

THE CARE BURDEN AFFECTS US ALL

Assessing men's stake as
caregivers in the United States

Survey Data from a February
2024 Online Survey



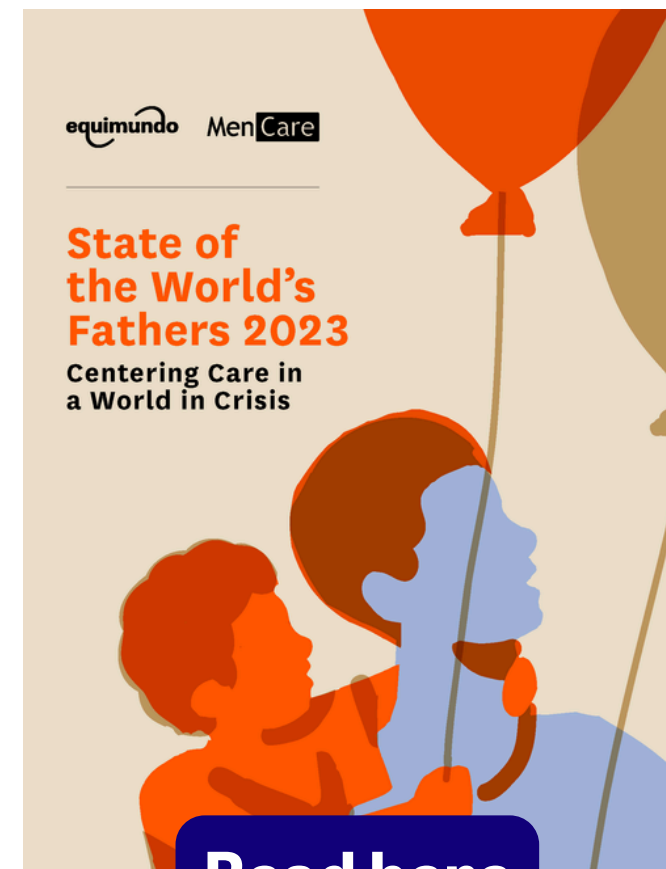
ABOUT EQUIMUNDO AND THE MENCARE CAMPAIGN

Equimundo works in the US and internationally to engage men and boys as allies for gender equality and to promote healthy masculinities, including men's involvement as caregivers.

Equimundo is coordinator of the [MenCare](#) campaign, a global platform active in more than 60 countries that seeks to promote men's equitable participation in care work.

As part of MenCare, Equimundo carries out the biennial [State of the World's Fathers](#) reports and other studies on men's caregiving.

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ABOUT THIS STUDY

The data presented here was collected by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) as part of a [national report](#) on working women's challenges related to caregiving. IWPR generously shared the data with Equimundo for additional analysis on fathers and men's reports of burdens and challenges related to caregiving, paid work and financial planning.

Methodology

The data included are a subsample from the full dataset of male- and female-identifying caregivers (N=1148) carried out between February 16th – 18th, 2024. The interviews were conducted online and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of adults based on age, gender, race, educational attainment, region, gender by age, and race by educational attainment.

- Male (N=515) and female (N=632) caregivers
 - Caregiver is defined as recent, or current caregivers (to elderly parents, children, disabled relative, or spouse in need of care).



INTRODUCTION

The caregiving burden in the US

- Care work is in and of itself valuable and important, and it is also a critical part of our economy — it allows for labor participation and economic production — yet is too often underpaid and undervalued in this country.
- The care responsibilities are not distributed equally. [Women of color and immigrant women](#) bear the brunt of the United States' inadequate support for working families, caregivers, and care workers.
- Data from [Better Life Lab](#) at New America show that more than 80% of men — regardless of their experience providing care or not — believed that unpaid care work at home is as valuable as paid work, valuable to society, and that men and women should share care responsibilities equally.
- Equimundo's [2023 State of America's Fathers Report](#) showed that fathers affirm they are willing to work less to spend time with their children and that they will take action to do so. While the percentage of men who endorse care policies is lower than women, almost three-fourths of fathers affirm their support for key care policies.

95%

of low-wage workers in the US are not afforded the option of taking paid family leave to care for a new child or a seriously ill family member.

Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

85%

of fathers with children under 18 say being a parent is the most or one of the most important aspects of who they are as a person.

