



THE INSTITUTE FOR PRO-LIFE ADVANCEMENT

an initiative of Students for Life of America

In January 2019, the Polling Company, commissioned by Students for Life of America's Institute for Pro-Life Advancement, conducted polling on Millennial views on abortion, Planned Parenthood, and Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton. The following paper summarizes the key findings of the polling and provides strategic advice on how the pro-life movement should utilize the findings to further our mission of abolishing abortion.

INTRODUCTION

The 2018 confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh renewed the focus on the role of the courts in allowing or not allowing states to craft their own abortion policy. Further, pro-abortion groups regularly claim that the majority of Americans support *Roe v. Wade* as well as taxpayer funding of the abortion giant, Planned Parenthood. It is often assumed that Millennials lead the charge in their support for both.

But, most polling on *Roe v. Wade* and Planned Parenthood lacks nuance. For example, polls on *Roe* generally fail to explain what *Roe* and its companion case, *Doe v. Bolton*, actually did, which was legalize abortion up until the moment of birth. Additionally, though polls do appear to show that 7 in 10 support *Roe v. Wade*, a 2013 poll showed that only 62% of people knew *Roe* dealt with abortion.¹

Similarly, Planned Parenthood pushes deceptive polling that says 7 in 10 Americans support taxpayer funding of the organization. But, those poll questions usually do not mention their abortion monopoly. For example, a poll by the Kaiser Foundation states, "Three-quarters of the public support continuing current federal Medicaid funding to Planned Parenthood to pay for non-abortion services received by people on Medicaid" skewing the fact that Medicaid dollars can subsidize abortion.² Planned Parenthood also states on their website that 80% of people oppose defunding of the organization. Yet, the question the survey respondents were asked failed to mention abortion. It was this, "If you knew that federal government funding to Planned Parenthood was being used only for non-abortion health issues such as breast cancer screening, would you still favor cutting off funding to Planned Parenthood?"

¹ <https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/roe-wade-abortion-recent-polls-overstate-public-support/>

² <https://www.kff.org/health-reform/poll-finding/kaiser-health-tracking-poll-aca-replacement-plans-womens-health/>

Students for Life has consistently tested various messaging on high school and college campuses to see which produce the most conversion on views related to abortion and Planned Parenthood. In fact, the questions used in this poll derive from our own experience and conversations on campuses. For example, we've brought displays to campuses showing medically-accurate depictions of late-term abortions, asked students to vote on whether Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) or Planned Parenthood should receive our taxpayer dollars, and explained where the Democratic, Republican, and Libertarian party platforms stand on abortion.

During our "We Don't Need Planned Parenthood" campus tour, we asked passersby to vote (*using a wooden nickel*) for who they preferred their tax dollars going to: FQHCs or Planned Parenthood. After learning about the services both Planned Parenthood and FQHCs provide, the vast majority of students voted for FQHCs - even if they identified as pro-choice. We even had several take their wooden nickel out of the Planned Parenthood funding box after reading our display and talking to our team members.

When we hosted our "Cycle of Corruption" tour about the major American political parties and their platforms on abortion, students were shocked that Democrats was so extreme on the issue. Additionally, they were turned off when learning Planned Parenthood pledged to spend more than \$30 million to fund pro-abortion political candidates during the 2016 election cycle.

When we toured with our "They Feel Pain" display this fall, again, students were shocked. We heard countless stories of students who had no idea that human fetuses are capable of feeling pain, how abortions are committed, or even that abortion after the fetus can feel pain is legal in their state. There were minds changed, and many students who walked up pro-abortion ended up signing our petition to ban 20-week abortions.

This past year, when California legislators tried to ram through SB 320, the bill that would've mandated all public California universities to distribute the abortion pill (RU-486), we launched a campaign against it. This "RU-Serious" campaign explained to students the danger of chemical abortions in their dorm rooms and saw even pro-choice students sign our petition to the California legislature.

These types of messages are working. We know because we use it on campuses, the battleground of the abortion fight, every single day across the country.

So, to this end, Students for Life's Institute for Pro-Life Advancement commissioned a poll that explicitly measured changes in attitude on subjects such as *Roe v. Wade* and Planned Parenthood both before and after participants were provided the real facts.

The results? While support for Planned Parenthood remains lukewarm, participants generally became more opposed to government funding of Planned Parenthood, more supportive of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), and more opposed to *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* after being provided the full picture.

