

New Marist Poll: Americans Make Dramatic and Sudden Move Toward Pro-Life Label

Democrats and young people lead the way as strong majorities also reject late-term abortion

By Christian Newswire

Hits: 522

NEW HAVEN, Conn. -- In just one month, Americans have made a sudden and dramatic shift away from the pro-choice position and toward a pro-life stance, according to a new Marist poll.

The shift was led by Democrats and those under 45 years old, according to a survey taken Feb.12-17 in the wake of efforts in several states to legalize abortion up until birth.

"Current proposals that promote late-term abortion have reset the landscape and language on abortion in a pronounced -- and very measurable -- way," said Barbara Carvalho, director of The Marist Poll.

In a substantial, double-digit shift, according to the poll, Americans are now as likely to identify as pro-life (47 percent) as pro-choice (47 percent). Just last month, a similar survey conducted by The Marist Poll found Americans more likely to identify as pro-choice than as pro-life by 17 percentage points (55 to 38 percent). Democrats moved in their pro-life identity from 20 percent to 34 percent.

Among Democrats, the gap between pro-life and pro-choice identifiers was cut in half from 55 percent to 27 percent. The number of Democrats now identifying as pro-life is 34 percent, up from 20 percent last month, while the number identifying as pro-choice fell from 75 percent to 61 percent. Younger Americans also moved dramatically, now dividing 47 percent pro-life to 48 percent pro-choice. One month ago, the gap was almost 40 percentage points with only 28 percent identifying as pro-life and 65 percent identifying as pro-choice.

"The recent legal changes to late-term abortion and the debate which followed have not gone unnoticed by the general public," said Carvalho. "In just one month, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of Americans who see themselves as pro-life and an equally notable decline in those who describe themselves as pro-choice."

This is the first time since 2009 that as many or more Americans have identified as pro-life as have identified as pro-choice. More than a third of Democrats (34 percent) as well as two-thirds of Republicans (67 percent) identify as pro-life. Independents divide (46 percent pro-life, 48 percent pro-choice).

At the same time, the survey found that opposition to late-term abortions is overwhelming. By about three to one (71 percent to 25 percent), Americans say abortion should be generally illegal during the third trimester. This majority includes 60 percent of Democrats, 72 percent of independents and 85 percent of Republicans.

By an even wider margin (71 percent to 18 percent), Americans strongly oppose late-term abortion after 20 weeks. This 71 percent includes two-thirds (66 percent) who say abortion should be banned after 20 weeks of pregnancy except to save the life of the mother, and an additional five

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Percent think abortion should be outlawed completely. Only 18 percent think abortion should be allowed at any time up until birth. Those opposing abortion after 20 weeks, or overall, include: 59 percent of Democrats, 78 percent of independents and 82 percent of Republicans.
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In addition, the poll found that 80 percent of Americans would like abortion limited to - at most - the first three months of pregnancy -- an increase of five points since just last month. This includes 65 percent of those who identified as pro-choice, as well as strong majorities of Democrats (64 percent), Republicans (92 percent) and independents (83 percent).

The proportion overall has shown a consensus over time on the issue with three-quarters to eight-in-10 Americans supportive of restrictions on abortion. The 80 percent figure is, nevertheless, a significant increase since January - a noteworthy change in what has been a very stable measure.

"Arguments in favor of late-term abortion are simply not convincing the American people," said Carl Anderson, CEO of the Knights of Columbus, the organization that sponsored the survey. "If anything, since these proposals have been unveiled, people are moving noticeably in the pro-life direction. It is now clear that these radical policies are being pursued despite the opposition of the majority of Americans of both parties."

This survey of 1,008 adults was conducted Feb. 12 through Feb. 17, 2019 by The Marist Poll sponsored and funded in partnership with The Knights of Columbus. Adults 18 years of age and older residing in the United States were contacted on landline or mobile numbers and interviewed in English or Spanish by telephone using live interviewers. Telephone numbers were randomly selected based upon a list of telephone exchanges from throughout the nation. The exchanges were selected to ensure that each region was represented in proportion to its population. Assistance was provided by SSRS for data collection. The sample was balanced to reflect the 2017 American Community Survey 1-year estimates for age, gender, income, race, and region. Results are statistically significant within ± 3.5 percentage points. MOE increases for subgroups.

About the Knights of Columbus

The Knights of Columbus is one of the nation's premiere volunteer and charitable organizations. Last year, Knights worldwide donated more than 75.6 million hours, and more than \$185 million to charitable causes in communities throughout the Americas, as well in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. From helping children in need, to providing wheelchairs for the disabled, to helping stock food banks, to offering top-rated and affordable life insurance to its members, the Knights has been at the service of the community for more than 130 years.

About the Marist Poll

Founded in 1978, The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion (MIPO) is a survey research center at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. The Marist Poll has conducted independent research on public priorities, elections, and a wide variety of social issues. The Marist Poll regularly

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Partners with NBC News and The Wall Street Journal to conduct scientific public opinion polls in key electoral battleground states. It teams often with NPR and PBS NewsHour to take the pulse of the country.
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