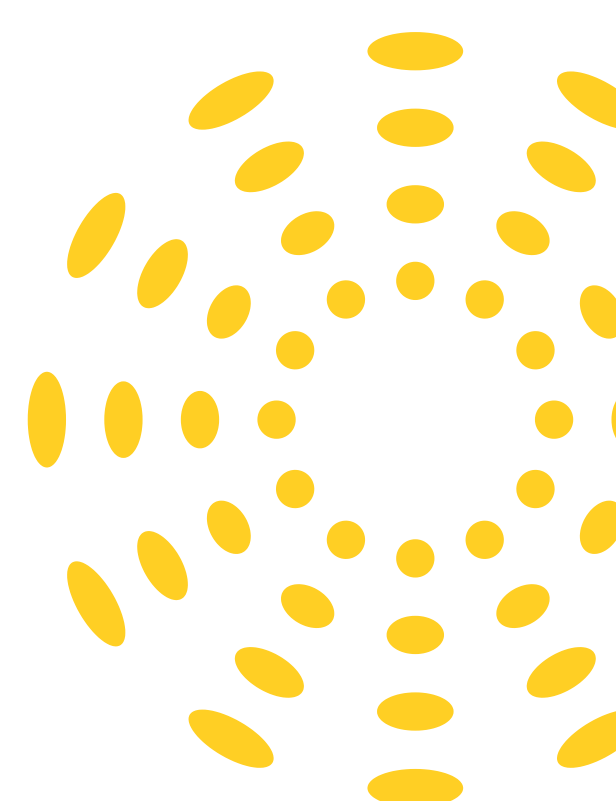
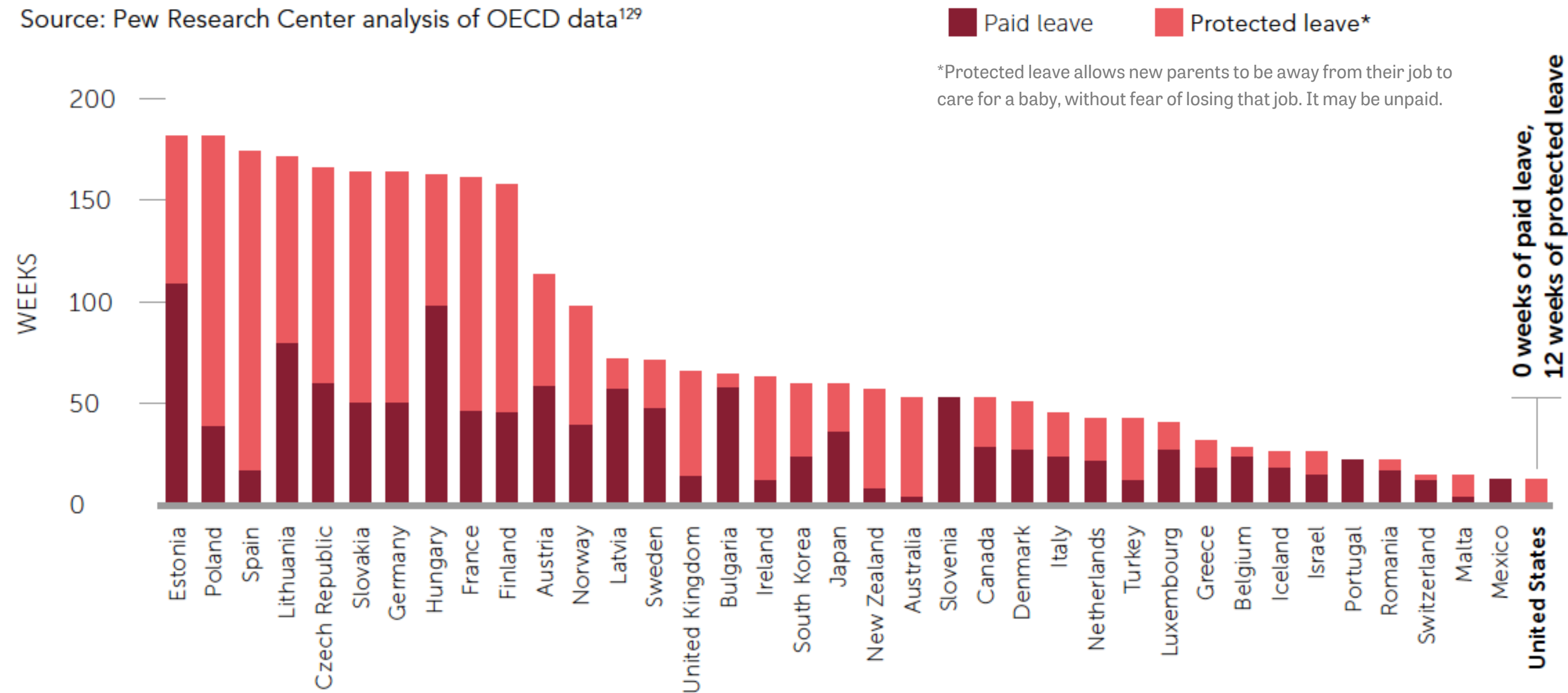
Source: [Pew Research Center](#)

Parents want men to spend more time with their children, but workplace and government policies simply have not caught up.

In Equimundo’s 2023 [State of America’s Fathers report](#), 38 percent of moms vs. 46 percent of dads had access to any leave at all.

The U.S. ranks last in government-supported time off for new parents

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of OECD data¹²⁹



Federal care policies in the US

The US is staggeringly behind in having policies related to care.

- The [2023 Oxfam US Care Policy Scorecard](#) found that federal care policies are severely lacking, and the needs of caregivers and care workers are not being met.
- The US received an aggregate score of 43 percent, or in other words, the US overall meets less than half of all possible criteria when all care policy indicators are examined and aggregated, painting a grim picture of an inadequate care policy landscape in the US.

Positive changes during the pandemic: [the federal government spent \\$24 billion](#) to keep the care industry afloat.

- The [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES Act\)](#) of 2020, [the Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(FFCRA\)](#), and the [American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\)](#).

The Child Tax Credit is one of the strongest tools to provide families with support and lowering child poverty.

- Enacted in 1997 and expanded through the ARP in 2020, the credit currently provides up to [\\$2,000 per child to about 40 million families every year](#).

