



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on October 2, 2009

More Pro-lifers Thanks to Obama

Popular support for legal abortion is shrinking nationwide, and we may have Obama to thank for it, according to results released on Thursday of an August 2009 survey from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (PF).

PF says the “election of a pro-choice Democrat for president” could contribute to this downward trend in numbers of abortion supporters, since the decline first appeared in polls early in 2009. Until then, abortion supporters largely outnumbered opponents, but now they only represent a slim majority.



The survey revealed a seven-percent drop over the past year in the number of Americans who say abortion should be legal in all or most cases (47 percent). At the same time, the number of pro-life advocates (45 percent) is up four percent. PF found a six-point increase in respondents who want to make abortions more difficult to obtain (41 percent). Sixty-five percent of Americans think it would be good to reduce the number of abortions, also up six percent from last year. [All of the survey results](#) found that support for abortion is on the decline. And although 60 percent of Americans still believe it is possible to find a compromise on abortion issues, even that number is down six points from 2006 survey results. This recent survey confirms findings of a [May 2009 Gallup poll](#) that found a slim majority of Americans, 51 percent, call themselves “pro-life.”

The shift in opposition to abortion is bi-partisan, though PF noted that abortion is no longer a hot topic among liberal Democrats. (Since 1973 and *Roe v. Wade*, they have not had to fight for abortion; they have focused their energies on loosening restrictions. Pro-life causes, on the other hand, have fought an uphill battle for nearly 40 years against legalized abortion, which might explain their more entrenched opposition.)

But this recent rise in pro-life sentiment didn't stop the Senate Finance Committee from rejecting two anti-abortion provisions in the healthcare reform bill earlier this week. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) introduced both amendments. The first would ensure that no taxpayer dollars would support abortions, especially exempting insurance premium subsidies since the bill authorizes such funding. The other amendment would have prohibited the government from discriminating against healthcare providers who refuse to perform abortions. Committee members voted 13 - 10 against both provisions. [In a press release](#), Hatch expressed his disappointment in both votes, “especially given the fact that Chairman Baucus has made it clear during this mark-up that he did not want federal taxpayer dollars to pay for abortions.” Hatch declares he will continue to fight for both of the issues contained in these amendments as debate on the healthcare bill continues.



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