various constituencies is within range of those eventual known factors but not precise. Moreover, as states begin to canvas and certify their election returns, these data could shift as well.*