

Headline Story

Gallup: More Americans Pro-Life than Ever Before

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A new poll shows Americans are identifying increasingly with the position of protecting human life, a trend that has been rising steadily since the Gallup poll's annual Values and Beliefs survey began asking about the subject in 1995.

The results represent a significant shift from a year ago, Gallup reports. Of those polled, 51 percent say they are pro-life, while 42 percent are pro-choice.

Just a year ago, half of Americans called themselves pro-choice and 44 percent, pro-life, according to Gallup. For the first time, women are just as likely as men now to call themselves pro-life.

The May 7-10 poll found that Christian groups also have seen an increase in the number of pro-life supporters, with an 8-point gain among Protestants and a 7-point gain among Catholics.

The shift in opinion is largely among Republicans surveyed, the poll shows, with Democrats still leaning toward pro-choice by a 2-to-1 margin.

"The May 2009 survey documents comparable changes in public views about the legality of abortion," the survey notes. "In answer to a question providing three options for the extent to which abortion should be legal, about as many Americans now say the procedure should be illegal in all circumstances (23 percent) as say it should be legal under any circumstances (22 percent).

"This contrasts with the last four years, when Gallup found a strong tilt of public attitudes in favor of unrestricted abortion."

A national Pew Research Center survey this month found overall support for abortion down. Poll results recorded an 8-percentage-point decline since August in those saying abortion should be legal in all or most cases, from 54 percent to 46 percent.

The Pew poll found that 46 percent say abortion should be legal in most cases (28 percent) or all cases (18 percent); 44 percent believe that abortion should be illegal in most (28 percent) or all cases (16 percent).

The Gallup poll concluded that the shift may be because of President Barack Obama and the pro-abortion majority in Congress.

"With the first pro-choice president in eight years already making changes to the nation's policies on funding abortion overseas, expressing his support for the Freedom of Choice Act, and moving toward rescinding federal job protections for medical workers who refuse to participate in abortion procedures, Americans — and in particular, Republicans — seem to be taking a step back from the pro-choice position," the poll report states. "However, the retreat is evident among political moderates as well as conservatives.

"It is possible that, through his abortion policies, Obama has pushed the public's understanding of what it means to be 'pro-choice' slightly to the left, politically. While Democrats may support that, as they generally support everything Obama is doing as president, it may be driving others in the opposite direction."

"GOP leaders across the nation should take note of both this week's poll and last week's Pew research that show the pro-life position is strengthening the Republican Party," Susan B. Anthony List President Marjorie Dannenfelser told the Christian News Wire.

"It's time to abandon the 'blame pro-lifers first' approach when the GOP loses. If Republicans want to improve their electoral performance, standing on the side of life is one of the best decisions they can make."

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