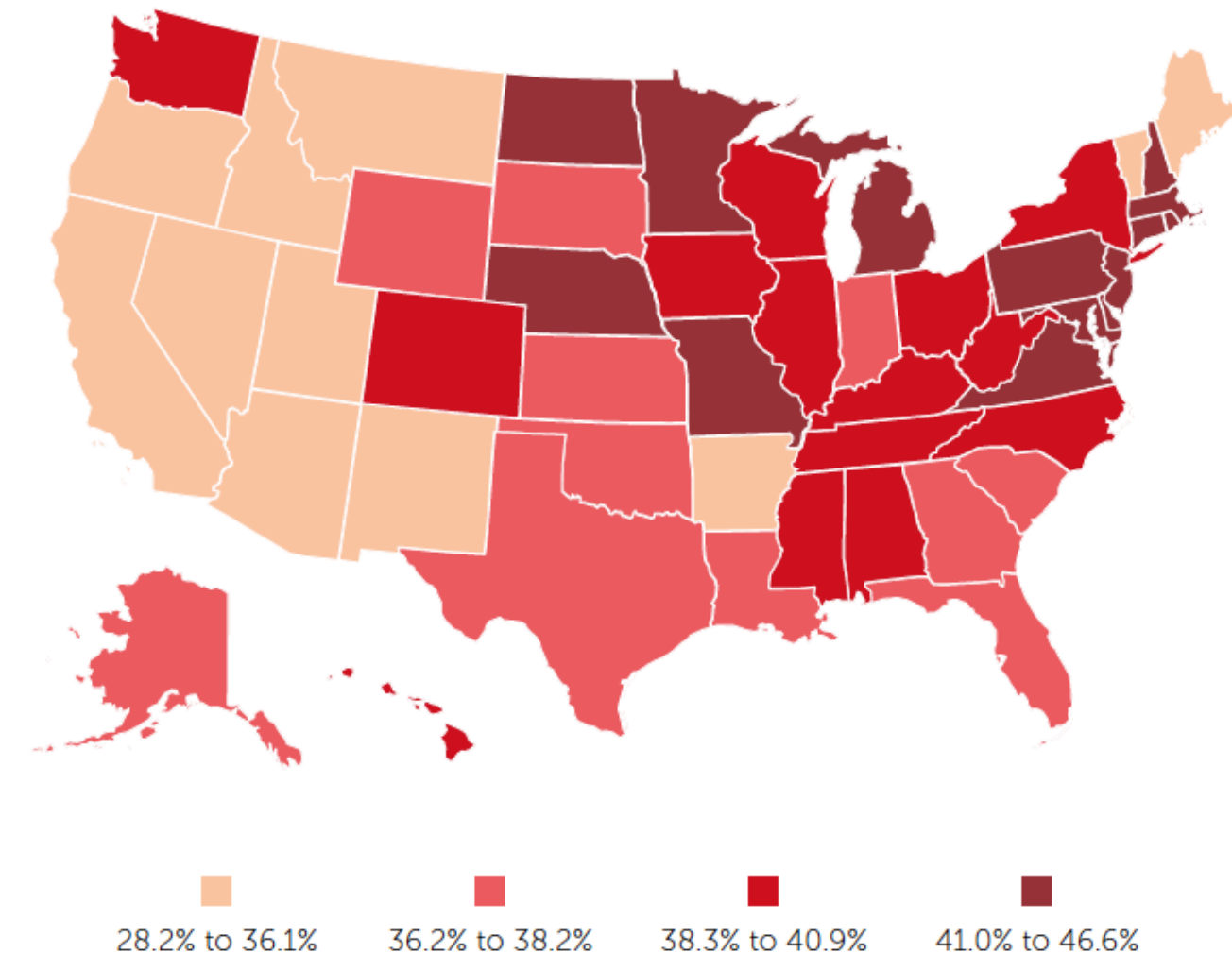


Childcare legislation in the US

- At the state level, [childcare legislation is in the works](#), and some businesses are more open to flexible working arrangements, allowing parents to balance their caregiving and career responsibilities.
- At the same time, [the childcare business is more precarious than ever](#). Providers' costs have increased along with inflation, and rising wages at food service and retail jobs have made it harder to recruit childcare workers, one of the lowest-paying jobs in the country.
- On average, [families spend 25 percent of their income on childcare](#); the Department of Health and Human Services says that for childcare to be affordable, it should cost [no more than 7 percent of a family's income](#).

Working parents who are eligible for and can afford unpaid leave under the FMLA

Source: diversitydatakids.org calculations of Current Population Survey, 2011-2014 March Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Public Use Microdata Files¹³⁹



