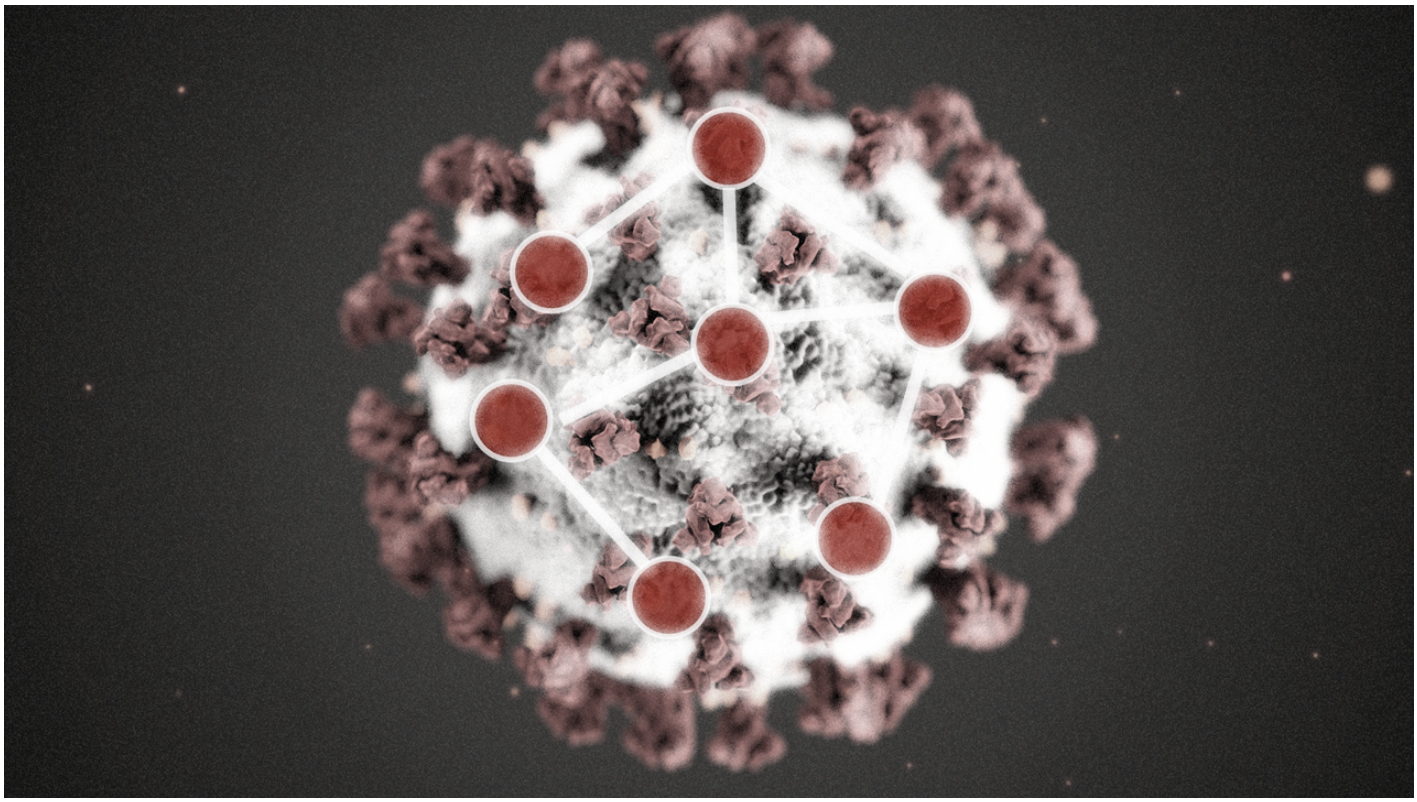

www.covidstates.org

THE STATE OF THE NATION:
A 50-STATE COVID-19 SURVEY
REPORT #15: PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR A FIFTH COVID-19 RELIEF PACKAGE

USA, October 2020

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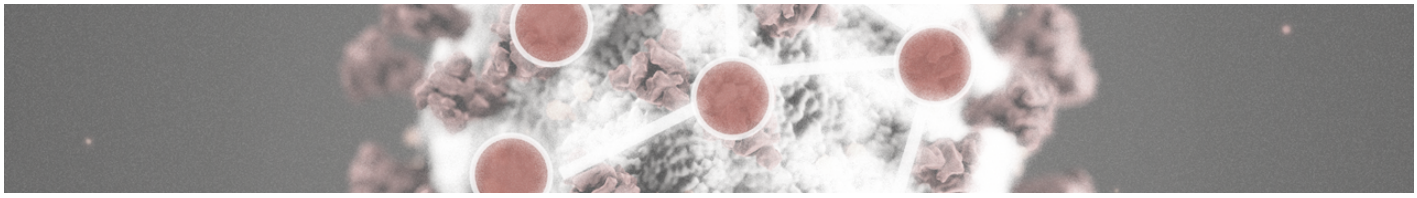

Report of October 1, 2020, v.2

[v.2 A t*ypo regarding relief package support among white respondents corrected on p.5*]

***From*:** The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States

A joint project of:
Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University

Authors: Matthew A. Baum (Harvard University); Adina Gitomer (Northeastern University); Katherine Ognyanova (Rutgers University); Hanyu Chwe (Northeastern University); Roy H. Perlis (Harvard Medical School); David Lazer (Northeastern University); Jon Green (Northeastern University), Alexi Quintana (Northeastern University); Jennifer Lin (Northwestern University), James Druckman (Northwestern University); Mauricio Santillana (Harvard Medical School); John Della Volpe (Harvard University); and Matthew Simonson (Northeastern University)

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COVER MEMO

Summary Memo— October 1, 2020

The COVID-19 Consortium for Understanding the Public's Policy Preferences Across States
Partners: Northeastern University, Harvard University, Rutgers University, and Northwestern University

Authors: Matthew A. Baum (Harvard University); Adina Gitomer (Northeastern University); Katherine Ognyanova (Rutgers University); Hanyu Chwe (Northeastern University); Roy H. Perlis (Harvard Medical School); David Lazer (Northeastern University); Jon Green (Northeastern University), Alexi Quintana (Northeastern University); Jennifer Lin (Northwestern University), James Druckman (Northwestern University); Mauricio Santillana (Harvard Medical School); John Della Volpe (Harvard University); and Matthew Simonson (Northeastern University)

From September 4 to 27 we conducted the ninth wave of a large, 50-state survey, some results of which are presented here. You can find previous reports online at www.covidstates.org.

Note on methods:

We surveyed 20,315 individuals across all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. The survey was conducted on 4-27 September 2020 by PureSpectrum via an online, nonprobability sample, with state-level representative quotas for race/ethnicity, age, and gender (for methodological details on the other waves, see covidstates.org). In addition to balancing on these dimensions, we reweighted our data using demographic characteristics to match the U.S. population with respect to race/ethnicity, age, gender, education, and living in urban, suburban, or rural areas. This was the tenth in a series of surveys we have been conducting since April 2020, examining attitudes and behaviors regarding COVID-19 in the United States.

