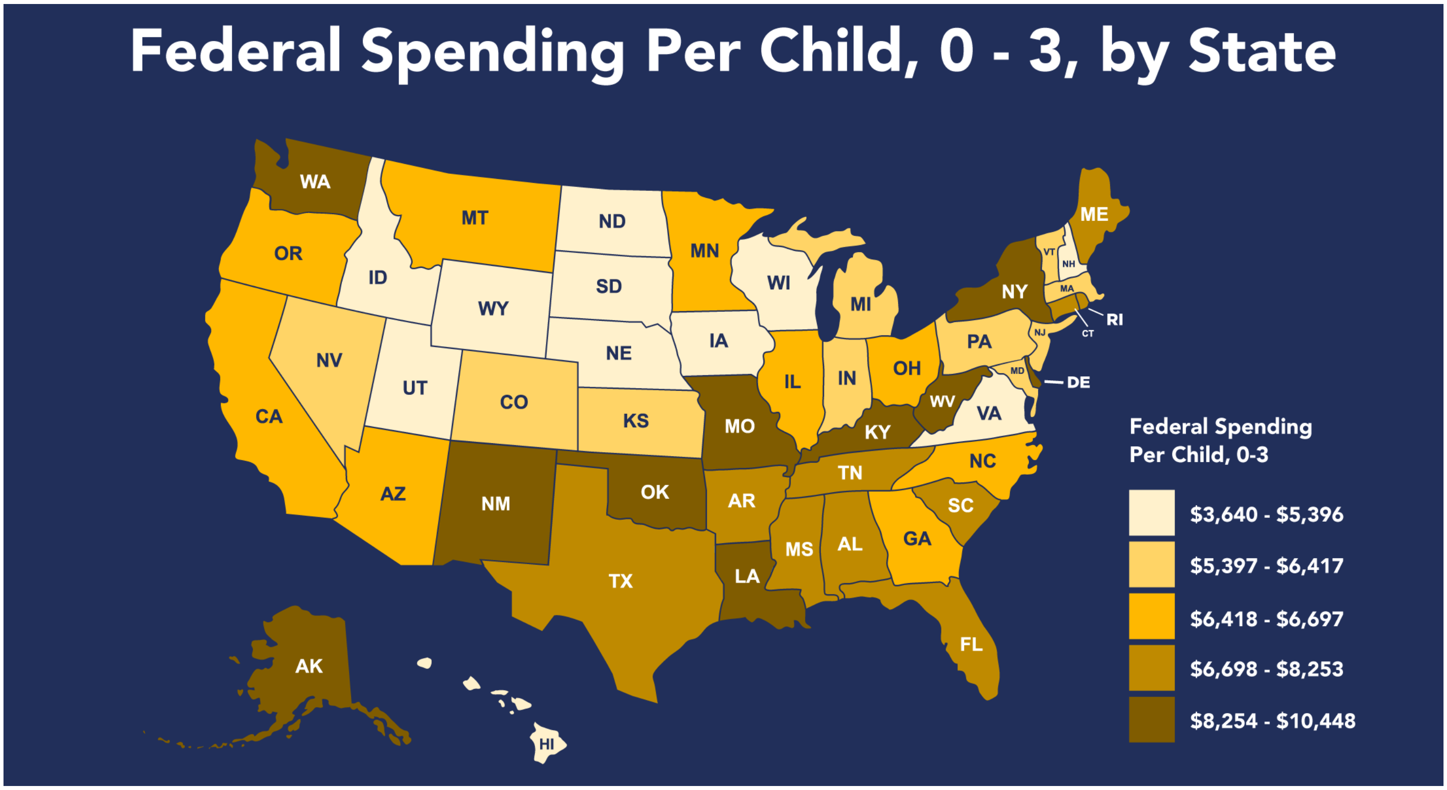
FACT SHEET

FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN BABIES: A VIEW FROM THE STATES

Federal investment in babies and toddlers accounts for just 1.59% of the entire U.S. budget. Despite this underinvestment, federal programs **offer essential support** to the babies and toddlers who receive them. **With many of these programs under threat**, First Focus on Children has broken down which states stand to lose the most.

