

To: **Real Women's Voices**

From: Kellyanne Conway, President & CEO
the polling company™, inc./WomanTrend

Re: Executive Summary and Analysis: "*Real Women's Voices*" National Omnibus

Date: April 21, 2006

Introduction and Methodology

the polling company™, inc./WomanTrend is pleased to present to **Real Women's Voices** this analysis of findings from a recent national survey of 1,000 adults aged 18 and older.

The research was conducted in order to collect fresh data in advance of the April 25, 2006 "Real Women's Voices" event and press conference to be held at the National Press Club in Washington, DC.

The survey was fielded April 13-14, 2006 at a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) phone facility using live callers. The sample was drawn utilizing Random Digit Dial (RDD), where phone numbers were generated by a computer to ensure that every household in the nation had an equal chance to be surveyed.

The original survey instrument included a total of 12 questions, including three substantive and nine demographic inquiries. The questionnaire used in this survey was approved by an authorized representative of the sponsoring organization prior to fielding.

Sampling controls were used to ensure that a proportional and representative number of adults were interviewed from such demographic groups as age, gender, race and ethnicity and geographic region.

The margin of error is calculated at +/- 3.1% at the 95% confidence level, meaning that in 19 out of 20 cases, the results obtained would differ by no more than three percentage points in either direction if the entire adult population nationwide were to be surveyed. Margins of error for subgroups are higher.

Analysis of Findings

Majority of Americans Identify with Pro-Life Stances on Abortion.

Abortion is often portrayed as a black-and-white issue – people are either for it or against it– with little regard to the intricacies or complexities of the debate. When Americans are asked to define their personal feelings about abortion as strictly *pro-life* or *pro-choice*, the word “choice,” which is a core governing value in this country, broadly applied to many different ideas and actions, often prevails¹. In reality, however, opinions on abortion are much more complex.

That said, the word choice is exposed as less enthusiastically embraced when people rate their own views on abortion using a six-point spectrum. In that context, **most Americans fall somewhere in the middle** and in fact, the majority (54%) aligned with one of the three traditionally pro-life statements, 13-points higher than those who selected a pro-choice view (41%). *Quite notably, three-quarters of Americans (75%) say they believe that abortions should never be allowed, allowed only in very limited circumstances, or not past the first trimester of pregnancy.*

Groups more likely than respondents overall to identify with one of the three pro-life views of abortion on the six-point scale:

- 18-34 year olds (especially 18-34 year old women)
- Low-income households (< \$30K)
- High school graduates
- Conservatives
- Self-ID Republicans
- South Central residents

Groups more likely than respondents overall to identify with one of the three pro-choice views of abortion on the six-point scale:

- 35-54 year olds (especially women)
- Moderates and Liberals
- Self-ID Independents and Democrats
- Northeasterners and Westerners
- As household income and respondent education level increased, so did the likelihood that he or she would select a pro-choice stance on abortion.

¹ In conjunction with CNN and USA Today, the Gallup poll has asked American adults whether they are pro-life or pro-choice 23 times over the past ten years. In 22 out of 23 cases, respondents were more likely to say they were pro-choice than pro-life. In 16 out of 23 instances, the difference between the number of people choosing pro-life vs. pro-choice was greater than the margin of error.

Which of the following statements most closely reflects your position on the issue of abortion?
(READ AND ROTATED LIST)

54% TOTAL PRO-LIFE (NET)

- 16% ABORTIONS SHOULD BE PROHIBITED IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES
- 16% ABORTION SHOULD BE LEGAL ONLY TO SAVE THE LIFE OF THE MOTHER
- 22% ABORTIONS SHOULD ONLY BE LEGAL IN CASES OF RAPE, INCEST OR TO SAVE THE LIFE OF THE MOTHER

41% TOTAL PRO-CHOICE (NET)

- 21% ABORTIONS SHOULD BE LEGAL FOR ANY REASON, BUT NOT AFTER THE FIRST 3 MONTHS OF PREGNANCY
- 8% ABORTIONS SHOULD BE LEGAL FOR ANY REASON, BUT NOT AFTER THE FIRST 6 MONTHS OF PREGNANCY
- 12% ABORTIONS SHOULD BE ALLOWED AT ANY TIME DURING A WOMAN'S PREGNANCY AND FOR ANY REASON
- 6% DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED (VOL.)

