

Massachusetts Voters + Prescription Drug Costs

Results from a Statewide Survey

July 2019

Methods.

Statewide 10-minute telephone survey of $n = 833$ registered voters in Massachusetts (45.5% landline, 54.5% cell phone).

Conducted June 14-23, 2019.

Margin of sampling error on the total results: ± 3.4 percentage points.

PerryUndem, a national non-partisan research firm, wrote the questions and analyzed the results. The survey was fielded by Braun Research, Inc.

The study was sponsored by Health Care For All to better understand voters' views on prescription drug costs and their feelings about new state legislation on the issue.

6 Key Findings.

- 1. The survey finds that almost 9 in 10 Massachusetts voters (88%) support a new bill currently being considered in the State House to increase transparency and accountability in prescription drug pricing.** There are high levels of support for the specific provisions of the bill as well. These include:

 - Strengthening the ability of MassHealth to negotiate drug prices (91% support).
 - Making pharmaceutical companies show their underlying costs that go into developing a drug (89% support).
 - Requiring pharmacists to inform people if the retail price for a drug is cheaper than using insurance (89% support).
 - Setting payment limits for unreasonably high-priced drugs (87% support).
- 2. Massachusetts voters are unlikely to settle for a bill that only increases drug pricing transparency.** When given a choice between the two, the vast majority prefers a bill that both addresses transparency and also takes steps to set payment limits that would bring down drug costs over a bill that just focuses on increasing transparency (82% prefer a bill that does both vs. 12% who prefer a bill that just increases transparency).

6 Key Findings (cont'd).

- 3. Where state legislators stand on this bill will matter to voters.** Almost 6 in 10 (59%) say they are more likely to vote for a state legislator in the next election if they support this bill. Conversely, about 7 in 10 (68%) say they would be less likely to vote for a legislator who opposes the bill. If their state legislator voted against this bill *and* accepted money from pharmaceutical companies, the vast majority (87%) says they are less likely to vote for them.
- 4. The bill's strong support seems to be driven by voter worry over rising drug prices.** More than 8 in 10 Massachusetts voters (82%) say they would be concerned about being able to afford prescription drugs in the future if prices were to rise, and almost two-thirds (62%) say they are already worried about costs as they are now.

6 Key Findings (cont'd).

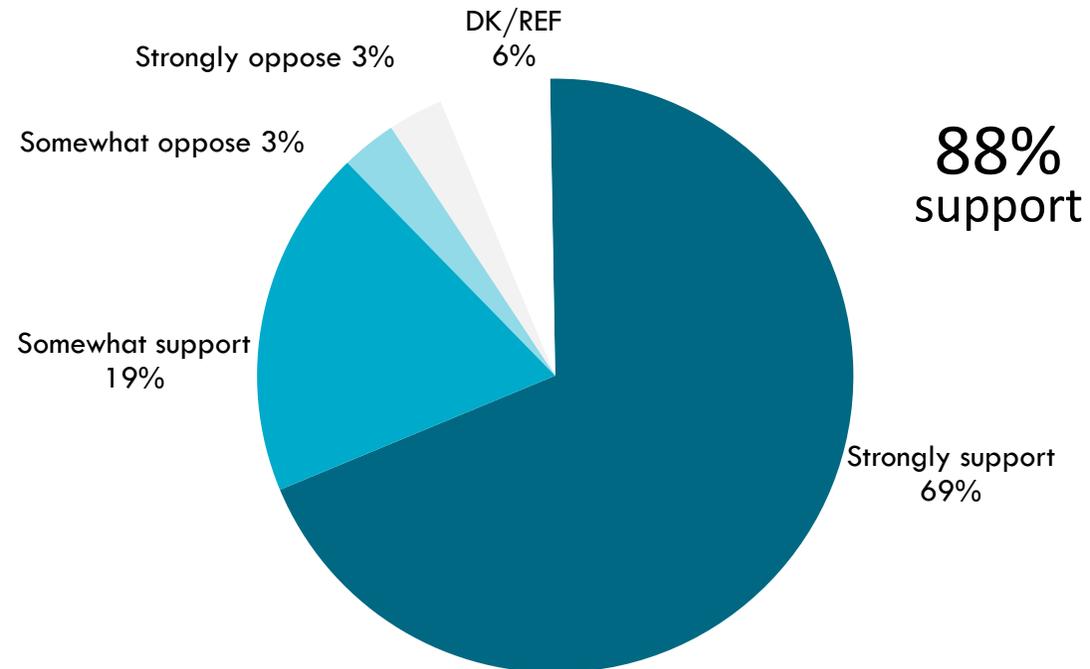
5. **This is also a personal issue for many voters.** More than one-third (36%) say they or a family member has struggled to afford prescription drugs in the past two years. Their struggles have included taking less of a prescription or skipping doses (23%); being unable to fill a prescription (22%); cutting back on spending on other necessities such as groceries (18%); and sharing prescriptions with someone else (8%).

