

Poll: Chicagoans Strongly Oppose Trump and Support Innovative Social Policy for Working Families

August 2026 | Conducted by 2040 Strategy Group

Summary

In August 2026, Not With Our Money and Community Change Action commissioned a poll by 2040 Strategy Group to assess Chicago residents' attitudes across several issues. Surveying a representative sample of 684 adults from August 4-16, 2026, the poll found broad support for two innovative campaigns: the proposed divestment from companies doing unlawful business with the Trump administration and redistributive support for working families with a guaranteed income. Among both the population as a whole and within every segment of Chicago residents, support for each campaign is strong, especially when bolstered by reference to billionaires and corruption.

The poll's key findings include:

- **Chicagoans support limiting the city's dealings with Trump-allied corporations:** Respondents supported city actions to avoid contracting with the Trump administration's corporate allies. For example, 64 percent of those polled agreed that the City of Chicago should avoid doing business with companies or suppliers profiting from President Trump's administration. Only 15 percent disagreed.
- **Chicagoans support Guaranteed Income programs:** Participants are broadly in favor of direct cash assistance in Chicago and beyond. For instance, 66 percent of respondents favored the reinstatement or expansion of guaranteed income programs in the city and 64 percent supported a \$1,000 monthly federal guaranteed income program.
- **Chicagoans support policies that prioritize working families over billionaires:** Those polled overwhelmingly prefer politicians who support working families' interests and oppose the disproportionate influence of billionaires. Notably, 74 percent of participants agreed that Chicago's leaders should not take direction from billionaires who do not live in Chicago, and 79 percent indicated a higher degree of trust for political leaders who prioritize working families over wealthy corporations or the business community.

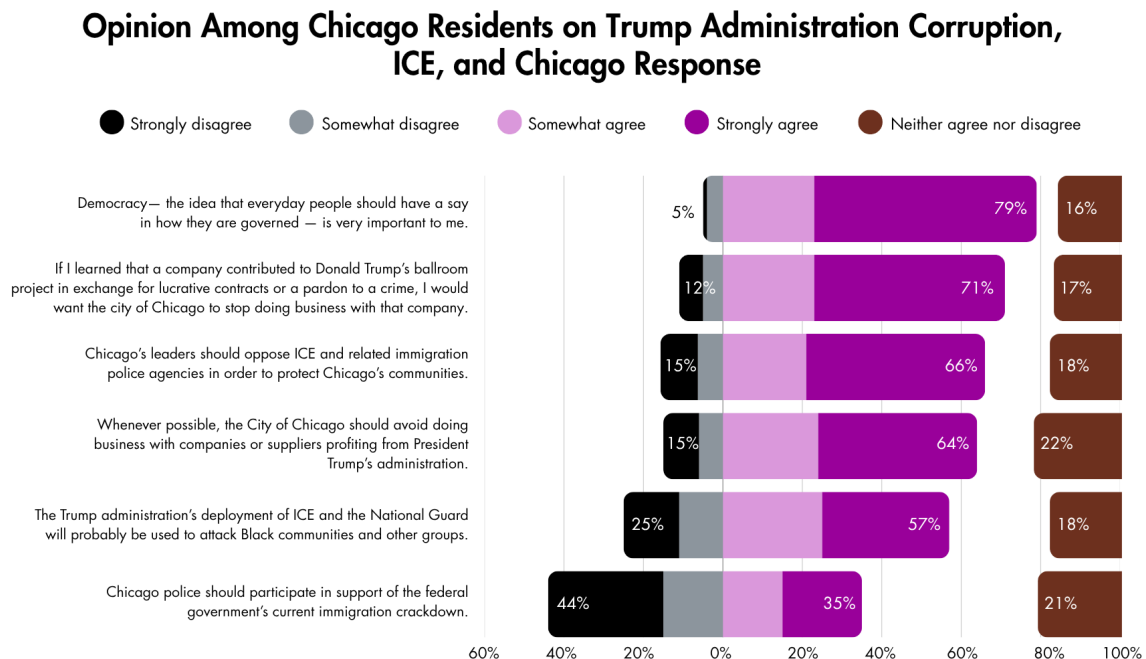
Municipal Opposition to the Trump Administration

Not With Our Money advocates leveraging the city's fiscal capacity to shift the stakes of enabling Trump's attacks on our communities and engaging in corrupt business dealings with the administration. Under this framework, local governments like Chicago would re-examine and possibly cut contracting ties with entities that are supporting or participating in the wide-ranging corruption and assault on rights by the Trump administration.

To gauge public support for such measures, the poll asked a series of questions about public corruption by officials, potential city responses to entities working with the Trump administration, and whether the city should assist ICE in its intensified immigration policing activities in the aftermath of the 2025 Midway Blitz operation. Overall, respondents voiced:

- Widespread support for democracy versus authoritarian government
- High levels of reported participation in anti-Trump and anti-ICE protests over the past year
- Strong opposition to ICE and the Trump administration generally
- Support for city actions to avoid contracting with Trump administration allies

The topline estimates for these topical questions are shown in the following figure:

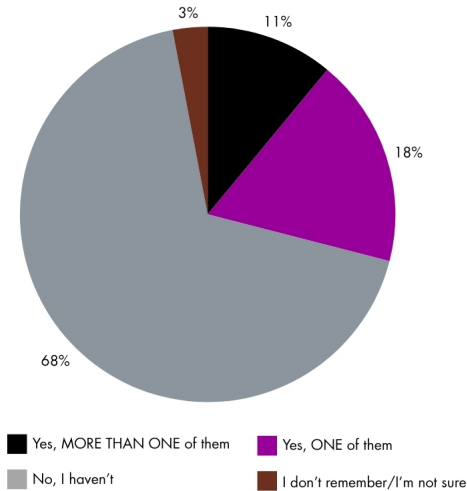


The following sections discuss the results in greater detail.

