

Abortion poll: Most Americans oppose 'fetal heartbeat' laws, closing of all clinics in a state

WASHINGTON - Most Americans are dismayed by the intensifying efforts across the country to limit abortions, a new USA TODAY/Ipsos poll says, and the issue is energizing Democratic voters for the 2020 presidential election.

By 55%-45%, those surveyed oppose the so-called fetal heartbeat laws passed in five states that bar abortions after the pulsing of an embryo can be detected, which can happen as early as the sixth week of pregnancy. By nearly three to one, 73%-27%, they oppose seeing all abortion facilities in their states closed, a possibility in Missouri.

There is broad support among those on both sides of the debate for the Supreme Court to hear cases involving the new state laws. Fifty percent say the high court should uphold the right to abortion established in the landmark Roe v. Wade decision, and another 30% say Roe v. Wade should be upheld but with strict limits allowed.

One in five say the 1973 decision should be overturned, giving states the power to outlaw abortion.

RESULTS: USA TODAY/Ipsos poll on abortion

The nationwide poll of 1,005 adults, taken online Friday and Saturday, has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

Which voters are energized?

The limits on abortion have been driven in large part by Republican-controlled legislatures, but their success in passing laws is energizing Democratic voters. A 52% majority of Democrats say the renewed abortion debate makes them more likely to vote in the 2020 elections.

Limits on abortion: Where is abortion legal? Everywhere. But ...

In contrast, a 55% majority of Republicans say the debate will have no effect on their likelihood to vote.

The intensified national focus on abortion isn't one that most Americans welcome. By a double-digit margin, 57%-43%, those surveyed say the renewed debate is "bad for the United States." That view is a tick higher at the center of the furor, in the nine states that have recently passed laws limiting abortions.

Women nationwide express more alarm than men: 62% of women call the debate bad for the USA, compared with 52% of men.

Public's attitude more nuanced than politicians'

The public's attitude toward abortion is more complicated and shaded than the black-and-white divide in the political world.

Though the GOP platform opposes abortion without citing any exceptions, Republicans are particularly fractured on the issue. One-third of Republicans (34%) say *Roe v. Wade* should be overturned. A third (32%) say *Roe v. Wade* should be upheld, and another third (34%) say the basic legality of abortion should be upheld but strict limits allowed.

The Democratic Party platform endorses abortion rights without any governmental interference. Among Democrats, 67% support upholding *Roe v. Wade*; 22% say the basic legality should be upheld but strict limits allowed; 10% say it should be overturned.

"Despite the strong emotions that abortion elicits, we find that most Americans are not absolutists on the issue, understanding its many nuances," says Cliff Young, president of Ipsos Public Affairs. "Indeed, over the last few decades, the primary sticking point has not been abortion yes or no - but under what conditions is abortion acceptable. Our poll puts a spotlight on this underlying historic trend."



Abortion rights supporters rally across the nation. Protesters rally to stop the abortion bans in the United States on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington on May 21, 2019. Jack Gruber, USAT

In the survey, 26% of all those surveyed say abortion should be legal in all cases, and 28% say it should be legal in most cases. Thirteen percent say it should be illegal in all cases, and 24% say it should be illegal in most cases.

Some states have passed restrictions in hopes of provoking a Supreme Court decision that would overturn *Roe v. Wade* or erode its protections for abortion rights.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards signed a law Thursday prohibiting abortion when a fetal heartbeat can be detected, similar to measures passed in Mississippi, Georgia, Ohio and Kentucky. In May, Missouri Gov. Mike Parson signed a law prohibiting abortions after eight weeks of pregnancy, and Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey signed the most restrictive abortion law in the nation, outlawing abortion at any stage of a pregnancy unless there is a serious health risk to the woman. Utah and Arkansas have enacted laws that bar most abortions after 18 weeks.

Edwards is a Democrat; the other states have Republican governors.

None of the laws has taken effect, and virtually all of them are likely to face legal challenges.

Some states are moving to strengthen abortion rights. In Nevada on Friday, Democratic Gov. Steve Sisolak signed a bill that removed criminal penalties for abortion and eased some abortion regulations, and the Illinois Legislature sent to the governor's desk a measure aimed at protecting access to abortion. Democratic Gov. J.B. Pritzker said he will sign it.

The USA TODAY/Ipsos poll surveyed 400 Democrats, with a credibility interval of 5.8 points, and 348 Republicans, with a credibility interval of 6 points.

Source:

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/06/03/abortion-poll-fetal-heart-beat-laws-most-oppose-democrat-voters-energized/1319419001/>

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