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**Nearly Six-in-Ten Voters Reject Criminalizing Any Abortions,
Three-in-Four Republicans Reject Criminalizing Before Fetal Viability**
In states with full abortion bans, only one-in-six support them

College Park, MD - A majority of voters (57%) say the government should not make abortion a crime, punishable with prison time or fines. This includes seven-in-ten Democrats and nearly two-thirds of independents.

Among Republicans, 77% oppose criminalization before fetal viability (22-24 weeks), including 42% who oppose any criminalization and 35% who only favor criminalization after fetal viability.

Respondents were presented three options and informed that making abortion a crime means punishing the woman or the doctor with prison time and/or major fines, which is the law in states where abortion is criminalized.

Just 14% of voters nationwide favor criminalizing abortion at all stages of pregnancy, including just 17% in the fifteen states with full abortion bans, 21% of Republicans, and 32% of Republican evangelicals.

Combining those who oppose all criminalization and those who oppose criminalization before fetal viability, a bipartisan majority supports not making abortion a crime before viability (84%), including nine-in-ten Democrats and over three-quarters of Republicans (77%). This includes voters in states which have enacted full abortion bans (81%), Republican primary voters (76%), and evangelical Republicans (66%).

Overwhelming bipartisan majorities favor policies that seek to reduce abortions by decreasing unintended pregnancies by:

- requiring public schools to provide education about birth control (78%, Republicans 71%, Democrats 86%)
- continuing the Affordable Care Act mandate that most insurance plans cover long-term birth control such as the pill and IUDs (82%, Republicans 76%, Democrats 90%)
- subsidizing long-term birth control for low-income and uninsured women by increasing funding to health care clinics that provide such services for free or at a low cost (78%, Republicans 69%, Democrats 87%)

Steven Kull comments, “When asked to consider what role, if any, the government should play in trying to reduce the number of abortions, overwhelming bipartisan majorities favor trying to reduce unintended pregnancies. Overall, there is majority resistance to criminalizing abortions, and even among Republicans and evangelicals, clear majorities do not support criminalizing pre-viability abortions.”

In the innovative public consultation survey of 2,604 registered voters by the Program for Public Consultation (PPC) at the University of Maryland, respondents were given a briefing on the subject of abortion and the potential role of government. They were presented a series of policy options and evaluated a series of strongly stated arguments for and against, before making their final recommendations. The survey content was reviewed by experts from differing sides of the abortion debate to assure that the briefings were accurate and balanced and that the arguments were the strongest ones being made.

Another proposal that has been debated recently is criminalizing abortion after 15 weeks, which is in between conception and viability. A nationwide 15-week ban was introduced by Senator Lindsey Graham. However, when a 15-week ban is included in the set of options, majorities still want to keep abortion legal up until viability (22-24 weeks), overall (72%) and among Republicans (60%).

Another strategy that states have used to reduce abortions has been putting more requirements on the process of getting an abortion. These types of policies were favored by majorities overall, driven primarily by Republican support:

- Requiring doctors to show an ultrasound of the fetus to the woman before they can provide the abortion (58%, Republicans 69%, Democrats 48%, independents 51%)
- Prohibiting doctors from providing an abortion on the day they approve it, but instead require women to come back in 1-3 days before receiving it (53%, Republicans 64%, Democrats 44%, independents 48%)

Several state legislators have also proposed passing laws to charge women with a crime for getting an abortion in another state, when it would have been illegal in their own. A bipartisan majority of over six-in-ten rejected this idea, saying that states should not be able to do this, including 53% of Republicans and two-thirds of Democrats.

The survey was fielded September 16-26, 2022, with a national sample of 2,604 registered voters provided by Precision Sample from its national opt-in panel.

Full Report:

https://publicconsultation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Abortion_Report_1022.pdf

Questionnaire:

https://publicconsultation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Abortion_Quaire_0922.pdf

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