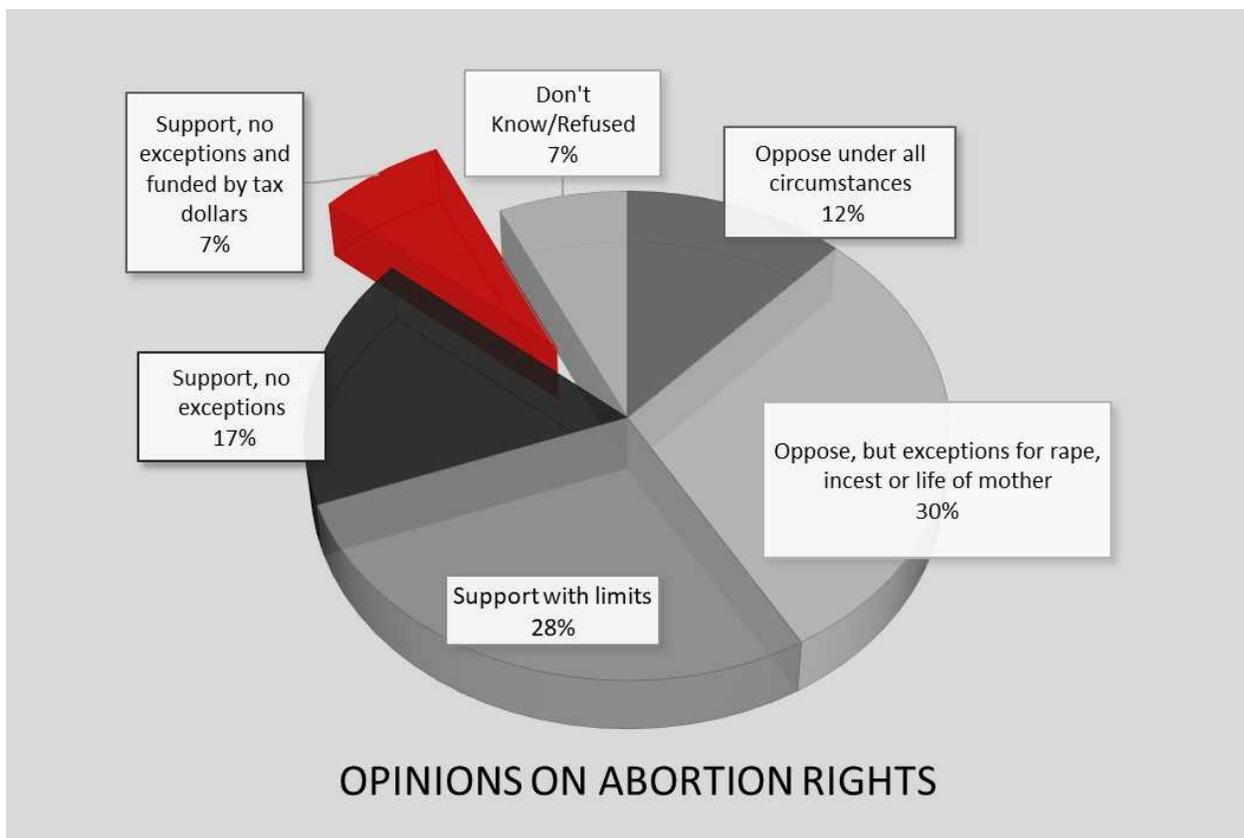
KEY FINDINGS

VIEW ON ABORTION

While respondents were equally divided on their label of pro-life and pro-choice (39 percent to 39 percent), our poll showed that the vast majority of Millennials are anti-abortion.

In fact, 70% said they support limits on abortion with 42 percent opposing abortion broadly and 28 percent supporting limits through specific policies like parental notification, limiting abortion later in pregnancy like at 5 months of pregnancy and beyond, and opposition to government funding of abortion.

But just as powerful as the support for commonsense limits on abortion was the lack of support for the radical abortion policy that is pushed as the views of Millennials – **ONLY 7 PERCENT supported abortion without any exceptions and funded by tax dollars, [the position articulated in the Democratic Party platform.](#)**



VOTING ON ABORTION

Looking at the current environment, in which abortion policy resides primarily with the Supreme Court, **65 percent of Millennials surveyed said they want to vote on abortion-related policy** with only 16 percent saying they wanted the policy to remain as is. This is key as reversing *Roe* and bringing the question of abortion legality back to individual states is key to our mission of making abortion illegal.

ROE V. WADE AND DOE V. BOLTON

The first question participants were asked was how they felt about *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*. The **initial result was that 40% supported the court decisions and 12% opposed**, with 21% saying it depends/neutral and 27% saying there were unsure/refused.