6. **Voters seem to agree on the main factors driving high drug prices.** Three-quarters (76%) point to pharmaceutical companies' desire to make as much money as possible as contributing a "great deal" to drug costs, almost twice as many as those who say research and development for new drugs contributes a great deal to the costs (39%). Most voters also think pharmaceutical companies aren't doing enough to make prescription drugs more affordable (86%), think drug companies make too much profit (79%), and spend too much on advertising (68%).

Detailed Findings.
Legislation.

The vast majority of Massachusetts voters (88%) support the State Legislature taking steps to lower prescription drug costs for patients.

Q: Do you support or oppose the Massachusetts State Legislature taking steps to lower prescription drug prices for patients in the state?



TOTAL SUPPORT: 88%

Democrat 92%
Independent 89%
Republican 76%

Women 89%
Men 87%

AAPI 77%
African American 92%
Latinx 74%
White 89%

18-29 years old 88%
30-44 years old 90%
45-59 years old 89%
60+ years old 86%

<\$25K 88%
\$25K-\$50K 92%
\$50K-\$99K 91%
\$100K+ 86%

Voters were asked in the survey
about a current bill in the
Massachusetts
State House...

Voters were told...

“Right now, there is a bill in the Massachusetts State House that would increase transparency and accountability for pharmaceutical companies so that they have to show how they decide what to charge for prescription drugs. The bill would also make it possible to set payment limits to lower the cost of the most expensive drugs or drugs like insulin that have seen big cost increases recently.”

And then they were asked about specific
provisions of this bill...

Almost 9 in 10 voters supports each specific provision of the bill.

Q: Here are some parts of the bill. For each let me know if you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this part of the bill.

	Total Support	Total Oppose
– Strengthen the ability of MassHealth – the state’s Medicaid program – to negotiate lower drug prices.	91%	6%
– Make pharmaceutical companies show the underlying costs that go into producing prescription drugs, like the research and development.	89%	8%
– Require pharmacists to inform people if purchasing a drug at the retail price would be cheaper than using their insurance. Pharmacists are not required to tell people now.	89%	9%
– Give an independent state agency the authority to use data from manufacturers to potentially set payment limits for unreasonably high-priced drugs to make them more affordable.	87%	10%

