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America's Abortion Quandary

A majority of Americans say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, but many are open to restrictions; many opponents of legal abortion say it should be legal in some circumstances

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How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this study to examine the public's attitudes about abortion in the United States. For this analysis, we surveyed 10,441 U.S. adults from March 7-13, 2022. Everyone who took part in the survey is a member of the Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses, which gives nearly all U.S. adults a chance of selection. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. Read more about the [ATP's methodology](#).

Here are the [questions used for this analysis](#), along with responses, and its [methodology](#).

The Center undertook this survey because the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to announce a decision about abortion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* before the end of its current term. Following the initial arguments, many observers anticipated that the high court could partially or completely overturn *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, two landmark decisions that prevented states from significantly restricting abortion before a fetus is considered viable outside the womb. And after this survey was completed, a [leaked draft of the majority opinion](#) in *Dobbs* published by Politico this week suggested that the court's upcoming decision would indeed completely overturn *Roe* and *Casey*. In anticipation of the court's decision, [several states already have made moves](#) in the direction of stricter abortion regulations, while others have [moved to protect abortion access](#). The new survey did not ask specifically about *Roe*, but [previous Center studies](#) have found that most Americans say the court should not completely overturn that decision.

Given the nuances of many people's opinions on the topic, measuring views on abortion is not easy. There are a vast number of ways to frame questions about the legality (or morality) of abortion when combining multiple possible factors, such as the stage of the pregnancy, the circumstances of the pregnant person, the health of the fetus, and many other possible complications or scenarios.

Nonetheless, the new survey seeks to explore some dimensions of the debate, beginning with the public's views on whether abortion should broadly be legal or illegal, and then moving on to probe views on specific circumstances. Because the survey could not take every possible scenario into account, several questions offered respondents the option to say "it depends" rather than taking a more firm or clear position on whether abortion should be legal or illegal in particular situations. Respondents also were asked about whether women or their doctors should be punished for

abortions performed illegally, how important the issue is to voters in the 2022 midterms, and how much influence religion has on their views of abortion.

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America's Abortion Quandary

A majority of Americans say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, but many are open to restrictions; many opponents of legal abortion say it should be legal in some circumstances

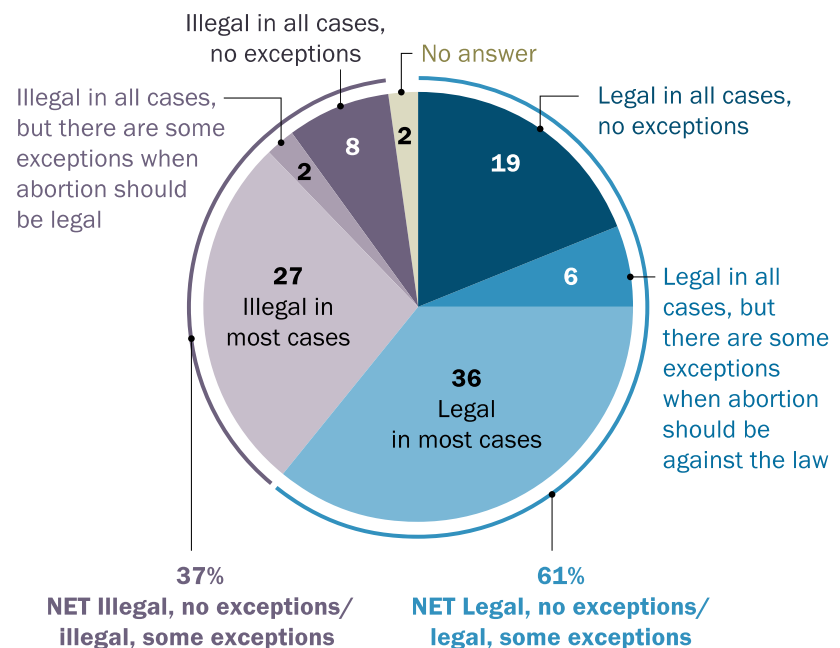
The abortion debate in America is often framed as a legal binary, with “pro-life” people on one side, seeking to restrict abortion’s availability, and “pro-choice” people on the other, opposing government restrictions on abortion.

But as the country approaches what could be a watershed moment in the history of abortion laws and policies, relatively few Americans on either side of the debate take an absolutist view on the legality of abortion – either supporting or opposing it at all times, regardless of circumstances.

A new Pew Research Center survey explores in detail the nuances of the public’s attitudes on this issue. The survey was conducted March 7-13, 2022 – after the Supreme Court’s oral arguments on a case this term challenging the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that established a federal right to abortion, but before the May 2 [publication of a leaked draft](#) of a Supreme Court majority opinion that suggests the court is poised to strike down *Roe*.

Majority of adults say abortion should be legal in some cases, illegal in others

% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be ...



Note: Pie chart shows combined result of three separate questions. Adults who answered that abortion should be legal in all cases but skipped the follow-up question were coded as “legal in all cases, no exceptions.” Adults who answered that abortion should be illegal in all cases but skipped the follow-up question were coded as “illegal in all cases, no exceptions.” See topline for full details.

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

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Nearly one-in-five U.S. adults (19%) say that abortion should be legal in all cases, with no exceptions. Fewer (8%) say abortion should be illegal in every case, without exception. By contrast, 71% either say it should be mostly legal or mostly illegal, or say there are exceptions to their blanket support for, or opposition to, legal abortion.

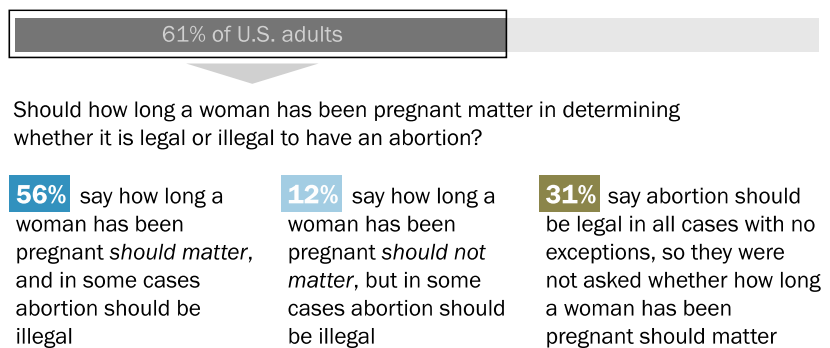
As in the past, more Americans say abortion should be legal in all or most circumstances (61%) than illegal in all or most circumstances (37%). But in many ways, the public's attitudes are contingent upon such circumstances as when an abortion takes place during a woman's pregnancy, whether the pregnancy endangers a woman's life and whether a baby would have severe health problems.

There is evidence that many people are cross-pressured on this issue. For example, more than half of Americans who generally support abortion rights – by saying it should be legal in “most” or “all” cases – also say the timing of an abortion (i.e., how far along the pregnancy is) should be a factor in determining its legality (56%).

The same share of people who generally support legal abortion say abortion providers should be required to get the consent of a parent or guardian before performing an abortion on a minor (56%).

Majority of abortion rights supporters say how long a woman has been pregnant should matter in determining legality of abortion

Opinions *among the 61% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be legal in “most” or “all” cases*



Before performing an abortion, should doctors/providers be required to notify a parent/legal guardian if person seeking abortion is under 18?



How well does this statement describe your views? “Human life begins at conception, so a fetus is a person with rights.”



Note: Those who did not answer the questions above are not shown.

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

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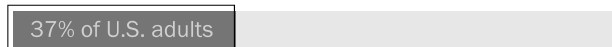
And about a third of Americans who generally support legal abortion (33%) say the statement “human life begins at conception, so a fetus is a person with rights” describes their own view at least “somewhat” well.

At the same time, large shares of those who generally oppose abortion say it should be legal in certain situations or say their position depends on the circumstances. For example, among those who say abortion should be against the law in most or all cases, nearly half (46%) say it should be legal if the pregnancy threatens the health or life of the woman. An additional 27% say “it depends” in this situation, while 27% say abortion should be illegal even in circumstances that threaten the health or life of the pregnant woman.

More than a third of abortion opponents (36%) say it should be legal if the pregnancy results from rape, with 27% saying “it depends” and 37% expressing opposition to legal abortion even in this situation. And four-in-ten abortion opponents (41%) say the statement “the decision about whether to have an abortion should belong solely to the pregnant woman” describes their own view at least “somewhat” well.

Many who generally oppose abortion nevertheless say it should be legal in certain situations

Opinions among the 37% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be illegal in “most” or “all” cases



Abortion should be ___ if pregnancy threatens the woman's life or health



Abortion should be ___ if the pregnancy is the result of rape



How well does this statement describe your views? “The decision about whether to have an abortion should belong solely to the pregnant woman.”



Note: Those who did not answer the questions above are not shown. The “illegal” categories include those who said previously that abortion should be illegal in all cases; they were not asked these questions.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022. “America’s Abortion Quandary”

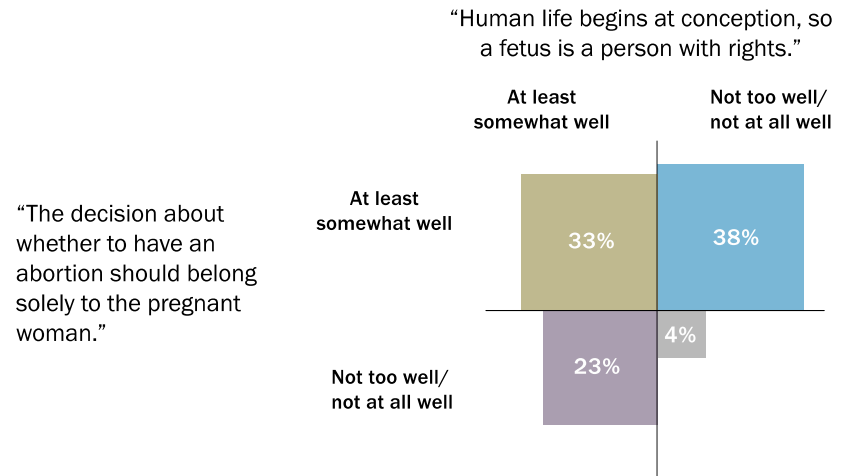
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Among Americans overall, most people (72%) say that “the decision about whether to have an abortion should belong solely to the pregnant woman” describes their views at least somewhat well, and more than half (56%) say the same about the statement “human life begins at conception, so a fetus is a person with rights.”

A third of Americans hold these seemingly conflicting views about the autonomy of pregnant women and the rights of the fetus at the same time, saying that *both* statements describe their views either extremely well, very well, or somewhat well.

One-in-three adults say both that human life begins at conception and that the decision to have an abortion belongs solely to the woman

% who say each statement describes their views ...



Note: Those who answered neither question are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.
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Moreover, the survey finds a distinction between how Americans feel about abortion in moral terms and in legal terms. While many (47%) see abortion as morally wrong in most or all cases, fewer (22%) say that abortion should be illegal in every situation where they believe it is immoral. Nearly half of U.S. adults (48%) say there are circumstances in which abortion is morally wrong but should nevertheless be legal.

And while nearly six-in-ten adults (57%) say they think stricter abortion laws would reduce the number of abortions performed in the United States, similar or larger shares say that increasing support for pregnant women (65%), expanding sex education (60%) and increasing support for parents (58%) would have the same effect.

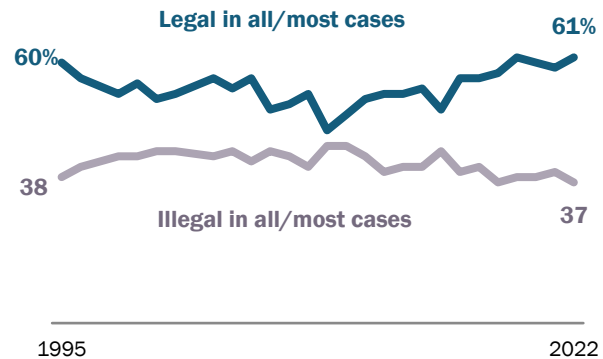
These are among the key findings of a new Pew Research Center survey, conducted among 10,441 adults on the Center’s [American Trends Panel](#). The Center has asked the public about their opinions on abortion for decades, but many of the questions in this survey are new, aimed at providing a more nuanced picture of public opinion.

On the Center’s long-running question about the legality of abortion – which asks whether it should generally be illegal in all cases, illegal in most cases, legal in most cases, or legal in all cases – public views have remained relatively stable in recent years. But support for legal abortion is as high today as at any point in surveys asking this question since 1995.

Most Americans typically do not give a lot of thought to issues around abortion: 36% say, prior to taking the survey in March, they had given a lot of thought to abortion-related issues.

Americans’ views of abortion, 1995-2022

% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be ...



Note: Data from 2019 and later from surveys conducted online via the American Trends Panel. 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. Those who did not answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022. “America’s Abortion Quandary”

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Broad public agreement that abortion should be legal if pregnancy endangers a woman’s health or is the result of rape

While most Americans do not have absolutist views about abortion – desiring neither to see it completely outlawed nor permitted without exception – there are certain situations in which there is clear consensus abortion should be legal.

Nearly three-quarters of adults (73%) say abortion should be legal if the woman’s life or health is endangered by the pregnancy, while just 11% say it should be illegal. And about seven-in-ten say abortion should be legal if the pregnancy is a result of rape, with just 15% saying it should be illegal in this case.

A smaller majority of U.S. adults (53%) say abortion should be legal if the baby is likely to be born with severe disabilities or health problems – though in this situation, too, a far larger share say abortion should be legal than say it should be against the law (19% say it should be illegal in such cases, while a quarter say “it depends”).

A majority says abortion should be legal if woman’s life or health at risk; just one-in-ten say it should be illegal in this case

% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be ____ in each of the following situations

Pregnancy threatens the woman’s life or health



Pregnancy is the result of rape



Baby likely to have severe disabilities or health problems



Note: Those who said abortion should be legal in all cases, without exception, or that abortion should be illegal in all cases, without exception, are included in the “legal” or “illegal” columns, respectively. Those who declined to answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022. “America’s Abortion Quandary”

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Most Americans open to some restrictions on abortion

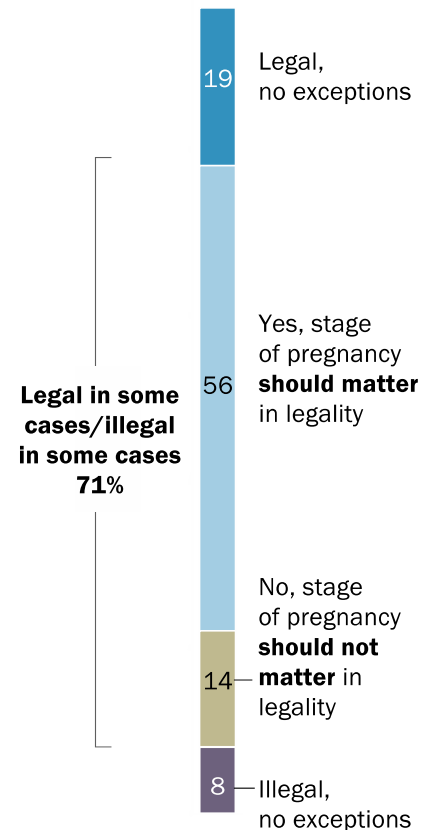
At the same time, the survey shows that large numbers of Americans favor certain restrictions on access to abortions. For example, seven-in-ten say doctors should be required to notify a parent or legal guardian of minors seeking abortions. And most of those who say abortion should be legal in some cases and illegal in others say that how long a woman has been pregnant should be a factor in determining whether abortion is legal or illegal (56% among all U.S. adults).

Combined with the 8% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be against the law in all cases with no exceptions, this means that nearly two-thirds of the public thinks abortion either should be entirely illegal at *every* stage of a pregnancy or should become illegal, at least in some cases, *at some point* during the course of a pregnancy.

On the other side, combining the 56% of U.S. adults who say how long a woman has been pregnant should matter in determining the legality of abortion with the 19% who say abortion should be legal in all cases also means that about three-quarters of the public thinks abortion either should be entirely legal at *every* stage of a pregnancy or should be legal, at least in some cases, *at some point* in a pregnancy.

More than half of U.S. adults say stage of pregnancy should be factor in determining legality of abortion

% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be ...



Note: Figures may not add to subtotals indicated due to rounding. Those who did not answer the initial question about abortion being legal or illegal, or the question about whether the stage of the pregnancy should matter, are not shown.

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

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When, exactly, during a pregnancy should abortion be legal, and at what point should it become illegal? To help answer this question, the survey posed follow-up queries about three periods: six weeks (when cardiac activity – sometimes called a fetal heartbeat – can be detected), 14 weeks (roughly the end of the first trimester), and 24 weeks (near the end of the second trimester).

The survey data shows that as pregnancy progresses, opposition to legal abortion grows and support for legal abortion declines. Americans are about twice as likely to say abortion should be legal at six weeks than to say it should be illegal at this stage of a pregnancy: 44% of U.S. adults say abortion should be legal at six weeks (including those who say it should be legal in *all* cases without exception), 21% say it should be illegal at six weeks (including those who say abortion should *always* be illegal), and another 19% say whether it should be legal or not at six weeks “depends.” (An additional 14% say the stage of pregnancy shouldn’t factor into determining whether abortion is legal or illegal, including 7% who generally think abortion should be legal, and 6% who generally think it should be illegal.)

At 14 weeks, the share saying abortion should be legal declines to 34%, while 27% say illegal and 22% say “it depends.”

