Results from Count on Mothers' study of

The Impact of Childcare Cost on the U.S. Family's Financial Security

Count on Mothers **provides policymakers comprehensive first-hand data to help them make more informed decisions**. Each issue that we examine is selected based on what surveyed Mothers have indicated they want to address, reflecting the priorities of Mothers from across the country and political spectrum. We survey Mothers because they are the largest group charged with the well-being of children. Every Mother is welcomed to contribute to our efforts. We do this work because we believe that Mothers' first-hand knowledge and experiences are critical sources of information that need to be an essential part of the policy-making process, both industry and government, particularly in areas that affect kids and families.

This report focuses on information Count on Mothers collected on an issue of interest to Mothers. In May 2024, we studied Mothers' views on the impact of childcare on their families' financial security and provided an open field for mothers to share possible solutions based on their firsthand experience. A total of **1048** Mothers residing in **48** states and from across the political spectrum provided feedback on these questions based on their first-hand knowledge.

Of the 1048 surveyed Mothers, 1032 identified politically within the given choice of very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal, or very liberal. Count on Mothers tallies political affiliation in order to ensure a reflective sample and to study where Mothers agree and disagree both along political lines and regardless of ideology. After analyzing Mothers' opinions from the survey, we take this aggregate data and share it with policymakers and the public so they are educated on Mothers' firsthand experiences and views.

Methodology

Design

This process uses a quantitative research design. Cross-sectional surveys were distributed in May 2024.

Instruments

A survey was constructed based on the main themes uncovered in our September study of Mothers' views on the Childcare for Working Families Act and feedback and areas of interest from the non-profit organization, Mothering Forward. We also assessed Mothers' political ideology and state/ zip code of residence to better understand the background of the sample.

Sampling Procedure

1048 Mothers from **48** states completed the survey focused on the impact of childcare on family financial security. Efforts were made to ensure that survey respondents reflected a range of poli Dcal ideologies, from very conservaDve to very liberal. 8.5**%** idenDfied as very conservaDve, **18.6%** idenDfied as conservaDve, **39.9%** idenDfied as moderate, **21.9%** idenDfied as liberal and 9.5**%** idenDfied as very liberal, and **1.5% i**denDfied as other.

While naDonal data on Mothers!"poliDcal ideologies has not been idenDfied, studies have examined the poliDcal ideologies of women, in general. According to a recent Gallup Poll (2021) 32% of women idenDfied as conservaDve, 37% of women idenDfied as moderate, and 29% of women idenDfied as liberal. Count on Mothers will conDnue to invite the parDcipaDon of Mothers across the poliDcal spectrum so that our sample closely mirrors these naDonal trends.

MAIN TAKEAWAYS

Quantitative Questions

- **OF MOMS WHO PAY FOR CHILDCARE, 55% PAY MORE THAN 10% OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD INCOME --** 37% of moms pay more than 15% of their household income on childcare.
- **7 OUT OF 10 MOTHERS SAY THAT CHILDCARE COSTS HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON THEIR ABILITY TO SAVE FOR EMERGENCIES, COLLEGE, OR RETIREMENT** — *Approximately 69% of moms agreed or strongly agreed that childcare costs had a direct impact on their family's ability to save for emergencies, college, or retirement.*
- **AS A RESULT OF LACK OF ACCESS TO CHILDCARE, MORE THAN HALF OF MOTHERS ARE DEALING WITH FINANCIAL INSECURITY** — *More than 52% of moms agreed or strongly agreed that lack of access to childcare has negatively impacted their family's financial security.*

- **AS A RESULT OF CHILDCARE NEEDS, AT LEAST 6 OUT OF 10 HOUSEHOLD'S NET INCOME IS "SIGNIFICANTLY" LOWER —** *Over 63% of moms agreed or strongly agreed that their family's net income has been significantly reduced to satisfy their childcare needs.*
- **AT LEAST 7 IN 10 MOTHERS DO NOT RELY ON PAID CHILDCARE (EITHER CENTERS OR HOME-BASED) FOR THE MOST PART OF WORKING HOURS** — *72% of moms said they rely on family members, grandparents, neighbors, partners, or themselves for the most part of working hours.*