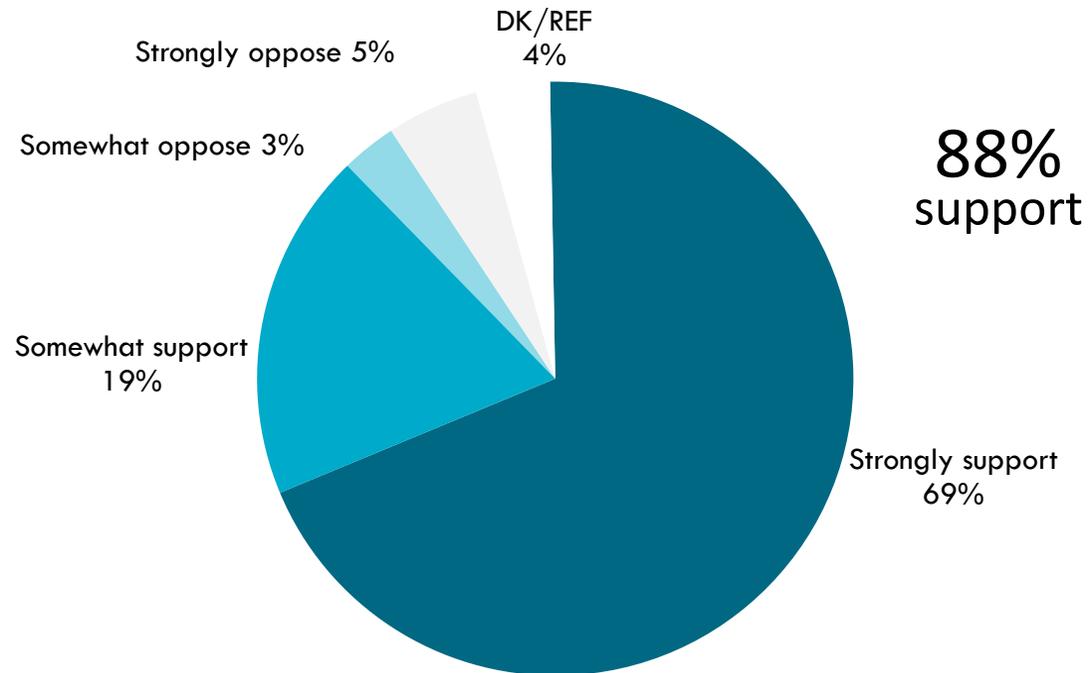
There is strong support for these provisions across voters of different political parties.

Q: Here are some parts of the bill. For each let me know if you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this part of the bill.

	Total Support	Dem	Ind	Rep
– Strengthen the ability of MassHealth – the state’s Medicaid program – to negotiate lower drug prices.	91%	98%	91%	78%
– Make pharmaceutical companies show the underlying costs that go into producing prescription drugs, like the research and development.	89%	95%	89%	80%
– Require pharmacists to inform people if purchasing a drug at the retail price would be cheaper than using their insurance. Pharmacists are not required to tell people now.	89%	86%	91%	90%
– Give an independent state agency the authority to use data from manufacturers to potentially set payment limits for unreasonably high-priced drugs to make them more affordable.	87%	93%	86%	83%

After considering specific provisions in the bill, almost 9 in 10 Massachusetts voters (88%) say they support this bill (H.1133/S.706) becoming law. Support for the bill spans party ID.

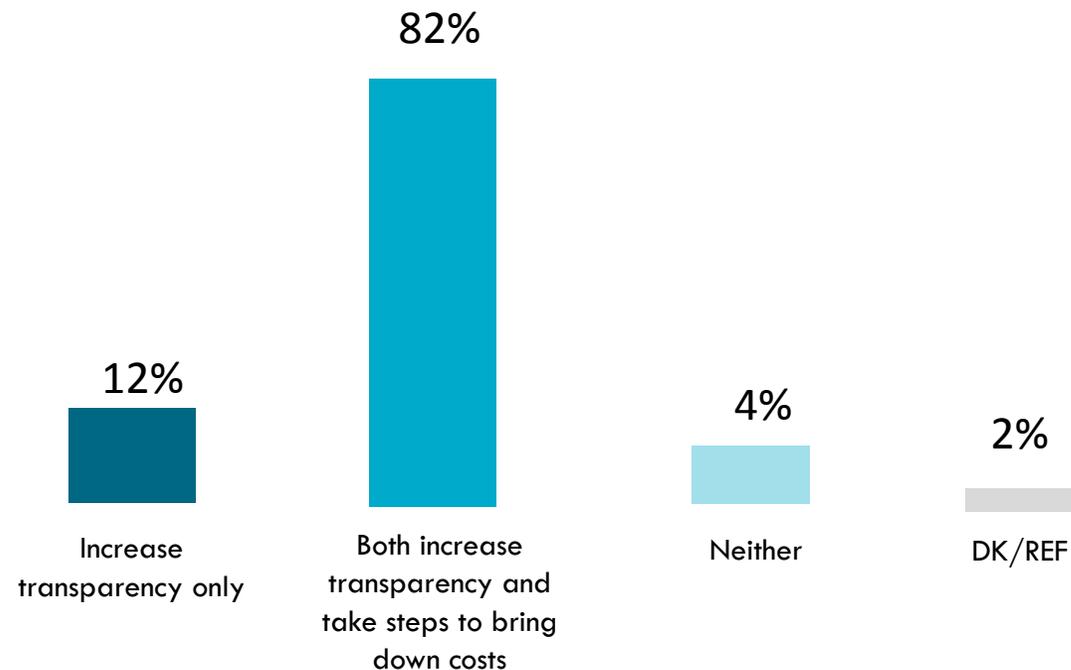
Q: Now that you know more, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose this bill becoming law?