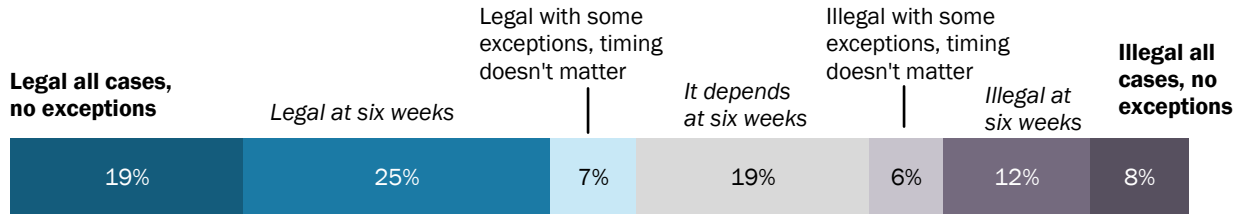
When asked about the legality of abortion at 24 weeks of pregnancy (described as a point when a healthy fetus could survive outside the woman’s body, with medical attention), Americans are about twice as likely to say abortion should be illegal as to say it should be legal at this time point (43% vs. 22%), with 18% saying “it depends.”

However, in a follow-up question, 44% of those who initially say abortion should be illegal at this late stage go on to say that, *in cases where the woman’s life is threatened or the baby will be born with severe disabilities*, abortion should be legal at 24 weeks. An additional 48% answer the follow-up question by saying “it depends,” and 7% reiterate that abortion should be illegal at this stage of pregnancy even if the woman’s life is in danger or the baby faces severe disabilities.

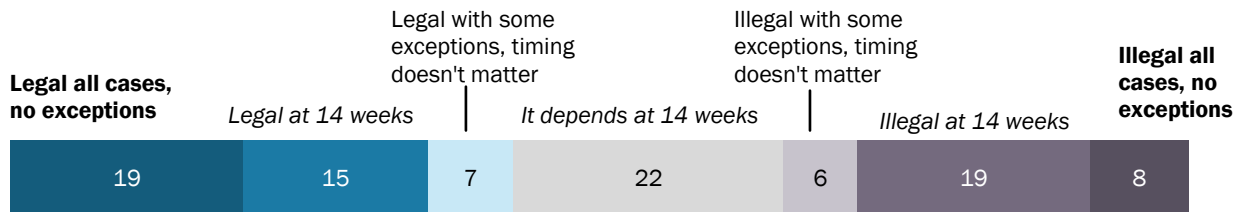
Opposition to legal abortion increases at later stages of pregnancy; at 24 weeks, roughly twice as many adults say abortion should be illegal as say it should be legal

% of U.S. adults who say ...

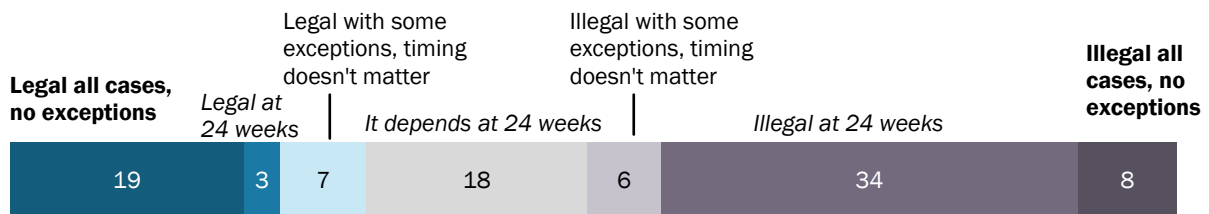
As you may know, **six weeks into a pregnancy** is about when cardiac activity (sometimes called a fetal heartbeat) can be detected, and before many women know they are pregnant. Should abortion at that point be ...



Thinking specifically about a pregnancy that is **14 weeks along** (roughly at the end of the first trimester), do you think abortion at that point should be ...



As you may know, **24 weeks into a pregnancy** (near the end of the second trimester) is about when a healthy fetus could survive outside the woman's body with medical attention. Do you think abortion at that point should be ...



Note: Adults who said abortion should be legal or illegal in all cases with no exceptions were not asked questions about whether how long a woman has been pregnant should factor into determining abortion's legality or specific time points when abortion should be legal. Adults who said abortion should be legal with some exceptions or illegal with some exceptions, but the stage of pregnancy should not matter in determining whether abortion should be legal or illegal, were not asked any questions about specific time points when abortion should be legal. Those who said abortion should be legal at 14 weeks were coded as also saying it should be legal at six weeks, but were not asked the question about abortions performed six weeks into pregnancy. Those who said abortion should be illegal at 14 weeks were coded as also saying it should be illegal at 24 weeks, but were not asked the question about 24 weeks. See topline for full details about filtering logic.

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

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Views of penalties for abortion in situations where it is illegal

If most people think there are at least some situations in which abortion should be against the law, an obvious follow-up question is: Who should face legal penalties if an abortion is performed illegally? And what should those penalties entail?

The survey asked whether four types of people should face penalties if an abortion takes place in a situation where it is illegal: doctors or medical providers who perform abortions, women who have abortions, people who help pay for abortions and people who help find or schedule abortions.

Majority of adults say a doctor who performs an abortion ‘in a situation where it is illegal’ should face penalties

% of U.S. adults who say each of the following should face penalties if an abortion is carried out in a situation where it is illegal

	Should not face penalties	Jail time	Community service	Not sure	NET Should face penalties
Doctor or provider	38%	25%	18%	17%	60%
Woman who had the abortion	50	14	16	17	47

	Should not face penalties	Should face penalties
Person who helped pay for the abortion	54	43
Person who helped find/schedule the abortion	57	41

Note: Respondents were not asked what specific types of penalties people who helped pay for or who helped find/schedule the abortion should receive if the abortion was done illegally. Figures may not add to subtotals indicated due to rounding. Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022. “America’s Abortion Quandary”

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Six-in-ten U.S. adults say that if doctors and other providers perform abortions in situations where it is illegal, then they should face penalties – including 25% who say the doctors/providers should serve jail time for performing abortions illegally, 18% who say they should face fines or community service, and 17% who aren’t sure what type of penalty would be appropriate. In response to a separate question, 31% of Americans say doctors should lose their medical licenses for performing an abortion illegally.

Compared with views on penalizing doctors, there is less support for punishing women who obtain an abortion illegally or for punishing people who help find, schedule and pay for the procedures. Nearly half of U.S. adults (47%) say women who obtain an abortion illegally should be penalized for doing so, while half say such women should not face penalties. Roughly four-in-ten favor legal punishments for people who help pay for an abortion that is performed illegally (43%) or who help find and schedule it (41%).

Support for punishing those who perform or obtain abortions illegally is tied to views about whether abortion should be legal or illegal in the first place. Still, 55% of those who say abortion should be legal, with some exceptions, say doctors who perform abortions in situations where it is illegal should face penalties, as do overwhelming shares of those who say abortion should always or mostly be illegal. See Chapter 1 for details.

Partisan differences in views of abortion

There are wide differences between the views of Democrats and Republicans on abortion. Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to say abortion should be legal in most or all cases, while Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say it should be *illegal* in most or all cases.

And in every specific scenario asked about in the survey – including situations where pregnancy threatens the life or health of the woman, or where pregnancy is the result of rape – Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say abortion should be legal.

Still, most Democrats say there are at least some instances in which abortion should be illegal, and most Republicans say there are at least some instances in which abortion should be legal, including when the life or health of the pregnant woman is at risk and when the pregnancy is the result of rape.

About half of Democrats and roughly two-thirds of Republicans say the stage of pregnancy should be a factor in determining abortion's legality. Four-in-ten Democrats and independents who lean toward the Democratic Party (40%) say the statement “human life begins at conception, so a fetus is a person with rights” describes their own view at least somewhat well, and more than half of

Majorities of Democrats and Republicans say abortion should be legal in some cases, illegal in others

% of U.S. adults who say ...

	Rep/ lean Rep %	Dem/lean Dem %
Abortion should be legal in all cases, no exceptions	6	30
There are some cases where abortion should be legal, others where it should be illegal	79	65
Mostly legal	31	50
Mostly illegal	47	15
Abortion should be illegal in all cases, no exceptions	13	4
<hr/>		
Abortion should be legal if pregnancy threatens woman's life/health*	62	84
Should be illegal*	16	6
It depends	20	8
<hr/>		
Abortion should be legal if pregnancy is result of rape*	56	83
Should be illegal*	23	7
It depends	19	8
<hr/>		
<i>Should how long a woman has been pregnant matter in determining whether it is legal or illegal to have an abortion?</i>		
Yes, stage of pregnancy should be factor in legality	64	52
No, stage of pregnancy should not factor into legality	14	13
Refused	<u>1</u>	<u><1</u>
NET Abortion should be legal in some cases, illegal in others	79	65

* Figures shown for those who say abortion should be legal (or illegal) in these situations include those who say abortion should be legal (or illegal) in all cases without exception.

Note: Figures may not add to subtotals indicated due to rounding. Those who did not answer are not shown.

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

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Republicans and GOP leaners (55%) say the same about the statement “the decision about whether to have an abortion should belong solely to the pregnant woman.”

Women are more likely than men to have thought ‘a lot’ about abortion, but there are only modest gender differences in views of legality

More than half of U.S. adults – including 60% of women and 51% of men – say that women should have a greater say than men in setting abortion policy. Just 3% of U.S. adults say men should have more influence over abortion policy than women, with the remainder (39%) saying women and men should have equal say when it comes to making abortion policy.

The survey also finds that by some metrics, women report being closer to the issue than men. For example, women are more likely than men to say they have thought “a lot” about abortion (40% vs. 30%). They are also considerably more likely to say they personally know someone who has had an abortion (66% vs. 51%) – a gap that is evident across age groups, political parties and religious groups.

But there are only modest gender differences on the survey’s questions about abortion’s legality; women and men mostly agree with each other that abortion should be legal in cases of danger to the life or health of the pregnant woman and in the case of rape. More than half of both women and men agree that how long a woman has been pregnant should be a factor in determining whether abortion is legal in any given case. And while women are slightly more likely than men to say abortion

Modest gender differences in views of whether abortion should be legal

% of U.S. adults who say ...

	Women %	Men %
Abortion should be legal in all cases, no exceptions	21	17
There are some cases where abortion should be legal, others where it should be illegal	68	74
Mostly legal	42	41
Mostly illegal	26	33
Abortion should be illegal in all cases, no exceptions	9	8
Abortion should be legal if pregnancy threatens woman’s life/health*		
Should be legal	71	74
Should be illegal*	12	10
It depends	14	13
Abortion should be legal if pregnancy is result of rape*		
Should be legal	68	70
Should be illegal*	15	14
It depends	14	14
Should how long a woman has been pregnant matter in determining whether it is legal or illegal to have an abortion?		
Yes, stage of pregnancy should be factor in legality	55	58
No, stage of pregnancy should not factor into legality	12	15
Refused	<u>1</u>	<u><1</u>
NET Abortion should be legal in some cases, illegal in others	68	74

* Figures shown for those who say abortion should be legal (or illegal) in these situations include those who say abortion should be legal (or illegal) in all cases without exception.

Note: Figures may not add to subtotals indicated due to rounding. Those who did not answer are not shown.

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

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should be legal in all cases with no exceptions (21% vs. 17%), large majorities of both women (68%) and men (74%) say there are some cases where abortion should be legal and others where it should be illegal.

White evangelicals are most opposed to abortion – but majorities across Christian subgroups see gray areas

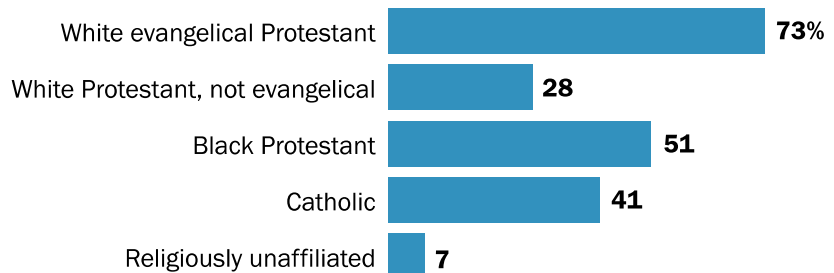
Among religious groups analyzed in the survey, White evangelical Protestants are most opposed to abortion. Nearly three-quarters say that abortion should be against the law in all cases without exception (21%) or that it should be illegal in most cases (53%). White evangelicals are also far more likely than U.S. adults who identify with other religious groups to say that life begins at conception and that the fetus is thus a person with rights; 86% of White evangelicals express this view.

White evangelicals are also more likely than those in other Christian groups to say their opinions on abortion are influenced by their religious beliefs.

At the other end of the spectrum, religious “nones” – U.S. adults who describe themselves, religiously, as atheists, agnostics or “nothing in particular” – are most supportive of legal abortion. Among religious “nones,” upwards of eight-in-ten say abortion should be legal in all cases with no exceptions (34%) or that it should be legal in most cases (51%). Self-described atheists are more absolutist in their opinions about abortion than any other religious group analyzed in the survey, with 53% saying abortion should be legal in all cases, no exceptions.

White evangelicals more likely than other Christians to say religion is very important in shaping their abortion views

% of U.S. adults who say religion is extremely or very important in shaping their views on abortion



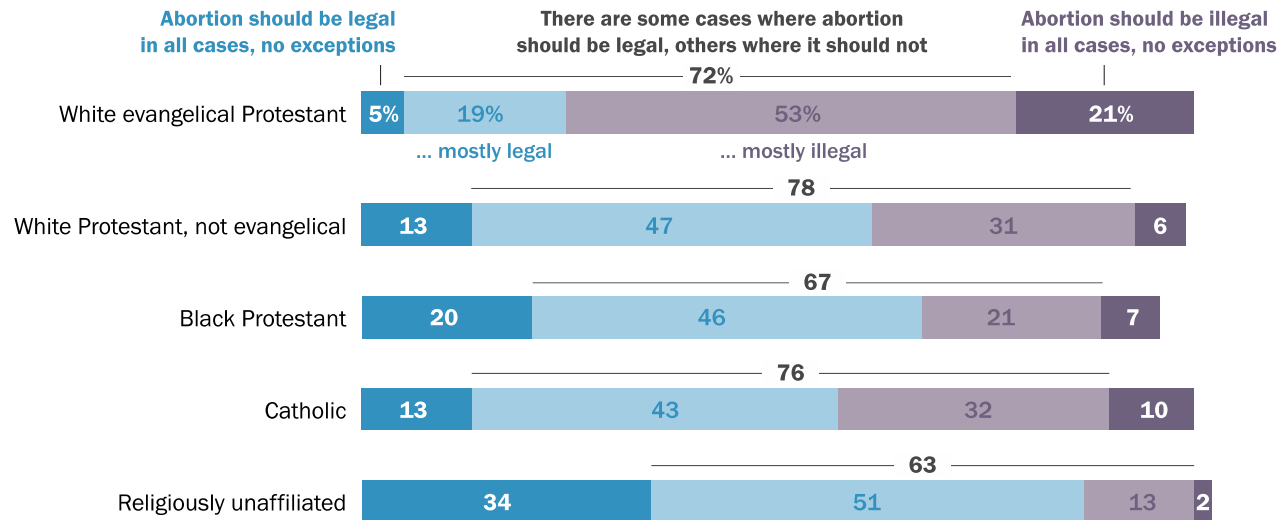
Note: Those who say religion is “somewhat,” “not too” or “not at all” important to their abortion views are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022. “America’s Abortion Quandary”

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White evangelicals are generally opposed to legal abortion, while religious ‘nones’ are broadly supportive, but majorities across groups say it should sometimes be legal, sometimes not

% of U.S. adults who say ...



Note: Figures may not add to subtotals indicated due to rounding. Those who did not answer are not shown.

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

“America’s Abortion Quandary”

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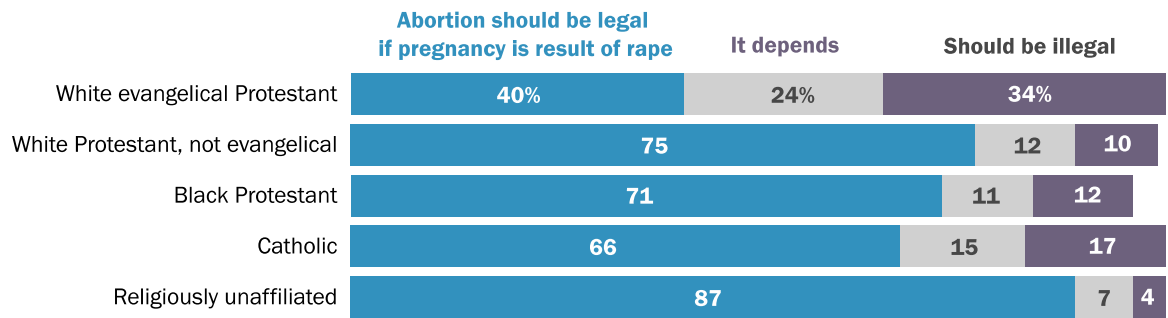
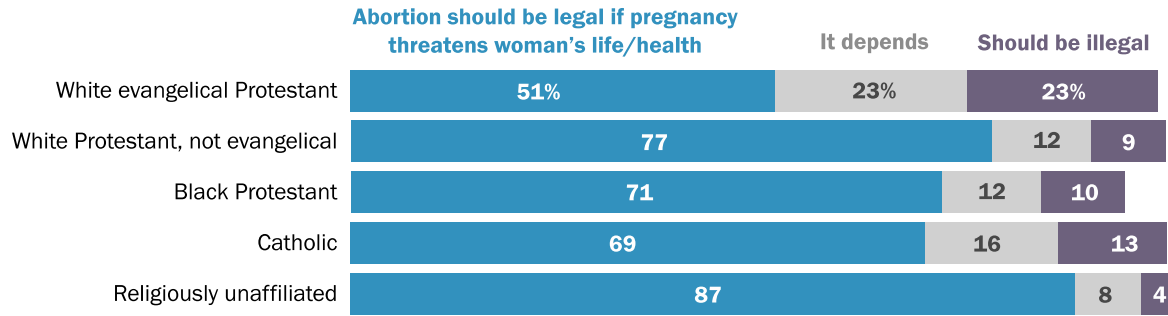
White Protestants who are not evangelical, Black Protestants, and Catholics tend to be less opposed to legal abortion than White evangelicals, but they are also less supportive of it than religious “nones.”

