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 **GUARDING AGAINST** PANDEMICS

# Support For Investing in Pandemic Preparedness is Resilient to Partisan Arguments

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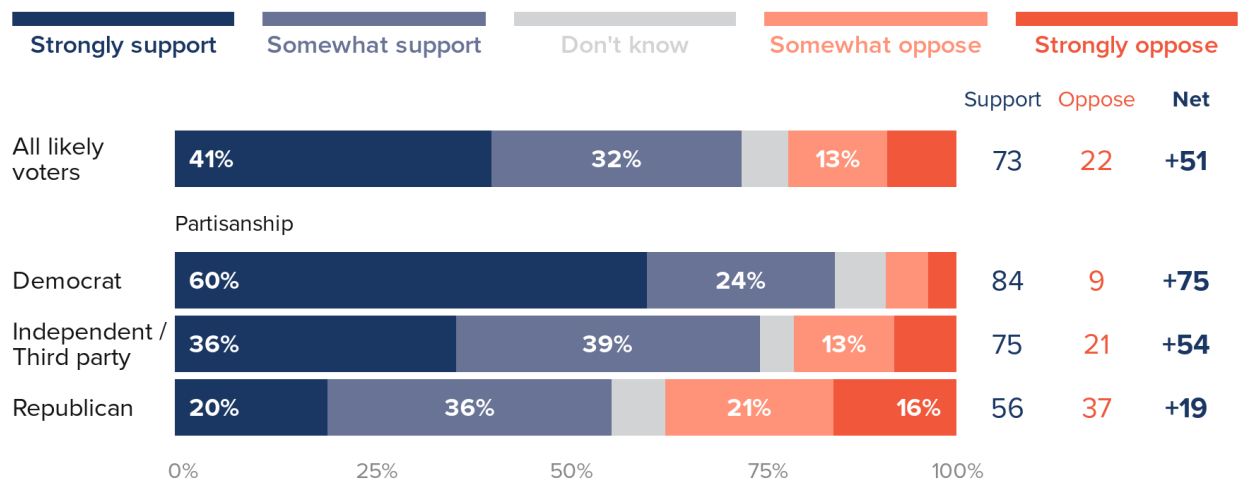


As part of a [survey](#) of likely voters nationally fielded from late July into early August, Guarding Against Pandemics and Data for Progress tested support for investing \$30 billion in pandemic preparedness funding. We find high levels of support for this proposal, with levels of support matching the result of a [survey](#) conducted earlier in July. In addition, support remains robust even when the proposal is tested with partisan framing and exposure to arguments in favor of and against the proposed investment. Lastly, the increased prevalence of the Delta variant provides crucial context to these findings and the urgency of investing in pandemic preparedness. The spread of the Delta variant is a development likely voters are attentive to and concerned about.

To start, we asked likely voters if they would support or oppose investing \$30 billion in pandemic preparedness. Among all likely voters, this proposal is supported by 51-percentage-points. Looking at attitudes among self-identified partisanship, we find that Democrats, Independents, and Republicans support this by margins of 75-points, 54-points, and 19-points, respectively.

## A Majority of Voters Support Investing \$30 Billion in Pandemic Preparedness

Some lawmakers in Congress are proposing investing \$30 billion to prepare for possible future pandemics and ensure economic competitiveness and resiliency. This funding would go to, for example, researching vaccines and treatments, expanding early detection and testing capacity, and increasing the size of America's stockpile of supplies needed for responding to pandemics. Do you support or oppose this proposal?