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Contents

1. Introduction

To date, Congress has passed four COVID-19 relief packages totaling about $3 trillion, the most recent of which, the CARES Act, was passed on March 27th, 2020. The House of Representatives subsequently passed the $3 trillion Heroes Act on May 15th. The Senate has yet to take up the legislation or pass a fifth bill of its own. Throughout the summer, the House, Senate, and White House have engaged in on-again, off-again talks aimed at agreeing on a fifth relief package. The Senate has consistently favored a smaller bill, ranging from $500 billion to $1 trillion. Most recently, the House introduced a revised bill valued at about $2.2 trillion. The White House, represented by Steven Mnuchin, along with the Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, have resumed negotiations over the shape of the package.

While both sides claim to support such a package, they disagree not only on the amount, but also on the targets for this funding. Democrats favor a combination of direct payments to Americans, extended unemployment insurance, and aid to hospitals, schools, small businesses, the Post Office, and state and local governments. Republicans oppose aid to state and local governments and favor more limited unemployment insurance benefits.

But what does the public think? We surveyed 20,315 respondents between September 4-27, 2020 on attitudes regarding the next COVID-19 relief bill. We asked respondents if they supported such a bill, as well as the types of relief they believed it should include. We also probed whether or not they had received the $300-$400 supplemental unemployment benefit authorized by President Trump's executive order of August 5th.

2. Overall support for a new relief package

We find overwhelming public support for a fifth additional relief package. Overall, 80% of respondents indicate that they support or strongly support a new COVID-19 relief package (see Figure 1).

Support for a new relief package is widespread, transcending party and race. As Figure 1 indicates, 88% of Democrats, 78% of independents, and 75% of Republicans support a new package. Among white respondents, 79% support a new relief package. The corresponding levels of support among Black, Asian American, and Hispanic respondents are 85%, 78%, and 83%, respectively (see Figure 2).

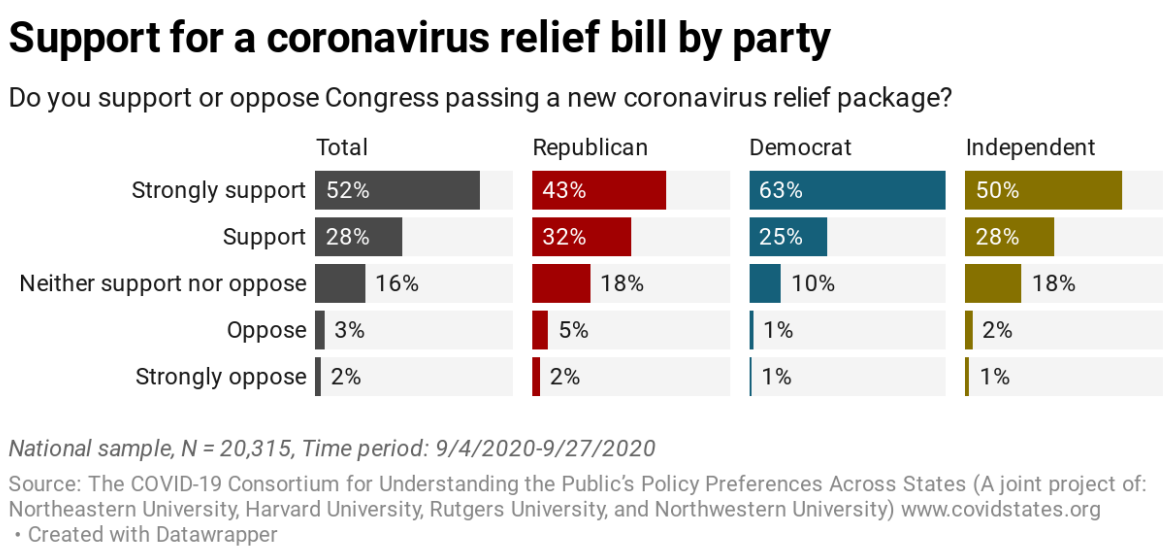

Figure 1. Support for a coronavirus relief bill, by party

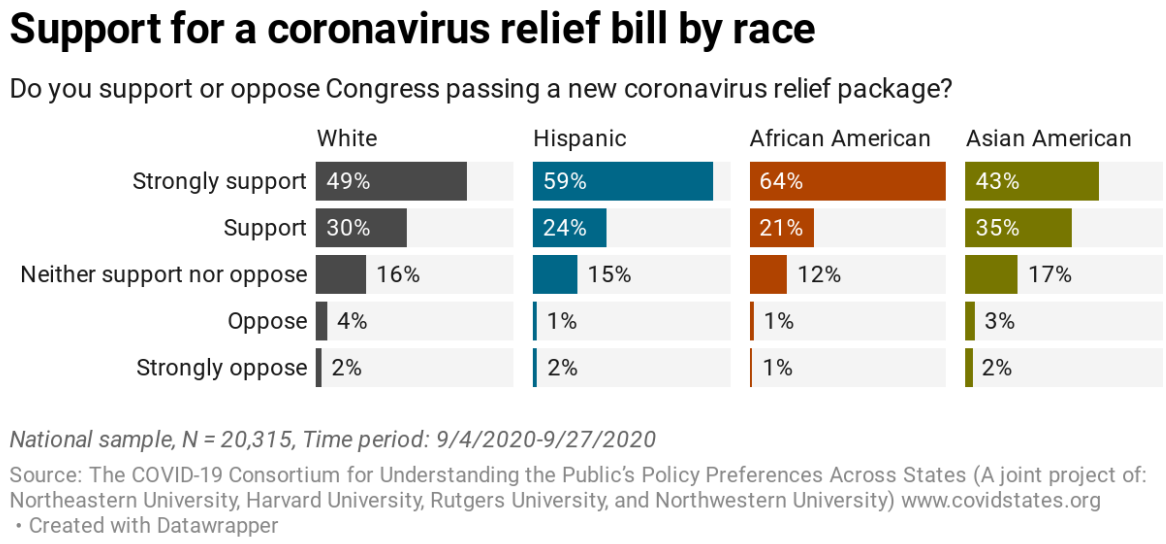

Figure 2. Support for a coronavirus relief bill, by race

When we move from general support to support for specific types of aid, the results are more varied (see Figure 3). **We find the highest level of support for direct cash payments (78%), followed by aid to hospitals (63%), aid to K-12 schools and small businesses loans (57% each), and extended unemployment insurance (53%)**. This last figure rises to 68% among unemployed respondents, compared to 50% among those who did not indicate that they are unemployed. Support for aid to essential industries and state and local governments is less strong, at 39% and 41%, respectively.