This fact sheet aggregates federal spending at the state level across 13 different programs[1] that collectively make up more than 75% of all spending on children 0 - 3, including Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the Child Tax Credit (CTC), and others. For each of these programs, state-by-state spending data is collected from a variety of sources and the percentage of total spending devoted to children under 3 in that state is estimated. These numbers are combined to estimate the share of federal spending on children under 3 for each program in each state. This method captures state-level variation in federal policy, need, and demographics, as well as other issues.

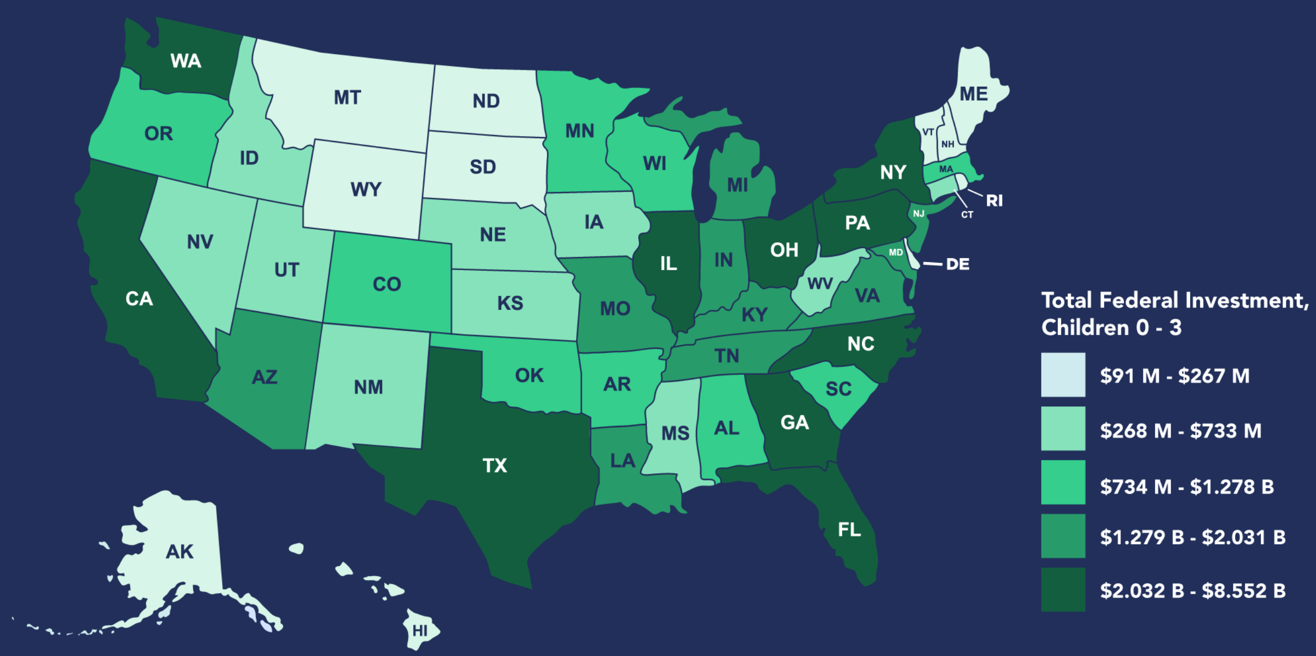
This analysis finds that federal spending per child varies widely from state to state and is influenced by a range of factors including region, demographics, and the rate of child and baby poverty in each state. Alaska, New Mexico, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Kentucky receive the most federal investment per year per child under 3. Utah, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Virginia receive the least.