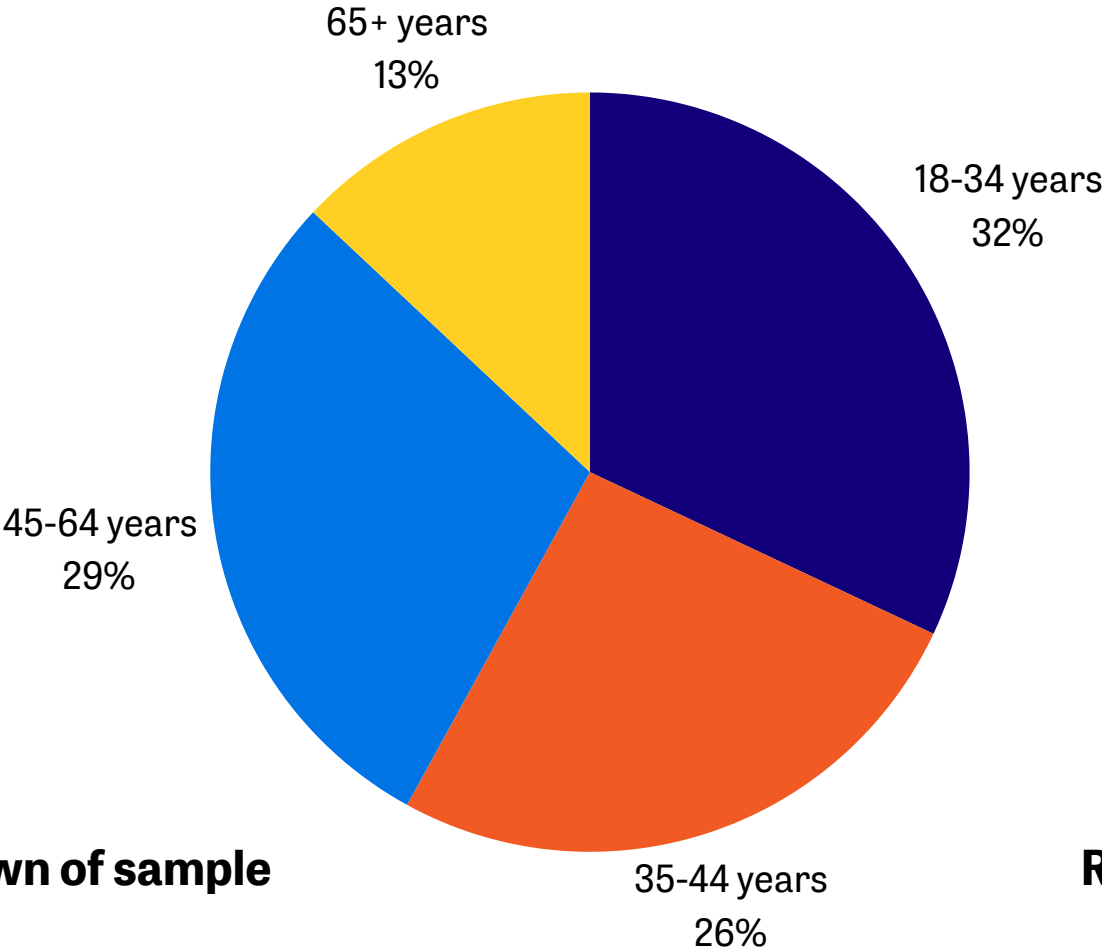
SURVEY FINDINGS ABOUT MALE AND FEMALE CAREGIVERS

From a February 2024 Online Survey

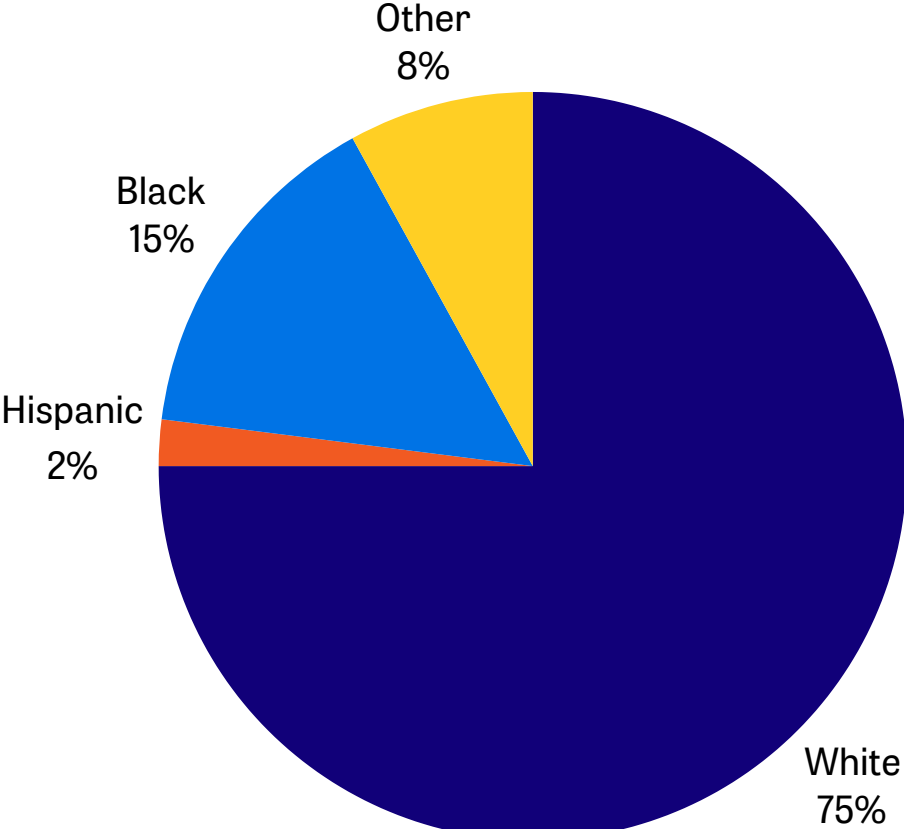


