Written by **Dave Bohon** on August 17, 2011

"Pro-Choice," Pro-Life Americans Agree on Some Core Issues

A recent Gallup poll reveals that many "pro-choice" Americans hold beliefs about abortion that are sharply at odds with the abortion industry — and are, in fact, more closely aligned with pro-life views on a number of crucial issues. According to Gallup senior editor Lydia Saad, the survey found that self-described pro-choice and pro-life Americans "agree about nine major areas of abortion policy," including requiring informed consent for women (86 percent for pro-choice, 87 percent for pro-life respondents), and banning partial-birth abortion (63 percent for pro-choice, 68 percent for pro-life respondents).

According to the Gallup poll, majorities of both pro-choice and pro-life Americans also believe that:

• Abortion should be legal when a woman's life is endangered (97 percent for pro-choice, 69 percent for pro-life respondents).

• Abortion should be legal when a woman's physical health is endangered (96 percent to 68 percent).

• Abortion should be legal in cases of rape or incest (91 percent to 59 percent).

• Abortion should be banned in the third trimester (79 percent to 94 percent).

• Parental consent should be required for minors seeking abortion (60 percent to 81 percent).

• A 24-hour waiting period should be in place for women seeking abortion (60 percent to 79 percent).

Surprisingly, the Gallup survey even found that a razor thin majority of "pro-choice" Americans (52 percent) think abortion should be banned in the second trimester — compared to 90 percent of pro-lifers who hold this view.

However, while the two opposing groups share majority opinions on the above nine abortion issues, they are predictably at odds over eight other foundational issues. For example, 64 percent of pro-choice Americans said abortion should be legal when a woman or family cannot afford to raise a child, as opposed to only nine percent of pro-life Americans.

Additionally, the groups disagreed that:

• Abortion should be legal in the first trimester (89 percent for pro-choice, 35 percent for pro-life respondents).

• Abortion should be legal when a baby may be mentally impaired (76 percent to 26 percent).

• Abortion should be legal when a baby may be physically impaired (75 percent to 27 percent).

• Abortion should be legal when a woman's mental health may be endangered (87 percent to 37

percent).

• An ultrasound should be required at least 24 hours before an abortion (29 percent to 73 percent).

• Federal funds should not be available for abortion providers (23 percent to 58 percent).

• Opt-out provisions should be allowed for pharmacists and health-care providers who do not wish to facilitate abortion (30 percent to 61 percent).

The Gallup survey demonstrates that while there are still major differences of opinion between pro-choice and pro-life Americans, both sides are in basic agreement on a core of fundamental issues — from banning partial-birth and late-term abortions to ensuring that both patients and parents are fully informed before an abortion.

While many of the positions of agreement "may not square with those taken by the leading pro-choice and pro-life lobbying groups in Washington," wrote Gallup's Lydia Saad, "enacting them would greatly narrow the scope of the debate among Americans as a whole."

Thomas Peters of Live Action, a pro-life activist group, noted that the pro-life movement "has much to gain by highlighting the fact that 'common ground' solutions to reducing the abortion rate … have support not only among pro-lifers, but by a majority (and sometimes a large majority) of people who claim to be pro-choice. Planned Parenthood always tries to paint us as the extremists — turns out the opposite is true!"

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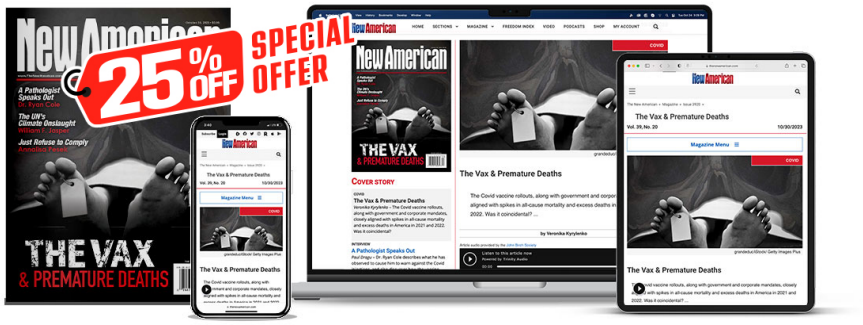

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