FACT SHEET
FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN BABIES: A VIEW FROM THE STATES

The United States invests just 8.57% of the federal budget in the nation's children as a whole, according to **Children's Budget 2025**. Children under 3 receive a far smaller share, according to **Babies in the Budget 2025**, despite research that shows these years to be among a person's most critical. States with the largest populations tend to receive the greatest number of dollars for children under 3, with Texas receiving the most, followed by California, New York, Florida, and Ohio. On the other hand, Vermont, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, and New Hampshire receive the fewest total dollars from the federal government for children 0 - 3.

Total Federal Spending on Children, 0 - 3, by State



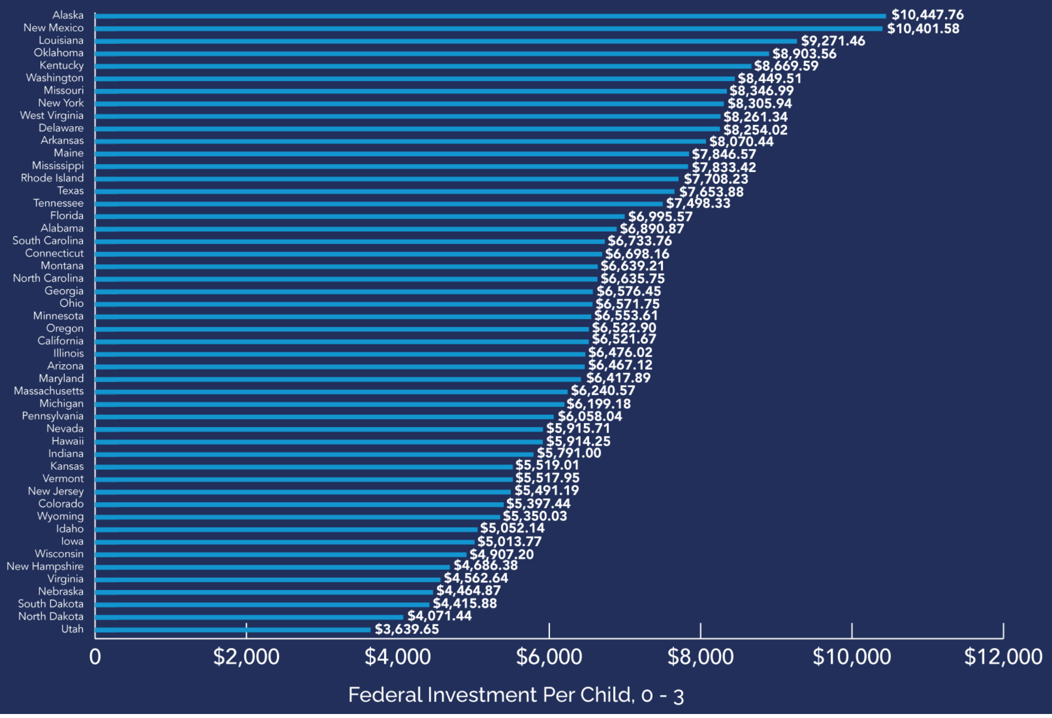
First Focus on Children's detailed accounting of how and where the federal government invests in babies and toddlers reveals a number of important takeaways and highlights the relationship between federal spending and a state's population, economic disposition and other factors.

FACT SHEET
FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN BABIES: A VIEW FROM THE STATES