July 30–August 2, 2021 survey of 1,168 likely voters

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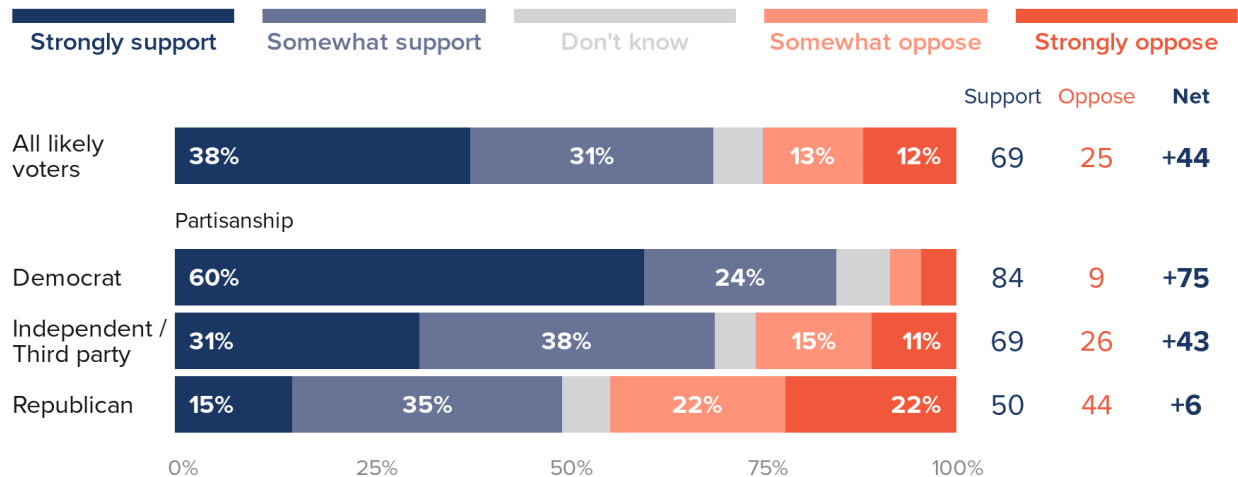
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We then reasked the same question, this time noting that it's a proposal that Democrats in Congress are making. We find that even when this partisan frame is introduced, support remains robust. Among all likely voters, investing in pandemic preparedness is supported by a 44-point margin. Democrats, Independents, and Republicans support this proposal by margins of 75-points, 43-points, and 6-points, respectively.

## A Majority of Voters Support Investing \$30 Billion in Pandemic Preparedness Even With a Partisan Frame

Some Democrats in Congress are proposing investing \$30 billion to prepare for possible future pandemics and ensure economic competitiveness and resiliency. This funding would go to, for example, researching vaccines and treatments, expanding early detection and testing capacity, and increasing the size of America's stockpile of supplies needed for responding to pandemics. Do you support or oppose this proposal?



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We then tested to see how support for this proposal would withstand arguments both for and against it. We find that investing \$30 billion in pandemic preparedness retains majority support. By a margin of 25-points, likely voters support it. This includes majorities of Democrats and Independents, who support the proposal by margins of 71-points and 23-points, respectively. While a majority of Republicans oppose this investment, nearly one-third (32 percent) support it.

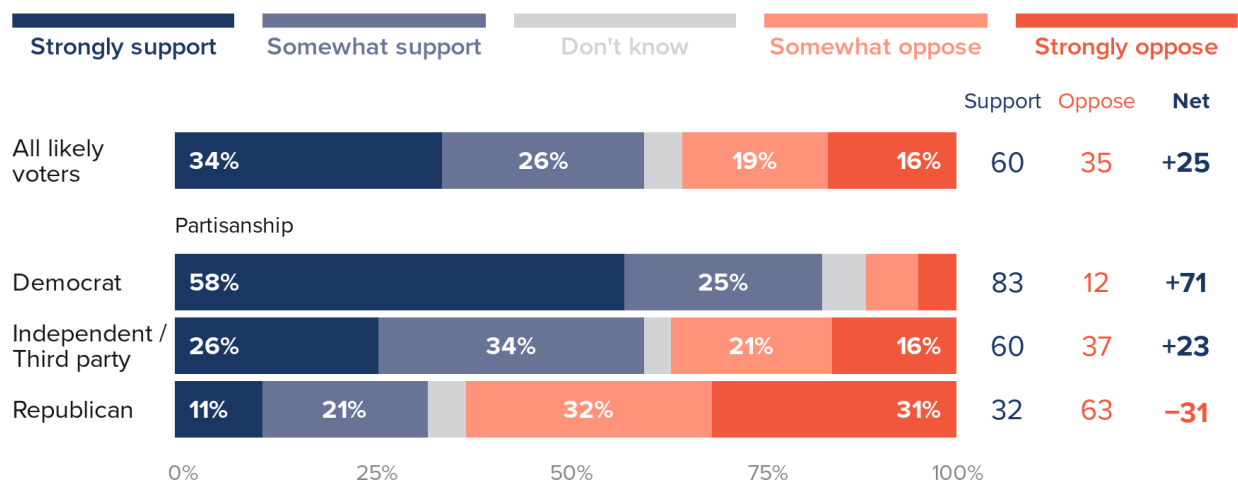
## A Majority of Voters Support Investing in Pandemic Preparedness Even When Provided Partisan Arguments for and Against

Some Democrats in Congress are proposing investing \$30 billion to prepare for possible future pandemics.