- **AT LEAST 6 IN 10 MOTHERS HAVE REDUCED THEIR FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE FAMILY BECAUSE OF CHILDCARE NEEDS**— *Approximately 63% of moms agreed or strongly agreed that they have reduced their work hours or earnings to satisfy their family's childcare needs.*
- **OVER HALF OF AMERICAN MOTHERS BELIEVE THEY ARE LESS LIKELY TO ACHIEVE THEIR EARNING POTENTIAL BECAUSE THEY TOOK A BREAK FROM WORK FOR CHILDCARE —** *Over 51% of moms believe their future earning potential is at risk because they took a break from work to satisfy childcare needs. There is a variation among political affiliation with 61% of very liberal moms who agreed or strongly agreed, 54% of liberal moms, 54% of moderate moms, 49% of conservative moms, and 33% of very conservative moms agreed or strongly agreed.*

Qualitative Question: OF THE MOTHERS WHO ANSWERED THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION ***"Based on your experience, what solution(s) would you suggest to remedy/solve the childcare issue for your family?"***

- Over 14% of moms wrote that childcare costs should be more affordable or there should be a cap on the cost.
- 13% of moms thought there should be some kind of government subsidy for childcare or the states and federal government should completely pay for childcare costs.
- Many moms rely (or relied) on family to help with childcare. A mom from Ohio said "I'm blessed to have family help me. I couldn't afford childcare."
- Likewise, some moms suggest taking alternate work shifts with a partner to ensure there was adequate childcare. For example, a Connecticut mom said, "my husband and I took turns (on) different shifts so one of us was always home."
- Some moms had more creative solutions to solve the childcare issue like suggesting employers have on-site childcare centers or employers offering childcare subsidies.
- Overall, many moms felt that childcare was a heavy financial burden – either due to monthly childcare costs, or the lack of income from one parent having to leave the workforce or work less.

Questions on the Impact of Childcare on U.S. Family Financial Security

1) **What kind of childcare does/did your family rely on for the most part of working hours?**

Over 44% of Mothers surveyed rely on only oneself and one's partner for the most part of working hours, and 28% of Mothers rely mostly on grandparents, other family members or neighbors. At least 19% of surveyed Mothers rely on Childcare Centers, and 6% rely on Home based childcare. A small group, 2% of Mothers surveyed, rely on a Nanny.

*On all tables, figures add up to 100%, not accounting for rounding error.

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2) To satisfy my family's childcare needs, I have reduced my work hours or earnings.

Approximately 64% of Mothers surveyed have reduced their work hours or earnings to satisfy their family's childcare needs. At least 6% were uncertain and almost 30% of Mothers did not reduce their work hours or earnings.

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3) Childcare that is available to me costs (or did cost) this percent of my family's income.

29% of Mothers have to pay over 15% of their family's income for childcare, and over 42% of Mothers have to pay over 10% of their family's income. About 22% of Mothers are paying between 6 — 10%, and only about 13% are paying between 1 — 5% of their family's income. About 22% of Mothers are using no part of their family's income to cover childcare.

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4) Childcare costs had/have a direct impact on my family's ability to save for emergencies, college, or retirement.

Over 68% of Mothers agree that childcare costs have had a direct impact on their family's ability to save for emergencies, college, or retirement. About 9% of Mothers are unsure, and about 22% do not believe childcare costs have impacted their ability to save for emergencies, college, or retirement.

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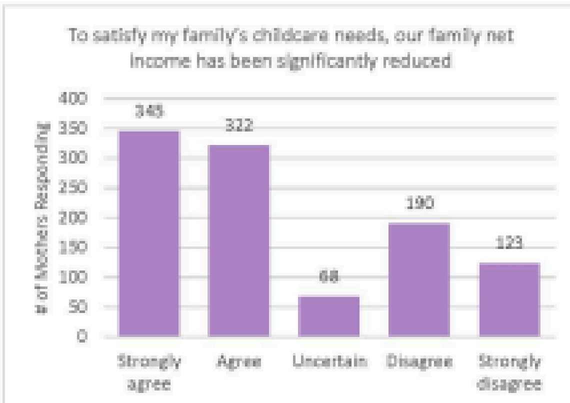
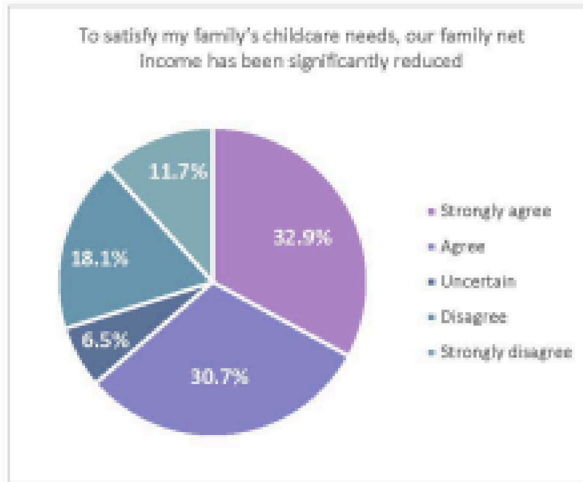
5) To satisfy my family's childcare needs, our family net income has been significantly reduced.

