



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Office of Media Relations

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USCCB News Release

08-206

December 30, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Survey Shows Most U.S. Adults Support Laws Limiting or Regulating Abortion

WASHINGTON—A nationwide survey commissioned by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has found that four out of five U.S. adults (82 percent) think abortion should either be illegal under all circumstances (11 percent) or would limit its legality. Thirty-eight (38) percent would limit abortion to the narrow circumstances of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother; and an additional 33 percent would limit abortion to either the first three or first six months. Only 9 percent said abortion should be legal for any reason at any time during pregnancy.

"These findings are remarkable," said Deirdre McQuade, Assistant Director for Policy & Communications at the USCCB's Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities. "Fewer than one in ten Americans support legal abortion for any reason at any time during pregnancy. But that is precisely the current state of abortion law under *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decisions that made abortion legal throughout the nine months of pregnancy for virtually any reason."

The survey of 2,341 adults, conducted online December 10-12, also found that laws limiting or regulating abortion enjoyed support as high as 95 percent among those expressing support or opposition to the six kinds of laws examined in the survey:

- 95 percent favor laws ensuring that abortions be performed only by licensed physicians
- 88 percent favor informed consent laws (i.e., that require abortion providers to inform women of potential risks to their physical and psychological health and about alternatives to abortion)
- 76 percent favor laws that protect doctors and nurses from being forced to perform or refer for abortions against their will
- 73 percent favor laws that require giving parents the chance to be involved in their minor daughter's abortion decision
- 68 percent favor laws against partial-birth abortion (i.e., aborting a child already partially delivered from the mother), and
- 63 percent favor laws preventing the use of taxpayer funds for abortions.

"Support for these measures cuts across 'pro-life' and 'pro-choice' positions. Over a third (35 percent) of the small minority who said abortion should be legal for any reason throughout pregnancy nevertheless supported three or more of the six laws presented," McQuade said.

"This research indicates how out of touch pro-abortion groups are with mainstream America," McQuade said.

"These same widely-supported, constitutionally valid measures, some of which have been proven effective in reducing abortion rates, are now seriously threatened by abortion advocates and their allies in Congress," McQuade said. "On behalf of children and their mothers, we will have to fight to keep such laws in place."

"Pro-abortion groups have already sent a comprehensive 55-page blueprint for their agenda to the incoming Administration," McQuade said. "But their agenda—including publicly-funded abortions, passage of the so-called 'Freedom of Choice Act' (FOCA), and attacking the Hyde amendment and other longstanding pro-life provisions in appropriations bills—won't sell in the general public."

"Most people agree we should work to reduce abortions, but you can't reduce abortions by promoting abortion and stigmatizing all the policies that have proven effective in reducing abortions," McQuade said. "The U.S. Conference of

eliminating all the policies that have proven effective in reducing abortions," McQuade said. "The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will oppose all such threats to human life in whatever manner they are proposed."

Survey Methodology

Harris Interactive® fielded the study on behalf of USCCB from December 10-12, 2008 via its QuickQuerySM online omnibus service, interviewing a nationwide sample of 2,341 U.S. adults aged 18 years and older. Data were weighted using propensity score weighting to be representative of the total U.S. adult population on the basis of region, age within gender, education, household income, race/ethnicity, and propensity to be online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.