

http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/current_events/abortion/americans_think_new_state_laws_will_reduce_number_of_abortions

Americans Think New State Laws Will Reduce Number of Abortions

Thursday, March 10, 2011

Pro-life state legislators are pushing several measures that critics view as restrictions on abortion, and most Americans agree that two of these proposals are at least somewhat likely to reduce the number of abortions in America.

New South Dakota Governor Dennis Daugaard is expected to sign a just-passed law in his state that would require women seeking an abortion to wait three days and have counseling about adoption and other parenting issues before undergoing the procedure. A new Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey finds that 65% of American Adults support a three-day waiting period and counseling before an abortion. Twenty-four percent (24%) oppose such a requirement, and another 11% are not sure.

Sixty-five percent (65%) also believe the waiting period and counseling are at least somewhat likely to reduce the number of abortions, including 33% who say they are Very Likely to do so. Thirty percent (30%) think the requirement is unlikely to reduce the prevalence of abortion, with seven percent (7%) who say it's Not At All Likely to have that effect.

Support is much lower for a bill approved by Texas lawmakers that requires pregnant women to see an ultrasound image (also known as a sonogram) of their fetus and to hear the fetus' heartbeat before having an abortion. Forty-eight percent (48%) of Americans favor the measure, while 38% are opposed. Fourteen percent (14%) are not sure about it.

However, 62% think it is at least somewhat likely that such a law would reduce the number of abortions, including 32% who say it is Very Likely. Thirty-one percent (31%) think such an outcome is unlikely, but that includes just seven percent (7%) who say it is Not At All Likely.

(Want a free daily e-mail update? If it's in the news, it's in our polls). Rasmussen Reports updates are also available on Twitter or Facebook.

The survey of 1,000 Adults was conducted on March 7-8, 2011 by Rasmussen Reports. The margin of sampling error is +/- 3 percentage points with a 95% level of confidence. Field work for all Rasmussen Reports surveys is conducted by Pulse Opinion Research, LLC. See methodology.

Roughly half of American adults have said in surveys for several years that it is too easy for someone to get an abortion in the United States. While the country remains closely divided between those who call themselves pro-life and those who view themselves as pro-choice, the majority of Likely U.S. Voters think abortion is morally wrong in most cases.

Women are slightly more supportive than men of both the waiting period and sonogram measures. Most men and women are in general agreement, though, that the measures are likely to reduce the number of abortions.

On the issue of abortion, 42% of Americans consider themselves pro-choice, while 44% say they are pro-life. Thirteen percent (13%) are undecided.

Married adults and adults with children at home are more likely to be pro-life, while unmarried adults and adults without children tend to be pro-choice.

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of Democrats say they are pro-choice, while the same percentage of Republicans (67%) regard themselves as pro-life. Adults not affiliated with either major political party are evenly divided.

Eighty-two percent (82%) of Republicans and 62% of unaffiliated adults support the waiting period law, as do 50% of Democrats. But 59% of Democrats oppose the sonogram proposal, while 68% of GOP adults and a plurality (47%) of unaffiliateds favor it.

Majorities of all three groups agree, however, that both measures are likely to reduce the number of abortions, although Republicans believe that much more strongly than the others.

Despite the strong opinions on the subject, most Americans have not been following news about the new Texas abortion law. Just 28% say they have been following news stories about it at least somewhat closely, with nine percent (9%) who say they have been following Very Closely.

Last month, 56% of voters said there should be some kind of a waiting period before a woman gets an abortion.

Over half of voters say abortion as an issue is at least somewhat important in terms of how they vote, and they trust Democrats slightly more than Republicans to handle the issue.

In late December 2009, 53% of voters favored an unsuccessful amendment to the national health care bill that would prohibit coverage of abortion by any insurance plan that receives federal government subsidies.

Questions - Abortion - March 7-8, 2011

National Survey of 1,000 Adults
Conducted March 7-8, 2011
By Rasmussen Reports

1* How closely have you followed news reports about a proposed new abortion law in Texas?

2* Generally speaking, on the issue of abortion, do you consider yourself pro-choice or pro-life?

3* A proposal has been made that would require pregnant women to see a sonogram of their fetus and listen to its heartbeat before having an abortion. Do you favor or oppose such a proposal?

4* Suppose that a law was passed requiring pregnant women to see a sonogram of their fetus and listen to its heartbeat before having an abortion. How likely is it that such a law reduce the number of abortions?

5* A proposal has been made that would require a three-day waiting period and counseling before having an abortion. Do you favor or oppose such a proposal?

6* Suppose a law was passed that would require a three-day waiting period and counseling before having an abortion. How likely is it that such a law reduce the number of abortions?

NOTE: Margin of Sampling Error, +/- 3 percentage points with a 95% level of confidence