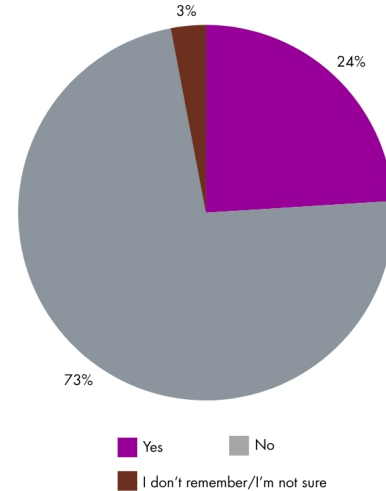
Opposition to the Trump Administration

The poll first asked respondents whether they had participated in any of the major protest events that have taken place in Chicago over the past year, including the No Kings protests and the more spontaneous, local actions protesting ICE activities in neighborhoods across the city and metro region. 29 percent reported participating in at least one No Kings protest, and 24 percent reported taking part in the anti-ICE protests and civil resistance activities over the past year.

Did you participate in any No Kings marches?

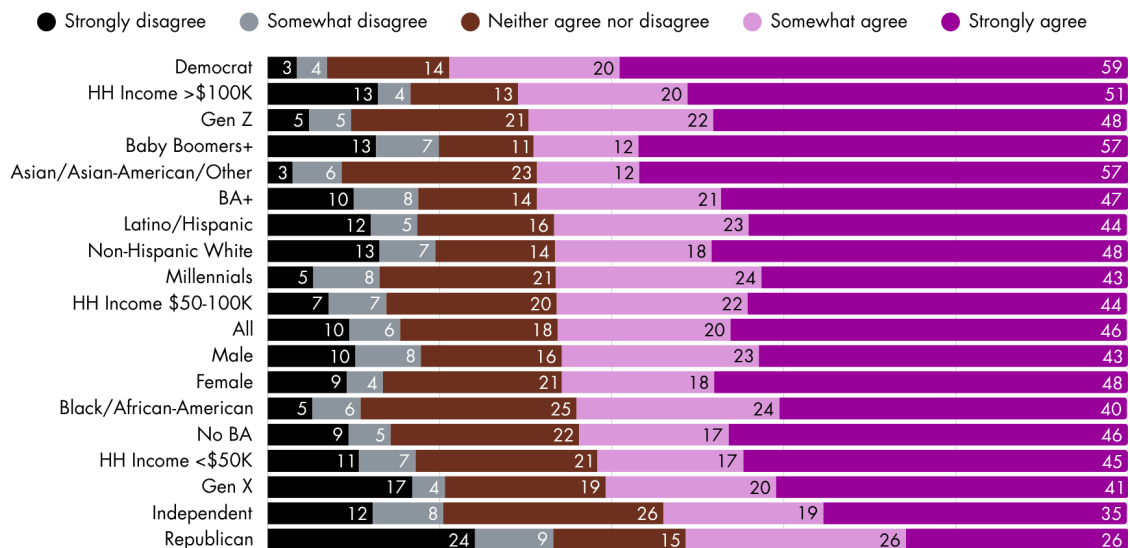


Did you participate in neighborhood-based ICE protests?



Next, the poll asked two questions about whether Chicago should support ICE's aggressive immigration policing activities across the city. Notably, ICE and related federal police agencies conducted the "Midway Blitz" operation in Autumn of 2025, drawing national notoriety for their sustained, aggressive tactics, which included multiple shootings, use of chemical weapons in residential neighborhoods, and mass indiscriminate arrests. In general, Chicagoans think the city government should not assist ICE in its activities. 66 percent agreed with the idea that Chicago's leaders should oppose ICE activities in order to protect all Chicago communities, while only 16 percent disagreed (another 18 percent were unsure).

Chicago leaders should oppose ICE and related immigration police agencies in order to protect all Chicago communities.



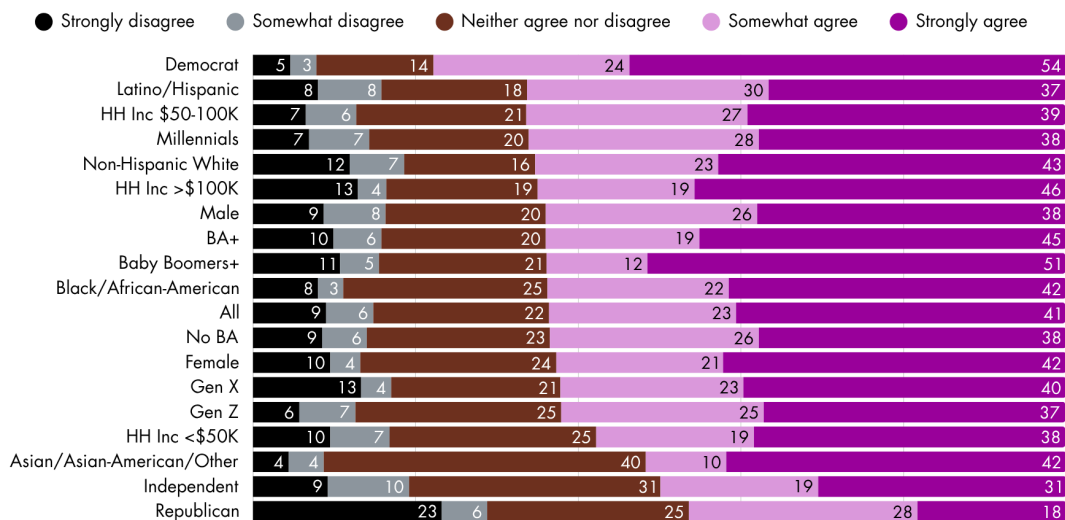
In a separate question, opinion was more divided about whether the Chicago Police Department (CPD) should assist ICE; a plurality (45 percent) said CPD should NOT cooperate with ICE in its operations, though 36 percent said they should and 21 percent said they were not sure. Republicans were the only demographic segment in which a majority supported CPD-ICE cooperation, but support for such cooperation was also slightly higher among male and white respondents. Democrats, respondents over 65, highly educated respondents, were more likely to oppose CPD-ICE cooperation.