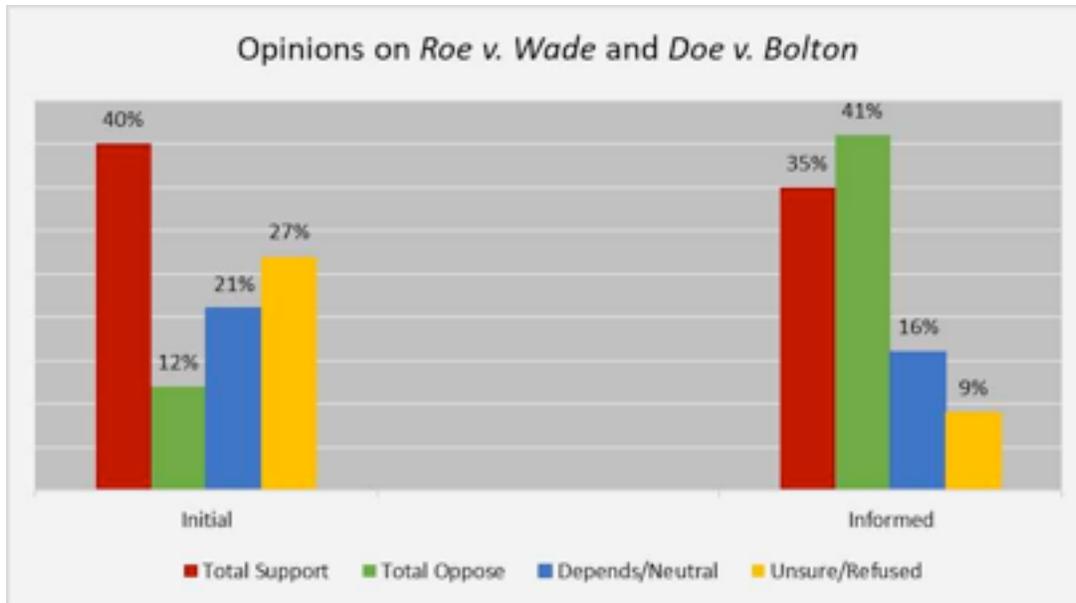
But, after being told that “*Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, companion Supreme Court cases, allow for abortions to be performed in all 9 months of pregnancy, up until the moment of birth”, the **results changed drastically**.

Support dropped from 40% to 30% for *Roe* and *Doe*, while **opposition to *Roe* moved from 12% to 51 %**, with only 20% remaining unsure/neutral/undecided.

Participants were then told that these court cases had been used to justify sending tax dollars to abortion vendors, and the numbers remained virtually the same, showing that people do not support their tax dollars being used for abortions.

Support for overturning *Roe* and *Doe* increased even further after participants learned that the cases had been used to justify sex selective abortions or using abortion for contraception (abortions of convenience, in other words), 54% of respondents saying they opposed *Roe* and *Doe*.

Interestingly, more respondents than not support *Roe*'s reversal. When we asked directly about support for overturning *Roe* and returning abortion to the states, **41percent supported *Roe*'s reversal, with 33 percent opposed**, and 27 percent undecided, leaving room for conversation.



PLANNED PARENTHOOD

As mentioned earlier, Planned Parenthood often states that 70% or more of citizens support funding Planned Parenthood, but those polls generally state that Planned Parenthood does not receive money for abortions, which ignores the fungibility of tax dollars.

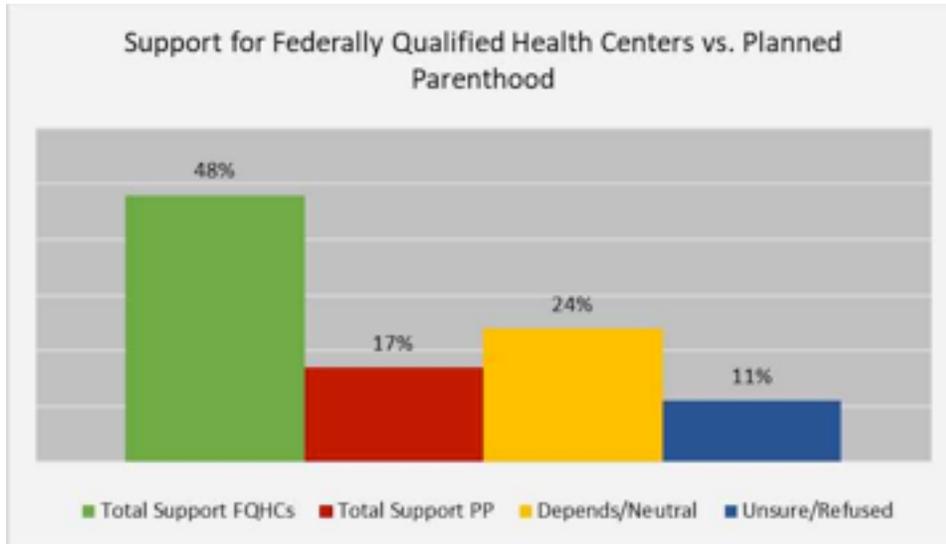
Respondents were first asked straightforward if they had a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Planned Parenthood. 54% had a favorable opinion while 23% had an unfavorable opinion.

But, after being told various facts about Planned Parenthood, support generally dropped. After learning that Planned Parenthood is the nation's largest abortion vendor and commits more than 321,000 abortions per year, only 41% of participants had a favorable opinion, while 36% of people had an unfavorable opinion.