We find substantial partisan differences in the types of aid respondents support (see again Figure 3). **While Democrats, Republicans, and independents all rate cash payments as their most preferred type of aid (favored by 82%, 72%, and 78%, respectively), this is where consensus support ends.** Among Republicans, the next-most-favored forms of aid are small business loans and aid to hospitals (55% each), while the least favored forms of aid are to essential industries (35%) and state and local governments (30%). Among Democrats, the most-highly-supported forms of aid include aid to hospitals (70%), unemployment insurance supplements (65%), aid to K-12 schools (64%), and aid to small businesses (60%), while the least favored type is aid to essential industries (41%). **There is thus something of a consensus at the low end, as all three partisan groups rate aid to essential industries (like airlines) as among their lowest priorities for relief.**

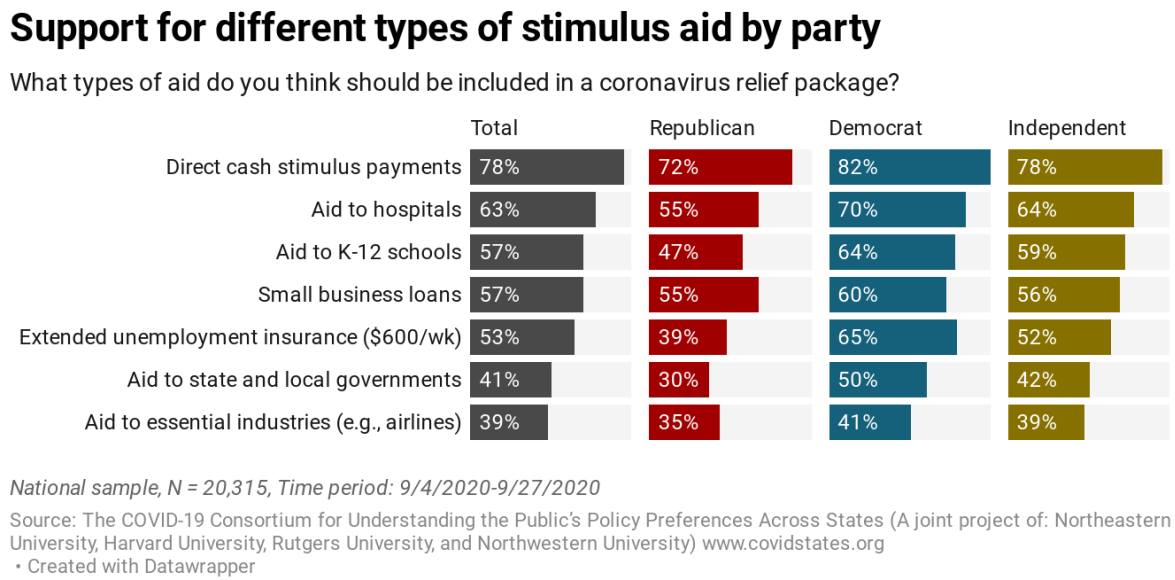

Figure 3. Support for different types of stimulus aid, by party

We also find substantial differences across racial groups in levels of support for different types of aid, though the various groups agree more than they disagree on their orders of prioritization (see Figure 4). By far the most popular form of aid, again, is cash payments, which are strongly supported across the board, ranging from 72% and 76% among Asian American and white respondents respectively, to 81% among Hispanic respondents, and 84% among Black respondents. Beyond cash payments, white Americans are most likely to support aid to hospitals (63%) and small business loans (59%), while this group's least-supported aid types are aid to essential industries (38%) and to state and local governments (39%).

Black respondents are relatively likely to support unemployment insurance (68%), aid to hospitals (67%), and aid to K-12 schools (64%). The corresponding support levels among Asian American respondents are, at the high end, aid to hospitals (64%) and small business loans (56%), and at the low end, aid to essential industries and aid to state and local governments (42% each). Finally, among Hispanics, we find the highest levels of support for aid to hospitals (62%), unemployment insurance and aid to K-12 schools (57% each); support levels are lowest for aid to essential industries (38%) and aid to state and local governments (39%).

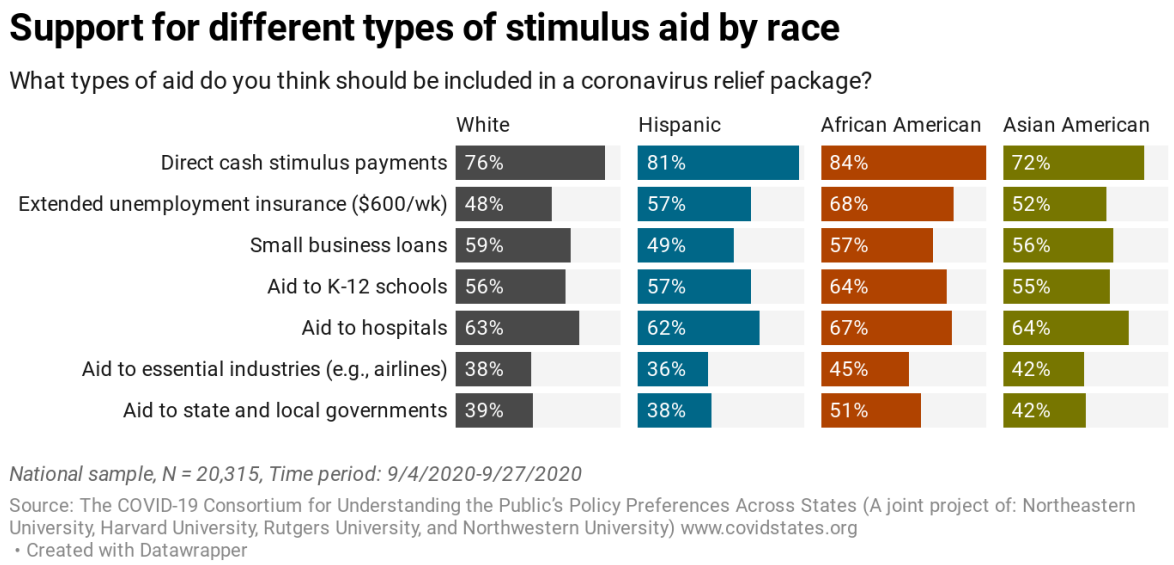

Figure 4. Support for different types of stimulus aid, by race

3. Support for a new relief package by state

Overall, looking across the 50 states and the District of Columbia (see Figure 5), **we find extremely high levels of support for a new COVID-19 relief package across the nation, with over 70% of respondents in every state and the District of Columbia supporting a new relief package.** We find support for a new COVID-19 relief package at 85% or greater in four states and the District of Columbia (DC), including West Virginia (87%), Maine (87%), Hawaii (85%), DC (85%), and New Mexico (85%). At the low end of popular support are Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming (72% each), followed by Nebraska (71%).