City Divestment from Corrupt Trump Allies

The survey went further to ask about how local officials might oppose the Trump administration. One policy proposal that is being considered is to consider Trump-related corruption and work profiteering from ICE operations as a negative factor in city contract applications. Support for cutting economic ties with companies that partner with the Trump administration was strong.

On the strongest version of the divestment question—the idea that “whenever possible, the City of Chicago should avoid doing business with companies or suppliers profiting from President Trump’s administration”—support far outpaces opposition, 64 percent to 15 percent. In no segment do opponents outnumber supporters for such a move, and though there is substantial uncertainty, the administration would be starting with roughly 2 in 5 Chicagoans strongly supporting a blanket decision to move away from doing business with Trump administration profiteers.

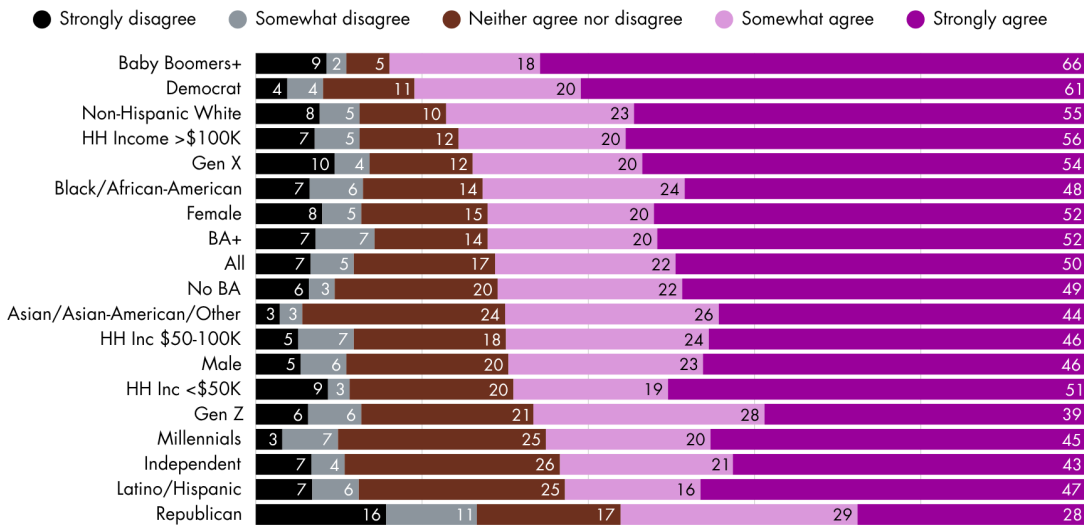
Whenever possible, the City of Chicago should avoid doing business with companies or suppliers profiting from President Trump’s administration.



Strikingly, support for these measures extends broadly across demographic and even partisan groups in the city. This is especially true if corruption, rather than simple policy opposition, is introduced in the framing. 71 percent of respondents said that they would want the city to stop doing business with a company if they found out it was contributing to Trump’s corrupt ballroom fund; only 12 percent disagreed with this idea. Even among Republicans, there is majority support for the city to cut ties with companies engaging in this kind of corruption

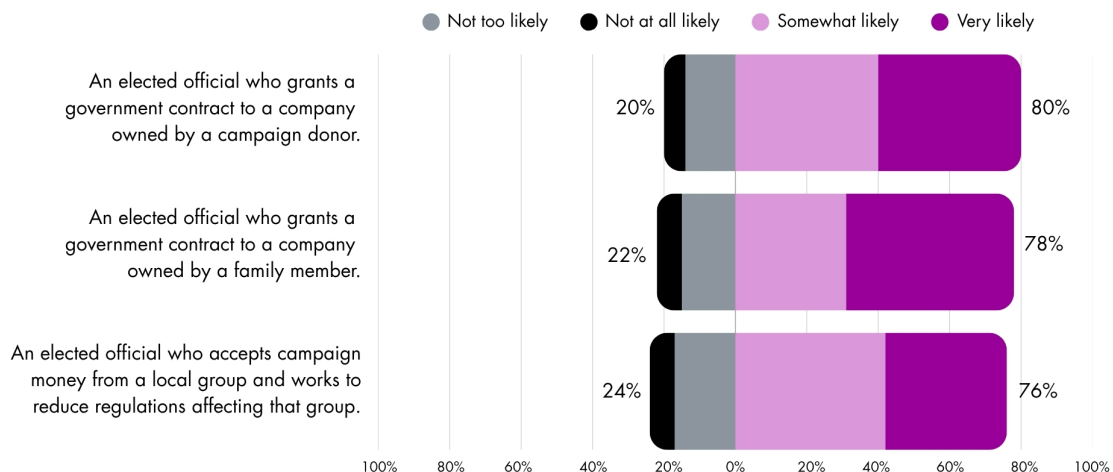
with the Trump administration. While there is substantial uncertainty in many demographics, this kind of plan is broadly popular across all major segments in the city.