Democrats say that we were unprepared for this pandemic and as a result we suffered an unacceptable loss of life, with millions losing their jobs, and with many small businesses forced under. Democrats say we can't be caught with our guard down again.

Republicans say that this is just another example of Democrats' out of control government spending. Republicans say our national debt is growing at an out of control rate and this will eventually force us to raise taxes on the middle class.

Knowing what you know now, do you support or oppose investing \$30 billion in pandemic preparedness?



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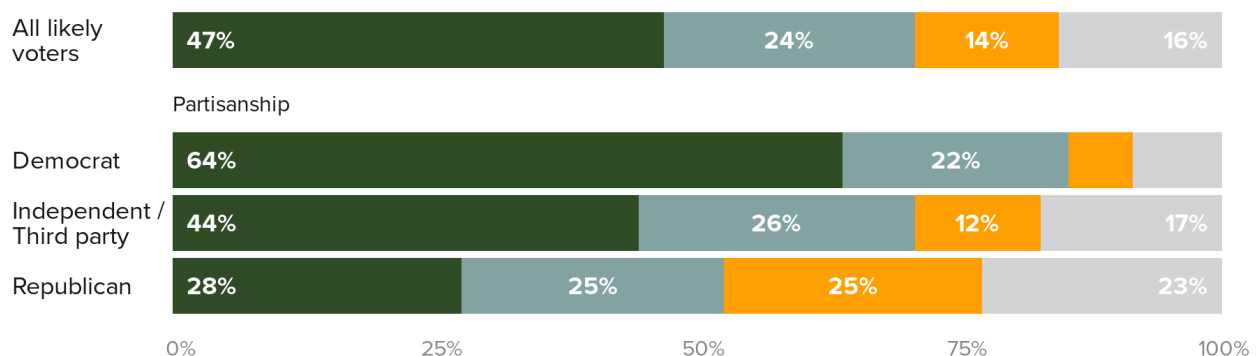
We then sought to identify which arguments in favor of investing in pandemic preparedness likely voters find most persuasive. We tested three arguments: one highlighting the dollar cost of the pandemic, another argument which stressed the damage of the coronavirus pandemic specifically to seniors, and a third argument centered on competition with China — drawing inspiration from how Senator Todd Young (R-IN) describes the purpose of the Endless Frontier Act.

We find that a plurality of likely voters (47 percent) find the argument about the dollar cost of the pandemic to be most persuasive. Sixty-four percent of Democrats find the cost argument to be most persuasive, as well as a plurality of Independents (44 percent). Republicans are roughly divided into quarters: 28 percent, 25 percent, and 25 percent find the cost, seniors, and China argument most persuasive, respectively; 23 percent of Republicans aren't sure.

## The Most Persuasive Arguments in Favor of Investing in Pandemic Preparedness is by Noting The Cost of the Coronavirus Pandemic

Below are some arguments Democrats make in **support** of spending \$30 billion on pandemic preparedness. Please select the one you find the **most** persuasive.

<p><b>The coronavirus pandemic cost over \$16 trillion dollars. \$30 billion is a small price to pay to make sure nothing like that ever happens again. It's fiscally responsible to invest in getting ready for a future pandemic now, so we don't have to spend more even later</b></p>	<p><b>The coronavirus pandemic hit America's seniors the hardest, leading to an unacceptable loss of life. By investing in pandemic preparedness now, we can work to protect our seniors to make sure nothing like the coronavirus ever happens again</b></p>	<p><b>Investing in pandemic preparedness is part of how we can beat the Chinese Communist Party, making sure that when the next pandemic strikes, our economy can remain strong and competitive globally</b></p>	<p>Don't know</p>
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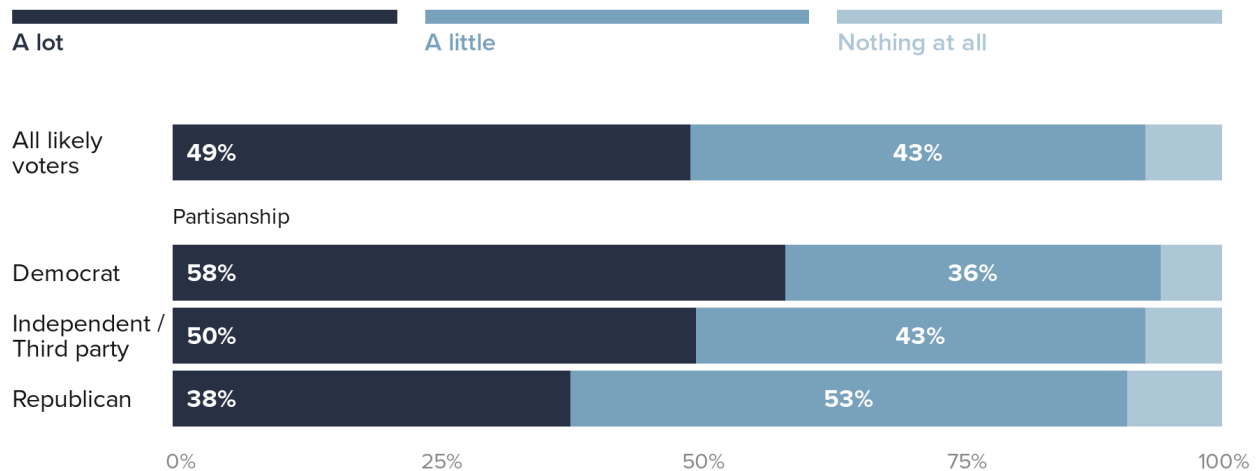
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One likely driver of support for funding pandemic preparedness is high levels of concern about the Delta variant of the coronavirus. Forty-nine percent of likely voters report having heard a lot about it recently, including 58 percent of Democrats and 50 percent of Independents. In contrast, only 38 percent of Republicans report having heard a lot about the variant.