FIRST FOCUS ON CHILDREN

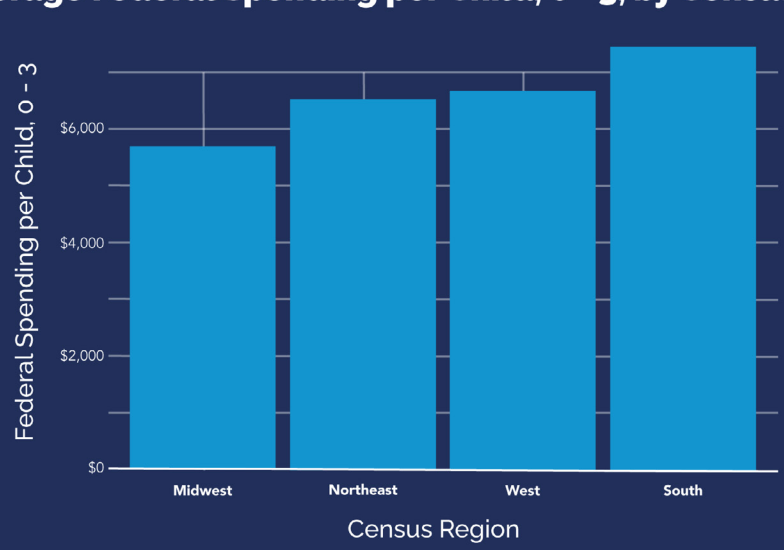
Takeaway #1
Annual federal spending per baby varies widely by state, ranging from just over $3,600 per baby (Utah) to more than $10,000 (Alaska).

States Ranked by Federal Investment per Child, 0 - 3



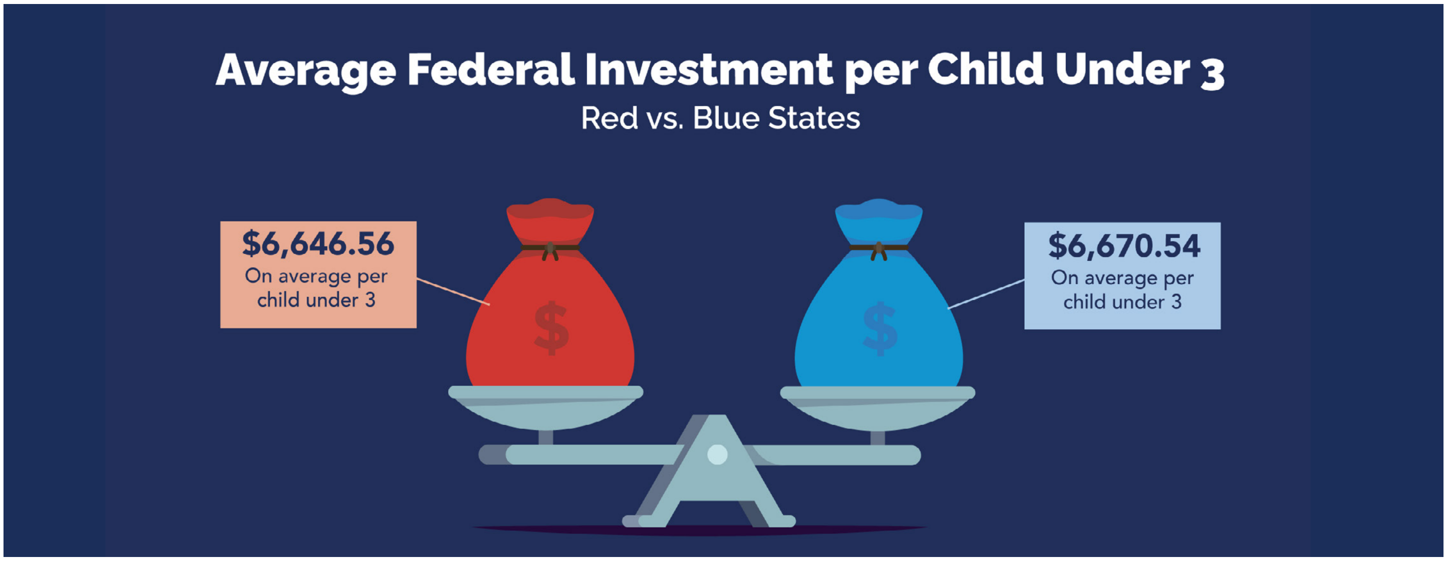
Takeaway #2
Southern states log the highest annual federal investment per child under 3 while investment is lowest in the Midwest.[2]