TOTAL:	89%
Democrat	93%
Independent	90%
Republican	85%
Women	91%
Men	86%
AAPI	100%
African American	85%
Latinx	89%
White	89%
18-29 years old	93%
30-44 years old	90%
45-59 years old	92%
60+ years old	94%
<\$25K	83%
\$25K-\$50K	96%
\$50K-\$99K	93%
\$100K+	87%

Eight in 10 voters want the bill to both increase transparency and set payment limits on expensive drugs. There is little support for a bill that just focuses on transparency.

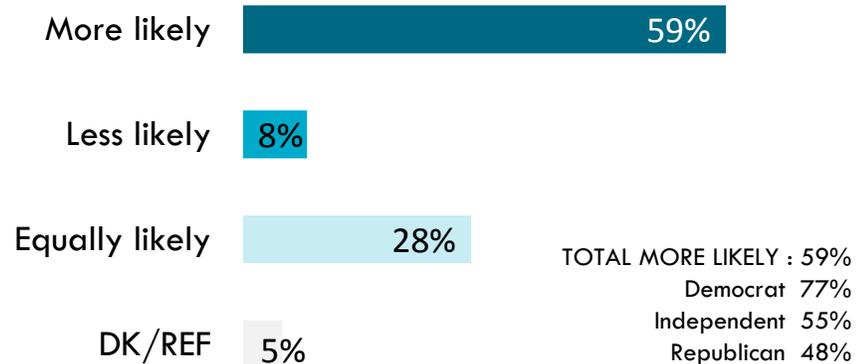
Q: Should the state legislature pass a bill that would only increase transparency so that people would know the underlying costs that go into producing prescription drugs? OR, should they pass a bill that would both increase transparency and take additional steps to set payment limits to bring down the costs of drugs?



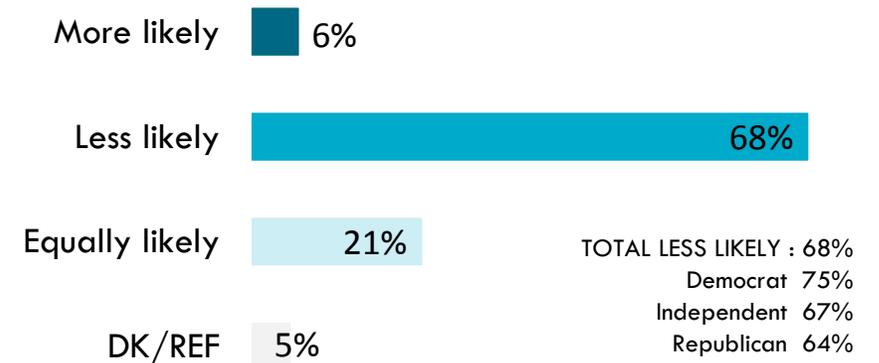
TOTAL BOTH:	82%
Democrat	94%
Independent	79%
Republican	73%
Women	87%
Men	76%
AAPI	88%
African American	86%
Latinx	87%
White	81%
18-29 years old	84%
30-44 years old	84%
45-59 years old	81%
60+ years old	80%
<\$25K	85%
\$25K-\$50K	91%
\$50K-\$99K	84%
\$100K+	77%

How state legislators vote on this bill will matter to Massachusetts voters at election time.

Q: If your State Representative supported this bill, would you be more likely, less likely, or equally likely to vote for them in the next election?



Q: If your State Representative opposed this bill would you be more likely, less likely, or equally as likely to vote for them in the next election?