## Almost Half of Voters Have Heard 'A Lot' About the Delta Variant

How much have you read or heard about the Delta variant of the coronavirus recently?



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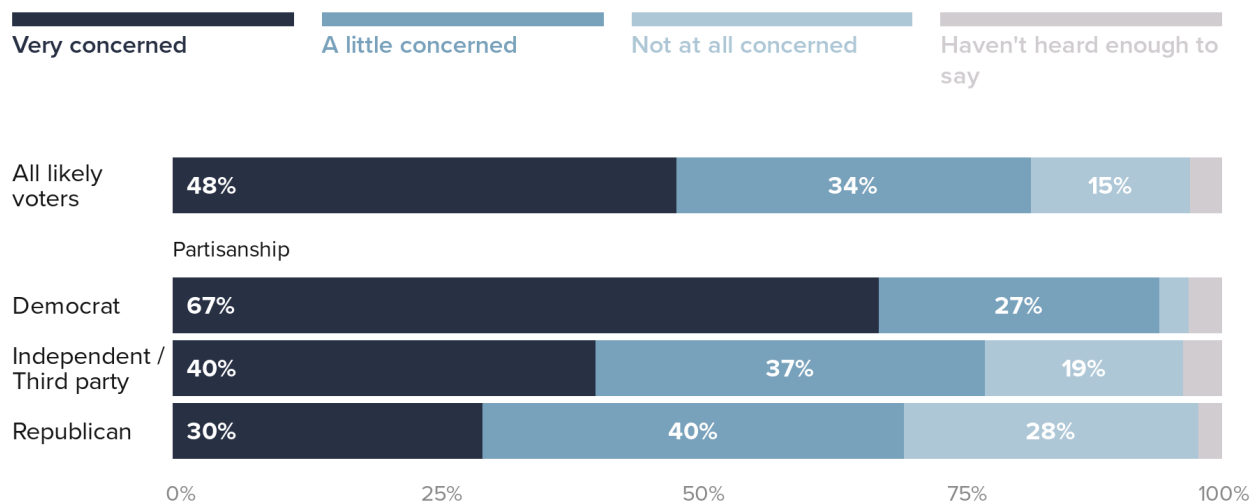
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We then asked about voters' concern about the Delta variant. Overall, a plurality (48 percent) of likely voters say they are “very concerned.” A majority of Democrats (67 percent) and plurality of Independents (40 percent) say they are very concerned. Among Republicans, 30 percent say they are very concerned, while a plurality (40 percent) say they are somewhat concerned.

## Forty-Eight Percent of Voters Are 'Very Concerned' About the Delta Variant

How concerned or not concerned are you about the Delta variant of the coronavirus?



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Investing in pandemic preparedness is popular among likely voters, and support for the proposal withstands partisan arguments. When making the case for the proposal, stressing the cost of the coronavirus pandemic is an effective rhetorical tool. Comparing this \$30 billion investment to the financial damage of the coronavirus, which cost the U.S. \$16 trillion, can represent a prudent, fiscal investment to likely voters. The emergence of the Delta variant adds urgency to the need to invest in preparation for a possible future pandemic.

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