One commonality across these groups is that sizable numbers in all of them see the issue of abortion in shades of gray. Large majorities in every group – ranging from 63% of religious “nones” to 78% of White non-evangelical Protestants – say abortion should be legal in some circumstances and illegal in others. Half of White evangelicals (51%) say abortion should be legal if the pregnancy threatens the life or health of the woman. Half of religious “nones” (50%) say the stage of pregnancy should factor into decisions about whether abortion should be legal.

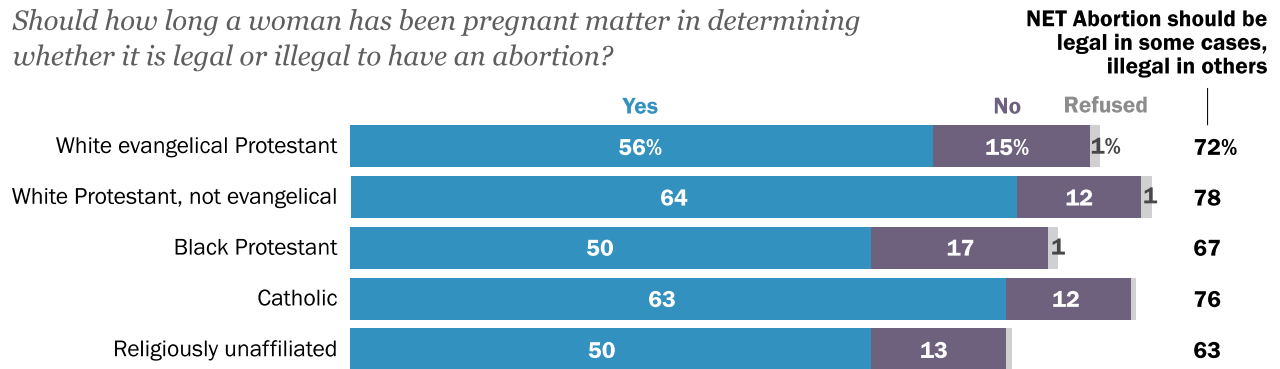
Although the survey was conducted among Americans of all religious backgrounds, including Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus, it did not obtain enough respondents who are religiously affiliated with non-Christian groups to report separately on their responses. Small subgroups of Christians are unable to be analyzed separately for the same reason.

Substantial support for legal abortion if pregnancy threatens woman’s health

% of U.S. adults who say ...



Should how long a woman has been pregnant matter in determining whether it is legal or illegal to have an abortion?



Note: Figures shown for those who say abortion should be legal (or illegal) if pregnancy threatens the woman's life/health or if it is the result of rape include those who say abortion should be legal (or illegal) in all cases without exception. Figures may not add to subtotals indicated due to rounding. Those who did not answer are not shown.

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

"America's Abortion Quandary"

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Guide to this report

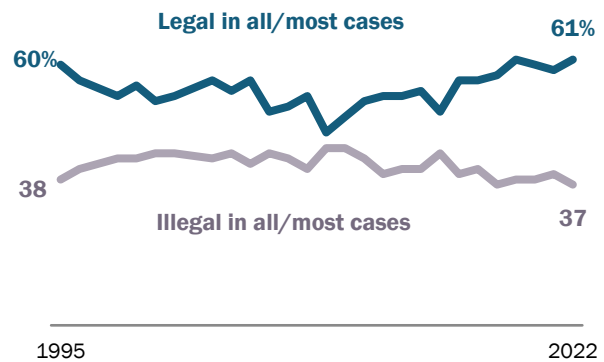
The remainder of this report discusses these findings in additional detail. Chapter 1 focuses on legal questions surrounding abortion. Chapter 2 examines the broader moral and religious questions surrounding the topic. Chapter 3 discusses the public's experiences and engagement with abortion.

1. Americans' views on whether, and in what circumstances, abortion should be legal

As the long-running debate over abortion reaches another [key moment at the Supreme Court](#) and in [state legislatures across the country](#), a majority of U.S. adults continue to say that abortion should be legal in all or most cases. About six-in-ten Americans (61%) say abortion should be legal in “all” or “most” cases, while 37% think abortion should be *illegal* in all or most cases. These views have changed little over the past several years: In 2019, for example, 61% of adults said abortion should be legal in all or most cases, while 38% said it should be illegal in all or most cases.

Americans' views of abortion, 1995-2022

% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be ...



Note: Data from 2019 and later from surveys conducted online via the American Trends Panel. 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. Those who did not answer are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022. “America’s Abortion Quandary”

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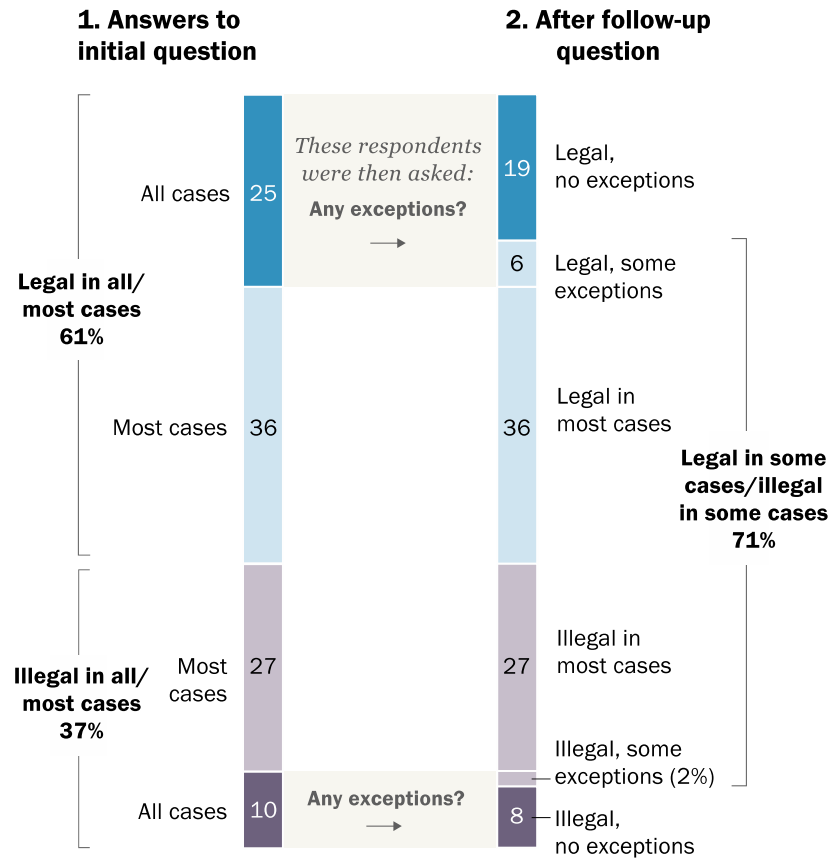
Most respondents in the new survey took one of the middle options when first asked about their views on abortion, saying either that abortion should be legal in *most* cases (36%) or illegal in *most* cases (27%).

Respondents who said abortion should either be legal in *all* cases or illegal in *all* cases received a follow-up question asking whether there should be any exceptions to such laws. Overall, 25% of adults initially said abortion should be legal in all cases, but about a quarter of this group (6% of all U.S. adults) went on to say that there should be some exceptions when abortion should be against the law.

One-in-ten adults initially answered that abortion should be illegal in all cases, but about one-in-five of these respondents (2% of all U.S. adults) followed up by saying that there are some exceptions when abortion should be permitted.

Large share of Americans say abortion should be legal in some cases and illegal in others

% who say abortion should be ...



Note: Figures may not add to subtotals indicated due to rounding. Those who did not answer the initial question about abortion being legal or illegal are not shown. Those who said legal in all cases but declined to say whether there should be exceptions are combined with "legal, no exceptions." Those who said illegal in all cases but declined to say whether there should be exceptions are combined with "illegal, no exceptions."

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022. "America's Abortion Quandary"

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Altogether, seven-in-ten Americans say abortion should be legal in some cases and illegal in others, including 42% who say abortion should be generally legal, but with some exceptions, and 29% who say it should be generally illegal, except in certain cases. Much smaller shares take absolutist views when it comes to the legality of abortion in the U.S., maintaining that abortion should be legal in all cases with no exceptions (19%) or illegal in all circumstances (8%).

There is a modest gender gap in views of whether abortion should be legal, with women slightly more likely than men to say abortion should be legal in all cases or in all cases but with some exceptions (63% vs. 58%).

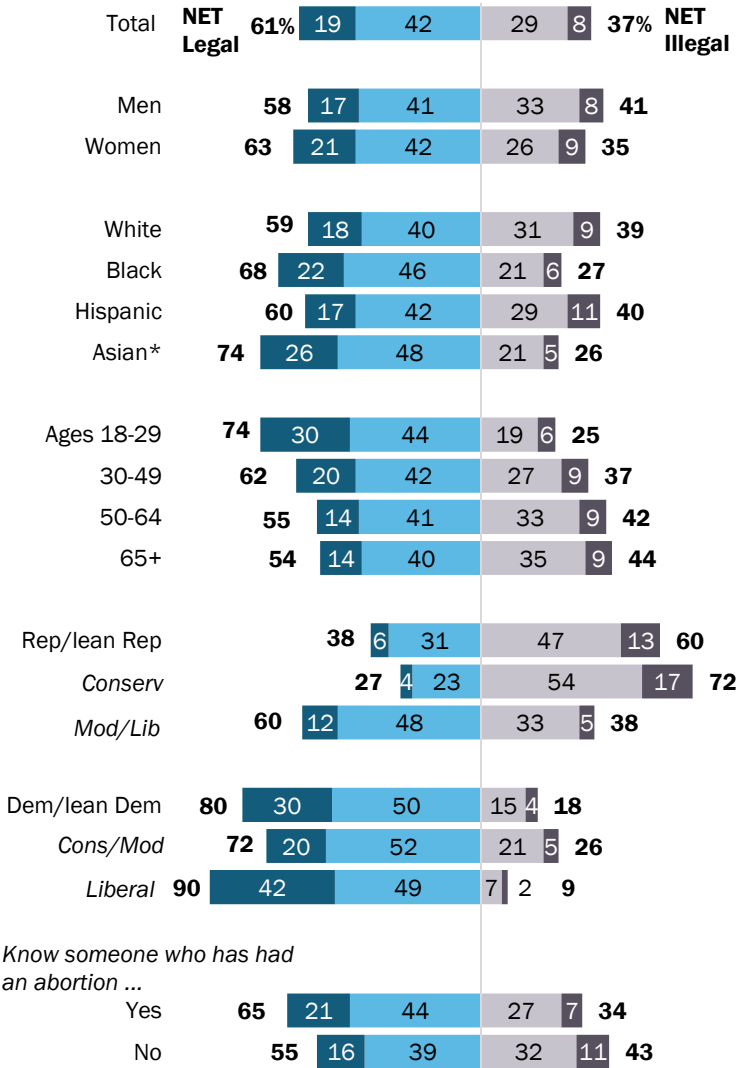
Younger adults are considerably more likely than older adults to say abortion should be legal: Three-quarters of adults under 30 (74%) say abortion should be generally legal, including 30% who say it should be legal in all cases without exception.

But there is an even larger gap in views toward abortion by

Sizable gaps by age, partisanship in views of whether abortion should be legal

% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be ...

- Legal in all cases, no exceptions
- Legal, some exceptions
- Illegal, some exceptions
- Illegal in all cases, no exceptions



* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.
 Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being one race and not Hispanic; Hispanic adults are of any race. Those who did not answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.
 "America's Abortion Quandary"

partisanship: 80% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, compared with 38% of Republicans and GOP leaners. [Previous Center research](#) has shown this gap widening over the past 15 years.

Still, while partisans diverge in views of whether abortion should mostly be legal or illegal, most Democrats and Republicans do not view abortion in absolutist terms. Just 13% of Republicans say abortion should be against the law in all cases without exception; 47% say it should be illegal with some exceptions. And while three-in-ten Democrats say abortion should be permitted in all circumstances, half say it should mostly be legal – but with some exceptions.

There also are sizable divisions within both partisan coalitions by ideology. For instance, while a majority of moderate and liberal Republicans say abortion should mostly be legal (60%), just 27% of conservative Republicans say the same. Among Democrats, self-described liberals are twice as apt as moderates and conservatives to say abortion should be legal in all cases without exception (42% vs. 20%).

Regardless of partisan affiliation, adults who say they personally know someone who has had an abortion – such as a friend, relative or themselves – are more likely to say abortion should be legal than those who say they do not know anyone who had an abortion.

Views toward abortion also vary considerably by religious affiliation – specifically among large Christian subgroups and religiously unaffiliated Americans.

For example, roughly three-quarters of White evangelical Protestants say abortion should be illegal in all or most cases. This is far higher than the share of White non-evangelical Protestants (38%) or Black Protestants (28%) who say the same.

Despite [Catholic teaching on abortion](#), a slim majority of U.S. Catholics (56%) say abortion should be legal. This includes 13% who say it should be legal in all cases without exception, and 43% who say it should be legal, but with some exceptions.

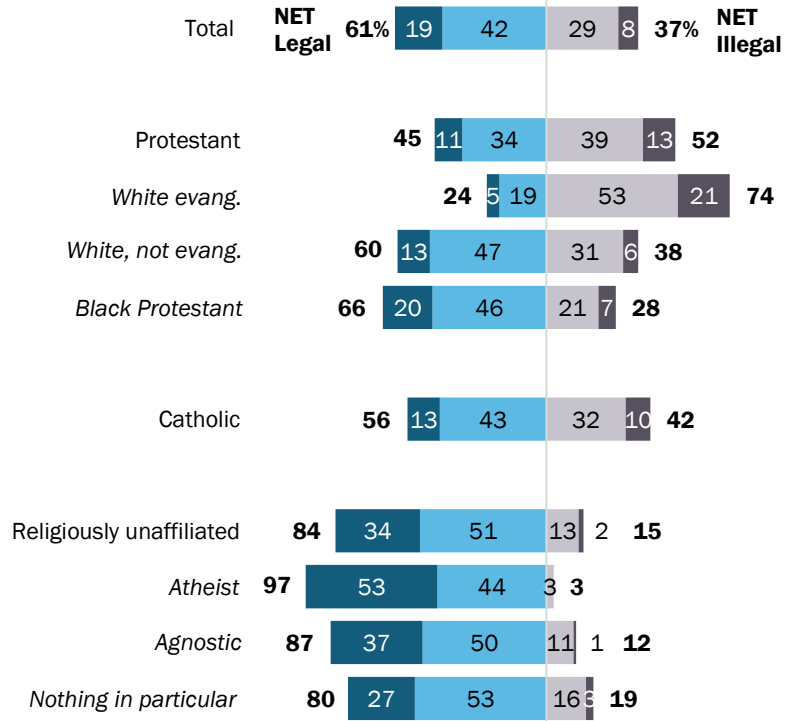
Compared with Christians, religiously unaffiliated adults are far more likely to say

abortion should be legal overall – and significantly more inclined to say it should be legal in all cases without exception. Within this group, atheists stand out: 97% say abortion should be legal, including 53% who say it should be legal in all cases without exception. Agnostics and those who describe their religion as “nothing in particular” also overwhelmingly say that abortion should be legal, but they are more likely than atheists to say there are some circumstances when abortion should be against the law.

Religion a significant factor in attitudes about whether abortion should be legal

% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be ...

- Legal in all cases, no exceptions
- Legal, some exceptions
- Illegal, some exceptions
- Illegal in all cases, no exceptions



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown. Share of atheists saying abortion should be illegal in all cases, no exceptions is less than 1%.

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

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Although the survey was conducted among Americans of many religious backgrounds, including Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus, it did not obtain enough respondents from non-Christian groups to report separately on their responses.

