

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates

Opinion Research &
Public Policy Analysis

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: John Fairbank and Ben Tulchin
Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates

DATE: March 7, 2005

RE: California Statewide Poll Results on Children's Health Care Coverage

CALIFORNIA VOTERS WANT ALL CHILDREN TO HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE

According to a recent statewide survey, California voters are concerned about children lacking health insurance and they strongly embrace a solution to this pressing problem. Furthermore, voters endorse specific features of a trust fund to ensure every child in California has health care coverage, and they express a willingness to pay for it.¹ Presented below are highlighted findings from this poll.

- ✓ ***California voters identify children not having health insurance as a grave concern.*** Specifically, nine out of ten voters (89 percent) view this issue as a serious problem, with three out of four voters statewide (73 percent) describing it as either *extremely* or *very serious*.
- ✓ ***Voters overwhelmingly support a plan that would “ensure that every child in California has health insurance.”*** Nearly four out of five voters (78 percent) support this plan, with more than half (55 percent) *strongly* in favor of it. Only one out of every seven voters (14 percent) opposes a plan to cover every child in the state, and the remaining eight percent are undecided. These numbers are truly extraordinary as we have rarely seen such strong support for a policy proposal in our polling.

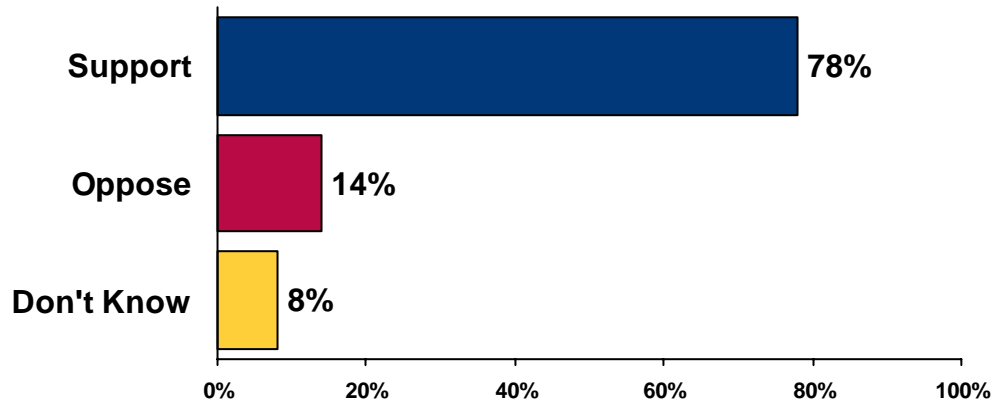
¹**Research Methodology:** From February 12-20, 2005, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates conducted a statewide telephone survey among 1,200 likely voters in California. Interviews were done in both English and Spanish. The margin of error for the entire sample is plus or minus 2.8% at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error for subgroups will be higher.

2425 Colorado Ave. Suite 180
Santa Monica, CA 90404
Phone: (310) 828-1183
Fax: (310) 453-6562

1999 Harrison Street Suite 1290
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone: (510) 451-9521
Fax: (510) 451-0384

Figure 1: Support for Ensuring All California Children Have Health Insurance

Would you support or oppose a plan that would ensure that every child in California has health insurance?



- ✓ **Support for a plan to ensure that every child has health insurance is solid throughout the state and cuts across partisan lines.**
 - Most Democrats and independent voters back this plan (89 percent and 80 percent, respectively) as do two-thirds of Republicans (63 percent).
 - Support is relatively even across the state – at least three quarters of voters in every region endorse it, including 84 percent in the Bay Area, 82 percent in Los Angeles County, 74 percent in Southern California outside of LA County, and 73 percent of voters in the Central Valley.
 - Practically every Latino (91 percent), African American (88 percent), and Asian (85 percent) voter wants to provide health care coverage to all children, as does a vast majority of Caucasians (76 percent).

- ✓ **Voters appreciate the specific features of a statewide health care trust fund for children, notably that every child would be covered, the focus on prevention, and that it is a shared solution.** Specific findings from the poll find that nine out of ten voters (88 percent) view the plan's emphasis on disease prevention and immunization as extremely or very important, four out of five voters (81 percent) believe "ensuring that every child in California has health insurance" is important, and three out of four voters (73 percent) think it is important to have a shared solution that calls on parents, employers, and the government to contribute.

- ✓ **Voters strongly support the cost saving proposals to help pay for such a trust fund.**
 The appeal of the “shared solution” approach is evident in these particular findings from the survey:
 - 90 percent of voters favor spending children’s health care dollars more efficiently;
 - 85 percent want the state to make better use of federal health care dollars, with 70 percent *strongly* supporting this source of revenue;
 - 87 percent believe that parents should “pay what they can”;
 - Four out of five voters (81 percent) want to allow businesses to voluntarily buy into the plan.

- ✓ **Most voters are willing to accept a small tax increase to pay for children’s health care.** In fact, several proposed tax increases garnered greater than 70 percent support, including closing corporate tax loopholes (77 percent support), raising the tobacco tax by 30 cents (72 percent), a 0.5% surtax on million dollar earners (71 percent), a seven cent tax on a serving of hard liquor (70 percent), as well as a tax on candy and soda (72 percent).

- ✓ Perhaps the most impressive finding of the survey is that **the overwhelming support for ensuring that all children have health insurance holds steady even after voters hear more information about the proposal, including its cost.** Once voters were informed of such a plan in more detail, support stood at 76 percent, essentially unchanged from the initial level of 78 percent. Opposition remains nominal, as only 18 percent oppose such a plan after hearing more about it and few are undecided (6 percent).

Figure 2: Support for Ensuring All California Children Have Health Insurance Before and After Information

Would you support or oppose a plan that would ensure that every child in California has health insurance?

	Initial Ask	After Information
Support	78%	76%
Oppose	14%	18%
Don’t Know	8%	6%

In sum, this poll clearly shows that California voters view children lacking health insurance as a major problem they want addressed, they offer intense support for a trust fund to ensure that every child in the state has health care coverage, and voters are willing to pay their share to achieve this goal.