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## IN A DEEPLY DIVIDED COUNTRY, VIEWERS FIND COMMON GROUND IN ENTERTAINMENT

**92% of U.S. TV and film viewers place importance on seeing realistic work, family, and caregiving storylines, according to New America and MarketCast**

WASHINGTON, DC / LOS ANGELES (July 24, 2025) – Against the backdrop of a divided country marked by cultural and political instability, a new study released today shows that an overwhelming majority of U.S. TV and film viewers, across a wide range of backgrounds and ideological perspectives, find common ground in entertainment focused on work, family, and caregiving themes. Viewers are eager to see characters and stories that reflect their own experiences and backgrounds as well as those of others, and they say these work, family, and caregiving stories have broad impacts on their viewing and purchasing decisions, how they live their lives, and how they understand and connect with others.

These findings come from a new nationally representative online survey of 1,310 U.S. streaming viewers and a social media analysis, both conducted by market research firm MarketCast and commissioned by the entertainment initiative at the nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank New America. The research reveals a striking unanimity among U.S. streaming viewers in a country that is otherwise deeply divided. A full report is available on New America's [website](#).

The new study confirms that people turn to entertainment media not just for enjoyment, but for connection, validation, and guidance on navigating work and family life. Shows with work, family, caregiving, and gender-role themes spark online conversations and viewer recommendations, including Emmy-nominated shows such as *Abbott Elementary*, *Black Mirror*, *The Diplomat*, *Hacks*, *Matlock*, *Severance*, *The Last of Us*, and *The Pitt*.

This research provides:

- A strong **business case** for media companies to produce and show more work, family, and care content based on its potential to engage audiences across multiple demographics and ideologies, including viewers who are most active online and in fandoms.
- A compelling **creative case** for authentic, relatable storytelling about work, family, caregiving, and gender roles across genre, tone, and context.
- A strong **social impact case** for incorporating work, family, and caregiving content into television and film stories to help build understanding across differences and catalyze action.

“This research underscores the power of entertainment to help people see themselves and each other. At a time when the country and our communities feel hopelessly divided, viewers are eager to see the things that bring us together and make us human—the relatable, common challenges millions of us share in managing work, family, and caregiving responsibilities,” said [Vicki Shabo](#), the founder and director of New America’s entertainment initiative. “It’s also exciting to see that viewers want to see stories that offer solutions—both through the support families, co-workers, and communities offer each other and through more supportive workplace cultures and public policies.”

In 2025, millions of people in the United States are struggling to navigate intersecting obstacles: the rising costs of living and difficulties saving for the future; a shifting landscape of work; physical and mental health issues; and the challenge of finding affordable, high-quality care for children and loved ones. Both women and men struggle to manage work, family, caregiving, and finances.

As storytellers, studios, and streaming platforms strive to make the next hit series and films that will be on viewers’ “must-see” lists, five key findings from this research stand out:

- **Viewers overwhelmingly want to see more content with authentic stories about work, family, and caregiving.**
  - 92% of viewers say realistic work, family, and caregiving themes in shows and films are important to see, and 79% say they find it easier to connect with characters when they face work and family challenges similar to their own.
- **Studios and streaming services can retain or attract subscribers with shows and films featuring work, family, and care themes.**
  - 65% of viewers overall—and 85% of those who prioritize the importance of work, family, and caregiving storylines—say they are more likely to subscribe, or keep subscribing to, a streaming service that carries programming with authentic stories about work, family, and caregiving.
- **TV shows and films with relatable work, family, and care themes drive engagement and impact.**
  - 87% of viewers surveyed say a show with a work-family theme led them to learn, feel, or do something new, such as gaining an understanding of others, feeling less alone, starting a conversation, or recommending a show to others.
- **Viewers are eager for stories and characters they feel are missing on screen now.**
  - 87% of viewers say there is a need for more inclusive representation of race, ethnicity, income, and household or family structure.
  - More than half of viewers say stories reflecting real-life family caregiving and workplace leave situations are not shown often now, and they want to see more. Those with lived experience are even more hungry to see related content.

- **Work, family, and care themes can be embedded into a wide range of shows and films “about” other things.**
  - 59% of viewers express strong interest in seeing work/family themes in shows focused on scientific and technological advancements and their impacts; 54% are interested in work/family themes in shows about extinction-level/apocalyptic events.

“Work, family and caregiving are meaningful, universal themes that shape how people connect, consume, and understand the world. That’s a powerful signal for studios and streamers looking to drive deeper engagement, grow audiences and build lasting cultural relevance,” said Ben Carlson, EVP at MarketCast. “We’re happy to work alongside groups like New America to help them understand consumer sentiment in a really unique manner—it’s something only MarketCast has the ability to do at scale.”

This research, conducted in April 2025, builds on an [earlier collaboration](#) between New America and Marketcast released in March 2024, which found similar widespread viewer interest in television and film storytelling centering work, family, and care.

This new project goes much deeper into viewers’ interests and their definitions of authentic, relatable storytelling—and it was conducted in a much more divisive time, where political, cultural, and ideological differences are in the news and closer to the surface of everyday life. Despite those divisions, though, the research found that:

- Both progressive and conservative-skewing audiences say work, family, and caregiving storytelling is important—and they share an interest in seeing more.
- Across party lines, strong majorities of viewers want to see more public policy support for families managing work and care and believe that families, communities, and the economy would be more stable if the U.S. had paid family, and medical leave, child care, and elder care policies in place.

Find the full report and study methodology [here](#).

The survey is one of the pillars of ***Re-Scripting, Gender, Work, Family, and Care***, the entertainment initiative at [New America’s Better Life Lab](#). The Lab is New America’s work-family and gender equity program, focused on telling stories about families’ economic security and well-being. *Re-Scripting Gender, Work, Family, and Care* advises entertainment creators and media companies on the inclusion of work, family, caregiving, and gender roles on screen and celebrates engaging storytelling in television and film. The initiative endeavors to see more authentic stories that entertain and affect audiences as they navigate their own jobs, finances, health, work-family challenges, caregiving needs, and search for supportive solutions. Learn more at <https://newamerica.org/entertainment>.

**For more information or to speak with a member of the New America or MarketCast teams, please contact:**

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### **About New America**

New America is a think-and-action tank dedicated to renewing the promise of America in an age of rapid technological and social change. Our work prioritizes care and family wellbeing, advances technology in the public interest, reimagines global cooperation, builds effective democracy, and ensures affordable and accessible education for all. Learn more at [newamerica.org](http://newamerica.org)

### **About MarketCast**

MarketCast is a leading technology and data-enabled market research firm dedicated to helping brands maximize their advertising impact and amplify brand fandom. With a powerful portfolio of advertising and brand research solutions, MarketCast helps clients find the right audiences to target, craft ad creative that resonates, and build long-term brand Fandom and customer loyalty. Headquartered in Los Angeles, MarketCast's team of researchers, product experts, and data scientists deliver game-changing insights for brands around the world. For more information, visit [www.marketcast.com](http://www.marketcast.com)

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