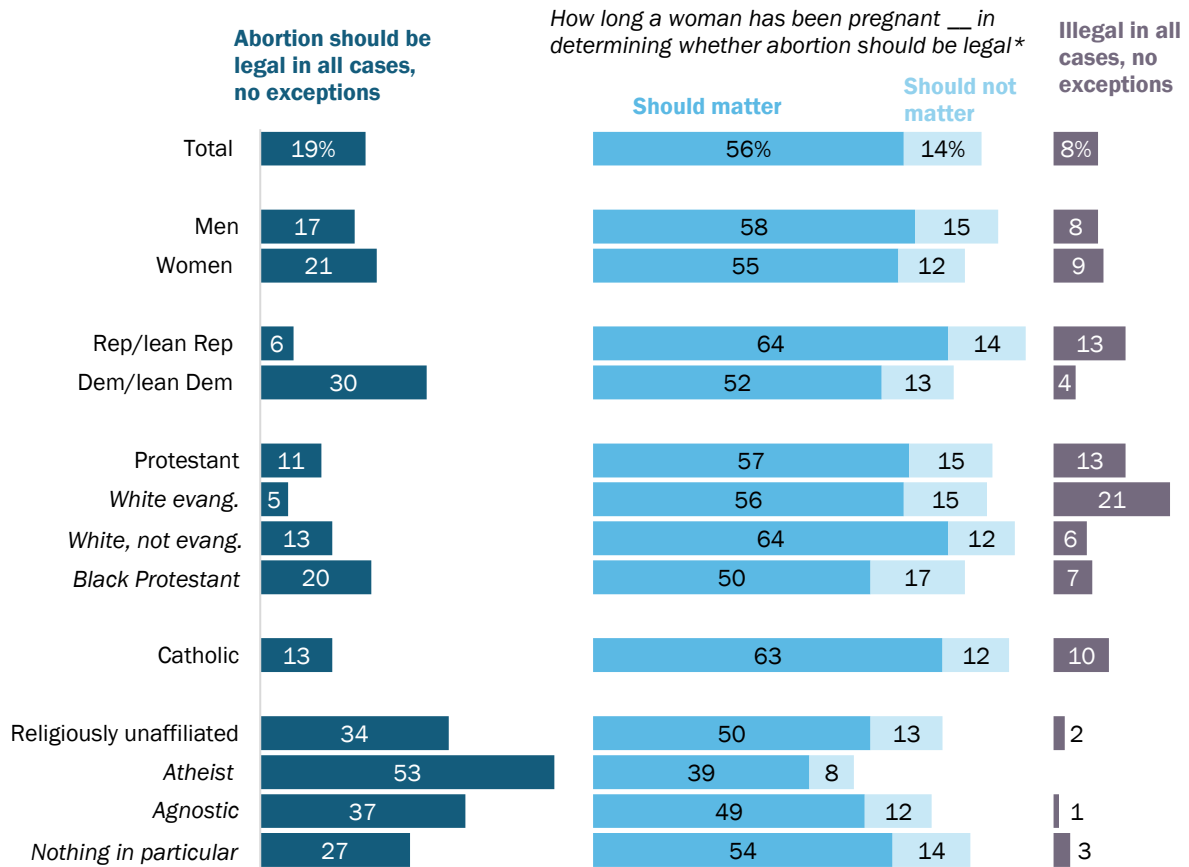
Abortion at various stages of pregnancy

As a [growing number of states](#) debate legislation to restrict abortion – often after a certain stage of pregnancy – Americans express complex views about when abortion should generally be legal and when it should be against the law. Overall, a majority of adults (56%) say that how long a woman has been pregnant should matter in determining when abortion should be legal, while far fewer (14%) say that this should *not* be a factor. An additional one-quarter of the public says that abortion should either be legal (19%) or illegal (8%) in all circumstances without exception; these respondents did not receive this question.

Among men and women, Republicans and Democrats, and Christians and religious “nones” who do not take absolutist positions about abortion on either side of the debate, the prevailing view is that the stage of the pregnancy should be a factor in determining whether abortion should be legal.

A majority of U.S. adults say how long a woman has been pregnant should be a factor in determining whether abortion should be legal

% of U.S. adults who say ...



* The question about whether how long a woman has been pregnant should matter in determining if abortion should be legal or illegal was asked only of those who said abortion should be legal with some exceptions or illegal with some exceptions; those who said abortion should be legal or illegal in all circumstances did not receive this question. See topline for full details.

Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

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

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Americans broadly are more likely to favor restrictions on abortion later in pregnancy than earlier in pregnancy. Many adults also say the legality of abortion depends on other factors at every stage of pregnancy.

Overall, a plurality of adults (44%) say that abortion should be legal six weeks into a pregnancy, which is about when cardiac activity (sometimes called a fetal heartbeat) may be detected and before many women know they are pregnant; this includes 19% of adults who say abortion should be legal in all cases without exception, as well as 25% of adults who say it should be legal at that point in a pregnancy. An additional 7% say abortion generally should be legal in most cases, but that the stage of the pregnancy should not matter in determining legality.¹

One-in-five Americans (21%) say abortion should be *illegal* at six weeks. This includes 8% of adults who say abortion should be illegal in all cases without exception as well as 12% of adults who say that abortion should be illegal at this point. Additionally, 6% say abortion should be illegal in most cases and how long a woman has been pregnant should not matter in determining abortion's legality. Nearly one-in-five respondents, when asked whether abortion should be legal six weeks into a pregnancy, say "it depends."

Americans are more divided about what should be permitted 14 weeks into a pregnancy – roughly at the end of the first trimester – although still, more people say abortion should be legal at this stage (34%) than illegal (27%), and about one-in-five say "it depends."

Fewer adults say abortion should be legal 24 weeks into a pregnancy – about when a healthy fetus could survive outside the womb with medical care. At this stage, 22% of adults say abortion should be legal, while nearly twice as many (43%) say it should be *illegal*. Again, about one-in-five adults (18%) say whether abortion should be legal at 24 weeks depends on other factors.

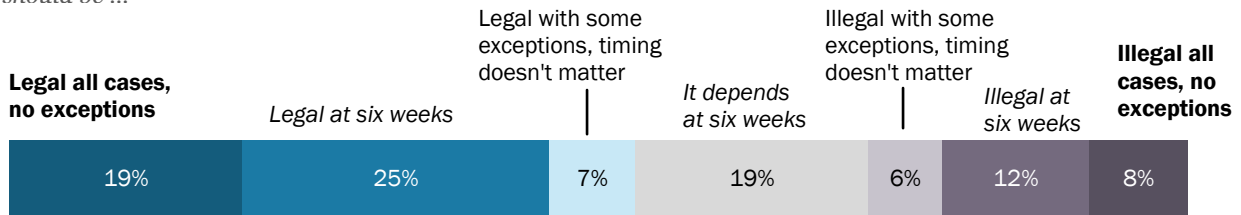
Respondents who said that abortion should be illegal 24 weeks into a pregnancy or that "it depends" were asked a follow-up question about whether abortion at that point should be legal if the pregnant woman's life is in danger or the baby would be born with severe disabilities. Most who received this question say abortion in these circumstances should be legal (54%) or that it depends on other factors (40%). Just 4% of this group maintained that abortion should be illegal in this case.

¹ Only respondents who said that abortion should be legal in some cases but not others and that how long a woman has been pregnant should matter in determining whether abortion should be legal received questions about abortion's legality at specific points in the pregnancy.

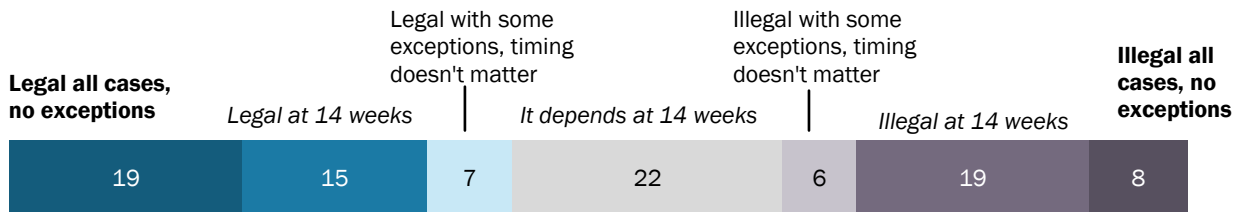
More adults support restrictions on abortion later in pregnancy, with sizable shares saying ‘it depends’ at multiple points in pregnancy

% of U.S. adults who say ...

As you may know, **six weeks into a pregnancy** is about when cardiac activity (sometimes called a fetal heartbeat) can be detected, and before many women know they are pregnant. Do you think abortion at that point should be ...



Thinking specifically about a pregnancy that is **14 weeks along** (roughly at the end of the first trimester), do you think abortion at that point should be ...



As you may know, **24 weeks into a pregnancy** (near the end of the second trimester) is about when a healthy fetus could survive outside the woman's body with medical attention. Do you think abortion at that point should be ...



Note: Adults who said abortion should be legal or illegal in all cases with no exceptions were not asked questions about whether how long a woman has been pregnant should factor into determining abortion's legality or specific time points when abortion should be legal. Adults who said abortion should be legal with some exceptions or illegal with some exceptions, but the stage of pregnancy should not matter in determining whether abortion should be legal or illegal, were not asked any questions about specific time points when abortion should be legal. Those who said abortion should be legal at 14 weeks are included in the "legal at six weeks" category. Those who said abortion should be illegal at 14 weeks are included in the "illegal at 24 weeks" category. See topline for full details about filtering logic. Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.
"America's Abortion Quandary"

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This pattern in views of abortion – whereby more favor greater restrictions on abortion as a pregnancy progresses – is evident across a variety of demographic and political groups.

Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to say that abortion should be legal at each of the three stages of pregnancy asked about on the survey. For example, while 26% of Republicans say abortion should be legal at six weeks of pregnancy, more than twice as many Democrats say the same (61%). Similarly, while about a third of Democrats say abortion should be legal at 24 weeks of pregnancy, just 8% of Republicans say the same.

However, neither Republicans nor Democrats uniformly express absolutist views about abortion throughout a pregnancy. Republicans are divided on abortion at six weeks: Roughly a quarter say it should be legal (26%), while a similar share say it depends (24%). A third say it should be illegal.

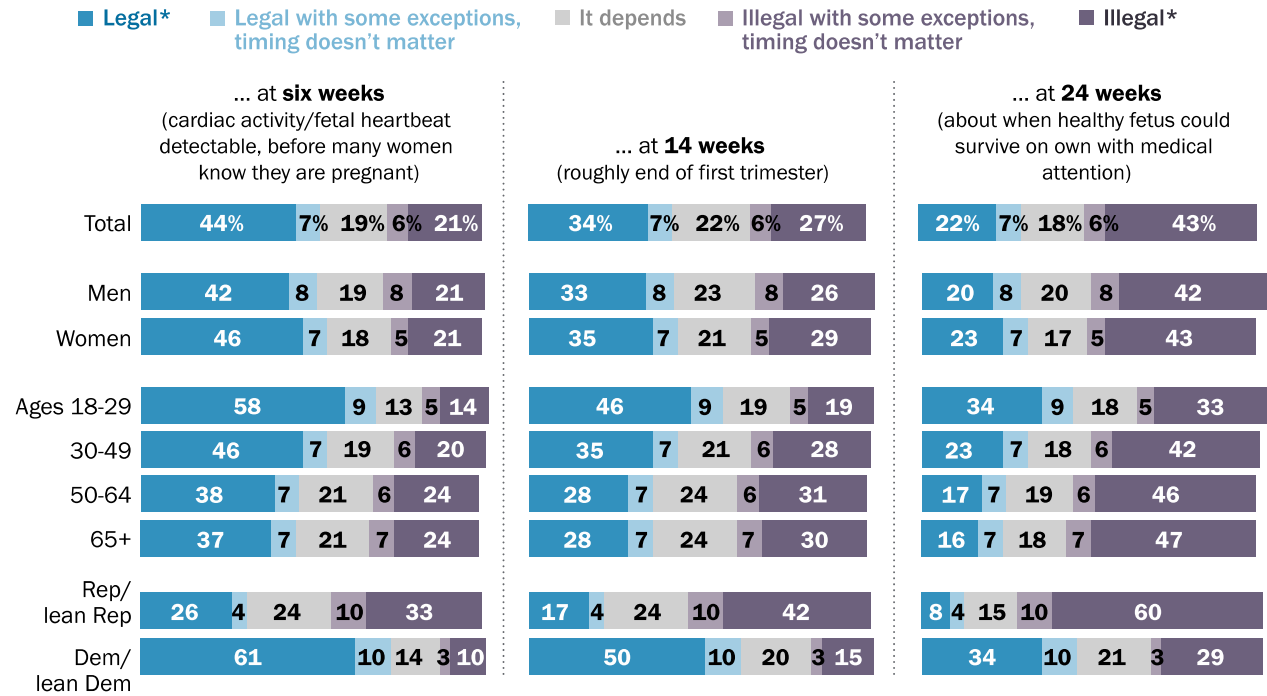
Democrats are divided about whether abortion should be legal or illegal at 24 weeks, with 34% saying it should be legal, 29% saying it should be illegal, and 21% saying it depends.

There also is considerable division among each partisan group by ideology. At six weeks of pregnancy, just one-in-five conservative Republicans (19%) say that abortion should be legal; moderate and liberal Republicans are twice as likely as their conservative counterparts to say this (39%).

At the same time, about half of liberal Democrats (48%) say abortion at 24 weeks should be legal, while 17% say it should be illegal. Among conservative and moderate Democrats, the pattern is reversed: A plurality (39%) say abortion at this stage should be illegal, while 24% say it should be legal.

A third of Republicans say abortion should be illegal six weeks into pregnancy; among Democrats, a third say abortion should be legal at 24 weeks

% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be ...



* "Legal" category includes all adults who said legal in all cases with no exceptions as well as those who said legal at that time point. "Illegal" category includes all adults who said illegal in all cases as well as those adults who said illegal at that time point.

Note: For full question wording about abortion at various stages of pregnancy, see topline. Those who said abortion should be legal at 14 weeks are included in the "NET legal" category at six weeks. Those who said abortion should be illegal at 14 weeks are included in the "NET illegal" category at 24 weeks.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022. "America's Abortion Quandary"

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Christian adults are far less likely than religiously unaffiliated Americans to say abortion should be legal at each stage of pregnancy.

Among Protestants, White evangelicals stand out for their opposition to abortion. At six weeks of pregnancy, for example, 44% say abortion should be illegal, compared with 17% of White non-evangelical Protestants and 15% of Black Protestants. This pattern also is evident at 14 and 24 weeks of pregnancy, when half or more of White evangelicals say abortion should be illegal.

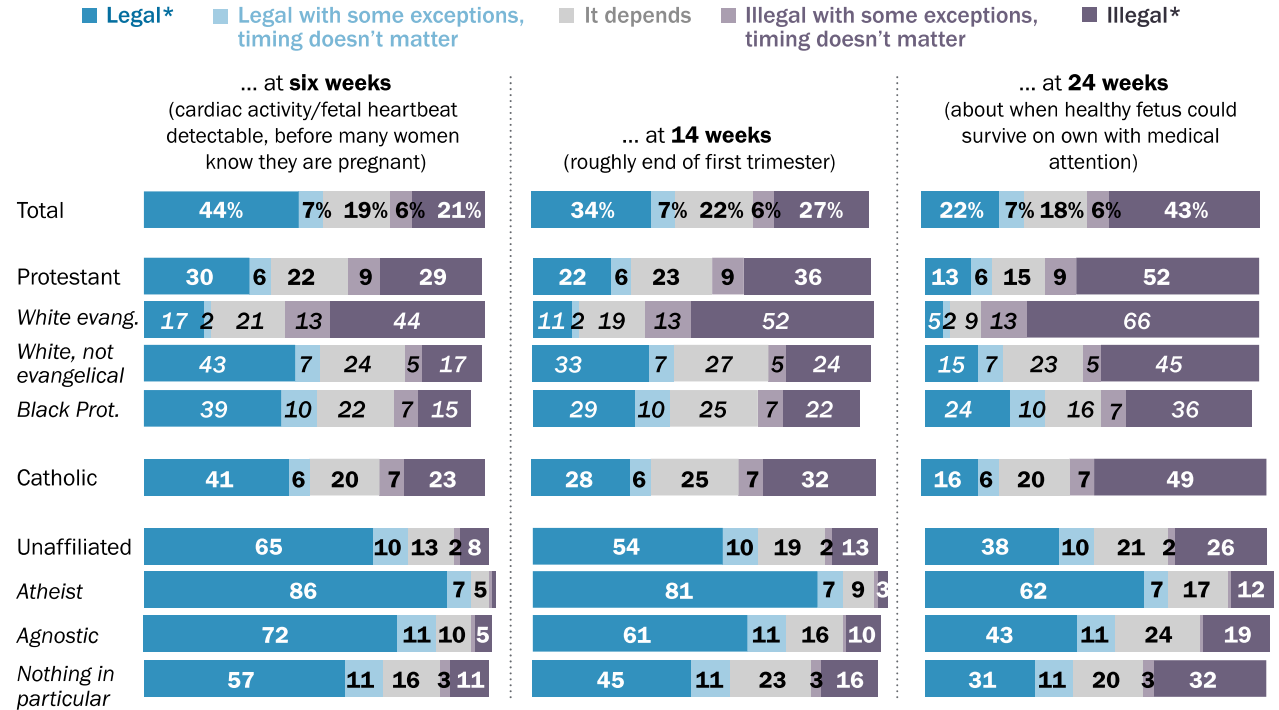
At six weeks, a plurality of Catholics (41%) say abortion should be legal, while smaller shares say it depends or it should be illegal. But by 24 weeks, about half of Catholics (49%) say abortion should be illegal.

Among adults who are religiously unaffiliated, atheists stand out for their views. They are the only group in which a sizable majority says abortion should be *legal* at each point in a pregnancy. Even at 24 weeks, 62% of self-described atheists say abortion should be legal, compared with smaller shares of agnostics (43%) and those who say their religion is “nothing in particular” (31%).

As is the case with adults overall, most religiously affiliated and religiously unaffiliated adults who originally say that abortion should be illegal or “it depends” at 24 weeks go on to say either it should be legal or it depends if the pregnant woman’s life is in danger or the baby would be born with severe disabilities. Few (4% and 5%, respectively) say abortion should be illegal at 24 weeks in these situations.

Majority of atheists say abortion should be legal at 24 weeks of pregnancy

% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be ...



* "Legal" category includes all adults who said legal in all cases with no exceptions as well as those who said legal at that time point. "Illegal" category includes all adults who said illegal in all cases as well as those adults who said illegal at that time point.