If I learned that a company contributed to Donald Trump's ballroom project in exchange for lucrative contracts or a pardon for a crime, I would want the city of Chicago to stop doing business with that company.



More basically, the survey also asked respondents to assess whether particular kinds of actions by public officials (and their partners) would constitute corruption in their opinion. The examples we asked about were things that Trump administration officials are doing in increasing frequency and magnitude, like giving government contracts or significant favors to family members or campaign donors. Overwhelmingly, respondents thought that these actions constituted corrupt acts. There was some partisan difference on these measures, as Republicans were more likely to see these behaviors as not corrupt.

Chicago Residents' Judgment of Political Corruption

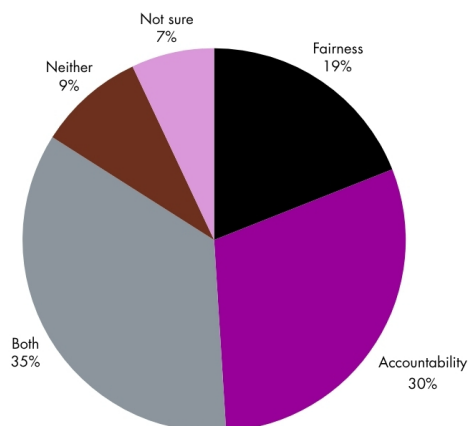


The poll followed up by asking a question about messaging the Not With Our Money campaign, posing different rationales for cutting business ties with companies profiting from partnerships with the Trump administration. We proposed two possible rationales:

- Fair competition: It protects ethical companies that compete on quality and price, not political connections.
- Accountability: It holds complicit companies responsible for enabling the administration's corruption.

These rationales are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but we were interested in learning if one was more compelling than the other in the public. As shown in the following figure, respondents reacted (a bit) more favorably to the accountability rationale, suggesting that this frame may be more compelling in public messages supporting this program, reflecting a palpable hunger for elite accountability in the public at large. Republicans were the only major group in which fairness was more compelling than accountability, suggesting some partisan differences in which rationale is most compelling. Since a plurality said both messages were compelling, however, it is likely that a competently delivered mix of both messages would increase support and likely not generate any backlash.

Which of the following arguments for this proposal do you find more compelling for stopping business with companies that profit from corruption or political favoritism in the Trump administration?



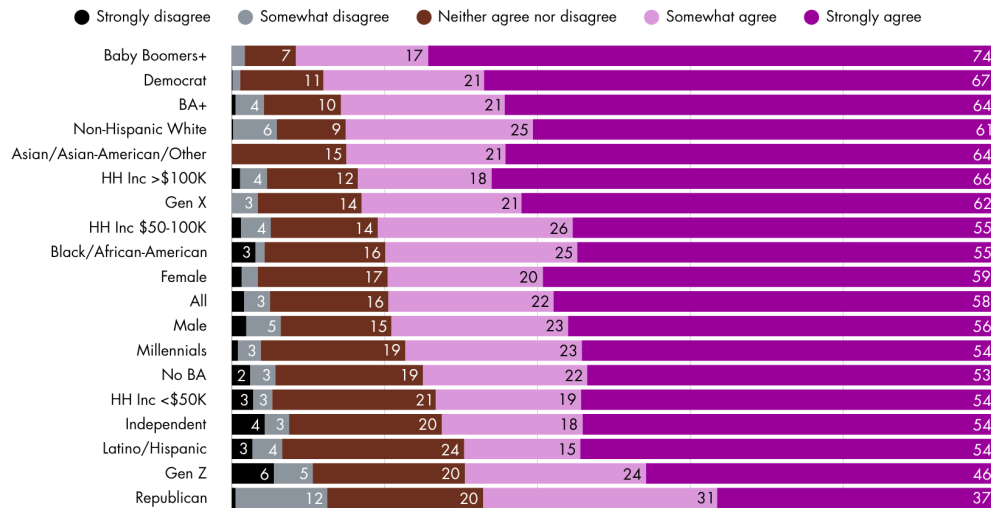
Across backsliding democracies, an opposition focus on corruption and inside dealing by the aspiring autocrat can be an extremely potent political message. The Trump administration is blatantly corrupt so Americans are already primed to receive a message condemning that corruption and seeking to bring accountability to the corrupt actors.

Support for Democracy

The survey asked several questions directly related to support for democracy as a value and system of government. Support for democracy in general is quite strong, with 80 percent of respondents saying they agree that the principle of self-government is important (and only 4 percent disagreeing). This support is strong across