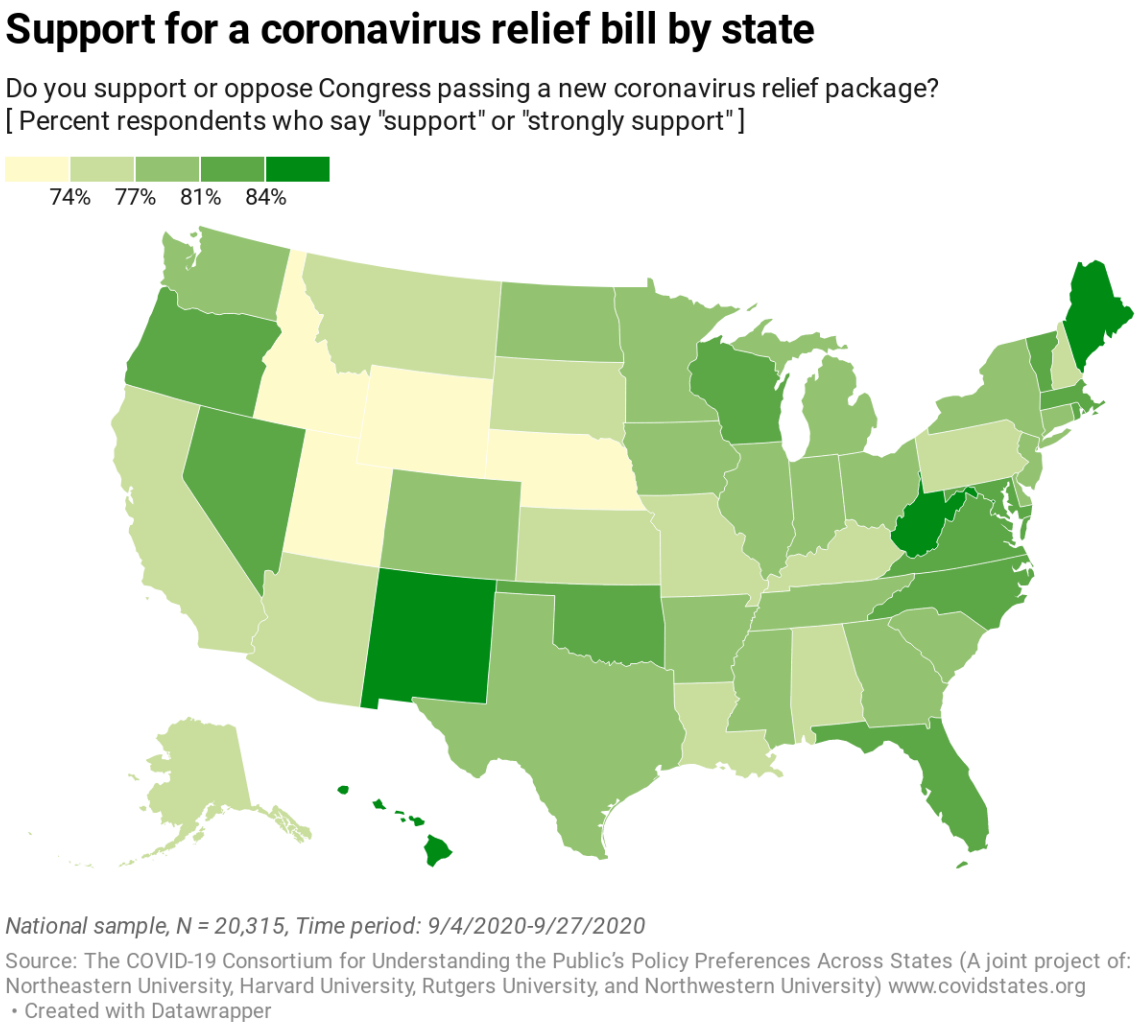

Figure 5. Support for a coronavirus relief bill, by state

Turning to public support for the individual potential components of a possible relief package, we find larger variations across states (see Figure 6). Beginning with individual cash payments, at the low end, we find 55% support in Utah -- the state with the lowest level of support for nearly every component, as we will see -- and 72% in California, New York, and Nebraska. At the high end, we find 90% support in Vermont and 86% in Maine.

Support for unemployment insurance (see Figure 7) ranges from lows of 32% in Utah and 41% in Idaho, to highs of 65% in DC and 67% in Hawaii. For small business loans (see Figure 8), the lowest levels of support emerge in Utah (41%), followed by Mississippi, North Dakota, and Texas (50% each). Conversely, the highest levels of small business loan support emerge in West Virginia (65%), Maryland (65%), Hawaii (66%), Connecticut (66%), Rhode Island (67%), and Vermont (69%).

