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Reproductive rights in America

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In a new U.S. poll, a majority identify as 'pro-choice' for the first time in decades

June 3, 2022 · 11:52 AM ET

RACHEL TREISMAN



Abortion rights activists protest outside of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington on May 3, a day after the leak of a draft opinion suggesting a possible reversal of *Roe v. Wade*.

Jose Luis Magana/AP

The percentage of Americans who consider themselves "pro-choice" has risen in the past year to 55%, its highest level in decades, according to a Gallup poll released Thursday.

That increase mainly was driven by Democrats, wrote Lydia Saad, the polling firm's director for U.S. social research, in a summary of the survey's findings. She attributed the shift to the recent Supreme Court draft opinion suggesting a possible end to *Roe v. Wade*.



ROE V. WADE AND THE FUTURE OF REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS IN AMERICA

Poll: Two-thirds say don't overturn Roe; the court leak is firing up Democratic voters

Gallup surveyed more than 1,000 U.S. adults by telephone over three weeks beginning May 2 — the day *Politico* published a draft opinion suggesting that the Supreme Court could soon overturn *Roe v. Wade*. That decision would enable many states to dramatically restrict or ban abortions.

The poll found the highest pro-choice affiliation that Gallup has measured since 1995, when 56% of Americans identified as such. That number had fluctuated between 45% and 50% for the past decade before jumping six points in the latest survey.



ROE V. WADE AND THE FUTURE OF REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS IN AMERICA

If *Roe v. Wade* is overturned, what happens next? Your questions answered

"The prospect of the Supreme Court overturning the case that established women's right to seek an abortion has clearly jolted a segment of Americans into identifying with the pro-choice side of the issue and expressing more unequivocal support for abortion being legal," Saad wrote.

Democrats' pro-choice identification rose from 70% to 88% in the past year. There was no significant change among Republicans, independents, men or older Americans, Gallup said.

The survey also found that 52% of Americans consider abortion morally acceptable, the first time a majority has expressed that view since Gallup began asking the question in 2001. A record-low 38% call it morally wrong.

THE NPR POLITICS PODCAST

A Majority of Americans Support Roe. That Doesn't Mean They Agree on Abortion.

Some of the survey's other notable findings:

- Some 39% of Americans identify as pro-life, the lowest percentage since 1996.
 - Pro-choice identification increased by nine percentage points to 61% among women, 12 points to 67% among adults aged 18 to 34 and nine points to 58% among adults ages 35 to 54.
 - Support for abortion being legal under any or most circumstances jumped among Democrats, jumping from 69% to 82%, and among adults aged 18 to 34, rising from 52% to 63%. It's higher among women (59%) than men (45%).
 - Support for abortion being broadly legal increased seven points over the past year among political independents, but not for Republicans or Americans over the age of 55.
 - A majority of Americans (55%) are generally opposed to abortion in the second trimester, while 36% think it should be legal. Some 71% believe abortion should be illegal in the third trimester.
-

	Yes, overturn	No, not overturn	No opinion
	%	%	%
2022 May 2-22 ^	35	58	7
2021 May 3-18 ^	32	58	10
2019 Jun 3-16	33	60	7
2018 Jul 2-8	28	64	9
2012 Dec 27-30	29	53	18
2008 May 8-11	33	52	15
2007 May 10-13	35	53	12
2006 May 8-11	32	55	13
2006 Jan 20-22	25	66	9
2005 Jul 7-10 ^	28	63	9
2002 Mar 22-24	36	60	4
1992 Aug 13-14	34	60	6
1989 Oct 5-8	33	61	6
1989 Jul 6-7	31	58	11

^ Asked of a half sample

GALLUP **Would you like to see the Supreme Court overturn its 1973 Roe v. Wade decision concerning abortion, or not?**

If the Supreme Court were to overturn its 1973 Roe versus Wade decision concerning abortion, it would mean there is no constitutional protection for abortion rights and each state could set its own laws to allow, restrict or ban abortions. Do you think overturning Roe versus Wade would be a good thing or a bad thing?