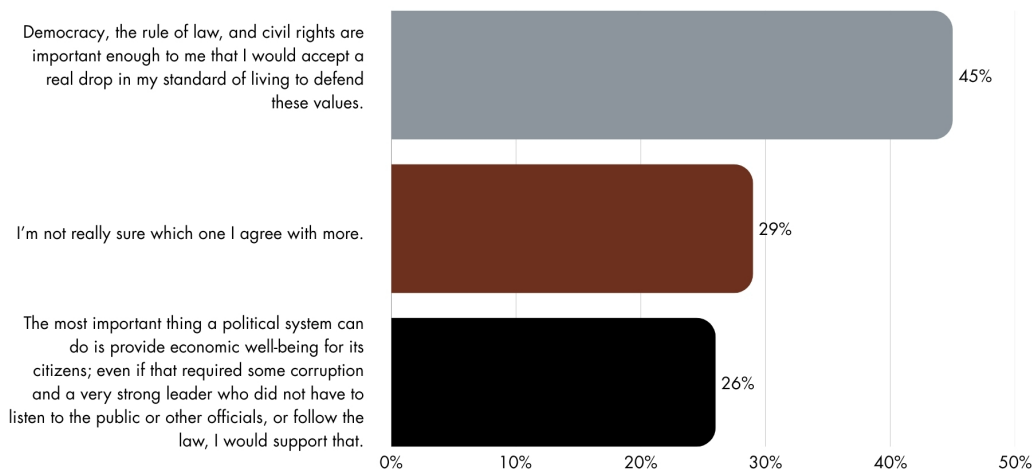
demographic segments of the community, as shown in this figure:

Democracy — the idea that everyday people should have a say in how they are governed — is very important to me.



However, when we posed the question as a potential tradeoff between democratic values and material well-being, respondents were a bit more ambivalent. Roughly a quarter said they would sacrifice democratic processes and values if it meant a better economy, and an additional 29 percent said they weren't sure. Only a plurality said they would sacrifice their standard of living for democratic values.¹

Which of the following statements come closer to your view?



¹ It is important to note that in reality, though the "strong man" hypothesis is often framed this way, as a choice between economic performance and democratic institutions, in reality this is a false choice: democracy and prosperity tend to go hand-in-hand (i.e., they are correlated—democratic societies are more prosperous, and prosperous societies tend to be democratic), especially in the long run.

These results suggest a substantial portion of even an overwhelmingly “blue” city are potentially susceptible to a prosperity argument frequently made by aspiring autocrats. However, the current experience of stagnant growth and high inflation may help these Americans learn that such appeals are hollow — autocracy does not deliver better economic results, even if economic performance under democracy is sometimes disappointing.

Chicagoans Support Guaranteed Income

Even as local governments are developing new tools within the federal system to oppose the abusive national regime, they are also developing a positive vision of how policy can directly help Americans live their lives. Over the past 50 years, several movements have made proposals that the United States should provide a guaranteed income (sometimes referred to as a universal basic income) to all Americans that might insulate households from financial precarity in the face of powerful market forces and technological change. Interest in this kind of policy solution has spread over the past decade, and many modestly scaled pilot programs have been conducted all over the nation. Over the past few years, both the City of Chicago and Cook County have initiated small-scale guaranteed income pilots that have provided thousands of dollars in unconditional cash to hundreds of local households.

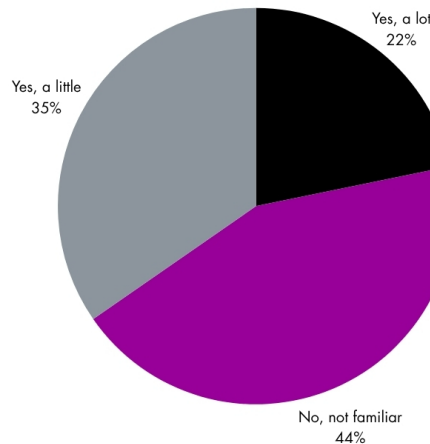
Close studies of these many pilot programs have helped scholars establish a growing body of evidence of the programs’ likely effects. However, because these programs are relatively new and small in scale, less is known about how Americans view these programs, and how opinion on these policies fit into the broader conversation about inequality and income redistribution generally. To gauge Chicagoans support for guaranteed income programs, the poll asked a battery of questions about these programs, as well as several broad questions about which kinds of constituencies and principles public officials should prioritize when making decisions about income redistribution at the local level. Overall, our respondents voiced:

- Broad support for guaranteed income programs
- Limited familiarity about these programs, suggesting there is room for continued education of the public on guaranteed income programs.
- Significant preference for “working families”-friendly politics
- Strong support for redistributive taxation schemes

Guaranteed Income Programs

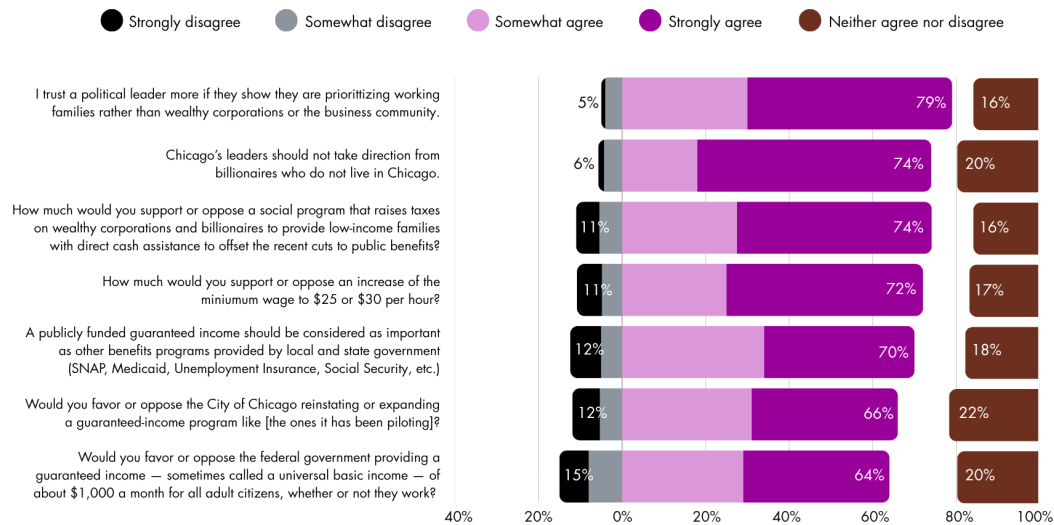
First, the survey asked respondents whether they were familiar with guaranteed income programs in general. Nearly half of respondents were not familiar with these kinds of programs. 22 percent of our sample said they had heard “a lot” about such programs, 35 percent had some familiarity, and 44 percent said they were not familiar with these programs.