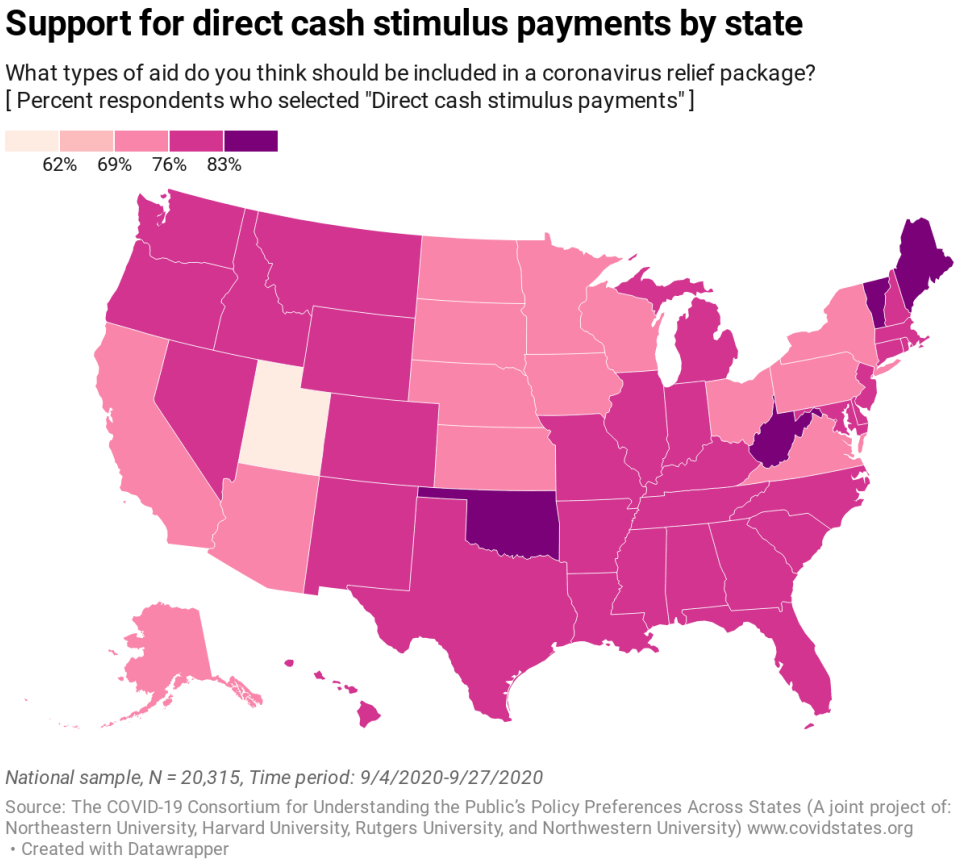

Figure 6. Support for direct cash stimulus payments, by state

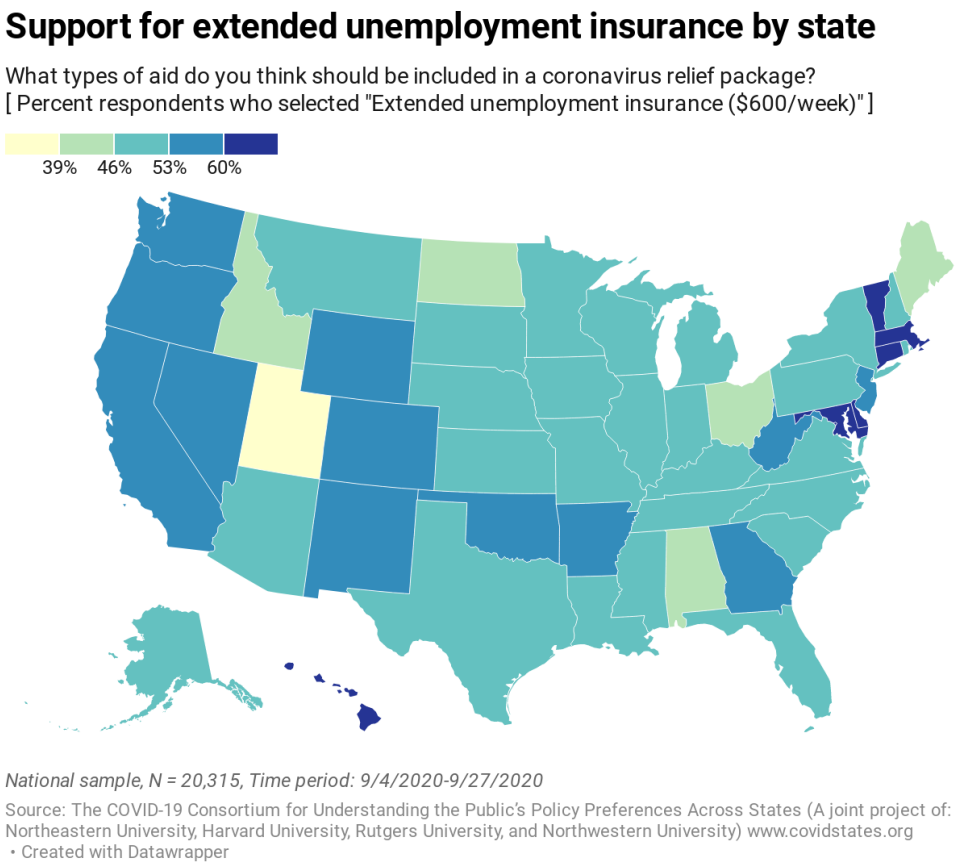

Figure 7. Support for extended unemployment insurance, by state

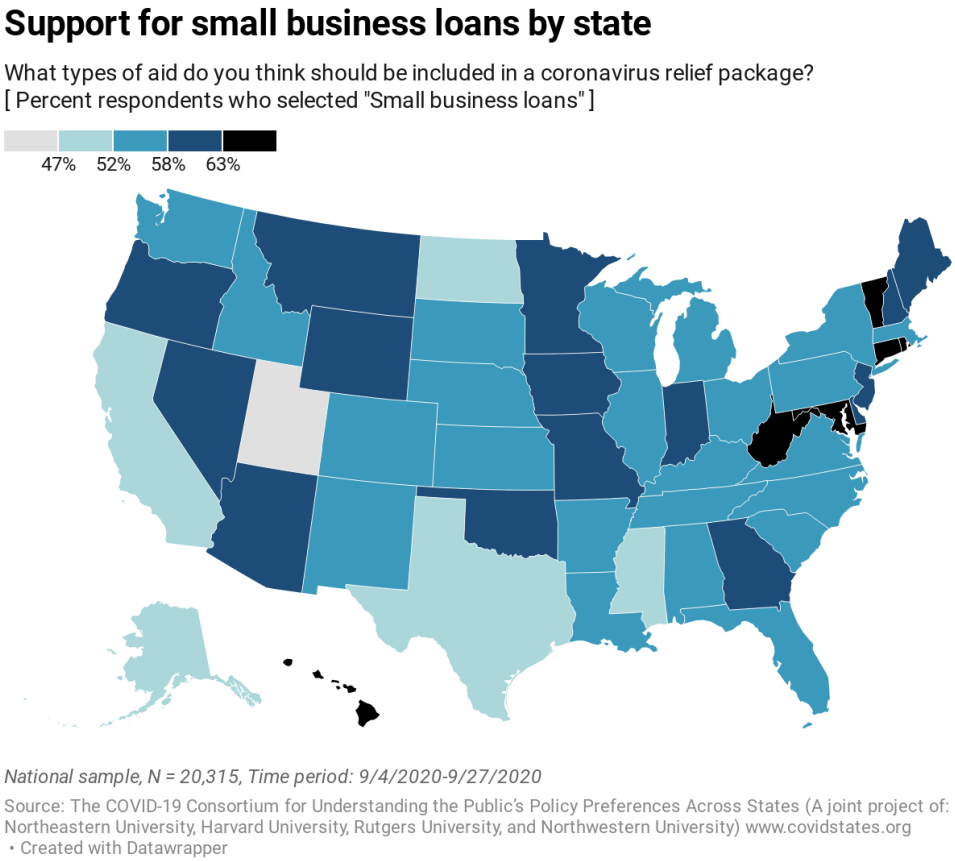

Figure 8. Support for small business loans, by state

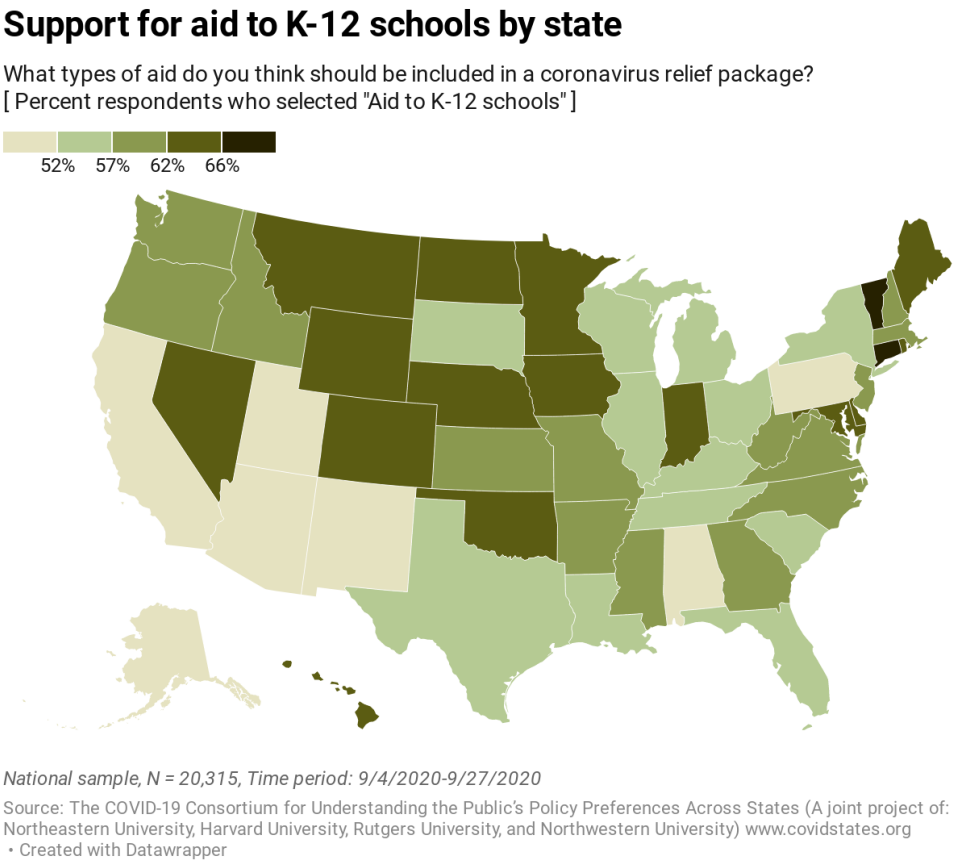

Figure 9. Support for aid to K-12 schools, by state

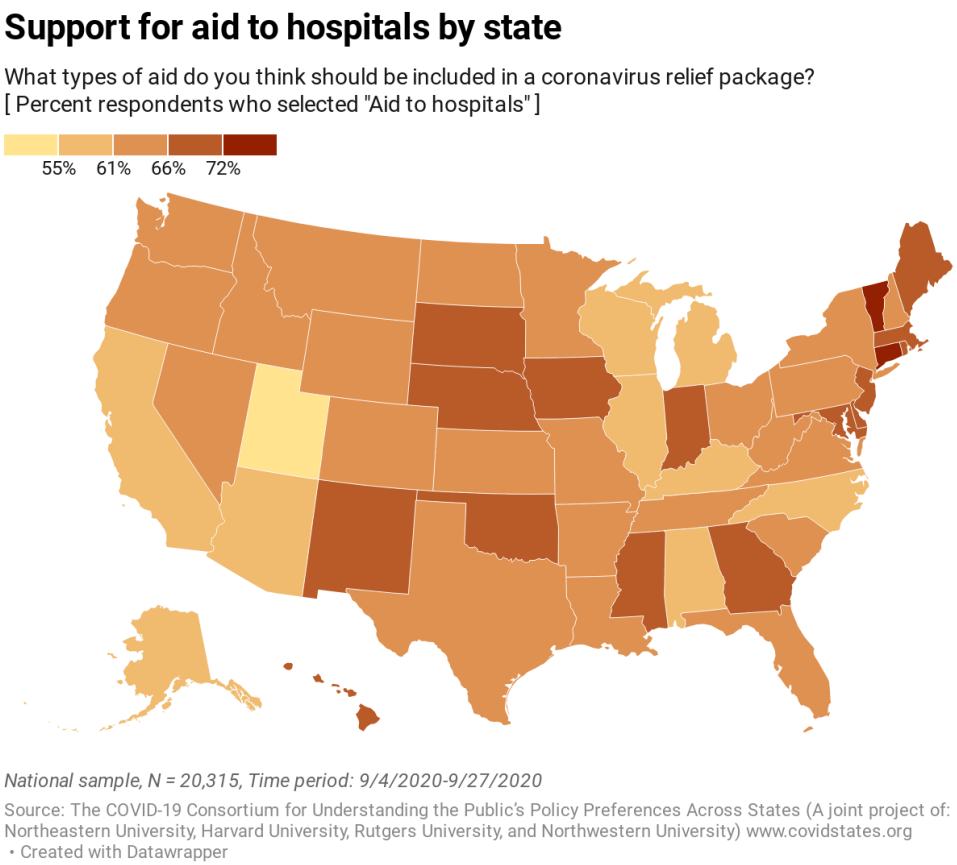

Figure 10. Support for aid to hospitals, by state

Turning to aid to K-12 schools (see Figure 9), here again the lowest level of support emerges in Utah (47%), as well as, in this instance, New Mexico (also 47%), California (48%), Arkansas (49%), and Arizona (50%). At the high end of support are Rhode Island and Delaware (65% each), DC (66%), Connecticut (67%), and Vermont (71%).

For aid to hospitals (see Figure 10), we once again find the lowest support levels in Utah (49%), followed by Wisconsin (55%), Arkansas (56%) and California (57%). At the high end are Delaware, Rhode Island, Oklahoma, and Hawaii (71% each), followed by Connecticut (75%) and Vermont (78%).

Less popular are aid to state and local government and aid to essential industries (see Figures 11 and 12, respectively). In the latter case, at the low end of support are Utah (29%), Nebraska (30%), and Wyoming (31%). At the high end are Connecticut, Georgia, and Rhode Island (45% each), Kansas (46%), and Hawaii (47%). The gap between the least (Utah) and most (Hawaii) supportive states on aid to essential industries is 18 percentage points. In the case of aid to state and local government, we see a larger range of variation across the states. Utah is again least supportive (22%), followed by South Dakota (28%). At the opposite extreme, respondents in Vermont (60%), DC (55%), and Maine (50%) are the most supportive. The corresponding gap between the least (Utah) and most (Vermont) supportive states is thus over twice as large on the issue of aid to state and local governments (38 points) as on the issue of aid to essential industries.