Survey demographics

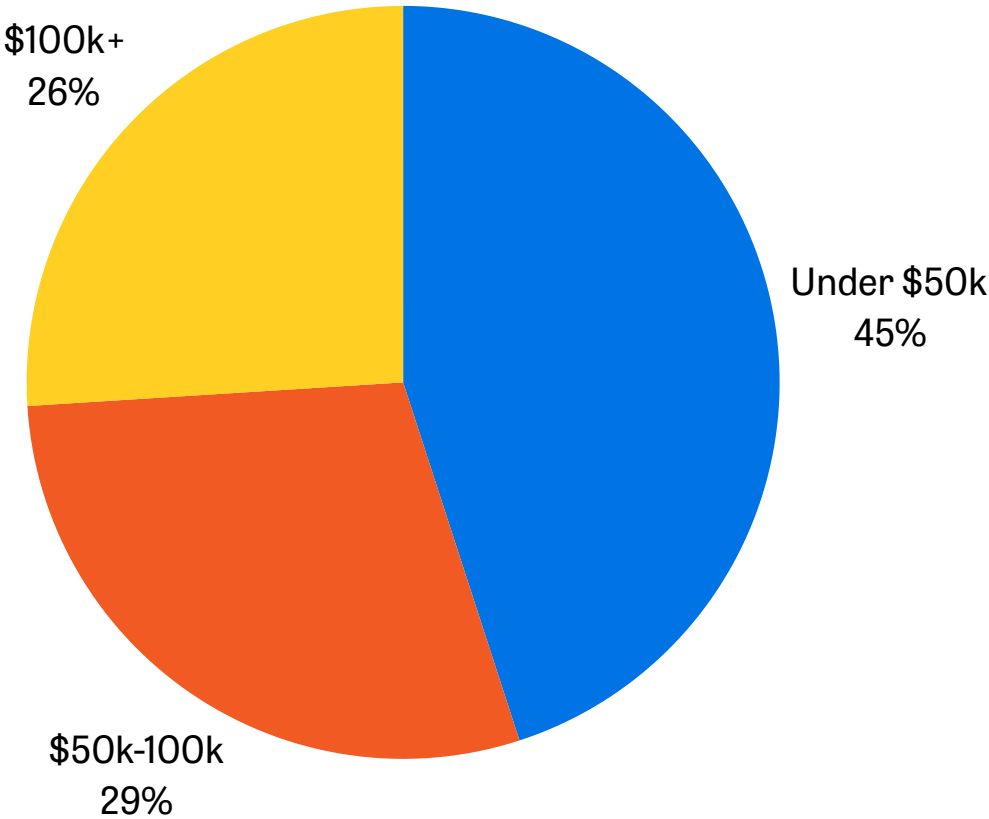
Age breakdown of sample



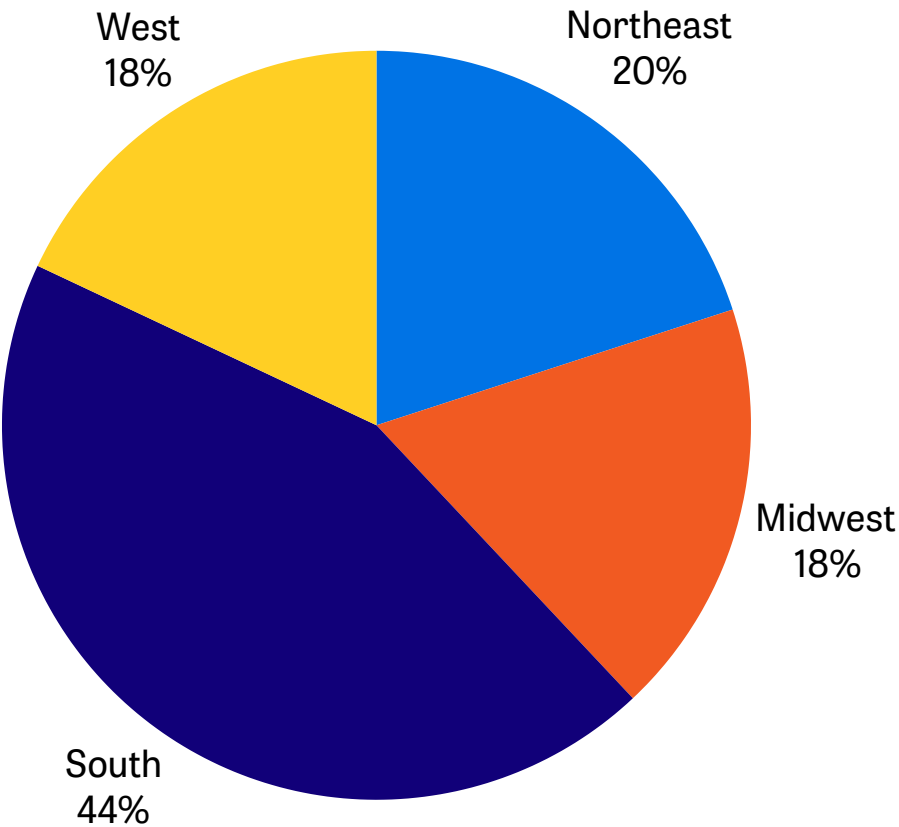
Self-reported ethnicity breakdown of sample