Note: For full question wording about abortion at various stages of pregnancy, see topline. Those who said abortion should be legal at 14 weeks are included in the "NET legal" category at six weeks. Those who said abortion should be illegal at 14 weeks are included in the "NET illegal" category at 24 weeks.

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

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Abortion and circumstances of pregnancy

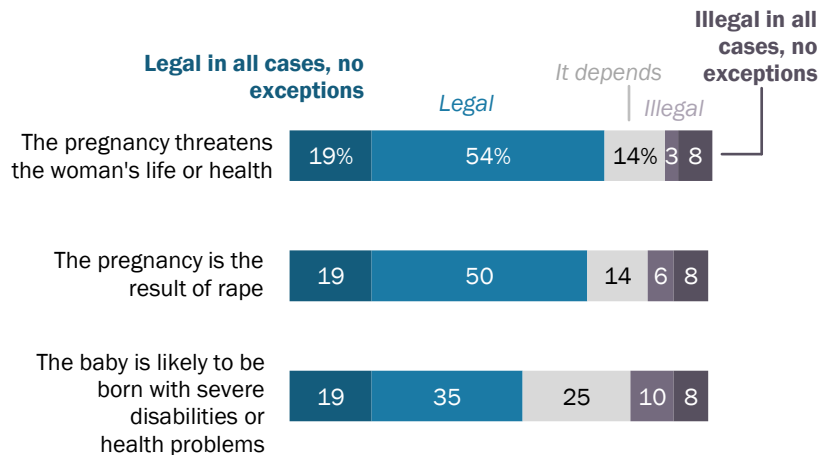
The stage of the pregnancy is not the only factor that shapes people's views of when abortion should be legal. Sizable majorities of U.S. adults say that abortion should be legal if the pregnancy threatens the life or health of the pregnant woman (73%) or if pregnancy is the result of rape (69%).

There is less consensus when it comes to circumstances in which a baby may be born with severe disabilities or health problems: 53% of Americans overall say abortion should be legal in such circumstances, including 19% who say abortion should be legal in all cases and 35% who say there are some situations where

abortion should be illegal, but that it should be legal in this specific type of case. A quarter of adults say "it depends" in this situation, and about one-in-five say it should be illegal (10% who say illegal in this specific circumstance and 8% who say illegal in all circumstances).

Majorities say abortion should be legal if pregnancy threatens woman's life; more uncertainty when it comes to baby being born with severe disabilities

% who say abortion should be ____ when ...



Note: Questions about circumstances in which abortion should be legal were only asked of those adults who said abortion should be legal with some exceptions or illegal with some exceptions. Results shown here based on all adults. See topline for full details. Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022. "America's Abortion Quandary"

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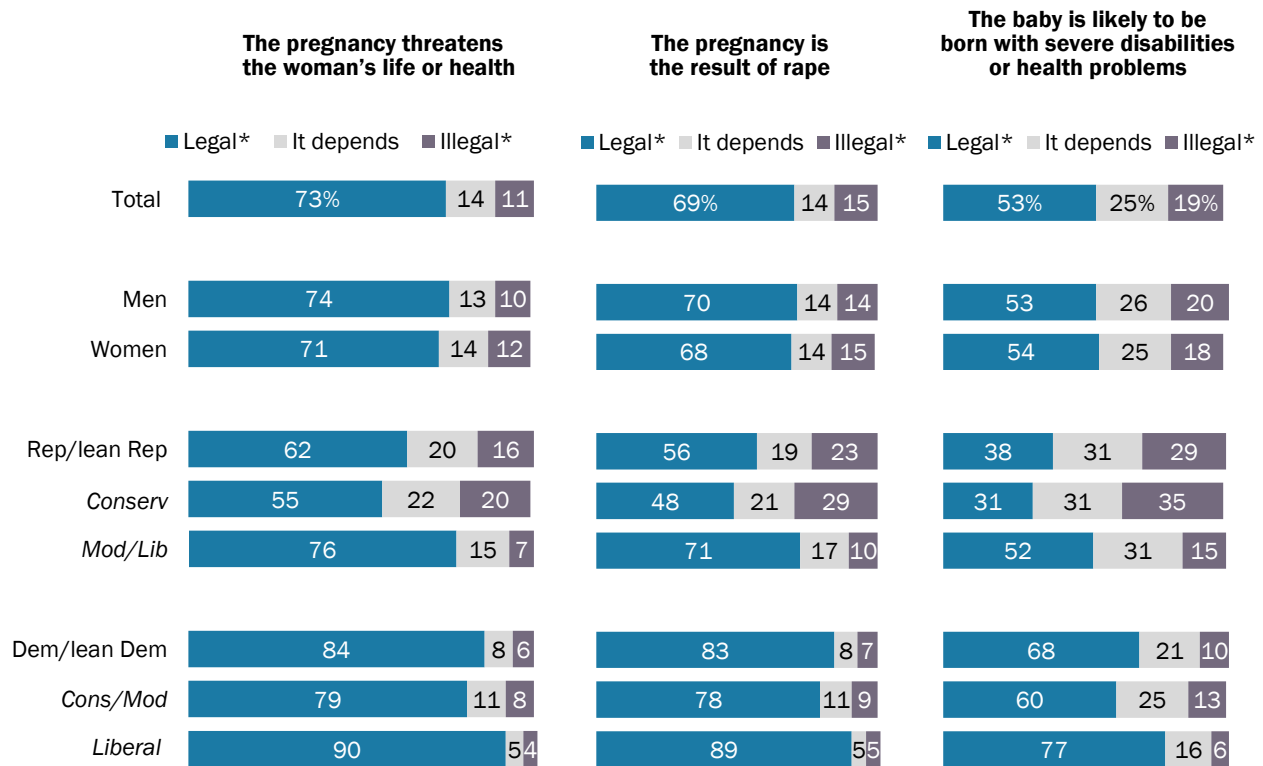
There are sizable divides between and among partisans when it comes to views of abortion in these situations. Overall, Republicans are less likely than Democrats to say abortion should be legal in each of the three circumstances outlined in the survey. However, both partisan groups are less likely to say abortion should be legal when the baby may be born with severe disabilities or health problems than when the woman's life is in danger or the pregnancy is the result of rape.

Just as there are wide gaps among Republicans by ideology on whether how long a woman has been pregnant should be a factor in determining abortion's legality, there are large gaps when it comes to circumstances in which abortions should be legal. For example, while a clear majority of moderate and liberal Republicans (71%) say abortion should be permitted when the pregnancy is the result of rape, conservative Republicans are more divided. About half (48%) say it should be legal in this situation, while 29% say it should be illegal and 21% say it depends.

The ideological gaps among Democrats are slightly less pronounced. Most Democrats say abortion should be legal in each of the three circumstances – just to varying degrees. While 77% of liberal Democrats say abortion should be legal if a baby will be born with severe disabilities or health problems, for example, a smaller majority of conservative and moderate Democrats (60%) say the same.

Democrats broadly favor legal abortion in situations of rape or when a pregnancy threatens woman's life; smaller majorities of Republicans agree

Do you think abortion should be legal or illegal in each of the following situations?



* "Legal" includes adults who said abortion should be legal in all cases as well as those who said abortion should be legal in each specific circumstance. "Illegal" category includes those who said abortion should be illegal in all cases as well as those who said abortion should be illegal in each specific circumstance.

Note: Those who did not answer are not shown. Questions about circumstances in which abortion should be legal only asked of those adults who said abortion should be legal in some cases and illegal in others. See topline for full details.

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

"America's Abortion Quandary"

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White evangelical Protestants again stand out for their views on abortion in various circumstances; they are far less likely than White non-evangelical or Black Protestants to say abortion should be legal across each of the three circumstances described in the survey.

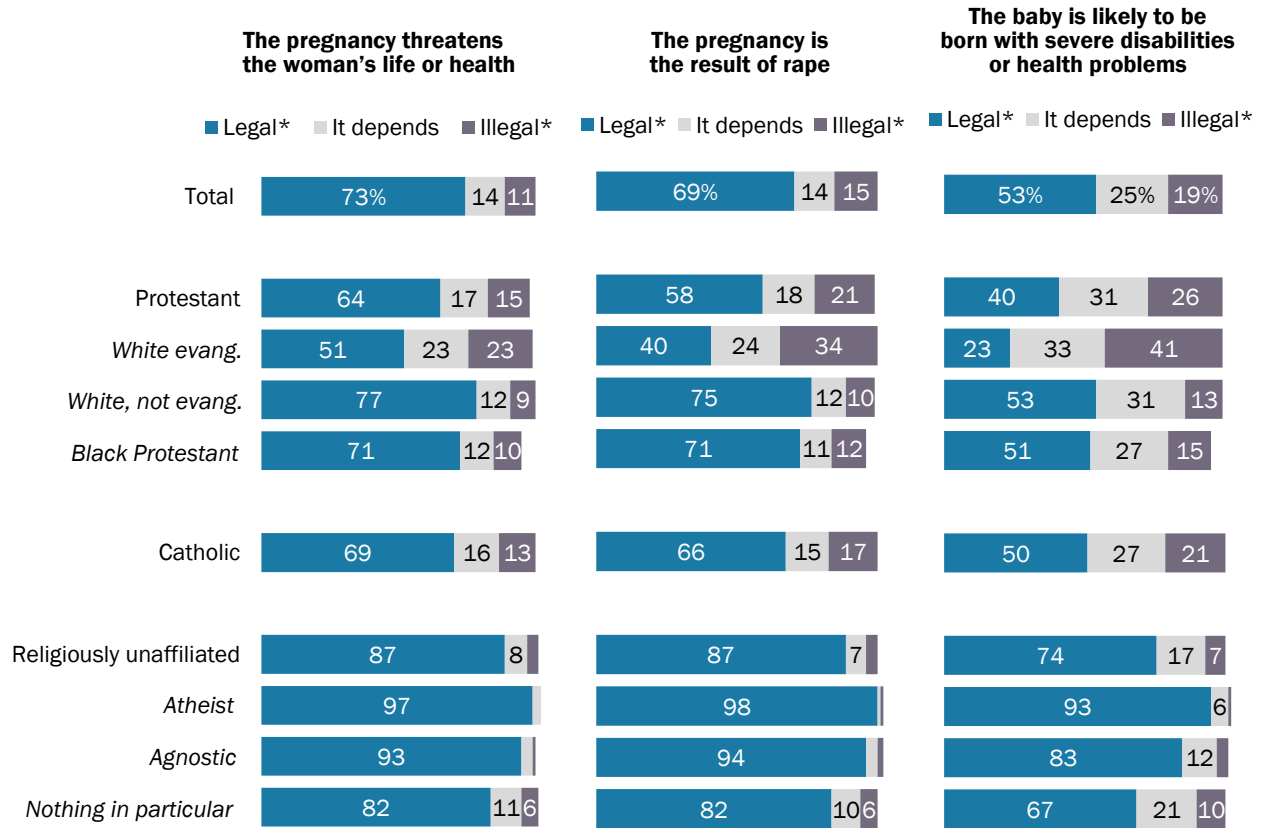
While about half of White evangelical Protestants (51%) say abortion should be legal if a pregnancy threatens the woman's life or health, clear majorities of other Protestant groups and Catholics say this should be the case. The same pattern holds in views of whether abortion should be legal if the pregnancy is the result of rape. Most White non-evangelical Protestants (75%), Black Protestants (71%) and Catholics (66%) say abortion should be permitted in this instance, while White evangelicals are more divided: 40% say it should be legal, while 34% say it should be *illegal* and about a quarter say it depends.

Mirroring the pattern seen among adults overall, opinions are more varied about a situation where a baby might be born with severe disabilities or health issues. For instance, half of Catholics say abortion should be legal in such cases, while 21% say it should be illegal and 27% say it depends on the situation.

Most religiously unaffiliated adults – including overwhelming majorities of self-described atheists – say abortion should be legal in each of the three circumstances.

White evangelicals less likely than other Christians to say abortion should be legal in cases of rape, health concerns

Do you think abortion should be legal or illegal in each of the following situations?



* "Legal" includes adults who said abortion should be legal in all cases as well as those who said abortion should be legal in each specific circumstance. "Illegal" category includes those who said abortion should be illegal in all cases as well as those who said abortion should be illegal in each specific circumstance.

Note: Those who did not answer are not shown. Questions about circumstances in which abortion should be legal only asked of those adults who said abortion should be legal in some cases and illegal in others. See topline for full details.

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

"America's Abortion Quandary"

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Parental notification for minors seeking abortion

Seven-in-ten U.S. adults say that doctors or other health care providers should be required to notify a parent or legal guardian if the pregnant woman seeking an abortion is under 18, while 28% say they should not be required to do so.

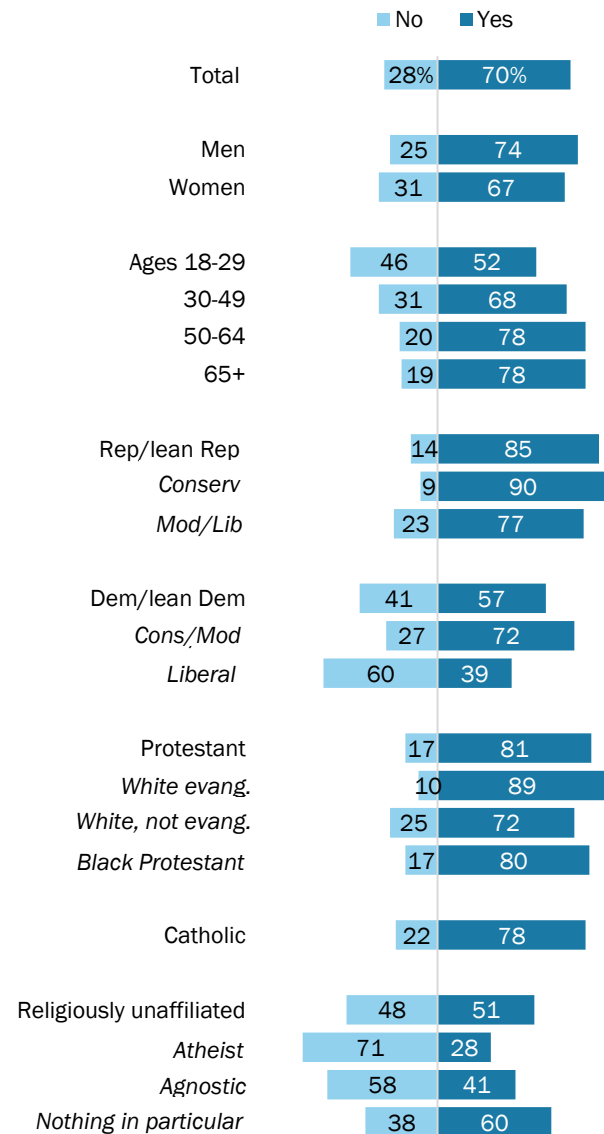
Women are slightly less likely than men to say this should be a requirement (67% vs. 74%). And younger adults are far less likely than those who are older to say a parent or guardian should be notified before a doctor performs an abortion on a pregnant woman who is under 18. In fact, about half of adults ages 18 to 24 (53%) say a doctor should *not* be required to notify a parent. By contrast, 64% of adults ages 25 to 29 say doctors *should* be required to notify parents of minors seeking an abortion, as do 68% of adults ages 30 to 49 and 78% of those 50 and older.

A large majority of Republicans (85%) say that a doctor should be required to notify the parents of a minor before an abortion, though conservative Republicans are somewhat more likely than moderate and liberal Republicans to take this position (90% vs. 77%).

The ideological divide is even more pronounced among Democrats. Overall, a slim majority of Democrats (57%) say a parent should be notified in this circumstance, but while 72% of conservative and moderate Democrats hold this view, just 39% of liberal Democrats agree.

Age, ideological divides in views of whether parents should be notified before abortion performed on minor

Before performing an abortion, should doctors or providers be required to notify a parent or legal guardian if the pregnant woman is under 18?



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022. "America's Abortion Quandary"

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By and large, most Protestant (81%) and Catholic (78%) adults say doctors should be required to notify parents of minors before an abortion. But religiously unaffiliated Americans are more divided. Majorities of both atheists (71%) and agnostics (58%) say doctors should *not* be required to notify parents of minors seeking an abortion, while six-in-ten of those who describe their religion as “nothing in particular” say such notification should be required.

Penalties for abortions performed illegally

Americans are divided over who should be penalized – and what that penalty should be – in a situation where an abortion occurs illegally.

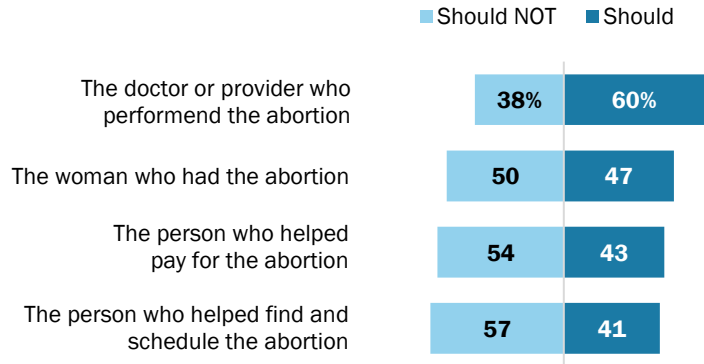
Overall, a 60% majority of adults say that if a doctor or provider performs an abortion in a situation where it is illegal, they should face a penalty. But there is less agreement when it comes to others who may have been involved in the procedure.

While about half of the public (47%) says a woman who has an illegal abortion should face a penalty, a nearly identical share (50%) says she should not. And adults are more likely to say people who help find and schedule or pay for an abortion in a situation where it is illegal should *not* face a penalty than they are to say they should.