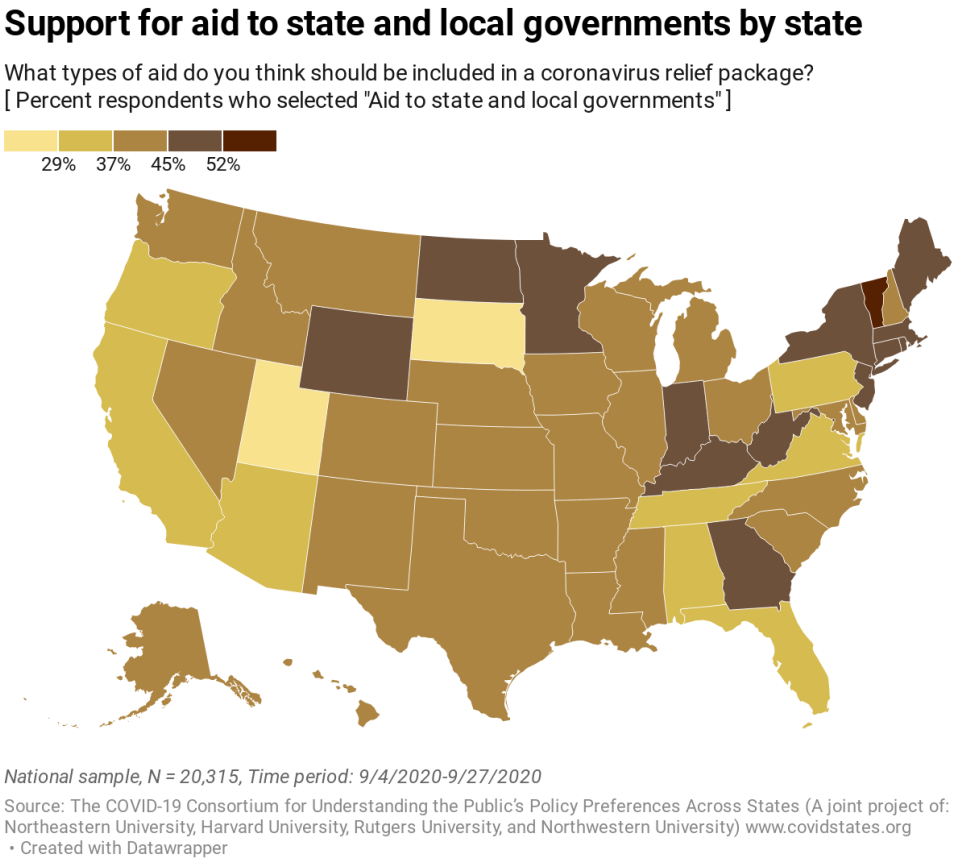

Figure 11. Support for aid to state and local governments, by state

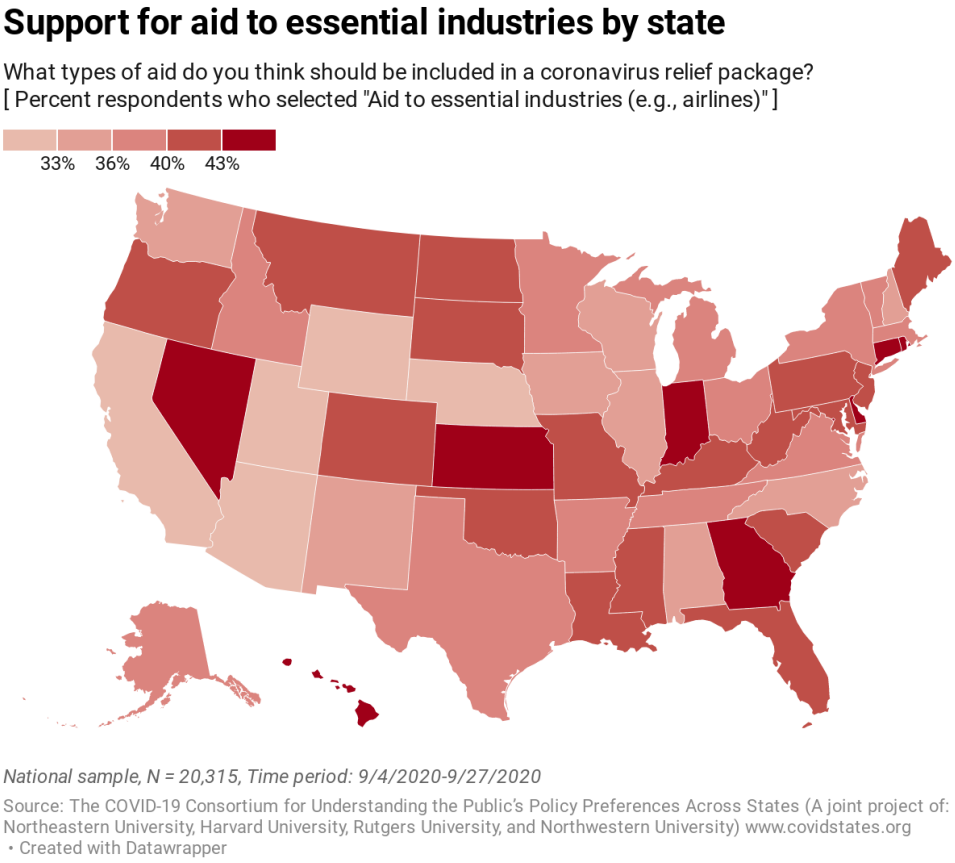

Figure 12. Support for aid to essential industries, by state

4. Who received supplemental unemployment benefits?

After Congressional talks on a fifth relief package stalled in July, President Trump took unilateral action, signing an executive order on August 5th aimed at providing a $400 weekly unemployment supplement for six weeks. The order called for $300 to be provided by the federal government (taken from FEMA's budget), contingent on an additional $100 being provided by state governments. The administration subsequently relaxed the requirement that states contribute $100, resulting in some states providing $300 and others $400. The current Congressional negotiations over a possible fifth relief package have taken on greater urgency, as the six week unemployment supplement expired in mid-September. To assess the impact of this program, we asked respondents whether or not they had received these supplemental benefits.

Overall, 13% of respondents indicate that they are currently unemployed (excluding those who self-identified as homemakers, students, or retired). Of this group, 27% indicate that they are currently receiving (unspecified) unemployment benefits. Finally, of these, fewer than one in three indicate that they had received either a $300 (28%) or $400 (2%) supplement to their unemployment benefit in August. These results make clear that few states took up the president's call to match the Federal Government's $300 benefit with their own $100 contribution.

Appendix 1: State tables

Report data tables are available online at: https://github.com/kateto/covidstates

Table 1. Do you support or oppose Congress passing a new coronavirus relief package?

State	Strongly oppose	Oppose	Neither support nor oppose	Support	Strongly support	Error Margin	N
AK	0	5.3	20.5	27.9	46.3	11.9	130
AL	2.2	2.9	18	23.6	53.4	6.8	396
AR	1.3	2.2	18.6	28.9	49	8.3	259
AZ	2.3	3.3	17.6	31.2	45.6	6.6	470
CA	1.8	3.6	17.9	25.4	51.3	4.2	882
CO	3.8	2.3	15.6	29.2	49.1	6.6	364
CT	2.2	1.3	16.1	28.9	51.5	6.5	391
DC	0.4	0.7	14.4	20.2	64.3	7.5	238
DE	0.5	2.9	16	33.1	47.5	8	288
FL	1.2	2.9	12	26.5	57.4	4.2	696
GA	2.1	1.5	18.1	27.2	51.1	5.5	502
HI	0	1.4	13.6	28.1	56.8	8.4	286
IA	0.3	4.1	17.2	29.8	48.6	8.2	312
ID	1.2	6.8	19.6	30.5	41.9	7.2	311
IL	0.6	2.8	16.2	23.3	57.2	4.9	528
IN	1.9	2.6	17	23.6	54.8	5.9	417
KS	3.4	5.5	16	27.3	47.8	7.5	299
KY	1.2	4	19.4	22.4	53	7	300
LA	2.1	4.3	17.2	25.6	50.8	7.9	296
MA	0.7	1.1	14.8	27.5	55.9	5.7	437