Americans Claim to Be Familiar with *Roe vs. Wade*, but Most Cannot Correctly Define its Holding and its Implications

“*Roe vs. Wade*” has been incorporated into the lexicon of the national abortion debate and is often volleyed around without further definition, context, or even basic explanation of its impact on the law. Previously, in the thousands of questions that have been asked about abortion over the years, very few (and none recently) seem to ask Americans straight-on what their knowledge about current abortion law is and their understanding of *Roe*.

It turns out, that most Americans are not well-informed about *Roe vs. Wade*—though many seem unaware of their lack of knowledge.

When asked in this survey, two-thirds (65%) of American adults declared themselves to be “very” (23%) or “somewhat” (42%) familiar with the landmark Supreme Court decision. That is more than twice the number who admitted they did not know much about the case (31%).

How familiar do you consider yourself to be with the 1973 United States Supreme Court case of *Roe vs. Wade*? Would you say you are...

65% TOTAL FAMILIAR (NET)

23% VERY FAMILIAR

42% SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR

31% TOTAL NOT FAMILIAR (NET)

19% JUST A LITTLE BIT FAMILIAR

12% NOT AT ALL FAMILIAR

2% DON'T KNOW (VOLUNTEERED)

1% REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

*Groups more likely than respondents overall to say they were familiar with *Roe vs. Wade* included:*

- 45-64 year olds (*who were 12-31 years old when the decision was rendered*)
- Liberals
- Self-ID Republicans
- Westerners
- Whites were more familiar than minorities (68% vs. 63% of Hispanics, 55% of Blacks, and 52% of Asians)
- Self-professed knowledge increased with respondents' education level and household income

*Groups more likely than respondents overall to say they were not familiar with *Roe vs. Wade* included:*

- 18-34 year olds (*nearly all of whom were born after 1973*)
- Blacks
- House holds earning less than \$30,000 per year
- High school graduates

Despite the fact that 65% said they were familiar with the holding, only 29% were able to select the *most* accurate description of the ruling from a list of four options.

This disconnect between what they believe and what is the truth is astonishing. While the correct explanation of the case was selected by more Americans than any other single *Roe vs. Wade* description, it is important to note that a combined 50% thought the 1973 watershed ruling provided a much more narrow allowance for abortion than it really did. An additional 15% acknowledged they did not know what legal implications of the decision were for abortion rights.

Which of the following most accurately describes what the United States Supreme Court's 1973 decision in *Roe versus Wade* provides as the law? (*READ AND ROTATED LIST*)

29% MADE ABORTION LEGAL IN ESSENTIALLY ALL CIRCUMSTANCES THROUGHOUT PREGNANCY

18% MADE ABORTION LEGAL BUT ONLY IN THE FIRST TRIMESTER

17% MADE ABORTION LEGAL BUT ONLY IN LIMITED CIRCUMSTANCES

15% MADE ABORTION LEGAL BUT ONLY IN THE FIRST AND SECOND TRIMESTERS

1% OTHER (VOLUNTEERED)

1% ALL OF THE ABOVE (VOLUNTEERED)

3% NONE OF THE ABOVE (VOLUNTEERED)

15% DO NOT KNOW (VOLUNTEERED)

2% REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

*Groups more likely than respondents overall to correctly select the most accurate description of the *Roe vs. Wade* decision included:*

- 35-54 year olds
- Households earning \$50,000+ per year
- Men were more likely than women to correctly define *Roe vs. Wade* (34%-25%)
- As education level increased, so did the likelihood that a respondent selected the proper description of *Roe vs. Wade*. Still, only 38% of post-graduates were more apt to know what the 1973 decision provided than their less-educated peers.
- Though respondents who considered themselves familiar with the *Roe vs. Wade* ruling were more likely than those who were unfamiliar to accurately identify the case's holding (35%-21%), they were also more inclined to select one of the three incorrect depictions (51%-47%). Furthermore, 9% of those who claimed some level of knowledge about *Roe vs. Wade* admitted they did not know what the decision provided as the law.

In Conclusion...

Many Americans do not understand the full implication of the *Roe vs. Wade* decision – a fact many pro-choice groups choose to interpret as support for their cause. These results demonstrate how broadening the spectrum of abortion stances with which respondents are able to identify from simply “pro-life” or “pro-choice” to a more inclusive and nuanced list increases agreement with views traditionally aligned with the pro-life cause. Simple information, without bias, persuasion, or spin, may be the first step in gaining the public's support to change America's abortion policy in from *virtually unrestricted* to *reasonably regulated*.