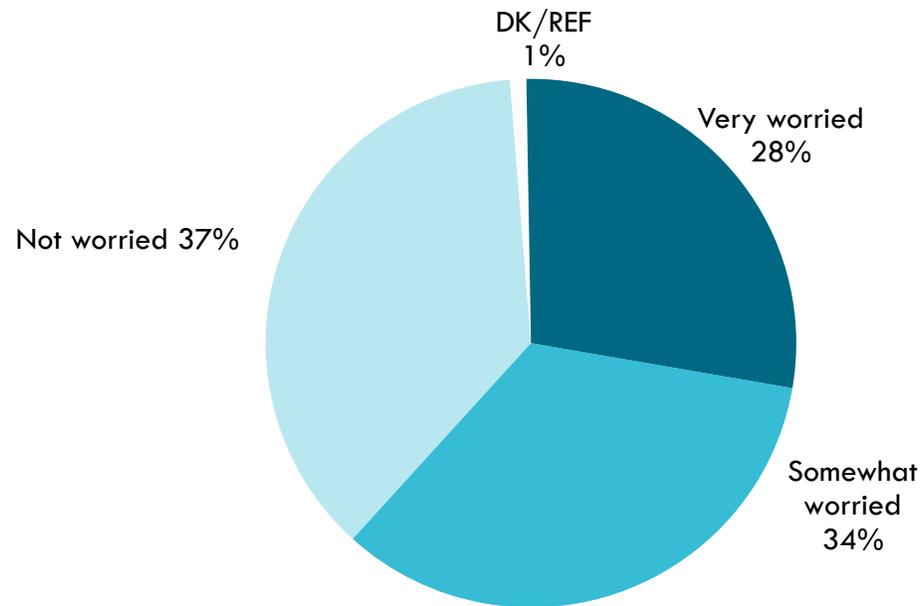
87%

of Massachusetts voters also say they are less likely to vote for a state legislator who accepted money from pharmaceutical companies and voted against this bill.

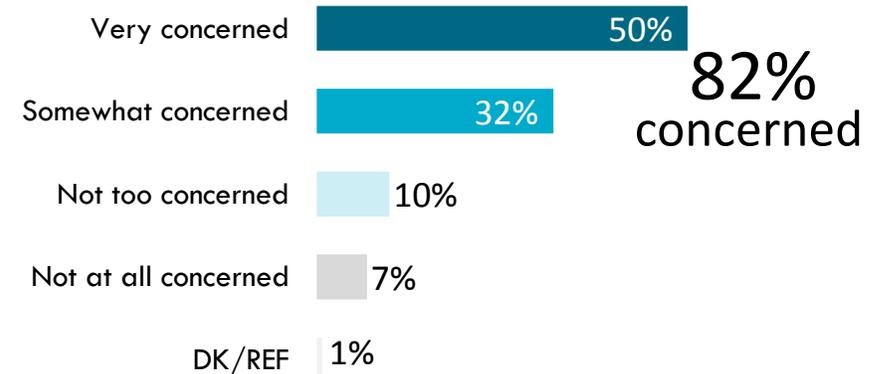
Cost Concerns.

More than 8 in 10 Massachusetts voters are concerned about being able to afford prescriptions in the future if prices were to rise.

Q: Would you say that you are very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried about the cost of prescription drugs right now for you and your family?



Q: If prescription drug prices were to rise, would you be very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about being able to afford prescription drugs in the future?



