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FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Update:
Friday, October 1

The Child Tax Credit & Taxing
the Rich



Methodology

On September 21, 2021, GBAO conducted three focus groups online with respondents that varied across demographics—age, gender, and race/ethnicity.



Florida mothers who oppose DeSantis' rules on masks in schools



Texas educators



Nevada mothers who oppose Sisolak's rules on masks in schools

Key Takeaways

- Respondents vary on how "tax the rich" might be defined, but generally land on a range comparable to President Biden's.
- Most in these groups—even Trump voters—are open to taxing the rich more.
- The Child Tax Credit should be framed around support for the whole family, not just the children.
- Elected officials who oppose both Tax The Rich and the Child Tax Credit risk seeming out of touch.

While Most Wonder How The “Rich” In “Tax The Rich” Is Defined, Participants Coalesce Around A \$400K-\$1M Range



“I would consider rich to be if you're making \$250,000 and up per household.” – FL, Trump voter

“I was thinking about somebody that makes over a million dollars per year, because if they can make a million dollars per year, they sure have enough to cover up everything. So why not share the wealth with people that weren't as fortunate as they are?” – FL, Trump voter

“I think you can look at single versus a couple, but I mean, if a single person's making over probably \$500,000 in a year, I think that's a person who's pretty wealthy and they're rich.” – TX, Biden voter

“I think like a million dollars.” – TX, Trump voter

“The ones that make, I don't know, a million or more.” – NV, Biden voter

“I'm thinking maybe like \$500,000 or more because, I mean, even \$100,000 ain't nothing now for a couple and a family. That's nothing. I mean, back in the days, that was like being rich.” – NV, Trump voter

“I agree with the \$500,000. Maybe \$750K... A million does sound like a lot, but then again, like she had said, \$100,000 is not as much as it appears to be. So[...] they really need to hit the wealthy and that's going to be definitely at least \$500,000.” – NV, Trump voter

Even Trump Voters Are Open To Taxing The Rich, Particularly After Hearing More About Growing Disparities

(moderator prompts)

"Let me read you some statements and get your take on them:"

- 650 billionaires in the U.S. became 54% richer during the pandemic, and their net worth increased by \$1 trillion.
- Another list showed the U.S. has 100 new billionaires during the pandemic year.
- The top 25 richest billionaires in the U.S. paid an average of 16% of their income in taxes.

"I think it has a negative effect on the country because people that are that rich are just making money on top of their money. None of it is going through the circulation. None of it is, like they say, helping the economy grow[...] It's just in some offshore account." – FL, Biden voter

"I feel like the blue-collar worker, like us teachers, we give so much in taxes, and I feel like a lot of those wealthy business owners, there's just so many loopholes." – TX, Trump voter

"That's not fair." – TX, Trump voter

"That's ridiculous." – TX, Trump voter

[How does this make you feel?] "Not enough. They should pay higher." – NV, Biden voter

"Mad because they're getting it from the poor people." – NV Trump voter

"Mad. Where did that money come from? And why wasn't it given to the people who truly need help?" – NV, Trump voter

There Is Modest Familiarity With The Child Tax Credit, With Some Recounting How It's Helped Them

"It helped pay the mortgage." – FL, Trump voter

"I was able to pay off a large sum of personal debt." – FL, Biden voter

"I know they passed that... I don't know too much about it, but I know that for every child now that they get a certain amount of money, and so I felt like that's been helpful for a lot of people. I know it might affect their tax return and things like that." – TX, Biden voter

"Well, it literally pays my rent. I literally only have to pay like \$50 towards my rent every month. So I only have to worry about my other bills, which is helpful when a job only brings in \$400 a check or \$500 a check. So that really helps." – NV, Biden voter

"I know I had the option to opt out of it and wait until next year, but how do you opt out of money that comes every month?" – NV, Biden voter



Helping Families Seems To Be A Stronger CTC Frame Than Child Poverty

(moderator prompts)

"Which is a more compelling reason to expand the CTC?"