Are you familiar with Guaranteed Income programs, which are direct cash payments to eligible families with no strings attached as to how the money is used?



Next, we asked a series of questions about support for guaranteed income programs and a living wage proposal under different framings, as shown in the following figure.

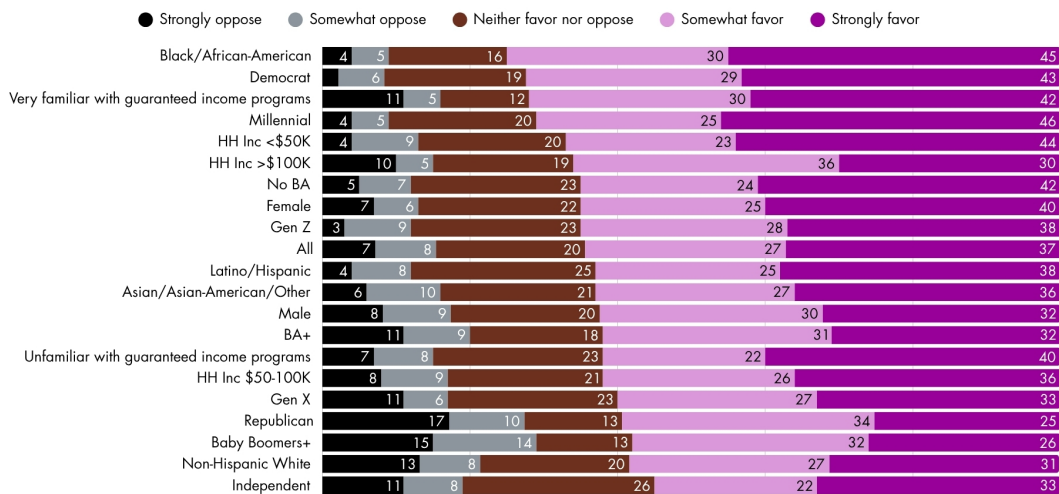
Opinion Among Chicago Residents on Guaranteed Income



Each framing of working-class-friendly policy or politics garners substantial majorities and little opposition overall. The strongest consensus is around more abstract formulations: prioritizing working families, *not prioritizing billionaires*, imprecisely defined redistribution. The most precise definition of guaranteed income garners the least support and most opposition, but supporters still outnumber opponents 4 to 1.

Guaranteed income proposals were broadly popular across all segments of respondents, with supporters clearly outnumbering opponents. Given that nearly half of respondents were initially unfamiliar with guaranteed income programs, it is unsurprising that there was substantial uncertainty on some of these questions, with approximately one in 5 or 6 respondents saying they were unsure. But even on the question framing with the least overall support (shown in the figure below), majorities in every segment were supportive, and less than 1 in 3 were opposed in even the most hesitant demographic segments.

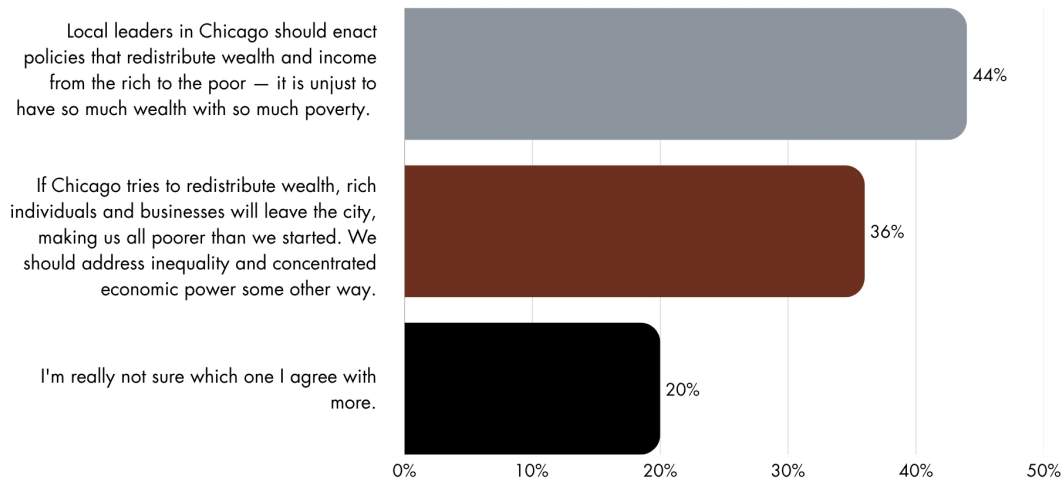
Would you favor or oppose the federal government providing a guaranteed income — sometimes called a universal basic income — of about \$1,000 a month for all adult citizens, whether or not they work?



These results suggest that guaranteed income proposals (and similar measures like an increased living wage) have substantial support in the Chicago public, especially among younger people and in communities of color. The initial finding—that these programs remain relatively unknown to many residents—suggests continuing pilot programs and developing communications strategies to make them better known (especially as supportive research results continue to arrive, assuaging some a priori concerns and potential arguments against them) may increase support further, because respondents who said they were already familiar with these programs were significantly more supportive of them.