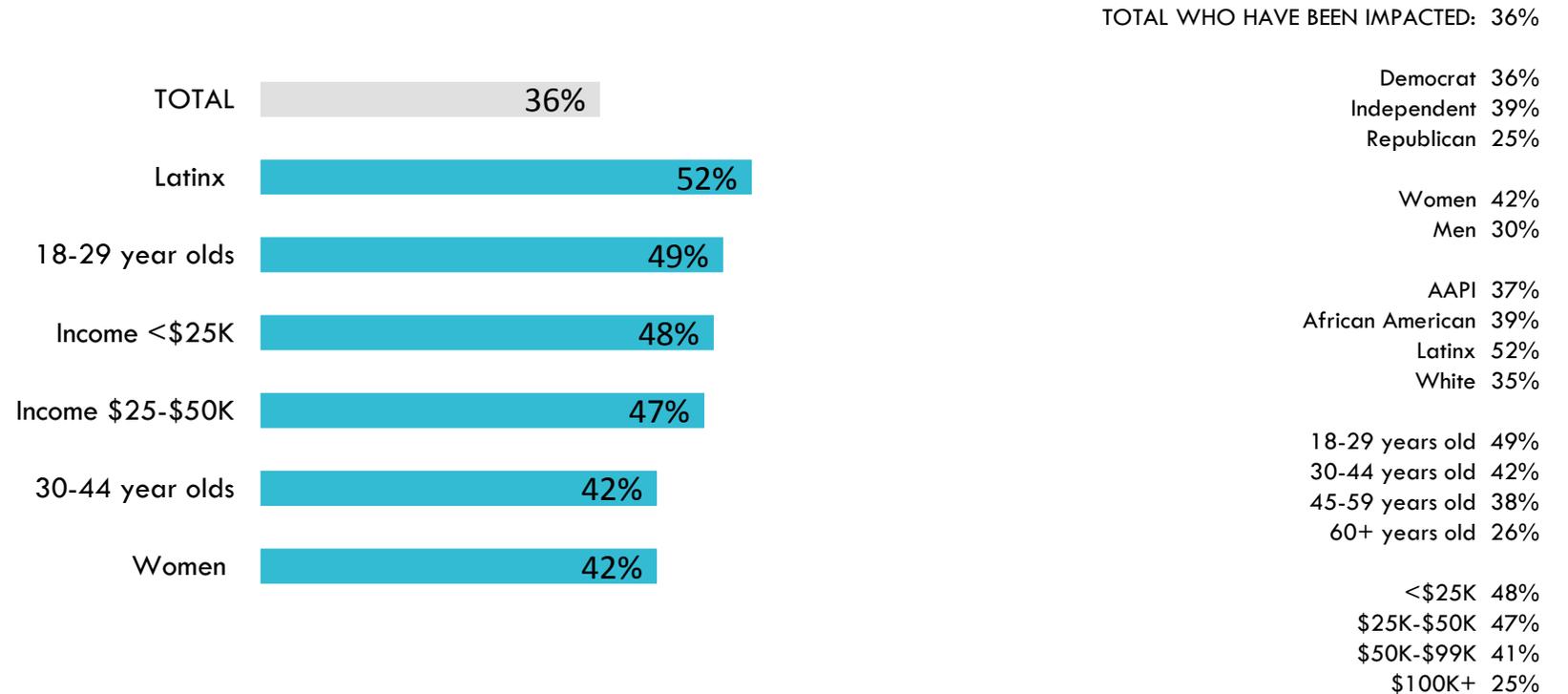
More than one-third say they or a family member has direct experience struggling to afford prescription drugs.

Q: In the past two years, have you or a family member experienced any of the following issues with prescription drugs? Have you...

	Total	Dem	Ind	Rep
Taken less of a prescription medication, skipped a dose, or cut pills in half	23%	25%	24%	15%
Been unable to fill a prescription because of cost	22%	22%	24%	14%
Cut back on spending on other necessities such as groceries because of prescription drug costs	18%	15%	20%	13%
Shared prescription medications with someone else because of cost	8%	8%	9%	4%



Those Massachusetts voters most likely to say they have faced at least one of those challenges in affording prescription drugs are...



Most think pharmaceutical companies are not doing enough to make prescriptions affordable, make too much profit, and spend too much on advertising.

Voters feel the following contribute “a great deal” to the cost of prescription drugs:

	Total	Political Party		
		Dem	Ind	Rep
Pharmaceutical companies’ desire to make as much money as possible	76%	80%	74%	73%
Lobbying by pharmaceutical companies to influence elected officials	61%	60%	61%	62%
The cost of marketing and advertising the drugs	42%	42%	42%	44%
The cost of research and development for new drugs	39%	37%	39%	39%

ALSO...

- 86%** think pharmaceutical companies are not doing enough to make prescription drugs affordable.
- 79%** think pharmaceutical companies make too much profit.
- 68%** think pharmaceutical companies spend too much on advertising.