About 63% of Mothers agree and strongly agree their families' net income has been significantly reduced, while only about 6% are unsure and about 30% of Mothers do not believe their families' net income has been significantly reduced.

To satisfy my family's childcare needs, our family net income has been significantly reduced.

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	345	32.9%
Agree	322	30.7%
Uncertain	68	6.5%
Disagree	190	18.1%
Strongly disagree	123	11.7%
Grand Total	**1048**	**100.0%**





By Political Identification:

Very Liberal

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	42	42.0%
Agree	22	22.0%
Unsure	13	13.0%
Disagree	11	11.0%
Strongly disagree	12	12.0%
Grand Total	**100**	**100.0%**

Liberal

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	76	33.0%
Agree	83	36.1%
Unsure	22	9.6%
Disagree	35	15.2%
Strongly disagree	14	6.1%
Grand Total	**230**	**100.0%**

Moderate

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	120	28.7%
Agree	146	34.9%
Unsure	55	13.2%
Disagree	65	15.6%
Strongly disagree	32	7.7%
Grand Total	**418**	**100.0%**

Conservative

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	46	23.6%
Agree	66	33.8%
Unsure	25	12.8%
Disagree	36	18.5%
Strongly disagree	22	11.3%
Grand Total	**195**	**100.0%**

Very Conservative

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	25	28.1%
Agree	25	28.1%
Unsure	8	9.0%
Disagree	12	13.5%
Strongly disagree	19	21.3%
Grand Total	**89**	**100.0%**

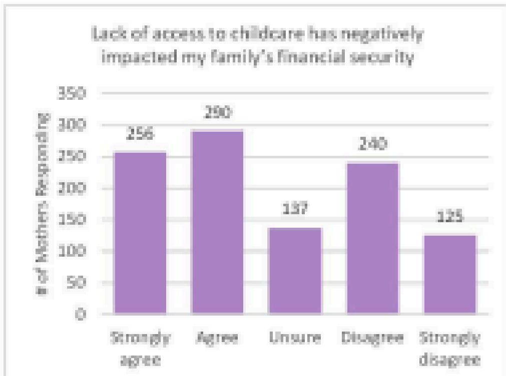
6) Lack of access to childcare has negatively impacted my family's financial security.

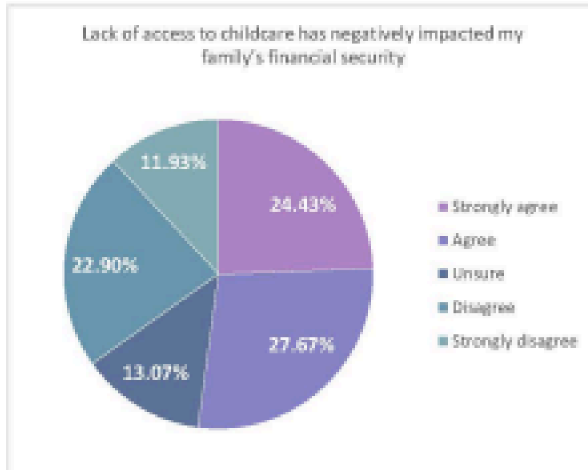
About 52% of Mothers agree and strongly agree that lack of access to childcare has negatively impacted their family's financial security, while 13% were unsure and almost 35% were not in

the category where lack of access to childcare had an impact on their financial security.

Lack of access to childcare has negatively impacted my family's financial security.