After finding out that Planned Parenthood grosses \$1 billion per year, has a profit of \$98 million per year, and spent \$30 million on elections in 2016, favorability dropped further. Only 35% of people had a favorable opinion of Planned Parenthood, while 41% had an unfavorable opinion. Finally, after finding out that Planned Parenthood's abortion services are increasing while their breast exams, Pap tests, HIV, HPV treatments, and prenatal services are declining by more than 37%, **favorability dropped to 32% while unfavorability rose to 43%.**

When people believe Planned Parenthood is a charitable, healthcare organization, their support is higher. When people realize how central abortion and political lobbying is to their money-making organization, their support drops. Overall, **at the end of the poll, only 43% of participants had a favorable opinion of Planned Parenthood.**

Lastly, participants were asked, after being provided the facts on Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Planned Parenthood, who they believed was most deserving of receiving taxpayer dollars. **By a nearly 3 to 1 margin, 48% of participants chose FQHCs, while only 17% chose Planned Parenthood.**



RU-486

A chemical abortion usually refers to using RU-486. In 2018, Students for Life worked to defeat legislation in California, SB-320, that would have mandated abortion drugs like RU-486 be dispensed through every public campus health centers. With the legislation being reintroduced in 2019 and other states likely to follow suit, it is important that the issue of chemical abortion drugs be addressed by the pro-life movement.

Participants in our poll were asked if they believed abortion drugs should be allowed to be sold online and without a doctor's exam. Only 24% of participants said they supported this, while **56% said they opposed.**

TAKEAWAYS FOR THE PRO-LIFE MOVEMENT

In order to reach Millennials, and the broader culture, we must continue to speak the truth on what Planned Parenthood funding, *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, and RU-486 mean. We must not let the other side define the terms of debate in broad terms like "women's health" or "reproductive rights."

ROE V. WADE

We can win when talking about *Roe* and *Doe*, but education is key. At Students for Life, we've

seen this time and time again. During our Fall 2016 “Cycle of Corruption” tour, students, anti- and pro-abortion, were shocked at the extremism of the Democratic National Committee’s platform on abortion. Over and over again, we heard from students who had no idea their party supported legal abortion up until the moment of birth, taxpayer funded. During this poll, posters reported that they received several questions and negative feedback when participants were asked if they were okay with abortion being used as a form of contraception or if the mother didn’t like the gender of the baby.

A DESIRE TO BE HEARD

While the abortion lobby uses the reversal of *Roe* and *Doe* as a scare tactic, it’s not so scary to Millennials, if we explain what the reversal of *Roe* would really mean. 65% of Millennials surveyed said they wanted to be able to vote on the issue of abortion.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD

When talking about Planned Parenthood, we must continue to explain how Planned Parenthood does receive funding for abortions, because Medicaid and Title X funds subsidize their business operation and how their “good” non-abortion services continue to decline.

Students for Life has toured hundreds of campuses with our “Planned Parenthood Project” and “We Don’t Need Planned Parenthood” displays, at each campus, we’ve seen pro-abortion and anti-abortion students shift in their opinion about Planned Parenthood after learning the truth of their operations. In fact, Planned Parenthood’s own annual report is the most powerful tool we bring with us.

We’ve found with our “We Don’t Need Planned Parenthood” display that when asked to vote on who should receive their tax dollars, Planned Parenthood or FQHCs, the choice was overwhelmingly for the FQHCs, even amongst self-described pro-choice students.

Our poll proves this point. The pro-life movement must continue to educate about the thousands of FQHCs and Pregnancy Resource Centers (PRCs) available to Americans in need as, sadly, many don’t know these resources exist.

LABELS

As we’ve stated in previous white papers, the pro-life movement has a branding issue. As we continue moving forward, the exact definition of what it means to be pro-life seems to vary widely, from anti-abortion all the way to anti-homelessness. As we unify as a movement to solve this branding problem, it is helpful to know that this generation doesn’t care for labels in general.

When assessing groups of people (especially this demographic), it seems to be crucial that the questions are phrased using facts, details, and definitions as opposed to blanket statements. A participant may not want to be called pro-life, but they may also think that abortions after the heart starts beating are wrong and that Americans shouldn't be forced to subsidize abortions. So they are/lean pro-life... they just don't want to be called by that name.

SKEPTICISM OF POLITICS

Millennials, and Americans in general, have a skepticism of large corporations and the political process. This is most likely why support for Planned Parenthood dropped when it's decline in basic services, profitability, and political spending became known to respondents. Therefore, we should continue to emphasize how Planned Parenthood is still a national corporation that is one of the biggest lobbyists in Washington, D.C. It also uses its multi-million PR machine to mask its true business, aborting over 321,000 babies per year.