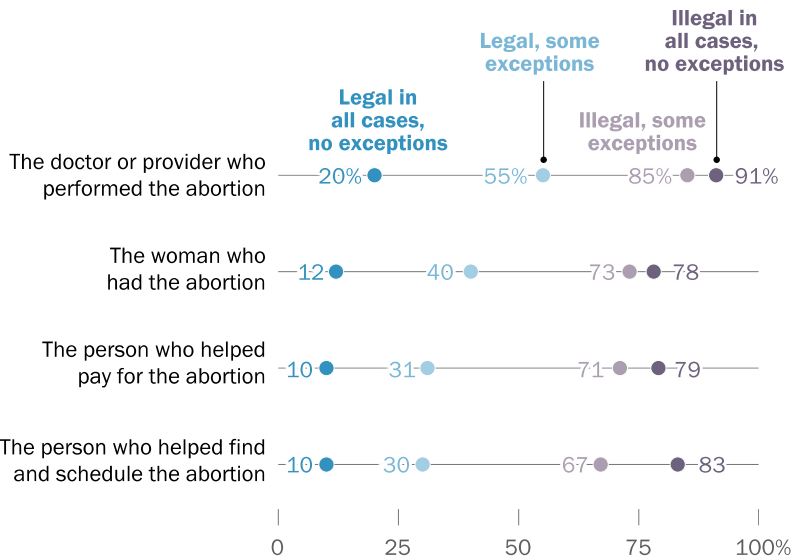
Views about penalties are closely correlated with overall attitudes about whether abortion should be legal or illegal. For example, just 20% of adults who say abortion should be legal in all cases without exception think doctors or providers should face a penalty if an abortion were carried out in a situation where it

Public split on whether woman who had an abortion in a situation where it was illegal should be penalized

% who say, if an abortion was carried out in a situation where it was illegal, each of the following ___ face a penalty



% who say each of the following **should face a penalty** if an abortion was carried out in a situation where it was illegal, among those who say abortion should be ...



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.
 "America's Abortion Quandary"

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was illegal. This compares with 91% of those who think abortion should be illegal in all cases without exceptions. Still, regardless of how they feel about whether abortion should be legal or not, Americans are more likely to say a doctor or provider should face a penalty compared with others involved in the procedure.

Among those who say medical providers and/or women should face penalties for illegal abortions, there is no consensus about whether they should get jail time or a less severe punishment. Among U.S. adults overall, 14% say women should serve jail time if they have an abortion in a situation where it is illegal, while 16% say they should receive a fine or community service and 17% say they are not sure what the penalty should be.

A somewhat larger share of Americans (25%) say doctors or other medical providers should face jail time for providing illegal abortion services, while 18% say they should face fines or community service and 17% are not sure. About three-in-ten U.S. adults (31%) say doctors should lose their medical license if they perform an abortion in a situation where it is illegal.

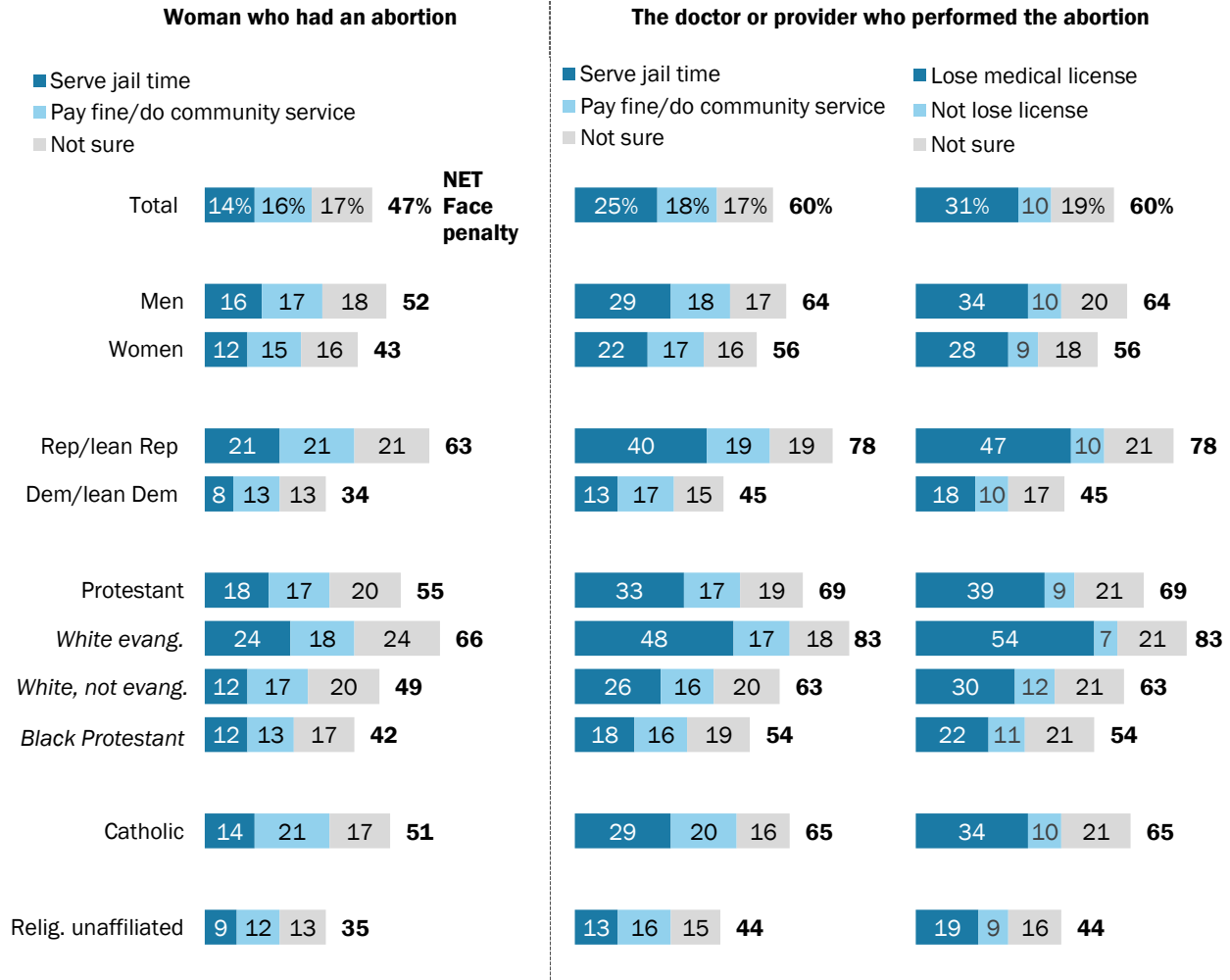
Men are more likely than women to favor penalties for the woman or doctor in situations where abortion is illegal. About half of men (52%) say women should face a penalty, while just 43% of women say the same. Similarly, about two-thirds of men (64%) say a doctor should face a penalty, while 56% of women agree.

Republicans are considerably more likely than Democrats to say both women and doctors should face penalties – including jail time. For example, 21% of Republicans say the woman who had the abortion should face jail time, and 40% say this about the doctor who performed the abortion. Among Democrats, far smaller shares say the woman (8%) or doctor (13%) should serve jail time.

White evangelical Protestants are more likely than other Protestant groups to favor penalties for abortions in situations where they are illegal. Fully 24% say the woman who had the abortion should serve time in jail, compared with just 12% of White non-evangelical Protestants or Black Protestants. And while about half of White evangelicals (48%) say doctors who perform illegal abortions should serve jail time, just 26% of White non-evangelical Protestants and 18% of Black Protestants share this view.

Relatively few say women, medical providers should serve jail time for illegal abortions, but three-in-ten say doctors should lose medical license

% of U.S. adults who say each of the following should ___ if an abortion were carried out in a situation where it was illegal



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.
 "America's Abortion Quandary"

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2. Social and moral considerations on abortion

Relatively few Americans view the morality of abortion in stark terms: Overall, just 7% of all U.S. adults say abortion is morally acceptable in all cases, and 13% say it is morally wrong in all cases. A third say that abortion is morally wrong in *most* cases, while about a quarter (24%) say it is morally acceptable most of the time. About an additional one-in-five do not consider abortion a moral issue.

There are wide differences on this question by political party and religious affiliation. Among Republicans and independents who lean toward the Republican Party, most say that abortion is morally wrong either in most (48%) or all cases (20%). Among Democrats and Democratic leaners, meanwhile, only about three-in-ten (29%) hold a similar view. About four-in-ten

Democrats say abortion is morally *acceptable* in most (32%) or all (11%) cases, while an additional 28% say abortion is not a moral issue.

White evangelical Protestants overwhelmingly say abortion is morally wrong in most (51%) or all cases (30%). A slim majority of Catholics (53%) also view abortion as morally wrong, but many also say it is morally acceptable in most (24%) or all cases (4%), or that it is not a moral issue (17%). And among religiously unaffiliated Americans, about three-quarters see abortion as morally acceptable (45%) or not a moral issue (32%).

Wide religious and partisan differences in views of the morality of abortion

% of U.S. adults who say having an abortion is ...

	Morally wrong in all cases	Morally wrong in most cases	Morally acceptable in most cases	Morally acceptable in all cases	Abortion is not a moral issue
	%	%	%	%	%
All U.S. adults	13	33	24	7	21
Republican/lean Rep	20	48	16	3	12
Democrat/lean Dem	6	23	32	11	28
Protestant	21	41	18	4	14
<i>White evangelical</i>	30	51	10	2	6
<i>White, not evangelical</i>	11	38	28	4	17
<i>Black Protestant</i>	14	29	22	7	24
Catholic	16	38	24	4	17
Religiously unaffiliated	3	19	32	13	32
<i>Atheist</i>	1	6	32	25	37
<i>Agnostic</i>	1	18	39	15	27
<i>Nothing in particular</i>	4	23	30	9	32
<i>Among those who say abortion should be ...</i>					
Legal in all cases	1	6	22	27	44
Legal, some exceptions	2	26	43	4	24
Illegal, some exceptions	17	69	6	1	5
Illegal, no exceptions	86	8	1	1	3

Note: Those who did not answer are not shown

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

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There is strong alignment between people's views of whether abortion is morally wrong and whether it should be illegal. For example, among U.S. adults who take the view that abortion should be illegal in all cases without exception, fully 86% also say abortion is always morally wrong. The prevailing view among adults who say abortion should be legal in all circumstances is that abortion is not a moral issue (44%), though notable shares of this group also say it is morally acceptable in all (27%) or most (22%) cases.

Most Americans who say abortion should be illegal with some exceptions take the view that abortion is morally wrong in *most* cases (69%). Those who say abortion should be legal with some exceptions are somewhat more conflicted, with 43% deeming abortion morally acceptable in most cases and 26% saying it is morally wrong in most cases; an additional 24% say it is not a moral issue.

The survey also asked respondents who said abortion is morally wrong in at least some cases whether there are situations where abortion should still be legal *despite* being morally wrong. Roughly half of U.S. adults (48%) say that there are, in fact, situations where abortion is morally wrong but should still be legal, while just 22% say that whenever abortion is morally wrong, it should also be illegal. An additional 28% either said abortion is morally acceptable in all cases or not a moral issue, and thus did not receive the follow-up question.

Across both political parties and all major Christian subgroups – including Republicans and White evangelicals – there are substantially more people who say that there are situations where abortion should still be *legal* despite being morally wrong than there are who say that abortion should always be *illegal* when it is morally wrong.

Roughly half of Americans say there are situations where abortion is morally wrong, but should still be legal

% of U.S. adults who say ...

	Abortion is morally wrong in at least some cases*		Abortion morally acceptable in all cases or not a moral issue
	There are situations where abortion is morally wrong, but should still be legal	Whenever abortion is morally wrong, it should also be illegal	
	%	%	%
All U.S. adults	48	22	28
Republican/lean Rep	55	28	14
Democrat/lean Dem	44	16	39
Protestant	52	27	18
<i>White evangelical</i>	53	36	7
<i>White, not evangelical</i>	55	21	21
<i>Black Protestant</i>	45	19	31
Catholic	54	22	22
Religiously unaffiliated	38	16	45
<i>Atheist</i>	25	13	62
<i>Agnostic</i>	42	16	41
<i>Nothing in particular</i>	40	16	41

* This category includes those who say abortion is morally wrong in all or most cases as well as those who say abortion is morally acceptable in most (but not all) cases.

Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

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

"America's Abortion Quandary"

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Public views of what would change the number of abortions in the U.S.

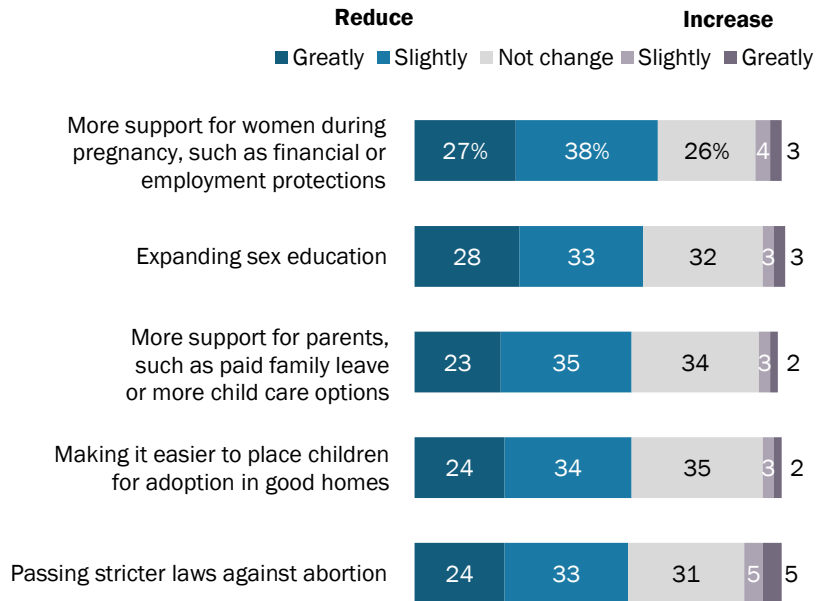
Asked about the impact a number of policy changes would have on the number of abortions in the U.S., nearly two-thirds of Americans (65%) say “more support for women during pregnancy, such as financial assistance or employment protections” would reduce the number of abortions in the U.S. Six-in-ten say the same about expanding sex education and similar shares say more support for parents (58%), making it easier to place children for adoption in good homes (57%) and passing stricter abortion laws (57%) would have this effect.

While about three-quarters of White evangelical Protestants (74%) say passing stricter abortion laws would reduce the number of abortions in the U.S., about half of religiously unaffiliated Americans (48%) hold this view. Similarly, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say this (67% vs. 49%, respectively). By contrast, while about seven-in-ten unaffiliated adults (69%) say expanding sex education would reduce the number of abortions in the U.S., only about half of White evangelicals (48%) say this. Democrats also are substantially more likely than Republicans to hold this view (70% vs. 50%).

Democrats are somewhat more likely than Republicans to say support for parents – such as paid family leave or more child care options – would reduce the number of abortions in the country (64% vs. 53%, respectively), while Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say making adoption into good homes easier would reduce abortions (64% vs. 52%).

Americans more likely to say additional support for women would reduce the number of abortions than say the same about stricter laws

How much, if at all, do you think each of the following would change the number of abortions in the U.S.?



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.
 “America’s Abortion Quandary”

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Majorities across both parties and other subgroups analyzed in this report say that more support for women during pregnancy would reduce the number of abortions in America.

Republicans more likely than Democrats to say passing stricter abortion laws would reduce number of abortions in the United States

% of U.S. adults who say each of the following measures would reduce the number of abortions in the U.S.

	More support for women during pregnancy, such as financial assistance or employment protections	Expanding sex education	More support for parents, such as paid family leave or more child care options	Passing stricter laws against abortion	Making it easier to place children for adoption in good homes
	%	%	%	%	%
All U.S. adults	65	60	58	57	57
Republican/lean Rep	62	50	53	67	64
Democrat/lean Dem	69	70	64	49	52
Protestant	64	54	57	61	61
<i>White evangelical</i>	70	48	58	74	72
<i>White, not evangelical</i>	62	59	56	56	58
<i>Black Protestant</i>	57	55	52	48	46
Catholic	65	62	57	60	59
Religiously unaffiliated	68	69	63	48	52
<i>Atheist</i>	77	77	69	48	52
<i>Agnostic</i>	77	76	69	55	59
<i>Nothing in particular</i>	62	64	59	46	50

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.
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A majority of Americans say women should have more say in setting abortion policy in the U.S.