MD	1	1.9	14.5	28.1	54.5	6.3	451
ME	1.4	2.4	9.4	29.6	57.3	6.8	272
MI	1.8	1.9	17.8	30.5	48	6.3	366
MN	1.9	4.8	15	32	46.3	7.6	328
MO	1.4	3.4	18.1	27.6	49.5	5.8	470
MS	0.8	4.5	16.6	25.5	52.5	8.3	299
MT	2.2	4.2	17.4	25.7	50.5	8.4	241
NC	1.7	1.6	15.9	29.8	51	5.7	475
ND	1.5	5.7	13.7	35.3	43.8	9.4	195
NE	4.7	5.6	19.1	28.8	41.9	8.6	273
NH	2.2	5.8	15.1	30	47	6.9	271
NJ	1.9	2.1	17.3	30.3	48.5	5.4	443
NM	2.8	1.2	11	26.1	59	8.1	312
NV	0.3	4	13.2	27.8	54.8	7.7	299
NY	0.9	3	17.1	31.2	47.8	4.4	650
OH	1.4	3.4	15.2	24.1	56.1	4.9	506
OK	2.5	2.1	14.3	24.6	56.4	7.5	354
OR	0.2	3.4	14.1	27.6	54.8	6.7	357
PA	2.5	3.5	18.4	30.3	45.5	4.9	548
RI	4	0.9	12.7	36.2	46.1	8	279
SC	0.8	2.6	17.3	32.4	47	6.8	345
SD	3.4	2.5	19.7	27.5	47	10.3	152
TN	1.8	2	16.5	23.9	55.8	5.4	491
TX	1.7	2.7	17.4	24.9	53.2	4	939
UT	2.7	5.2	19.8	27.6	44.7	7.6	305
VA	1.6	4.3	13.2	31.2	49.7	5.5	432
VT	0.8	1.3	15.5	19	63.4	11.2	138
WA	0.4	1.7	19.6	26.1	52.2	5.4	457
WI	2.2	3.7	12.3	34.1	47.7	6.3	407
WV	0.3	0.2	12.2	29.3	58.1	8	303
WY	4.2	3.7	19.8	28.5	43.9	11	131

Table 2.1 What types of aid do you think should be included in a coronavirus relief package?

	Direct cash stimulus payments	Extended unemployment insurance ($600/week)	Small business loans	Aid to K-12 schools	Error Margin	N
AK	73	51.6	51.7	48.6	11.3	144
AL	79.9	45.9	53.4	51.3	6.5	428
AR	80.3	57.6	54.9	57	8.2	270
AZ	73.6	48.2	58.4	49.8	6.5	486
CA	71.2	56.5	51.1	47.6	4	957
CO	79.2	54.7	55.6	63.2	6.5	375
CT	77.9	64.3	65.9	66.5	6.5	394
DC	78.9	64.8	62.9	66.3	7.8	242
DE	81.9	61.9	62.3	65	8	293
FL	77.2	52.4	54.1	53.1	4.1	751
GA	78.5	54.7	61.4	61.5	5.3	523
HI	79.1	67	65.8	63.4	8.3	295
IA	75.8	47.5	60.2	64.4	8	318
ID	76.6	41	56.6	60.1	7.1	321
IL	77.4	51.7	56.8	54.5	4.8	557
IN	79.8	50.7	59.7	63.6	5.8	436
KS	73.4	48.8	56.6	58.2	7.3	309
KY	80	51.1	54	54.7	6.8	317
LA	81.1	51.7	52.4	54.4	7.8	305
MA	78.6	61.8	57.1	61.6	5.6	448
MD	80	63.8	64.9	63.9	6	476
ME	85.9	44.2	63.2	61.8	6.8	276
MI	78.4	52.4	57.1	54.3	6.1	387
MN	75.4	52	62.9	62.7	7.5	337
MO	79.8	48.7	60	60.2	5.7	484
MS	81.5	47.4	49.6	59	8.2	309

MT	78.8	48.9	61.2	62.2	8.4	242
NC	79.7	50.3	55.5	57.4	5.5	505
ND	74.8	45.5	49.8	62	9.2	202
NE	71.9	47	56.6	64.3	8.8	275
NH	76	52.3	59.9	59.3	6.8	274
NJ	76.5	56.8	60.3	59.9	5.2	470
NM	78.2	54.6	55.7	47.4	8.1	320
NV	82.2	56.8	58.4	62.8	7.8	302
NY	71.7	52.3	57.1	56.4	4.3	688
OH	74.7	45.3	56.6	55.8	4.7	553
OK	83.8	54.7	61	63.2	7.5	363
OR	79.2	58.2	62	58.7	6.6	363
PA	74.4	47.6	55.3	51.5	4.7	588
RI	81.4	51.9	66.6	64.6	8	284
SC	79.6	46.6	57.8	55.2	6.7	362
SD	72	50.3	56.3	55.9	10.2	160
TN	76.6	48.6	53.8	52.8	5.2	539
TX	79.8	51.8	50.2	54.4	3.9	984
UT	55.2	32.2	41.4	47.3	6.7	417
VA	74.7	48.4	52.6	57.6	5.3	463
VT	89.7	64.3	68.8	71.2	11	141
WA	76.5	55.3	57	59.6	5.2	482
WI	73.4	51.9	56.9	52.3	6	447
WV	85.1	55.7	64.8	60.5	7.9	321
WY	79.7	55.4	59.4	61.9	11	132

Table 2.2 What types of aid do you think should be included in a coronavirus relief package? (Cont.)

State	Aid to hospitals	Aid to essential industries (e.g., airlines)	Aid to state and local governments	Error Margin	N
AK	56.2	39.1	39.6	11.3	144
AL	58.5	33.8	35.6	6.5	428
AR	61.5	38.3	40.6	8.2	270
AZ	59.3	32.5	31.7	6.5	486
CA	56.9	32	36.5	4	957
CO	61.9	40.4	39.7	6.5	375
CT	75.2	44.5	49.3	6.5	394
DC	67.5	43.8	54.9	7.8	242
DE	70.7	44.2	39.3	8	293
FL	63	39.7	35.3	4.1	751
GA	68	44.6	45.5	5.3	523
HI	71.1	46.6	42.9	8.3	295
IA	67.6	35.3	39.1	8	318
ID	63	39.4	40.1	7.1	321
IL	59.9	35.9	41.5	4.8	557
IN	66.5	44	44.7	5.8	436
KS	62.3	46.3	41.3	7.3	309
KY	58.3	39.7	47	6.8	317
LA	62.7	41.9	39.6	7.8	305
MA	69.7	36.3	45.3	5.6	448
MD	69.6	42.6	42.6	6	476
ME	66.5	41.2	50.3	6.8	276
MI	57.8	37.7	42.7	6.1	387
MN	66.2	38	46.5	7.5	337
MO	60.7	42.5	39.9	5.7	484

MS	68	41.9	41.8	8.2	309
MT	65.5	42.9	43.4	8.4	242
NC	59.4	35.1	37.5	5.5	505
ND	61.6	41.2	47.7	9.2	202
NE	66.8	30.4	38.4	8.8	275
NH	63.6	33.4	43	6.8	274
NJ	67.3	42.2	45.3	5.2	470
NM	67.7	34.9	44.1	8.1	320
NV	64.8	43.8	40.1	7.8	302
NY	62.9	37	47	4.3	688
OH	61.2	39.1	42.2	4.7	553
OK	71.1	42	38	7.5	363
OR	61.6	40.7	36.2	6.6	363
PA	60.6	39.6	36.4	4.7	588
RI	71.1	44.8	49.1	8	284
SC	61.1	42.1	41.3	6.7	362
SD	66.4	42.7	27.9	10.2	160
TN	62.3	39.1	35.7	5.2	539
TX	60.7	38.9	37.8	3.9	984
UT	48.8	29	21.9	6.7	417
VA	62.3	36.2	36.8	5.3	463
VT	78.1	37.3	59.6	11	141
WA	65.2	32.8	39.5	5.2	482
WI	55	33.2	37.4	6	447
WV	64.8	41.9	47.3	7.9	321
WY	64	31.1	49	11	132