Average Federal Spending per Child, 0 - 3, by Census Region



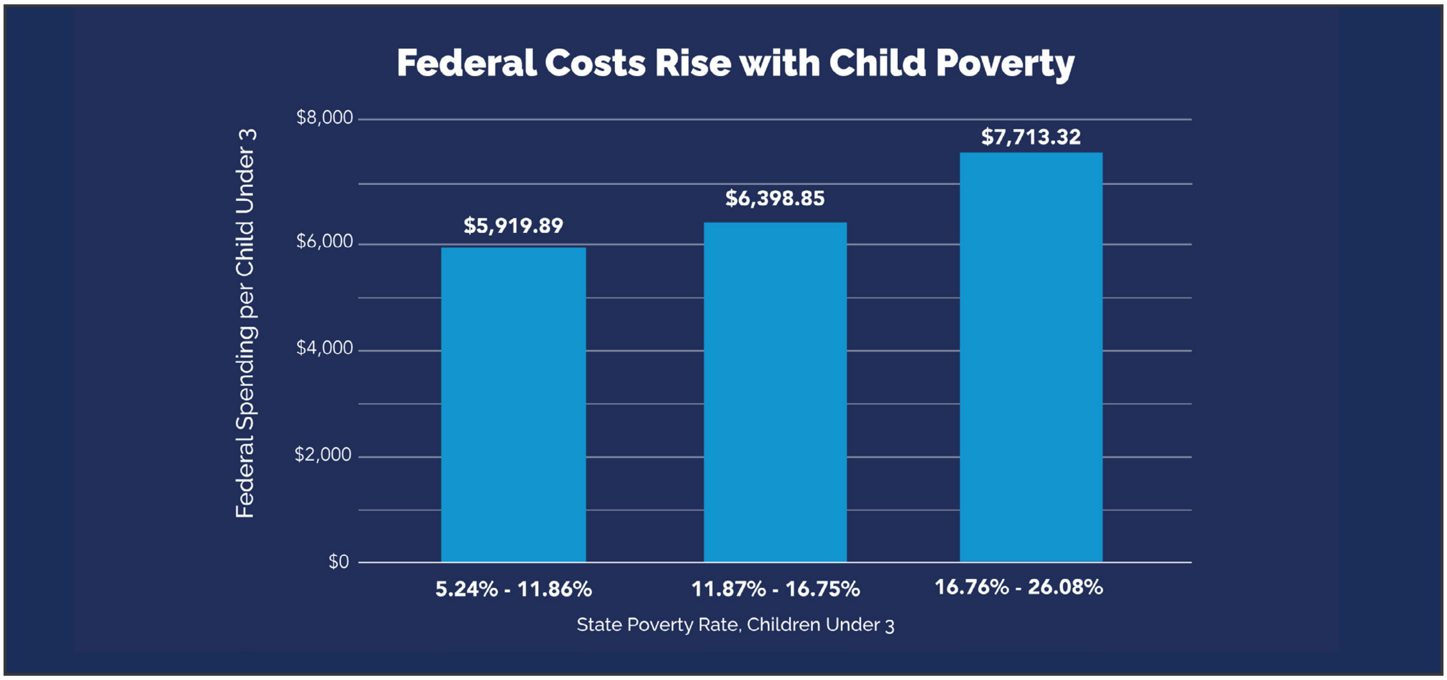
Takeaway #3

Federal support for babies and toddlers is comparable in red and blue states. The average spending per child under 3 for red and blue states is nearly identical.[3]



Takeaway #4

Federal spending on children under 3 largely tracks with need: states with higher baby poverty rates generally receive more federal support to address those and other needs.