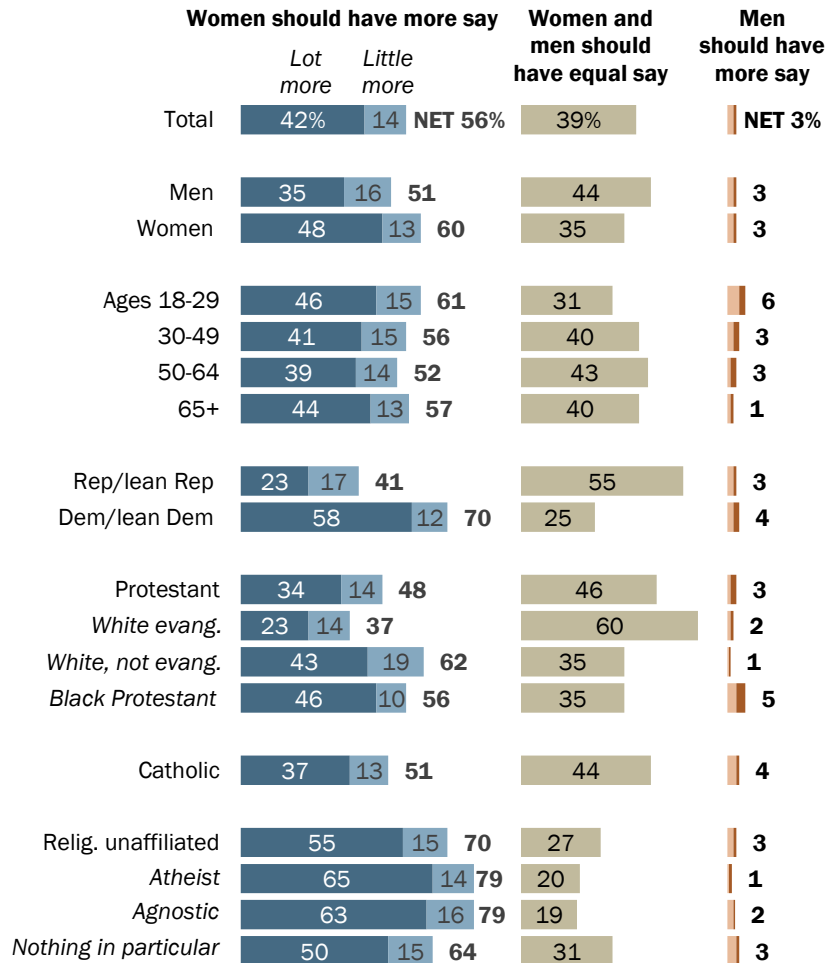
More than half of U.S. adults (56%) say women should have more say than men when it comes to setting policies around abortion in this country – including 42% who say women should have “a lot” more say. About four-in-ten (39%) say men and women should have equal say in abortion policies, and 3% say men should have more say than women.

Six-in-ten women and about half of men (51%) say that women should have more say on this policy issue.

Democrats are much more likely than Republicans to say women should have more say than men in setting abortion policy (70% vs. 41%). Similar shares of Protestants (48%) and Catholics (51%) say women should have more say than men on this issue, while the share of religiously unaffiliated Americans who say this is much higher (70%).

Seven-in-ten Democrats say women should have more say than men in setting abortion policy in the U.S.

Thinking about policies around abortion in this country, in general, when setting those policies, do you think ...



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.
 “America’s Abortion Quandary”

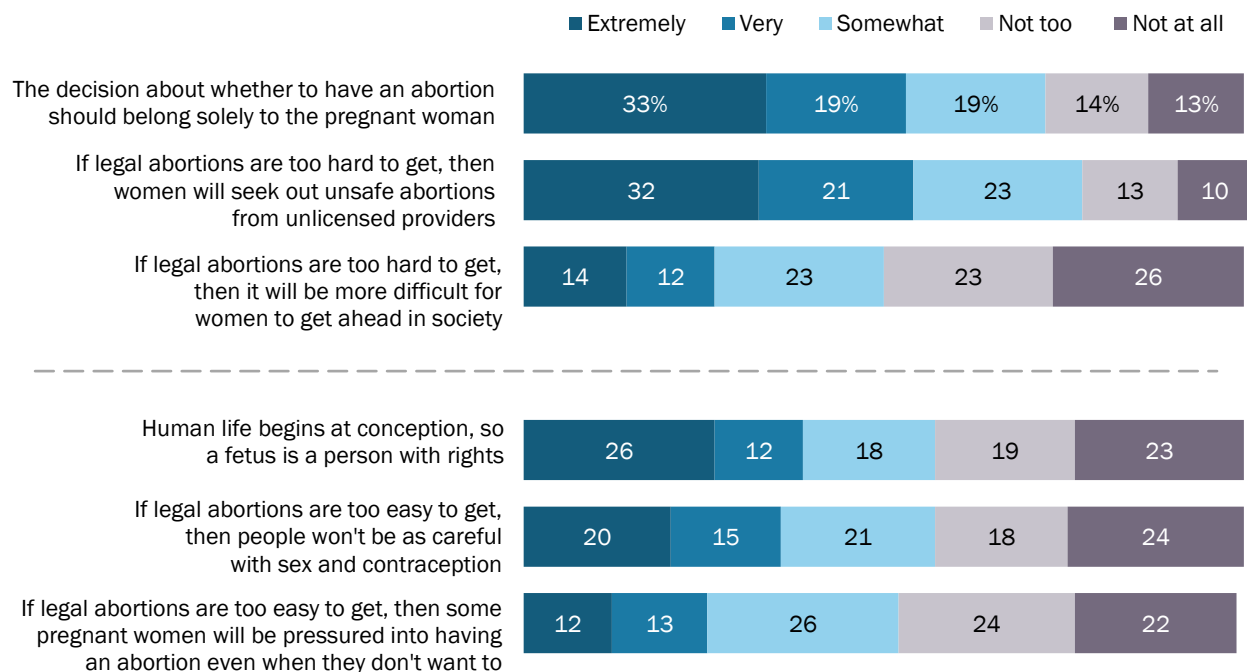
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How do certain arguments about abortion resonate with Americans?

Seeking to gauge Americans' reactions to several common arguments related to abortion, the survey presented respondents with six statements and asked them to rate how well each statement reflects their views on a five-point scale ranging from "extremely well" to "not at all well."

About half of U.S. adults say if legal abortions are too hard to get, women will seek out unsafe ones

% who say each of the following statements describes their views ___ well



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.
"America's Abortion Quandary"

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The list included three statements sometimes cited by individuals wishing to protect a right to abortion: "The decision about whether to have an abortion should belong solely to the pregnant woman," "If legal abortions are too hard to get, then women will seek out unsafe abortions from unlicensed providers," and "If legal abortions are too hard to get, then it will be more difficult for women to get ahead in society." The first two of these resonate with the greatest number of Americans, with about half (53%) saying each describes their views "extremely" or "very" well. In other words, among the statements presented in the survey, U.S. adults are most likely to say that

women alone should decide whether to have an abortion, and that making abortion illegal will lead women into unsafe situations.

The three other statements are similar to arguments sometimes made by those who wish to restrict access to abortions: “Human life begins at conception, so a fetus is a person with rights,” “If legal abortions are too easy to get, then people won’t be as careful with sex and contraception,” and “If legal abortions are too easy to get, then some pregnant women will be pressured into having an abortion even when they don’t want to.”

Fewer than half of Americans say each of these statements describes their views extremely or very well. Nearly four-in-ten endorse the notion that “human life begins at conception, so a fetus is a person with rights” (26% say this describes their views extremely well, 12% very well), while about a third say that “if legal abortions are too easy to get, then people won’t be as careful with sex and contraception” (20% extremely well, 15% very well).

When it comes to statements cited by proponents of abortion rights, Democrats are much more likely than Republicans to identify with all three of these statements, as are religiously unaffiliated Americans compared with Catholics and Protestants. Women also are more likely than men to express these views – and especially more likely to say that decisions about abortion should fall solely to pregnant women and that restrictions on abortion will put women in unsafe situations. Younger adults under 30 are particularly likely to express the view that if legal abortions are too hard to get, then it will be difficult for women to get ahead in society.

Most Democrats say decisions about abortion should fall solely to pregnant women

% of U.S. adults who say each of the following reflects their views ...

	The decision about whether to have an abortion should belong solely to the pregnant woman		If legal abortions are too hard to get, then women will seek out unsafe abortions from unlicensed providers		If legal abortions are too hard to get, then it will be difficult for women to get ahead in society	
	Extremely/ very well %	Somewhat well %	Extremely/ very well %	Somewhat well %	Extremely/ very well %	Somewhat well %
All U.S. adults	53	19	53	23	26	23
Men	47	21	48	25	23	24
Women	58	18	57	21	28	22
Republican/lean Rep	35	21	36	32	10	19
Democrat/lean Dem	70	17	68	15	39	27
Protestant	43	19	43	27	16	23
<i>White evangelical</i>	26	18	32	33	9	17
<i>White, not evangelical</i>	51	24	54	27	19	23
<i>Black Protestant</i>	67	17	51	20	20	31
Catholic	49	21	46	25	22	23
Religiously unaffiliated	67	17	69	16	39	24
<i>Atheist</i>	84	7	88	6	62	20
<i>Agnostic</i>	67	15	74	13	43	22
<i>Nothing in particular</i>	63	20	63	19	31	25
<i>Among those who say abortion should be ...</i>						
Legal in all cases	86	9	81	9	51	23
Legal, some exceptions	67	23	64	20	29	30
Illegal, some exceptions	24	22	28	36	10	19
Illegal in all cases	13	11	20	27	10	7

Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

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

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In the case of the three statements sometimes cited by opponents of abortion, the patterns generally go in the opposite direction. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say each statement reflects their views “extremely” or “very” well, as are Protestants (especially White evangelical Protestants) and Catholics compared with the religiously unaffiliated. In addition, older Americans are more likely than young adults to say that human life begins at conception and that easy access to abortion encourages unsafe sex.

Gender differences on these questions, however, are muted. In fact, women are just as likely as men to say that human life begins at conception, so a fetus is a person with rights (39% and 38%, respectively).

Nearly three-quarters of White evangelicals say human life begins at conception

% of U.S. adults who say each of the following statements reflects their views ...

	Human life begins at conception, so a fetus is a person with rights		If legal abortions are too easy to get, then people won't be as careful with sex and contraception		If legal abortions are too easy to get, then some pregnant women will be pressured into having an abortion even when they don't want to	
	Extremely/ very well	Somewhat well	Extremely/ very well	Somewhat well	Extremely/ very well	Somewhat well
	%	%	%	%	%	%
All U.S. adults	38	18	35	21	25	26
Men	38	19	36	21	27	27
Women	39	17	34	21	24	25
Republican/lean Rep	56	19	53	21	37	30
Democrat/lean Dem	23	17	20	20	16	23
Protestant	52	19	44	22	32	29
<i>White evangelical</i>	72	14	57	21	43	29
<i>White, not evangelical</i>	32	24	36	19	20	29
<i>Black Protestant</i>	38	25	33	25	24	28
Catholic	44	20	39	23	28	27
Religiously unaffiliated	16	13	20	18	15	22
<i>Atheist</i>	3	5	6	8	7	13
<i>Agnostic</i>	11	11	14	19	10	25
<i>Nothing in particular</i>	21	16	26	20	18	24
<i>Among those who say abortion should be ...</i>						
Legal in all cases	9	10	9	15	9	18
Legal, some exceptions	17	23	20	25	16	28
Illegal, some exceptions	71	20	63	21	42	32
Illegal in all cases	93	3	66	12	55	18

Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

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

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Analyzing certain statements together allows for an examination of the extent to which individuals can simultaneously hold two views that may seem to some as in conflict. For instance, overall, one-in-three U.S. adults say that *both* the statement “the decision about whether to have an abortion should belong solely to the pregnant woman” and the statement “human life begins at conception, so the fetus is a person with rights” reflect their own views at least somewhat well. This includes 12% of adults who say both statements reflect their views “extremely” or “very” well.

Republicans are slightly more likely than Democrats to say both statements reflect their own views at least somewhat well (36% vs. 30%), although Republicans are much more likely to say *only* the statement about the fetus being a person with rights reflects their views at least somewhat well (39% vs. 9%) and Democrats are much more likely to say *only* the statement about the decision to have an abortion belonging solely to the pregnant woman reflects their views at least somewhat well (55% vs. 19%).

Additionally, those who take the stance that abortion should be legal in all cases with no exceptions are overwhelmingly likely (76%) to say only the statement about the decision belonging solely to the pregnant woman reflects their views extremely, very or somewhat well, while a nearly identical share (73%) of those who say abortion should be *illegal* in all cases with no exceptions say only the statement about human life beginning at conception reflects their views at least somewhat well.

One-third of U.S. adults say both that abortion decision belongs solely to the pregnant woman, and that life begins at conception and fetuses have rights

% of U.S. adults who say each of the following two statements reflects their views *at least somewhat well* ...

“The decision about whether to have an abortion should belong solely to the pregnant woman,” and “Human life begins at conception, so a fetus is a person with rights.”

	The decision belongs solely to woman AND fetus is a person with rights	Only that the decision belongs solely to woman	Only that a fetus is a person with rights	Neither
	%	%	%	%
All U.S. adults	33	38	23	4
Republican/lean Rep	36	19	39	4
Democrat/lean Dem	30	55	9	4
Protestant	38	24	33	3
<i>White evangelical</i>	32	11	54	1
<i>White, not evangelical</i>	35	38	20	4
<i>Black Protestant</i>	52	30	10	3
Catholic	39	31	25	3
Religiously unaffiliated	21	63	9	6
<i>Atheist</i>	5	85	2	5
<i>Agnostic</i>	12	70	10	8
<i>Nothing in particular</i>	28	55	10	5
<i>Among those who say abortion should be ...</i>				
Legal in all cases	18	76	1	4
Legal, some exceptions	35	54	5	4
Illegal, some exceptions	41	5	49	4
Illegal in all cases	22	1	73	2

Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

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

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In their own words: How Americans feel about abortion

When asked to describe whether they had any other additional views or feelings about abortion, adults shared a range of strong or complex views about the topic. In many cases, Americans reiterated their strong support – or opposition to – abortion in the U.S. Others reflected on how difficult or nuanced the issue was, offering emotional responses or personal experiences to one of two open-ended questions asked on the survey.

One open-ended question asked respondents if they wanted to share any other views or feelings about abortion overall. The other open-ended question asked respondents about their feelings or views regarding abortion restrictions. The responses to both questions were similar.

Overall, about three-in-ten adults offered a response to either of the open-ended questions. There was little difference in the likelihood to

Americans express a range of strong emotions when asked to describe feelings on abortion

Asked in an open-ended question, “Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your views or feelings about _____,” % of U.S. adults who said ...

	Abortion %	Abortion restrictions %
NET Expressed view in support of legal abortion	34	30
Abortion should be legal	4	3
Abortion should be legal so it’s safe	1	2
Abortion prevents unwanted children	1	1
Politics/religion should stay out of abortion law	3	5
Not my place to decide for others	2	2
Decision should be personal/medical	20	15
Other	5	3
NET Expressed view in opposition to abortion	20	22
Abortion should be illegal	1	2
Human life begins at conception/abortion is murder	7	8
People use abortion as birth control	2	2
People should consider adoption instead	1	1
Abortion is a sin/abortion is wrong	5	5
Support for programs making abortion less common	1	2
Other	3	4
NET Neither/both	25	26
Having an abortion is a difficult decision	2	2
Men should have a say/couple should decide	1	2
The ‘other side’ is wrong	1	1
Abortion is a difficult topic	1	2
Depends on length of pregnancy	1	2
Depends on specific situation/exception	5	5
Abortions harm to the pregnant person	1	*
Other neutral response	5	9
Both support and oppose legal abortion	7	4
NET Unclear/other	22	21

Note: Results based on those who responded to open-end question. Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding. Only initial response coded, except “both support and oppose,” which includes respondents who gave at least two responses – one in support of legal abortion and one in opposition.

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

“America’s Abortion Quandary”

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respond by party, religion or gender, though people who say they have given a “lot” of thought to the issue were more likely to respond than people who have not.

Of those who did offer additional comments, about a third of respondents said something in support of legal abortion. By far the most common sentiment expressed was that the decision to have an abortion should be solely a personal decision, or a decision made jointly with a woman and her health care provider, with some saying simply that it “should be between a woman and her doctor.” Others made a more general point, such as one woman who said, “A woman’s body and health should not be subject to legislation.”

About one-in-five of the people who responded to the question expressed disapproval of abortion – the most common reason being a belief that a fetus is a person or that abortion is murder. As one woman said, “It is my belief that life begins at conception and as much as is humanly possible, we as a society need to support, protect and defend each one of those little lives.” Others in this group pointed to the fact that they felt abortion was too often used as a form of birth control. For example, one man said, “Abortions are too easy to obtain these days. It seems more women are using it as a way of birth control.”

About a quarter of respondents who opted to answer one of the open-ended questions said that their views about abortion were complex; many described having mixed feelings about the issue or otherwise expressed sympathy for both sides of the issue. One woman said, “I am personally opposed to abortion in most cases, but I think it would be detrimental to society to make it illegal. I was alive before the pill and before legal abortions. Many women died.” And one man said, “While I might feel abortion may be wrong in some cases, it is never my place as a man to tell a woman what to do with her body.”

The remaining responses were either not related to the topic or were difficult to interpret.

3. How the issue of abortion touches Americans personally

Americans report a wide variance in how much thought they have given to the issue of abortion personally.