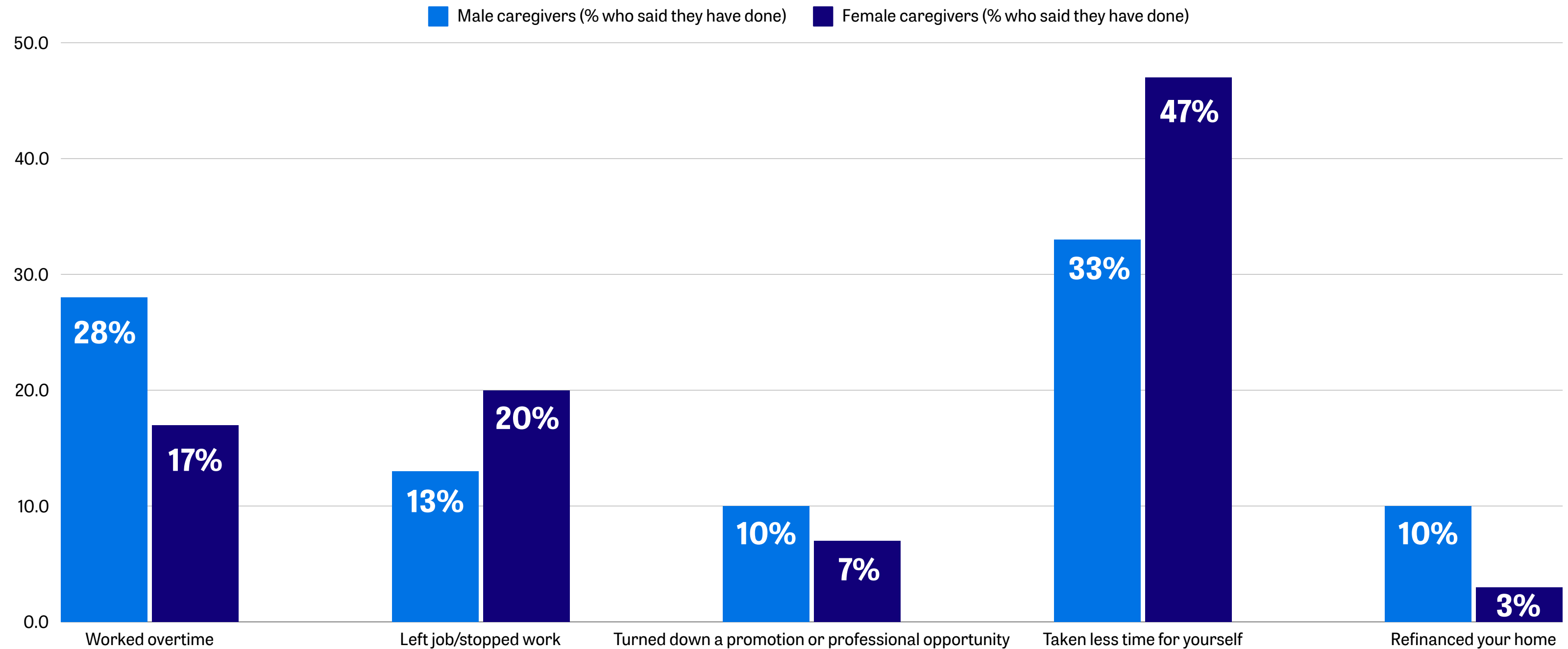
Income breakdown of sample



Regional representation of sample



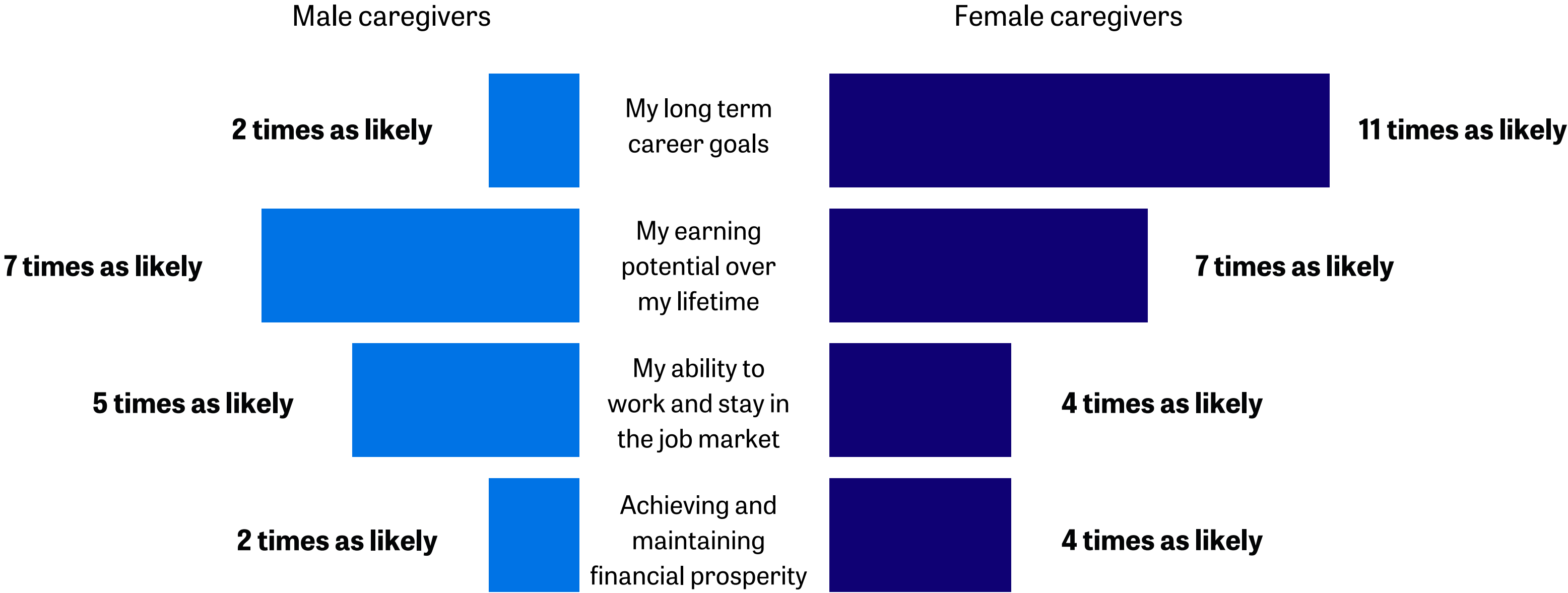
Men and women both report significant but different financial stresses related to their caregiving responsibilities.



Only statistically significant findings are reported.

Men and women who have caregiving responsibilities are **far more likely** to be concerned about future work opportunities and career trajectories.

Male and female caregivers who turn down a promotion due to care burdens are also this likely to feel fear about their future career:

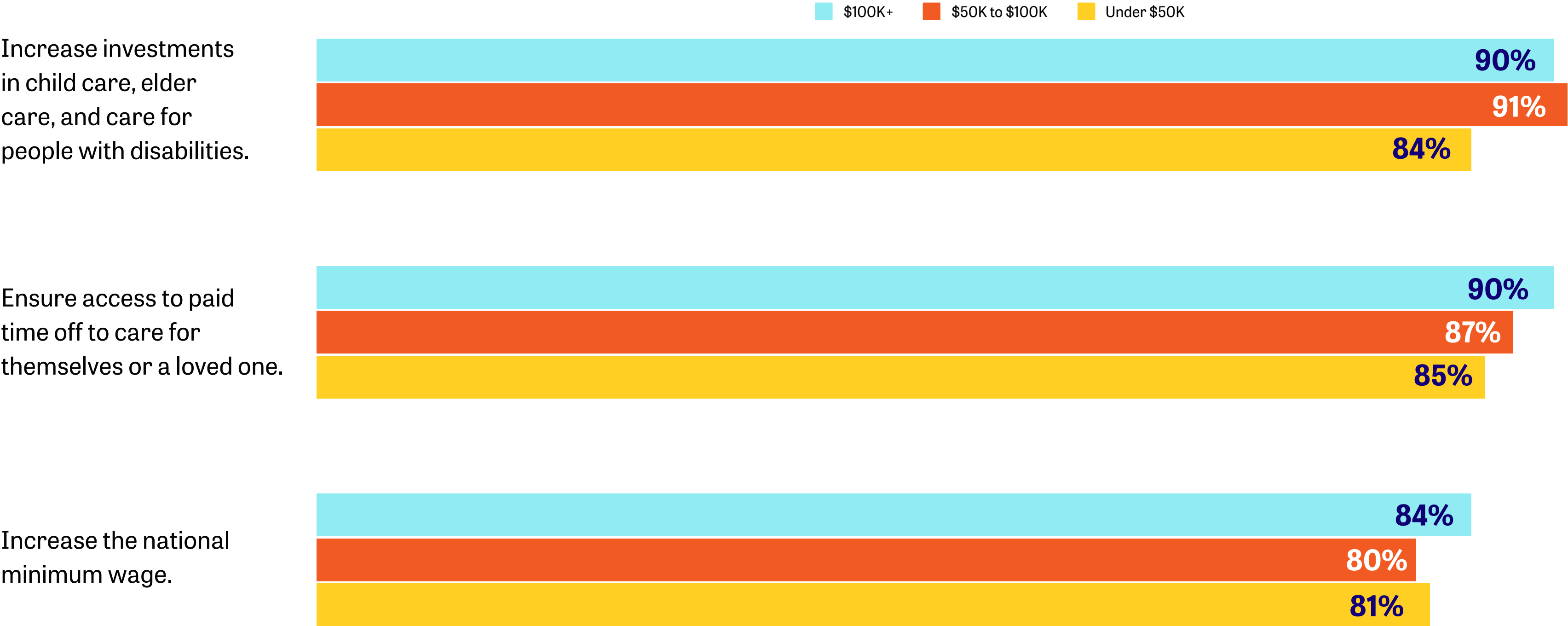


Men and women have highly similar policy priorities when it comes to caregiving and financial stability.

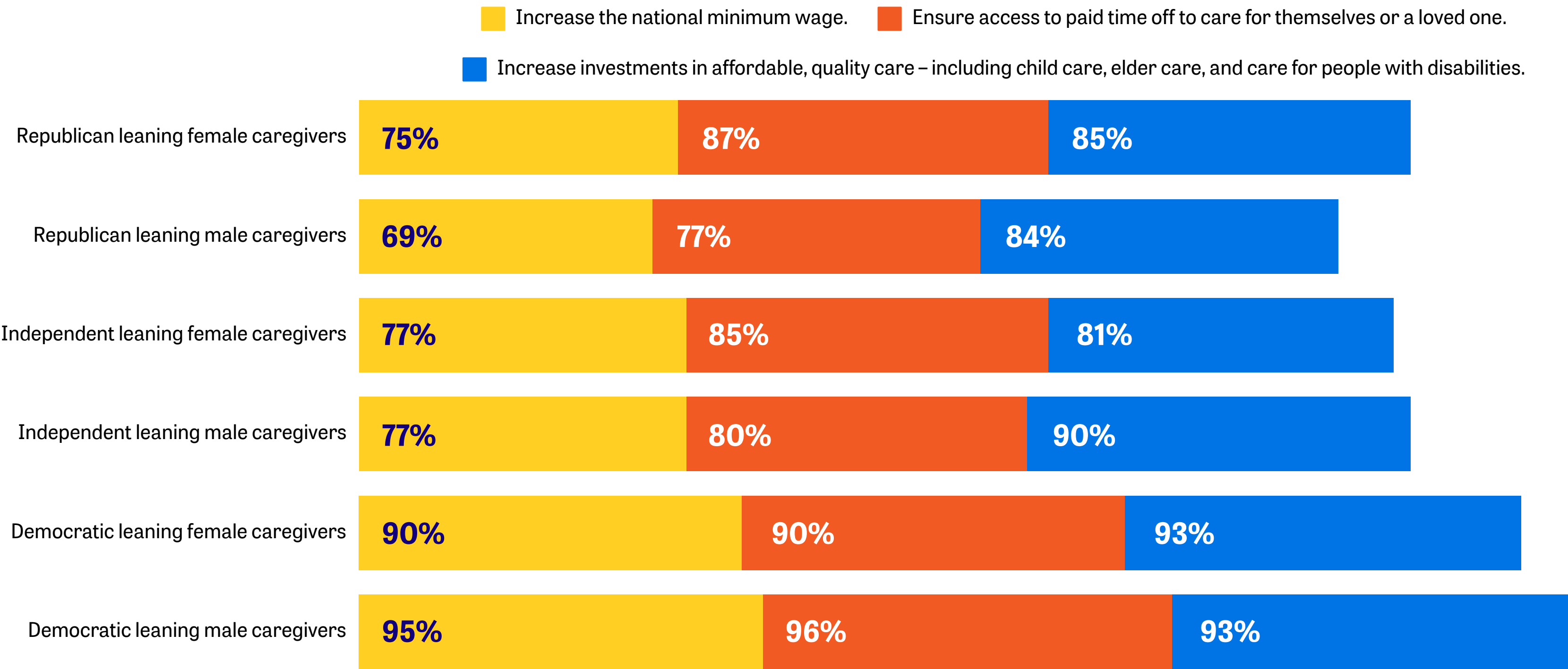


We all want better care policies.

Demand for care policies is highly similar across income groups.



Democratic leaning voters are more likely to support care policies, but a majority of Republican voters also want them.