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	256	24.43%
Agree	290	27.67%
Unsure	137	13.07%
Disagree	240	22.90%
Strongly disagree	125	11.93%
Grand Total	1048	100.00%





By Political Identification:

Very Liberal

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	36	36.0%
Agree	21	21.0%
Unsure	7	7.0%
Disagree	23	23.0%
Strongly disagree	13	13.0%
Grand Total	100	100.0%

Liberal

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	46	20.0%
Agree	72	31.3%
Unsure	32	13.9%
Disagree	57	24.8%
Strongly disagree	23	10.0%
Grand Total	230	100.0%

Moderate

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	117	28.0%
Agree	120	28.7%
Unsure	62	14.8%
Disagree	82	19.6%
Strongly disagree	37	8.9%
Grand Total	418	100.0%

Conservative

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	41	21.0%
Agree	55	28.2%
Unsure	22	11.3%
Disagree	54	27.7%
Strongly disagree	23	11.8%
Grand Total	195	100.0%

Very Conservative

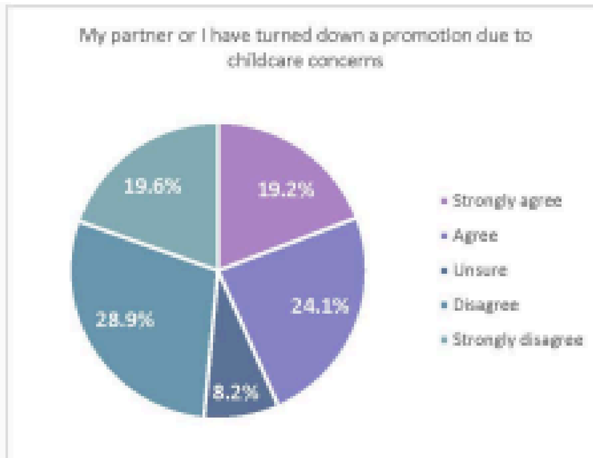
	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	15	16.9%
Agree	16	18.0%
Unsure	11	12.4%
Disagree	20	22.5%
Strongly disagree	27	30.3%
Grand Total	89	100.0%

7) My partner or I have turned down a promotion due to childcare concerns.

Approximately 43% of Mothers (or their partners) had to turn down a promotion because of childcare concerns, while about 8% were unsure and approximately 49% of Mothers did not have to turn down a promotion nor did their partner.

My partner or I have turned down a promotion due to childcare concerns.

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	201	19.2%
Agree	253	24.1%
Unsure	86	8.2%
Disagree	303	28.9%
Strongly disagree	205	19.6%
Grand Total	**1048**	**100.0%**



By Political Identification:

Very Liberal

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	34	34.0%
Agree	10	10.0%
Unsure	10	10.0%
Disagree	29	29.0%
Strongly disagree	17	17.0%
Grand Total	**100**	**100.0%**

Liberal

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	32	13.9%
Agree	61	26.5%
Unsure	22	9.6%
Disagree	75	32.6%
Strongly disagree	40	17.4%
Grand Total	**230**	**100.0%**

Moderate

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	86	20.6%
Agree	116	27.8%
Unsure	26	6.2%
Disagree	116	27.8%
Strongly disagree	74	17.7%
Grand Total	**418**	**100.0%**

Conservative

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	28	14.4%
Agree	58	29.7%
Unsure	17	8.7%
Disagree	61	31.3%
Strongly disagree	31	15.9%
Grand Total	**195**	**100.0%**

Very Conservative

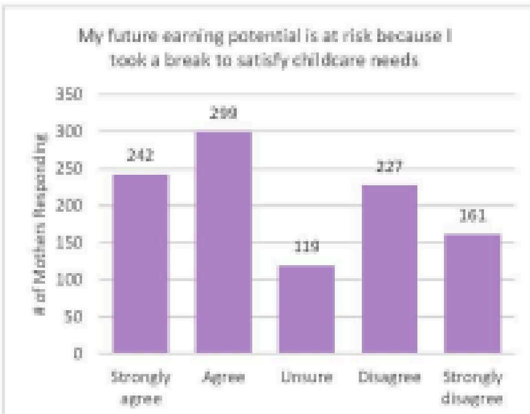
	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	17	19.1%
Agree	7	7.9%
Unsure	9	10.1%
Disagree	17	19.1%
Strongly disagree	39	43.8%
Grand Total	**89**	**100.0%**

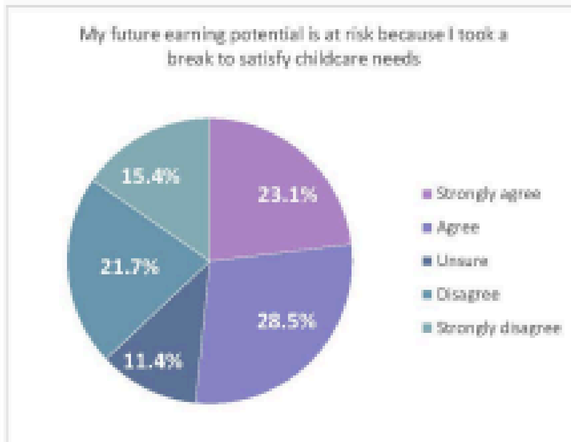
8) My future earning potential is at risk because I took a break to satisfy childcare needs.