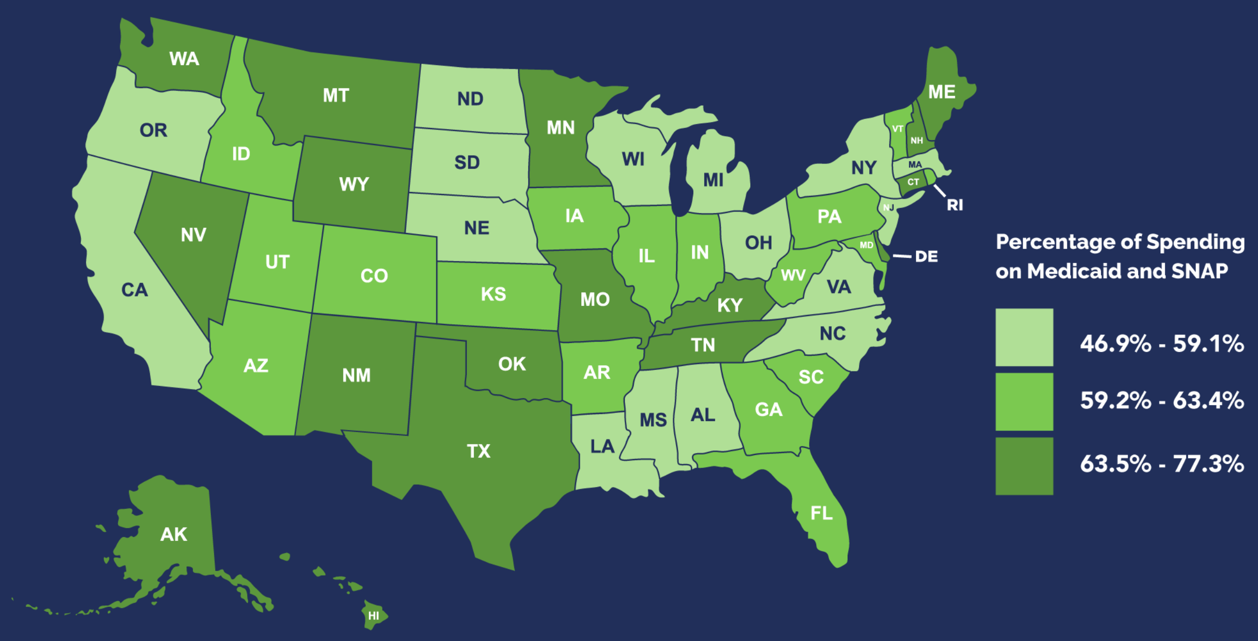


FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN BABIES: A VIEW FROM THE STATES

Takeaway #5

Medicaid and SNAP - which were cut by more than $1 trillion in H.R. 1 - account for the majority of 0-3 program spending tracked here in 49 of the 50 states

Percentage of Spending on Medicaid and SNAP, Children 0 - 3



H.R. 1, also known as the One Big Beautiful Bill, **cuts nearly $1 trillion from Medicaid and another nearly $200 billion from SNAP**, two programs that make up roughly 50% of all spending nationally on children under 3. These cuts will have an outsized impact on every single state. Of the 13 programs we track in this report, Medicaid and SNAP make up anywhere from 46.9% (Massachusetts) to more than 77.3% (Alaska) of federal funding for babies and toddlers.