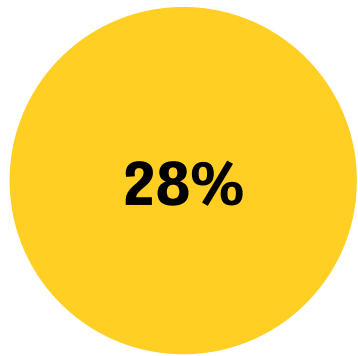


Men's and fathers' care policy priorities: 2023 findings

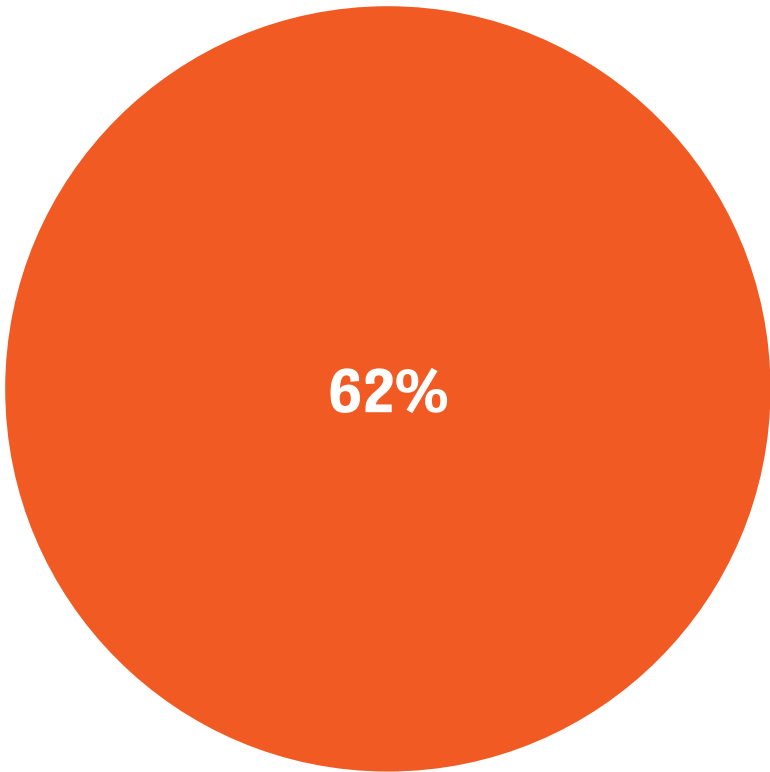
In 2023, similar trends: Male caregivers prioritize caregiving over work responsibilities if needed and rank care policies highly on their political agenda.



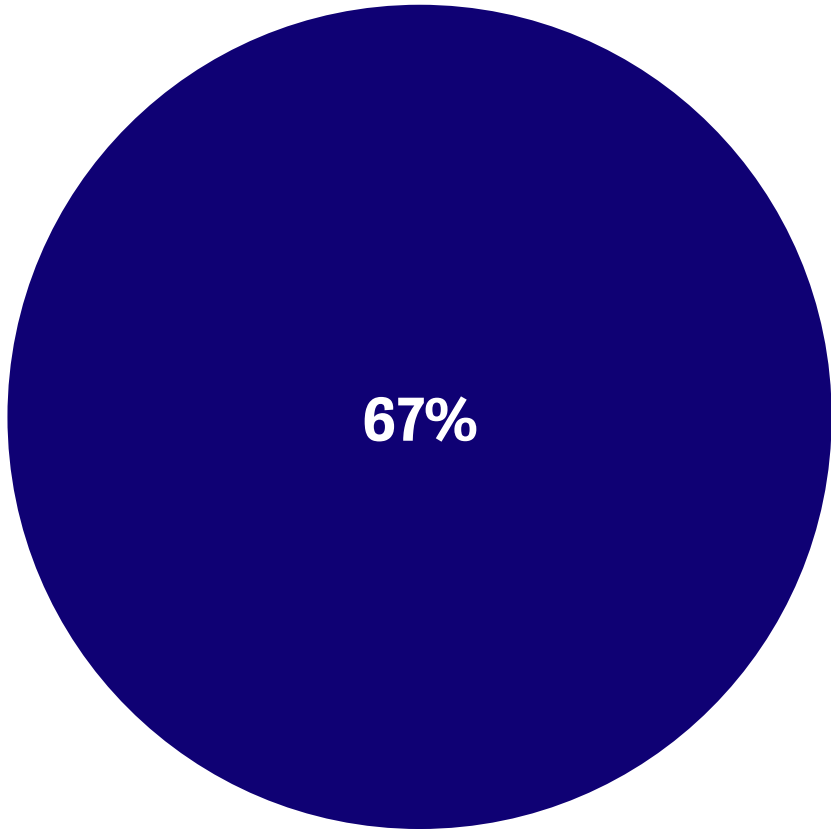
Source: Equimundo's 2023 State of America's Fathers report



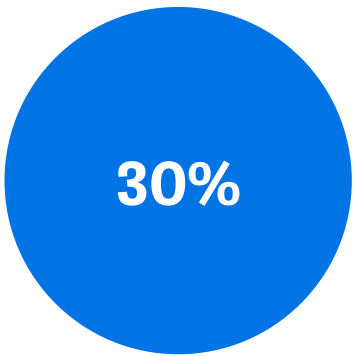
of fathers ranked childcare access and cost in their top 5 policy priorities



of men would consider working less if they had a / another child



of fathers who have previously taken paternity leave would consider working less if they had another child



of fathers ranked family and medical leave in their top 5 policy priorities

CONCLUSIONS

Discussing men's caregiving is an opportunity to break out of political polarization.

It is an opportunity to call all men into being their most connected, empathetic, equity-seeking selves, and achieving the care policy advances we all need to thrive.

There must be well-designed, well-funded, and widely accessible government policies and programs that facilitate people's ability to give and receive care.

These policies should ensure that those in the paid care workforce are protected, paid well, and treated with dignity. As men take on a greater share of caregiving, this study and others affirm that male caregivers are increasing likely to care about and support the key policies that all families need to support them in their caregiving.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Introduce **national and universal paid leave** along with workplace supports that enable men (and all caregivers) to step up to care – and help men see their benefits.
- Provide **subsidized, high-quality child and elder care** that would help make childcare more accessible and affordable, while increasing pay for childcare workers and early learning educators and engaging men as allies and voters.
- Provide **income support for the lowest-income families**, including permanently expanding the **child tax credit (CTC)** through an increase in the amount for each child and making the credit fully refundable, showing male caregivers how they benefit as well.
- Affirm that **care matters to men and that men matter for care policies** through the media and policy.
- **Engage men as “care citizens”** joining in allyship with women for activism and advocacy around care policies.



STAY IN TOUCH.

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