	Good thing	Bad thing	No opinion
	%	%	%
2022 May 2-22 ^	32	63	4

^ Asked of a half sample

GALLUP



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JUNE 13, 2022



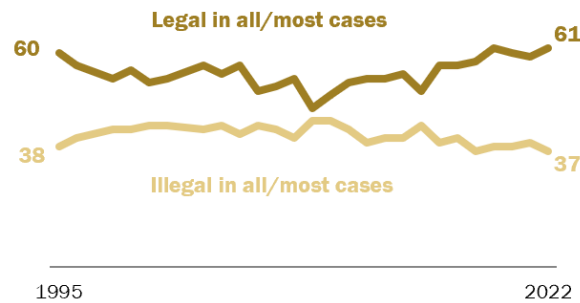
About six-in-ten Americans say abortion should be legal in all or most cases

BY [HANNAH HARTIG](#)

Abortion has long been a contentious issue in the United States, and it is one that sharply divides Americans along partisan, ideological and religious lines.

Public views of abortion, 1995-2022

% who say abortion should be ...



Notes: Trend data from 2018 and earlier from surveys conducted by telephone. Data from 1995-2005 from ABC News/Washington Post polls; data for 2006 from AP-Ipsos poll. Trend lines show aggregated data for years where more than one survey was conducted. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Today, a 61% majority of U.S. adults say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, while 37% think abortion should be *illegal* in all or most cases. These views are relatively unchanged in the past few years. The [latest Pew Research Center survey](#), conducted March 7 to 13, finds deep disagreement between – and within – the parties over abortion. In fact, the partisan divide on abortion is far wider than it was two decades ago.

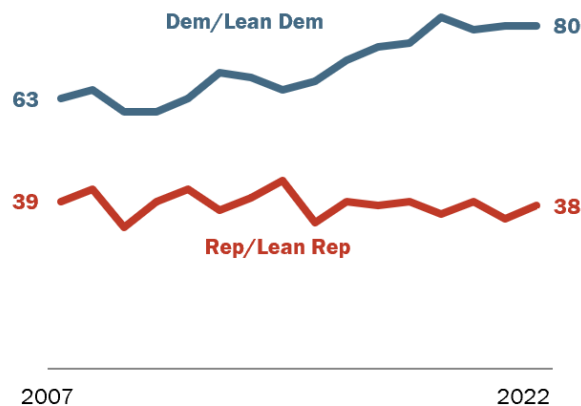
Related: Explore an [interactive look](#) at Americans' attitudes on abortion.

In the latest survey, Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents are 42 percentage points more likely than Republicans and Republican leaners to say abortion should be legal in all or most cases (80% vs. 38%). This gap is little changed over the last few years, but the current divide is wider than it was in the past. For instance, as recently as 2016, there was a 33-point gap between the shares of Democrats (72%) and Republicans (39%) who supported legal abortion in all or most cases.

How we did this ⊕

Partisan gap in views of whether abortion should be legal remains wide

% who say abortion should be **legal** in all or most cases



Notes: Data from 2018 and earlier from surveys conducted by telephone. Trend lines show aggregated data for years where more than one survey was conducted.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.

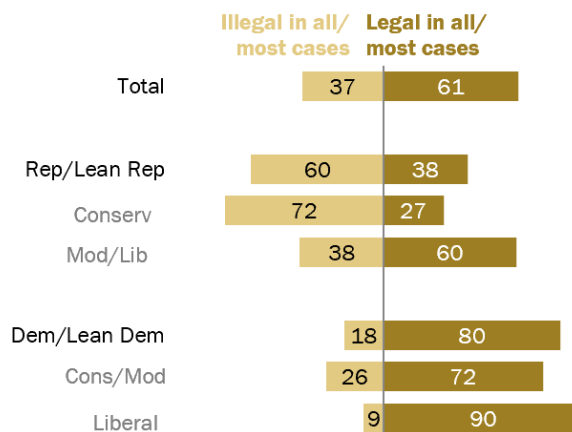
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This wider gap is mostly attributable to a steady increase in support for legal abortion among Democrats. In 2007, roughly two-thirds of Democrats and Democratic leaners (63%) said abortion should be legal in all or most cases. Support among Democrats has risen by nearly 20 points since then, and 80% now say abortion should be legal in all or most cases.

Views among Republicans have remained relatively steady during this period. In 2007, around four-in-ten Republicans (39%) said abortion should be legal in all or most cases; today, 38% say this.