Approximately 52% of Mothers surveyed believed their future earning potential is at risk because they took a break from earning to satisfy childcare needs, while 11% of Mothers were unsure and 37% of Mothers did not think their earning potential was at risk due to a break to take care of their children.

My future earning potential is at risk because I took a break to satisfy childcare needs.

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	242	23.1%
Agree	299	28.5%
Unsure	119	11.4%
Disagree	227	21.7%
Strongly disagree	161	15.4%
Grand Total	**1048**	**100.0%**





By Political Identification:

Very Liberal

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	34	34.0%
Agree	27	27.0%
Unsure	13	13.0%
Disagree	12	12.0%
Strongly disagree	14	14.0%
Grand Total	**100**	**100.0%**

Liberal

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	51	22.2%
Agree	74	32.2%
Unsure	25	10.9%
Disagree	52	22.6%
Strongly disagree	28	12.2%
Grand Total	**230**	**100.0%**

Moderate

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	97	23.2%
Agree	127	30.4%
Unsure	48	11.5%
Disagree	89	21.3%
Strongly disagree	57	13.6%
Grand Total	**418**	**100.0%**

Conservative

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	40	20.5%
Agree	55	28.2%
Unsure	18	9.2%
Disagree	53	27.2%
Strongly disagree	29	14.9%
Grand Total	**195**	**100.0%**

Very Conservative

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Strongly agree	16	18.0%
Agree	13	14.6%
Unsure	13	14.6%
Disagree	18	20.2%
Strongly disagree	29	32.6%
Grand Total	**89**	**100.0%**

Qualitative Data

9) Open Field: Based on your experience, what solution(s) would you suggest to remedy/solve the childcare issue for your family?

Of the 794 Mothers who offered solutions, most remarked that we need for the government to be involved — either to cap costs or fund childcare. Other government intervention ranged from flexible work environment to onsite workplace childcare to requiring childcare staff are paid “a living wage.” A number of Mothers offered solutions focused on personal choices, like alternating work shifts with partner to getting additional help from family members and friends.

Based on your experience, what solution(s) would you suggest to remedy/solve the childcare issue for your family?

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
More affordable childcare/cap childcare costs	156	14.4%
Government funded/subsidized childcare	144	13.3%
Additional help from family members/friends	89	8.2%
One parent leave the workforce (or reduce hours) to provide childcare	65	6.0%
More flexible work environment/employer	48	4.4%
On-site workplace childcare	32	3.0%
More high-quality childcare options	24	2.2%
Alternating work shifts so parents can provide childcare	21	1.9%
Improve access to affordable childcare	21	1.9%
Ensure that employees are paid a living wage	18	1.7%
Utilizing babysitting services	15	1.4%
Find a better paying job to afford childcare	13	1.2%
Saving money/making financial sacrifices to afford childcare	13	1.2%
Quality childcare with extended hours	12	1.1%
Employer subsidies	10	0.9%
Paid family leave	10	0.9%
Additional childcare tax credits	9	0.8%
Utilizing a nanny or live-in childcare provider	8	0.7%
Increased wages for childcare providers	6	0.6%
Improved training for childcare providers	5	0.5%
Increase working hours to earn additional money/take a second job	5	0.5%
Political leadership that prioritizes childcare issues	3	0.3%
Improved care for children with special needs	2	0.2%
Utilize home daycares	1	0.1%
No childcare issues	64	5.9%
N/A	197	18.2%
Other	93	8.6%
Grand Total	**1084**	**100.0%**