Finally, the survey asked a question about potential tradeoffs inherent in conducting redistributive programs like a guaranteed income paid for by local taxation. This potential challenge is called the “city limits” hypothesis and rests on the premise that local governments may face flight by businesses and/or wealthy individuals if they attempt to tax them. The evidence that such flight actually occurs is [limited](#), but it is a widely held piece of theoretical conventional wisdom and has been deployed recently in discussions of redistributive taxation schemes in [New York](#) and [California](#). We asked our respondents which view they agreed with more:

Which of the following statements comes closer to your opinion?



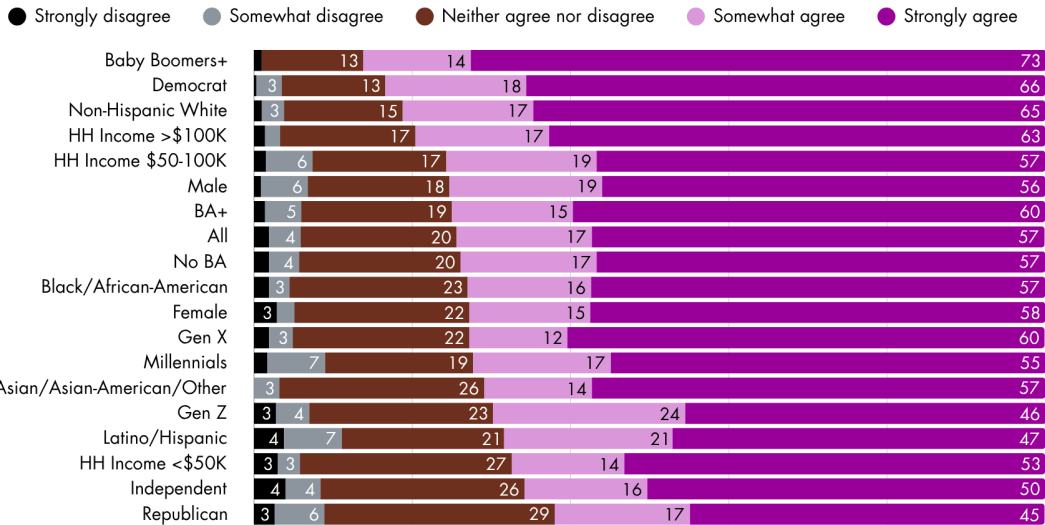
As the figure shows, there is substantial disagreement on this point. While a plurality thought the city should engage in redistributive policymaking, this figure is much lower than the majorities that were supportive of such policies in the previous figures (before a counter-argument was made explicit). A substantial share (36 percent) thought concerns about wealth/capital flight would put this redistributive mission at risk, while an additional 1 in 5 respondents were unsure which position they agreed with more. This suggests that local efforts at redistribution, once met with this conventional counterargument, will begin with substantial support in the public, but also face challenging debates, likely amplified in media in a pattern echoing the analogous efforts in CA and NYC.

Chicago Voters Reject Billionaire Influence

We also asked a few other questions to better understand Chicagoans' views about class identity and whether politicians should prioritize working families or billionaires. Consistent with past research, the public strongly prefers politicians who support working families' interests and opposes the disproportionate influence of billionaires. These results are not surprising, so we present them here with only limited discussion.

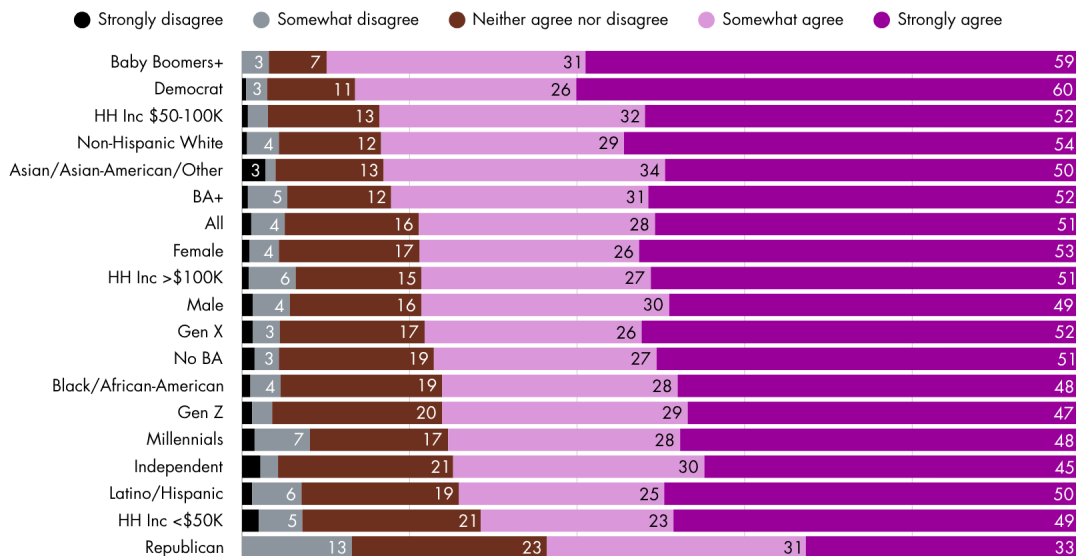
First, large majorities in every segment think Chicago leaders should not take direction from outside billionaires. Overall, 74 percent agree with this idea, while only 6 percent disagree. Again, even Republicans supported independence from the billionaires, though approximately 3 in 10 were unsure.

Chicago's leaders should not take direction from billionaires who do not live in Chicago.