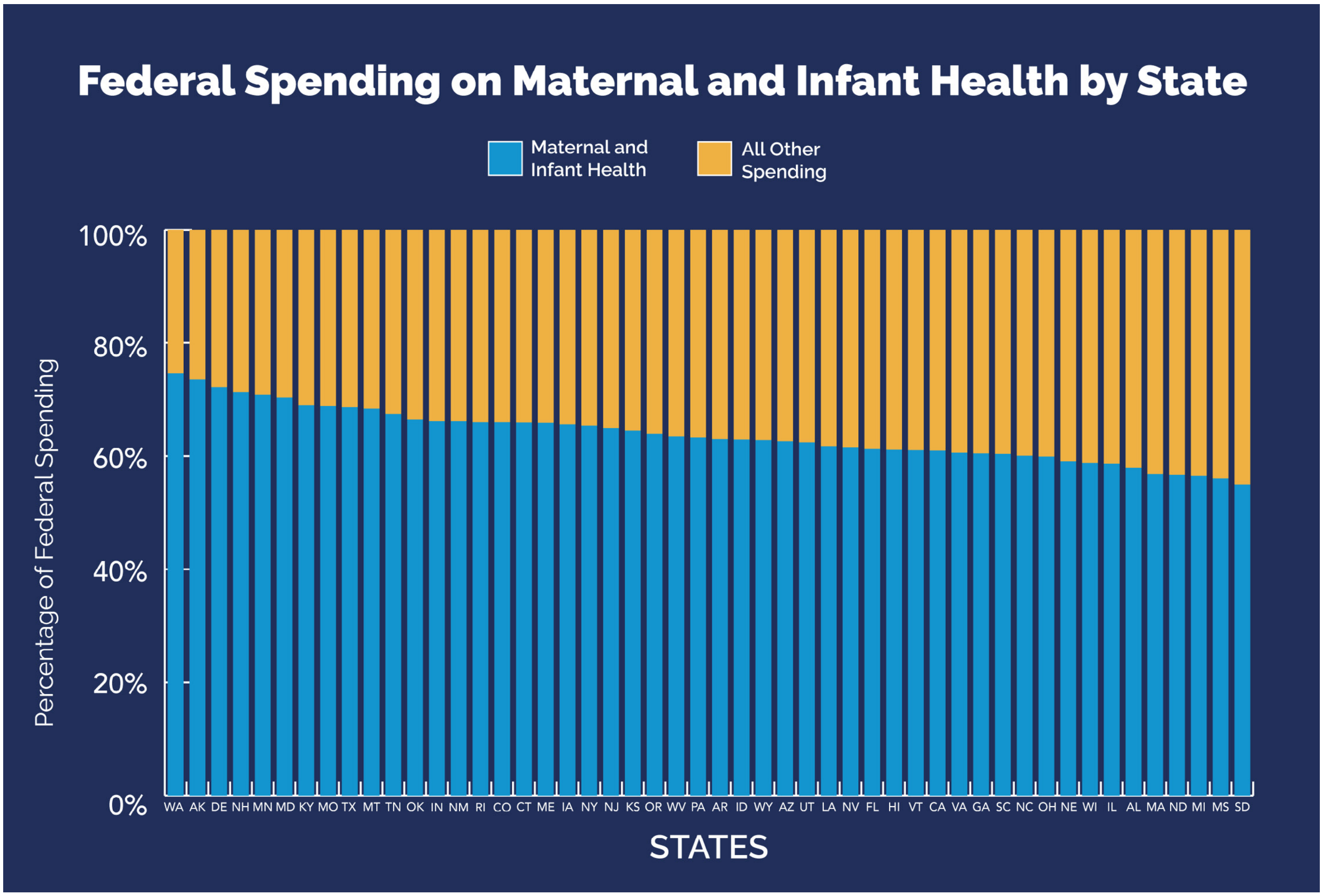
Medicaid is especially important during the first year of life when medical expenses for children are highest and their **care has tangible long-term consequences** for their economic well-being.

FACT SHEET

FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN BABIES: A VIEW FROM THE STATES

Takeaway #6

Maternal and infant health programs including Medicaid, CHIP, WIC and Healthy Start make up at least half of all federal spending on children 0 - 3 for every state — from 55.0% in South Dakota to 74.6% in Washington.



Other Resources

Babies in the Budget 2025

Fact Sheet: The Impact of One Big Beautiful Bill on babies and toddlers

Fact Sheet: Maternal and Infant Health in the FY2025 Budget

Endnotes

1. These programs include Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the Child Tax Credit (CTC), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Tenant-Based Rental Assistance, Project-Based Rental Assistance, the Public Housing Fund, Early Head Start, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Child Care and Development Block Grant, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and Healthy Start

2. The Midwest region includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The Northeast region includes Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The West region includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The South region includes Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

3. Red states are defined as those whose average margin of victory (Republican vote % - Democrat vote %) over the last three presidential elections favored Republicans (i.e. positive margin of victory— net advantage for Republicans). Blue states are those that similarly favored Democrats.