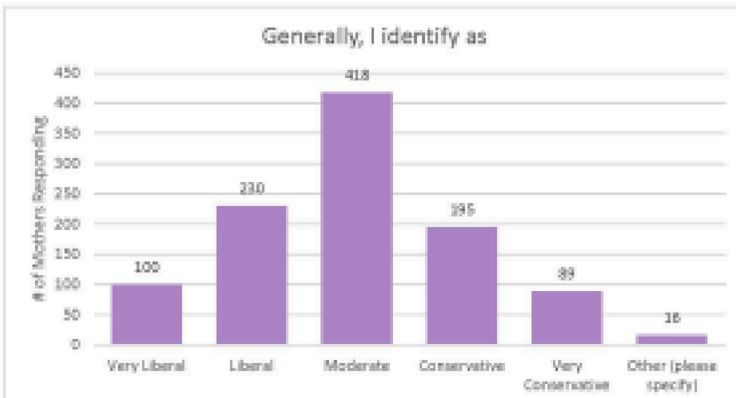
Political Ideology

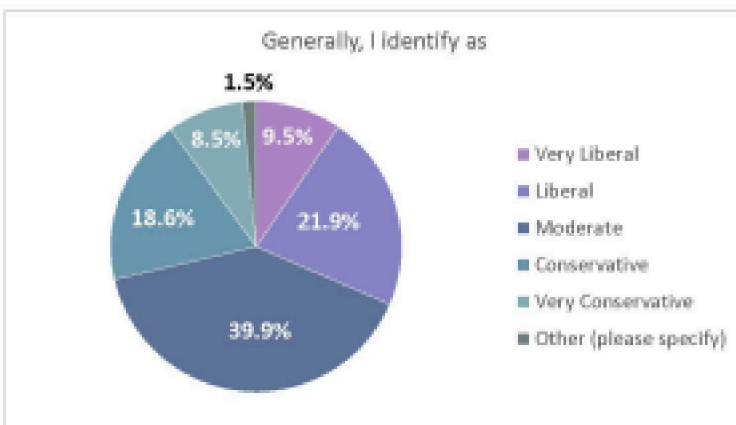
Count on Mothers is committed to representing Mothers of all political ideologies. In an effort to inform policymaking, we collect a sample of Mothers who closely reflect the U.S. breakdown of political ideology among women according to Gallup.

Regarding the political background of the survey respondents, 8.5**%** identified as very conservative, **18.6%** identified as conservative, **39.9%** identified as moderate, **21.9%** identified as liberal and 9.5**%** identified as very liberal, and **1.5% i**dentified as other.

Generally, I identify as

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Very Liberal	100	9.5%
Liberal	230	21.9%
Moderate	418	39.9%
Conservative	195	18.6%
Very Conservative	89	8.5%
Other (please specify)	16	1.5%
Grand Total	**1048**	**100.0%**





State of Residence Question

Of the 1048 respondents, 865 Mothers shared their state of residence and 48 states were represented. The states that had the most representation were: California (7.51%), Texas (6.71%), Florida (6.47%), New York (6.24%), Ohio (5.78%), Pennsylvania (5.78%), Georgia (4.51%), North Carolina (4.39%), Michigan (3.35%), Missouri (3.24%), and Illinois (3.12%). Of the 1084 respondents, 857 shared their zip codes (shown in purple below).

I live in

	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
Alabama	21	2.43%
Alaska	1	0.12%
Arizona	22	2.54%
Arkansas	6	0.69%
California	65	7.51%
Colorado	9	1.04%
Connecticut	9	1.04%
Delaware	1	0.12%
Florida	56	6.47%
Georgia	39	4.51%
Hawaii	4	0.46%
Idaho	4	0.46%
Illinois	27	3.12%
Indiana	24	2.77%
Iowa	7	0.81%
Kansas	10	1.16%
Kentucky	16	1.85%
Louisiana	13	1.50%
Maine	4	0.46%
Maryland	18	2.08%
Massachusetts	16	1.85%
Michigan	29	3.35%
Minnesota	8	0.92%
Mississippi	8	0.92%
Missouri	28	3.24%
Nebraska	4	0.46%
Nevada	13	1.50%
New Hampshire	3	0.35%
New Jersey	18	2.08%
New Mexico	4	0.46%
New York	54	6.24%
North Carolina	38	4.39%
North Dakota	2	0.23%
Ohio	50	5.78%
Oklahoma	10	1.16%
Oregon	11	1.27%
Pennsylvania	50	5.78%
Rhode Island	2	0.23%
South Carolina	19	2.20%
South Dakota	5	0.58%
Tennessee	18	2.08%
Texas	58	6.71%
Utah	4	0.46%
Vermont	4	0.46%
Virginia	17	1.97%
Washington	13	1.50%
Washington D.C.	2	0.23%
West Virginia	9	1.04%
Wisconsin	12	1.39%
Grand Total	**865**	**100.00%**