



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 29, 2011

Gallup Poll Demonstrates Solid Pro-life Views Among Americans

Most significantly, the Gallup pollsters found that 87 percent of Americans would favor a law “requiring doctors to inform patients about certain possible risks of abortion before performing the procedure.” Similarly, the survey found that:



— 71 percent would favor a law “requiring women under 18 to get parental consent for any abortion.”

— 69 percent would favor a measure “requiring women seeking abortions to wait 24 hours before having the procedure done.”

— 64 percent would support a measure making it illegal for a doctor to perform a late-term “partial birth abortion”— except when necessary “to save the life of the mother.”

— 50 percent would support a law “requiring women seeking an abortion to be shown an ultrasound image of her fetus at least 24 hours before the procedure.”

But while the survey showed that a majority of Americans embrace solidly pro-life views, on two questions that majority appeared to shift, with 51 percent indicating that they would be opposed to a measure “allowing pharmacists and health providers to opt out of providing medicine or surgical procedures that result in abortion,” and 57 percent saying they would oppose a law “prohibiting health clinics that provide abortion services from receiving any federal funds.”

Commenting on the study, Gallup senior editor Lydia Saad noted that the polling firm “typically finds few differences between men’s and women’s attitudes about the legality of abortion in general,” and consistent with that trend, the latest poll showed “relatively minor gender differences in views about the seven specific restrictions tested.”

Partisan views, however, were much more pronounced, wrote Saad, “although majorities of Democrats as well as most Republicans favor informed consent, parental consent, 24-hour waiting periods, and a ban on ‘partial birth abortion.’”

By contrast, she said, the survey found that “Republicans and Democrats are on opposite sides when it comes to opt-out provisions and withholding federal funds from abortion providers.” That divergence, no doubt, accounted for the slim majorities the survey found opposing those measures — with otherwise pro-life Democrats predictably unable to choose against government force, or the continued bankrolling of Planned Parenthood.

Gallup also found that residents of the states where the abortion restrictions in question have passed “may have views that differ from those of the public at large,” wrote Saad. As other studies have shown, “regional breakdowns show that residents of the South and Midwest are generally more supportive of [restrictive abortion policies] than those in the East and West,” she added. “This is particularly true for attitudes on mandatory ultrasound counseling, parental consent laws, 24-hour waiting periods, and



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bans on funding of abortion clinics.”

While in recent years abortion has been largely simmering on the back burner in the national political arena, it has been a hot-button issue on the state level. According to the pro-abortion [Guttmacher Institute](#) (the de facto research arm of Planned Parenthood), in the first half of 2011 19 states passed 80 legislative measures placing restrictions on abortion — “up from 23 such laws enacted in 2010 and shattering the previous record of 34 set in 2005,” according to Saad.

With the most recent flurry of state-enacted abortion restrictions, “46 states now allow medical professionals and 43 allow at least some institutions to opt out of participating in abortions, 36 require parental involvement for minors (either notification or consent), 24 have waiting-period requirements, 19 mandate some sort of counseling, and 16 ban ‘partial birth’ abortions,” Saad reported.

Thirty-nine states also have imposed limits on how late abortions can be performed, according to Guttmacher statistics, with most state laws prohibiting abortion after 24 weeks of pregnancy—the time when it is generally agreed that a baby can live outside the mother’s womb. Without exception, however, those state laws include exceptions that allow for abortion in order to protect a mother’s life or health.

Gallup’s own survey, taken in early June, found that such limitations “are consistent with Americans’ hesitancy about late-term abortion.” The Gallup survey found that 86 percent of Americans opposed abortion in the last three months of pregnancy, and 71 percent said it should be illegal in the second three months as well. However, noted Saad, “6 in 10 think abortion should be generally legal in the first trimester, consistent with prior Gallup polling showing that Americans reject [overturning Roe v. Wade](#) or [banning abortion outright](#).”

Steve Ertelt of [LifeNews.com](#) challenged the high number of Americans that Gallup found who supported abortion in the first trimester, noting that it was different from the pollster’s “own survey earlier this year finding [61 percent of Americans](#) want all or most abortions made illegal.”

Saad pointed out that ever since the Supreme Court’s ruling in the 1992 case [Planned Parenthood v. Casey](#), which opened the door to more restrictive state abortion laws, pro-life legislators and groups “have focused more of their efforts on chipping away at the legality of abortion in the states than on trying to win a sweeping ban in Washington.”

While it is true that a segment of politically liberal Americans oppose a couple of abortion restrictions that have been passed in state legislatures, the Gallup poll shows that a majority of the nation supports what Saad described as a “patchwork” of pro-life measures enacted by state lawmakers increasingly committed to protecting the unborn.

Commenting on the survey, Brianna Walden of the pro-life [Family Research Council](#) noted that abortion advocates suggest that the scores of pro-life measures passed in 19 state legislatures this year is nothing more than ultra-conservative lawmakers “with extreme right-wing social ideologies ‘pushing’ their agenda on the people in their state who likely do not agree with them on these issues.” Walden wrote that such pro-abortion mouthpieces “even go so far as to assert that there has been an all out ‘attack on women’ by these state legislators.”

But the latest Gallup survey, Walden asserts, provides a reality check of sorts to both pro-life and “pro-choice” leaders. “Are these pro-life legislators out of touch or do they reflect the feelings of the majority of Americans?” asked Walden. “Are women feeling attacked and fighting back, or do they support and advocate bills that require their doctor to fully inform them of potential abortion risks, show them an



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ultrasound, and get parental consent for minors to receive an abortion?”

The answer, clearly, is that an increasing majority of Americans — both men and women — are identifying themselves more and more as pro-life, as legislators and public policy leaders give them the opportunity to do so.



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