

Poll: Strong Support For Abortion Rights

Just 22 Percent Favor Ban On Abortion in CBS News Poll

NEW YORK, Jan. 22, 2003



(CBS/AP)

(CBS) On the 30th anniversary of the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision, a **CBS News/New York Times** poll finds the vast majority of Americans continues to believe that abortion should remain available in at least some cases.

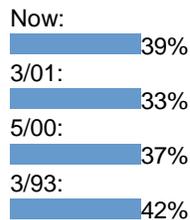
Seventy-seven percent of respondents said abortion should either be generally available, or available but with stricter limits than now.

Just 22 percent said abortion should not be permitted.

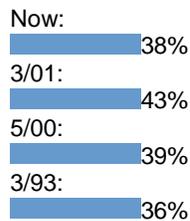
Public sentiment on the issue is about the same as it was ten years ago. The latest findings show the number of Americans who believe that abortion should be generally available is up slightly from two years ago, and about the same as it was in the spring of 2000.

ABORTION SHOULD BE:

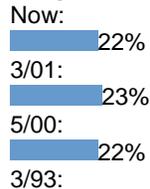
Generally available



Available, but with stricter limits than now



Not permitted



40%

Those who believe abortion should remain available are evenly divided between those who think it should be generally available to those who want it, and those who think it should have more restrictions than it currently does.

And looking ahead to the next two years, the great majority of Americans expects that abortion will remain legal in some form, though many - particularly women -- believe it will soon come under stricter limits. 47% of women think so, 39% of men do.

LOOKING AHEAD: OVER NEXT TWO YEARS, ABORTION WILL BE:

Generally available

All: 41%
Men: 45%
Women: 38%

Available, but with stricter limits than now

All: 43%
Men: 39%
Women: 37%

Not permitted

All: 11%
Men: 10%
Women: 11%

Partisanship and abortion

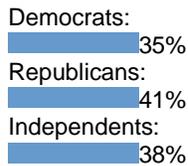
There are partisan differences on abortion, though majorities of both parties are in general agreement that it should be available in at least some form. 43% of Democrats think that abortion should be generally available, and 35% think it should be under stricter limits. Republicans are less inclined to think it should be generally available - 29% think so - while 41% of them think it should be available but under more limits than it is today. 28% of Republicans say it should not be permitted at all, and 21% of Democrats agree. Independents break down much like the Democrats: 42% of them say abortion should be generally available.

PARTISAN DIFFERENCES ON ABORTION Abortion should be...

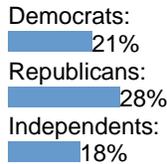
Generally available

Democrats: 43%
Republicans: 29%
Independents: 42%

Available, but with stricter limits than now



Not permitted



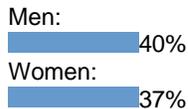
Gender, age and abortion

There are no major differences between men's and women's stands on the issue. 40% of men believe abortion should be generally available, and 37% of women think it should be. 20% of men think it should not be permitted, and slightly more women, 24%, agree.

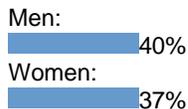
MEN AND WOMEN ON ABORTION

Abortion should be...

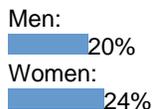
Generally available



Available, but with stricter limits than now



Not permitted



Younger women hold nearly identical views on abortion as do older women. Among women under 45, 38% say abortion should be generally available and one-quarter say it should never be permitted. Among women 45 and older, 36% say it should be generally available and 23% say abortion should never be permitted.

Catholics and Protestants in the survey held roughly the same views on the issue. 36% of Catholics believe abortion should be generally available, and 34% of Protestants agree. 27% of Catholics think abortion should not be permitted, and 24% of Protestants believe this, as well.

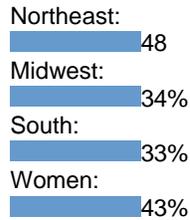
Regional differences

There are, however, strong regional differences in the United States on the abortion question. Southerners and mid-westerners are more likely to believe abortion should not be permitted, while those in the West and Northeast are more likely to think it should be generally available.

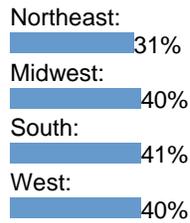
ABORTION VIEWS BY REGION

Abortion should be...

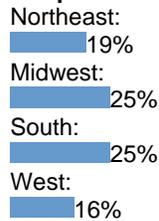
Generally available



Available, but with stricter limits than now



Not permitted



This poll was conducted among a nationwide random sample of 814 adults, interviewed by telephone January 19-21, 2003. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus four percentage points. Sampling error for subgroups may be higher.