

New Poll Shows Nearly 9 out of 10 Voters Support Legislation Protecting Patients from Surprise Medical Bills

November 12, 2019. A new survey sponsored by Families USA shows just how frustrated voters are by surprise medical bills and how much they want steps taken to protect them from these bills in the future.¹ The survey, conducted by non-partisan research firm PerryUndem, shows that nearly half of voters have received a surprise bill from out of network doctors and hospitals and that most faced difficulty paying the bills or couldn't pay them at all. For these reasons, there is strong support among all kinds of voters for both state and federal legislation to protect patients from surprise bills. This strong support crosses political ideology and offers a rare opportunity for bipartisanship to help voters with their health care costs.

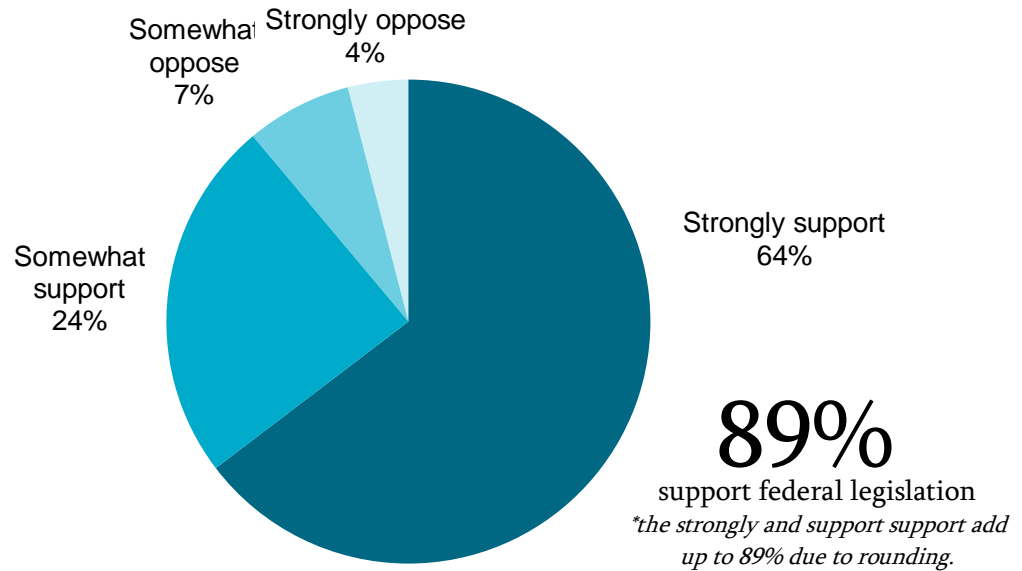
Five key findings from the survey are:

1. **Surprise medical bills are a common experience for more than 4 in 10 voters.** More than 4 in 10 (44%) have received a surprise out of network bill and among this group, nearly 8 in 10 say it was difficult to pay (68%) or that they couldn't pay the bill at all (11%).
2. **Across party lines, nearly 9 in 10 voters support legislation to protect patients from surprise medical bills.** Early in the survey, 89% of voters support "Congress passing federal legislation to protect patients from surprise medical bills." (Figure 1) Near the end of the survey, 87% feel it is "important" that their elected officials support legislation to protect patients from surprise medical bills. Those saying it is important include Democrats 97%; Independents 88%; and Republicans 74%.
3. **Voters prefer, more than 9 to 1, a bill that pays doctors and hospitals based on what doctors in the area are typically paid and would be less likely to lead to higher premiums.** Survey respondents were told there are two bills being considered by Congress. After reading brief descriptions, they preferred the bill that pays doctors and hospitals that send surprise bills the "market rate" over the bill that allows doctors and hospitals to still charge fees high above the market rate (73% vs 8%).

¹ This is a national survey administered online by YouGov that included 1,000 voters conducted October 16-22, 2019. The survey has a margin of sampling error of 3.3 percentage points.

Figure 1: Support for Federal Legislation

Q: Do you support or oppose Congress passing federal legislation to protect patients from surprise medical bills? (n=1,000)



- Voters are not concerned about doctors and hospitals being paid less money.** Almost 9 in 10 (86%) voters say their fees are too high and another 84% believe the rates that hospitals and doctors charge are inflated above their actual costs. In addition, as part of legislation to protect consumers from surprise medical bills, 82% support “doctors and hospitals that do surprise billing being paid less by insurance companies than they are now.”
- Voters have strong negative reactions to the Doctor Patient Unity ad campaign attacking proposals to protect patients from surprise bills.** After reading a description of the TV and online ads and seeing two still photos from the ads, 16% of voters say they have seen them before. When told about corporations paying for these ads, voters offer strong words like disgusting, corrupt, angry, expected, etc. (Figure 2) More than 8 in 10 (86%) agree that advertising campaigns funded by corporations that buy up doctor practices should not influence what Congress does on surprise medical bills. And, 74% said they would be concerned if Congress failed to pass surprise billing legislation because of this ad campaign.

For more information about the poll, please contact Lisa Holland at lholland@familiesusa.org 2