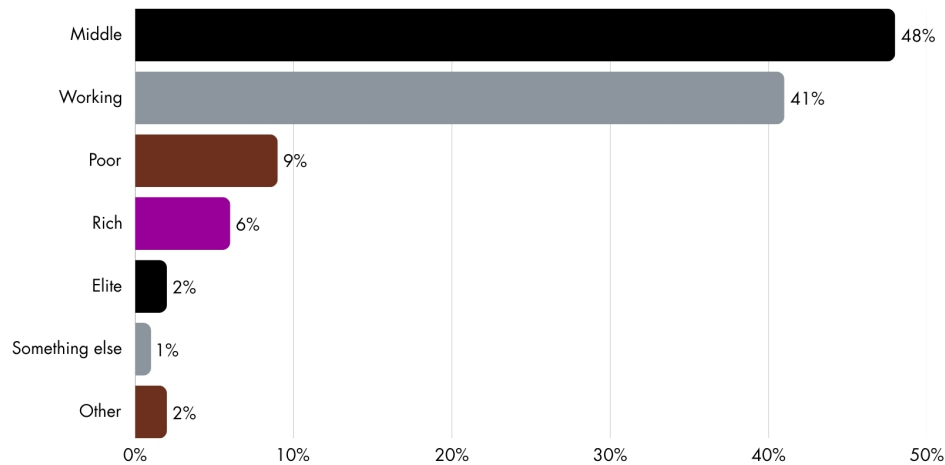
Similarly, large majorities are persuaded by politicians' appeals to "working families" values and priorities over the interests of wealthy corporations or business. As in the previous sections, even Republicans respond favorably to this approach. This suggests that such a framing provides cross-cutting populist appeal that has not yet been polarized into reflexive partisan views.

I trust a political leader more if they show they are prioritizing working families rather than wealthy corporations or the business community.



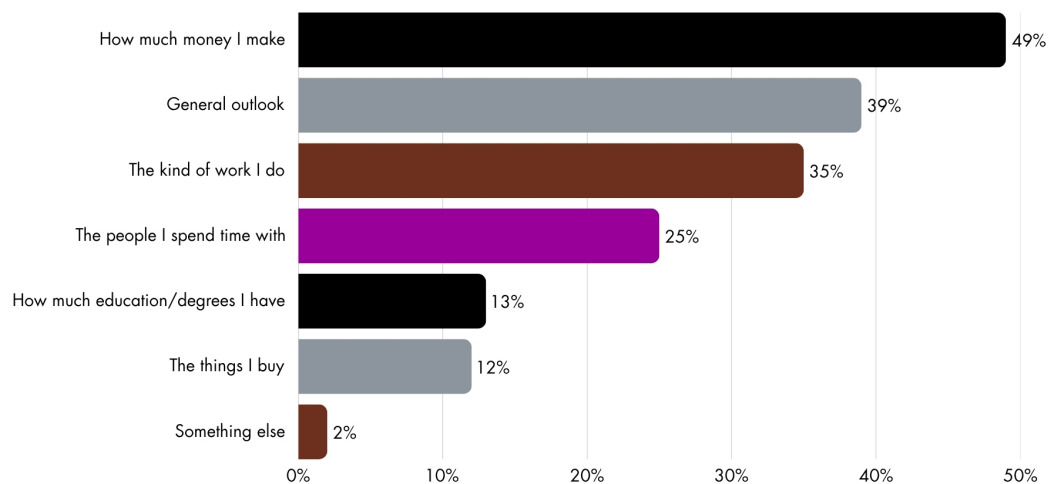
The survey also asked respondents about how they view their own class identity. Overwhelmingly, respondents said they were middle class or working class (even a majority of respondents in the top income category, in households earning more than \$250,000/year, identified as middle class): 48 percent identified this way.

**We hear a lot of talk about social class in the media and political conversations.
In general, which of the following describes how you think of yourself in terms of your class identity? (Check all that apply)**



Given the prevalence but vagueness of the term “working class” in American political discourse, we followed up with those respondents who identified as working class to ask why they see themselves that way. Economic factors like income and the nature of work were the top choices on this question, suggesting that the prevalent definition used in many analyses (educational attainment) is likely missing something important about the subjective experiences of working-class people.

What makes you think of yourself as working class?



About This Poll

Parameter	Details
Field Dates	August 4-16, 2026
Sample Size	684 Chicago Residents (All Adults)
Sample Provider	Bovitz, Inc.
Margin of Error	±3.7% (whole sample)
Geographic Coverage	City of Chicago
Weights	Analyses weighted by age, sex, education, income, and party ID, to adjust for differential response rates.

About Not With Our Money

Not With Our Money is a people-powered campaign that uses cities' economic spending power, including procurement contracts, purchasing decisions, and pension fund investments, as a tool of corporate accountability. The campaign works with elected officials, workplace organizations, and coalition partners nationwide to ensure public dollars are not directed toward corporations that enable authoritarianism.

About Community Change Action

Community Change Action is a national organization that builds the power of low-income people of color to fight for a society where everyone can thrive. Our role is to strengthen and bring together grassroots groups from all over the country and to unite the power of community organizing, big ideas, and political clout to win a bold progressive agenda.

About 2040 Strategy Group

2040 Strategy Group is a boutique consulting firm that provides evidence-based insights to political candidates, progressive organizations, and private-sector companies. Our team has decades of practical and academic experience and expertise in voting behavior, public policy, and rigorous research methods. We have a particular strength in providing insights about diverse communities and organizations. Our philosophy is rooted in a knowledge that sophisticated short- and long-term strategies will be required to successfully navigate the dramatic social and natural changes that will transform our world between today and 2040.