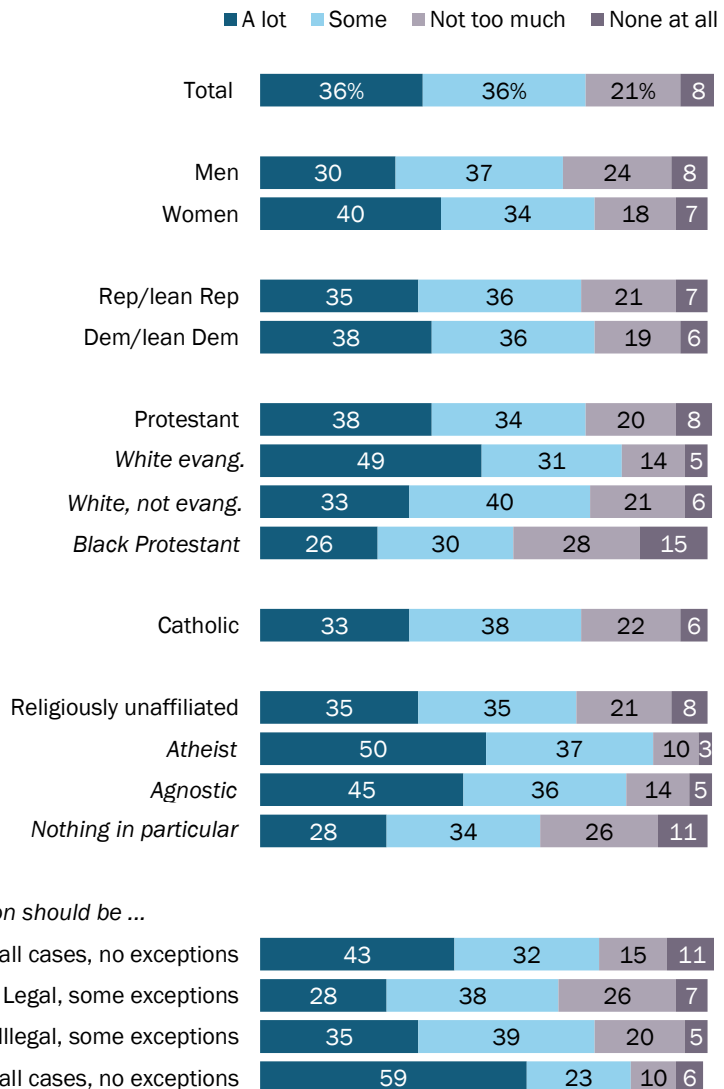
Overall, 36% of adults say that prior to taking the survey, they had given “a lot” of thought to issues around abortion. An identical share say they had given “some” thought to the issue, while roughly three-in-ten say they had thought about abortion “not too much” (21%) or “not at all” (8%). *Note: The survey was conducted prior to the leak of the Supreme Court’s draft opinion on May 2.*

Women are more likely than men to say they have given “a lot” of thought to abortion (40% vs. 30%). This gender gap is consistent across age groups and political parties.

Religiously unaffiliated adults are just as likely as those who do identify with a religion to say they have given a lot of thought to issues surrounding abortion (35% and 36%, respectively). Among Christian subgroups, White evangelical Protestants are far more likely than others to say they have

Adults who take absolutist views on abortion are more likely to say they have thought ‘a lot’ about the issue

% of U.S. adults who say, before taking the survey, they had given ____ thought to issues around abortion



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022. “America’s Abortion Quandary”

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thought a lot about abortion (49%). Self-described atheists, however, also stand out: 50% say that prior to taking the survey, they had given a lot of thought to the issue.

Americans who say abortion should be legal or illegal *with no exceptions* are more likely than those with less absolutist views to say they have thought a lot about the issue. This is especially the case for Americans who say abortion should be *illegal* in all cases without exception – a clear majority of whom report having given abortion a lot of thought (59%).

Women who say they personally know someone who has had an abortion (or have had one themselves) are particularly likely to say they have given “a lot” of thought to abortion issues (47%). Women who do not know someone who has had an abortion are far less likely to say they have given a lot of thought to the issue (28%). There is a similar gap among men: 38% of men who know someone who has had an abortion say they have thought “a lot” about the issue; this compares with 23% of men who do not know someone who has had an abortion.

Personal connections to abortion

Overall, most Americans (59%) say they personally know someone who has had an abortion, such as a close friend or family member, or themselves. People in this category are more likely than others to say abortion should be legal in all or most cases.

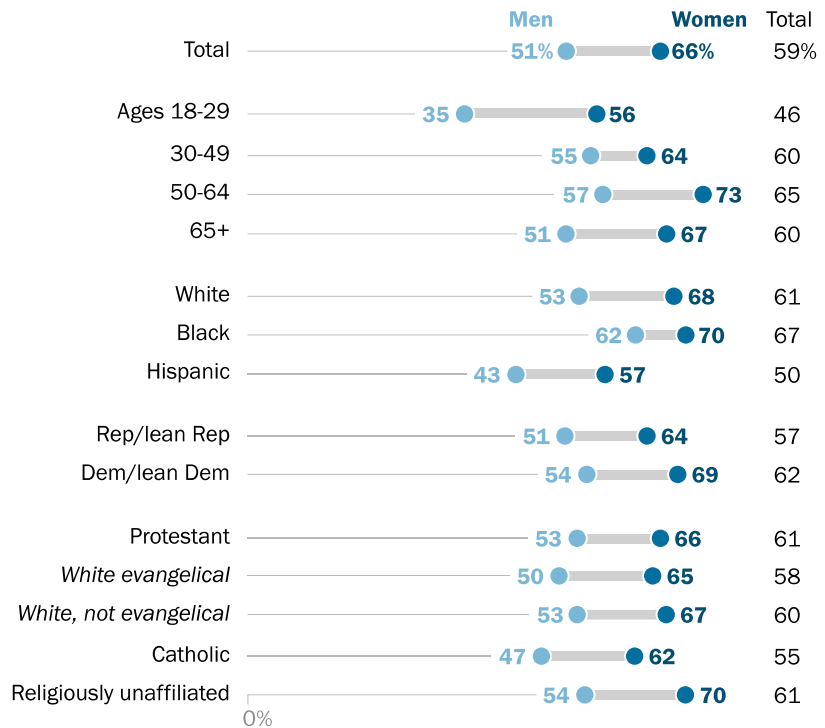
Women (66%) are considerably more likely than men (51%) to say they personally know someone who has had an abortion – a gap that is evident across age groups, political parties and most religious groups. Among adults under 30, for example, 56% of women say they personally know someone who has had an abortion, compared with 35% of men under 30.

Overall, Americans ages 30 and older are more likely than adults under 30 to say they personally know someone who has had an abortion. Black Americans (67%) are somewhat more likely than White (61%) and Hispanic adults (50%) to report knowing someone who has had an abortion, and Democrats also are slightly more likely than Republicans to say this (62% vs. 57%).

Identical shares of Protestants and religiously unaffiliated Americans (61%) say they know someone who has had an abortion. Even among White evangelical Protestants, who voice much greater opposition to abortion legally and morally, a majority (58%) say this is the case.

Gender gap across most groups in shares who personally know someone who has had an abortion

% of U.S. adults who say they personally know someone (such as a close friend, family member or themselves) who has had an abortion ...



Note: White and Black adults include those who report being one race and not Hispanic; Hispanic adults are of any race. Black Protestants not shown due to insufficient sample size.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.
"America's Abortion Quandary"

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Religion's impact on views about abortion

While there are many factors that could shape people's views on abortion, including personal experiences and politics, religious teachings are a major consideration for many Americans. Overall, 36% of adults say that religion is either "extremely" or "very" important in shaping their views about abortion, with members of certain Christian groups especially likely to say this is the case.

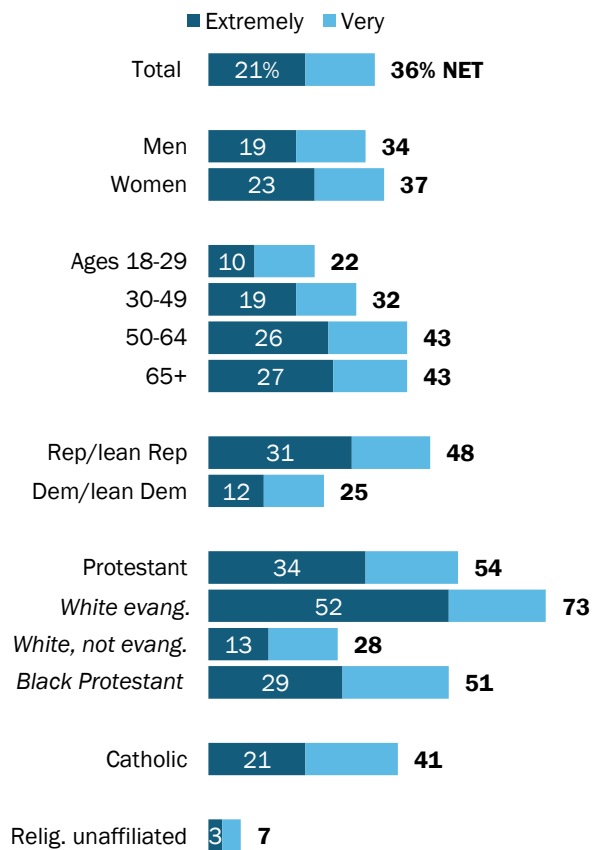
White evangelical Protestants stand out: 73% say religion is at least "very" important in shaping their views on abortion, including about half (52%) who say it is *extremely* important.

Catholics are significantly less likely to say religion is important in shaping their views: 41% say it is important, including 21% who say it is *extremely* important. And White non-evangelical Protestants are even less inclined to link religion with their opinions on abortion.

Older adults and Republicans are more likely than younger adults and Democrats to say religion is important in shaping their personal views on abortion.

Most White evangelicals say religion is important in shaping their views on abortion

% of U.S. adults who say religion is ___ important in shaping their views on abortion ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022. "America's Abortion Quandary"

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Americans who say that religion has a major impact on their views of abortion are more likely than others to support legal restrictions on abortion.

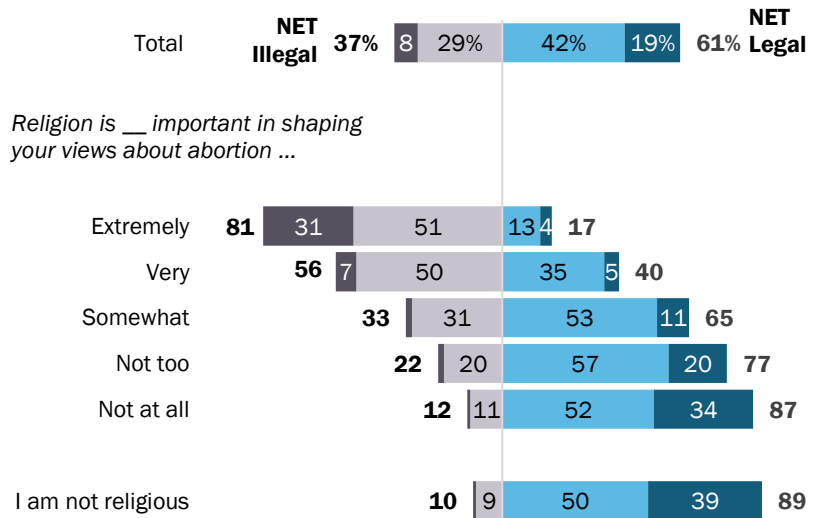
Among those who say religion is extremely important to their views, 81% say abortion should generally be illegal – including 31% who say abortion should be illegal in all cases without exception.

In contrast, among adults who say religion is not at all important to shaping their views on religion, 87% say abortion should be legal in most situations – including 34% who say abortion should be legal in all cases with no exceptions.

Those who say religion shapes their views about abortion much more likely to say it should be illegal

% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be ...

- Legal in all cases, no exceptions
- Legal, some exceptions
- Illegal, some exceptions
- Illegal in all cases, no exceptions



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-13, 2022.
 "America's Abortion Quandary"

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Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from the panel wave conducted March 7-13, 2022. A total of 10,441 panelists responded out of 11,687 who were sampled, for a response rate of 89%. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 3%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 10,441 respondents is plus or minus 1.5 percentage points.

Panel recruitment

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 9,942 (50%) agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a stratified, random sample of

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	1,599
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	938
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	470
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS	9,396	8,778	4,426
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS	5,900	4,720	1,625
June 1 to July 19, 2020; Feb. 10 to March 31, 2021	ABS	3,197	2,812	1,694
May 29 to July 7, 2021				
Sept. 16 to Nov. 1, 2021	ABS	1,329	1,162	935
	Total	39,540	27,414	11,687

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

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households selected from the U.S. Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File. Sampled households receive mailings asking a randomly selected adult to complete a survey online. A question at the end of the survey asks if the respondent is willing to join the ATP. Starting in 2020, another stage was added to the recruitment. Households that do not respond to the online survey are sent a paper version of the questionnaire, \$5 and a postage-paid return envelope. A subset of the adults returning the paper version of the survey are invited to join the ATP. This subset of adults receive a follow-up mailing with a \$10 pre-incentive and invitation to join the ATP.

Across the four address-based recruitments, a total of 19,822 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 17,472 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. In each household, the adult with the next birthday was asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. Of the 27,414 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 11,687 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.² The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

Sample design

The overall target population for this survey was non-institutionalized persons ages 18 and older, living in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii.

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with Ipsos. The web program was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the Ipsos project management team and Pew Research Center researchers. The Ipsos project management team also populated test data that was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or a gift code to Amazon.com or could choose to decline the incentive. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$20 depending on

² AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. “[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling](#).”

whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was March 7-13, 2022. Postcard notifications were mailed to all ATP panelists with a known residential address on March 7, 2022.

Invitations were sent out in two separate launches: Soft Launch and Full Launch. Sixty panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on March 7, 2022. The ATP panelists chosen for the initial soft launch were known responders who had completed previous ATP surveys within one day of receiving their invitation. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on March 8, 2022.

All panelists with an email address received an email invitation and up to two email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. All ATP panelists that consented to SMS messages received an SMS invitation and up to two SMS reminders.

Invitation and reminder dates

	Soft Launch	Full Launch
Initial invitation	March 7, 2022	March 8, 2022
First reminder	March 10, 2022	March 10, 2022
Final reminder	March 12, 2022	March 12, 2022

Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, the Center's researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing clear patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for very high rates of leaving questions blank, as well as always selecting the first or last answer presented. As a result of this checking, three ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

Weighting

The ATP data is weighted in a multistep process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the survey process. First, each panelist begins with a

base weight that reflects their probability of selection for their initial recruitment survey. The base weights for panelists recruited in different years are scaled to be proportionate to the effective sample size for all active panelists in their cohort and then calibrated to align with the population benchmarks in the accompanying table to correct for nonresponse to recruitment surveys and panel attrition. If only a subsample of panelists was invited to participate in the wave, this weight is adjusted to account for any differential probabilities of selection.

Among the panelists who completed the survey, this weight is then calibrated again to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table and trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

Some of the population benchmarks used for weighting come from surveys conducted prior to the coronavirus outbreak that began in February 2020. However, the weighting variables for panelists recruited in 2021 were measured at the time they were recruited to the panel. Likewise, the profile variables for existing panelists were updated from panel surveys conducted in July or August 2021.

This does not pose a problem for most of the variables used in the weighting, which are quite stable at both the population and individual levels. However, volunteerism may have changed over the intervening period in ways that made their 2021 measurements incompatible with the available (pre-pandemic) benchmarks. To address this, volunteerism is weighted using the profile variables that were measured in 2020. For all other weighting dimensions, the more recent panelist measurements from 2021 are used.

For panelists recruited in 2021, plausible values were imputed using the 2020 volunteerism values from existing panelists with similar characteristics. This ensures that any patterns of change that were observed in the existing panelists were also reflected in the new recruits when the weighting was performed.

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age x Gender	2019 American Community Survey (ACS)
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metro/Non-metro	2020 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2019 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2021 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Frequency of internet use	
Religious affiliation	

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population.

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The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Group	Unweighted sample size	Weighted %	Plus or minus ...
All U.S. adults	10,441		1.5 percentage points
Republican/lean Rep	4,972	42	2.2 percentage points
<i>Conservative</i>	3,494	28	2.6 percentage points
<i>Moderate/liberal</i>	1,444	14	4.2 percentage points
Democrat/lean Dem	5,215	51	2.2 percentage points
<i>Conservative/moderate</i>	2,632	28	3.0 percentage points
<i>Liberal</i>	2,526	23	3.1 percentage points
	Unweighted sample size		Plus or minus ...
Women	5,732		2.0 percentage points
Men	4,626		2.4 percentage points
White	7,314		1.8 percentage points
Black	829		5.0 percentage points
Hispanic	1,453		4.8 percentage points
Asian	371		7.7 percentage points
Ages 18-29	903		4.9 percentage points
30-49	3,346		2.6 Percentage points
50-64	3,052		2.7 percentage points
65+	3,097		2.5 percentage points
Protestant	4,403		2.3 percentage points
<i>White evangelical</i>	1,762		3.5 percentage points
<i>White, not evangelical</i>	1,422		4.1 percentage points
<i>Black Protestant</i>	606		5.7 percentage points
Catholic	2,224		3.4 percentage points
Religiously unaffiliated	2,847		3.0 percentage points
<i>Atheist</i>	577		6.7 percentage points
<i>Agnostic</i>	616		6.8 percentage points
<i>Nothing in particular</i>	1,654		3.9 percentage points
<i>Among those who say ...</i>			
Abortion should be legal in most/all cases	6,307		2.0 percentage points
Legal in all cases	1,900		3.7 percentage points
Legal, some exceptions	4,407		2.3 percentage points
Abortion should be illegal in most/all cases	3,936		2.5 percentage points
Illegal in all cases	782		5.7 percentage points
Illegal, some exceptions	3,154		2.8 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Dispositions and response rates

Final dispositions	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	10,441
Logged on to survey; broke-off	2.12	145
Logged on to survey; did not complete any items	2.1121	47
Never logged on (implicit refusal)	2.11	1,050
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	1
Completed interview but was removed for data quality		3
Screened out		0
Total panelists in the survey		11,687
Completed interviews	I	10,441
Partial interviews	P	0
Refusals	R	1,245
Non-contact	NC	1
Other	O	0
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
Total		11,687
AAPOR RR1 = $I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)$		89%

Cumulative response rate	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	12%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	69%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 104	43%
Response rate to Wave 104 survey	89%
Cumulative response rate	3%

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