"Cuts child poverty by half"

"Families are struggling to make ends meet because of the pandemic; helps families pay for things like food and housing"

"I mean, child hunger is a major issue... but the public schools are offering free breakfast and free lunch, and it's a COVID thing for families that are unable to pay for groceries or to buy their children meals." – FL, Trump voter

"Because it's helping parents with both. I know it has for us, with bills and whatnot." – FL, Biden voter

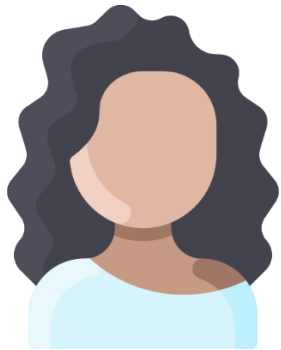
"Probably helping the parents to make ends meet because that, in turn, is going to help cut down on child poverty." – FL, Trump voter

"Well, I'm just thinking of like the family more, the stability and meeting all those needs. Which in hand, is going to help child poverty ultimately. But I kind of lumped it in with the COVID and all the things and the emotional things and even the physical part of COVID." – TX, Trump voter



Not Many See The Child Tax Credit As A Handout Or Disincentive To Work

"No. It's not that much money to discourage people from working." – FL, Trump voter



"I mean, really. It helps, but you know... and I'm thankful for it, but not enough to say I want to sit home and not go to a real job." – FL, Biden voter

*"That's part of our taxes. **We earned that.** So that's definitely not a handout. You just gave it to me early." – NV, Trump voter*



Three online focus groups were conducted on September 21: One of moms in Florida who opposed DeSantis' rules on masks in schools, one of teachers/educators in Texas, and one of moms in Nevada who opposed Sisolak's rules on masks in schools. For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org

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Respondents Say They'd Reject Leaders Who Oppose Taxing The Rich Or Making CTC Expansion Permanent

(moderator prompt)

"What would you think of a candidate who opposed taxing the rich or the CTC?"

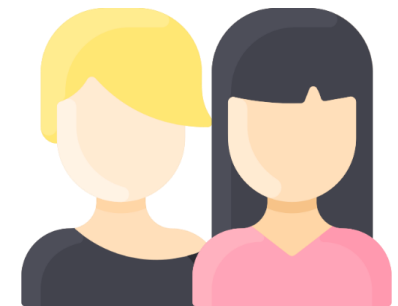
"[I'd assume] that he's in that bracket. That he's thinking about himself and those other people in his social circle." – TX, Trump voter

"He's not thinking about the future. I mean, these children that are growing up in poverty, that's affecting them in all ways. So he's not looking to the future, doesn't seem like he cares about the future of our country and their wellbeing." – TX, Trump voter

"I would say along the same lines. You're really thinking about the money aspect and you're not really thinking of the people and their needs." – TX, Biden voter

"He doesn't have kids." – NV, Trump voter

"It would tell me that they don't want to restore our economy or care about the American citizens." – NV, Trump voter



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About Navigator

In a world where the news cycle is the length of a tweet, our leaders often lack the real-time public-sentiment analysis to shape the best approaches to talking about the issues that matter the most. Navigator is designed to act as a consistent, flexible, responsive tool to inform policy debates by conducting research and reliable guidance to inform allies, elected leaders, and the press. Navigator is a project led by pollsters from Global Strategy Group and GBAO along with an advisory committee, including: Andrea Purse, progressive strategist; Arkadi Gerney, The Hub Project; Joel Payne, The Hub Project; Christina Reynolds, EMILY's List; Delvone Michael, Working Families; Felicia Wong, Roosevelt Institute; Mike Podhorzer, AFL-CIO; Jesse Ferguson, progressive strategist; Navin Nayak, Center for American Progress Action Fund; Stephanie Valencia, EquisLabs; and Melanie Newman, Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

About the Study

GBAO conducted online focus groups on September 21, 2021, with voters in three states: Florida (mothers who oppose DeSantis' rules on masks in schools), Texas (teachers/educators), and Nevada (mothers who oppose Sisolak's rules on masks in schools). Some quotes have been lightly edited for brevity. Qualitative results are not statistically projectable.

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