Wide ideological gaps in both parties in views of abortion

% who say abortion should be ...



Note: No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.

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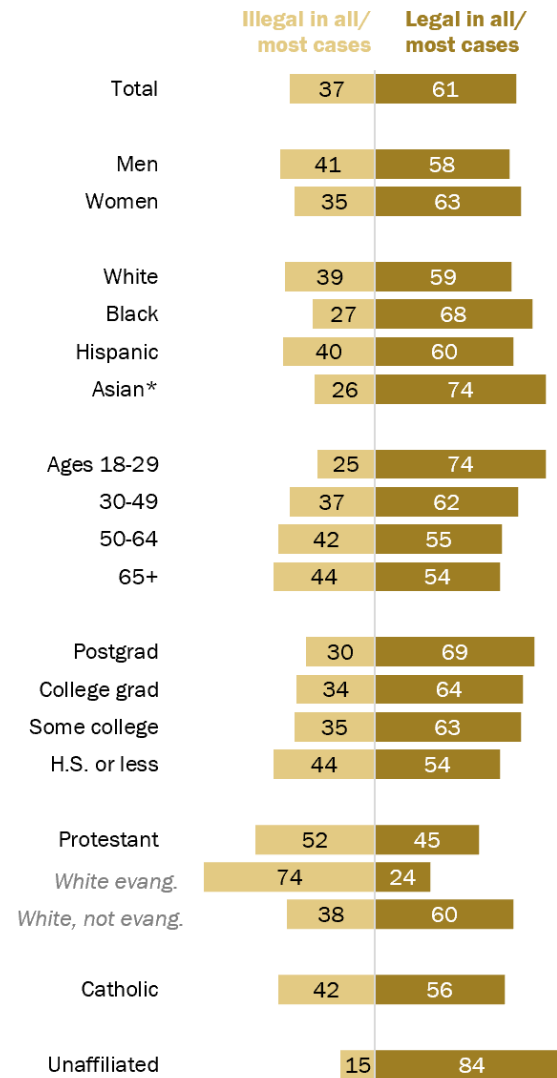
There are ideological differences within both parties over abortion, though the divide is starker within the GOP. Among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents, 60% of moderates and liberals say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, compared with just 27% of conservative Republicans.

While liberal Democrats are 18 percentage points more likely than conservative and moderate Democrats to say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, wide majorities of both groups (90% and 72%, respectively) say this.

Support for legal abortion varies by race and ethnicity, education and religious affiliation.

Modest gender gap in views of whether abortion should be legal

% who say abortion should be ...



* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.

Notes: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanic adults are of any race. No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Majorities of adults across racial and ethnic groups say abortion should be legal in all or most cases. White adults and Hispanic adults, however, are slightly less likely to say this than Black and Asian adults. Roughly six-in-ten White (59%) and Hispanic adults (60%) say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, compared with larger majorities of Black (68%) and Asian (74%) adults.

Support for legal abortion is greater among those with higher levels of education. While majorities of those with a postgraduate degree (69%), bachelor's degree (64%) and those

with some college experience (63%) say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, adults with no more than a high school education are more divided on the issue: 54% say abortion should be legal in at least most cases, while 44% say abortion should be *illegal* in all or most cases.

White evangelical Protestants continue to be opposed to abortion in all or most cases. Nearly three-quarters of White evangelicals (74%) say it should be illegal in all or most cases, while 24% say it should be legal in at least most cases. In contrast, a majority of White Protestants who are not evangelical (60%) say abortion should be legal in all or most cases. Religious “nones” – those who are religiously unaffiliated – overwhelmingly support legal abortion. Over eight-in-ten (84%) say it should be legal in all or most cases, while just 15% say it should be illegal.

Among the public overall, there is a modest gender divide in views of whether abortion should be legal: 58% of men and 63% of women say it should be legal in at least most cases. Within both parties, the views of men and women are largely aligned. Among Democrats, 80% of both men and women say abortion should be legal in all or most cases. Similarly, 36% of Republican men and 39% of Republican women say the same.

Note: This is an update of a post originally published July 17, 2017. Here are [the questions used](#) for this report, along with responses, and [its methodology](#).

Topics [Religion, Politics & Policy](#), [Political Parties](#), [Abortion](#), [Religion & Abortion](#)

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