

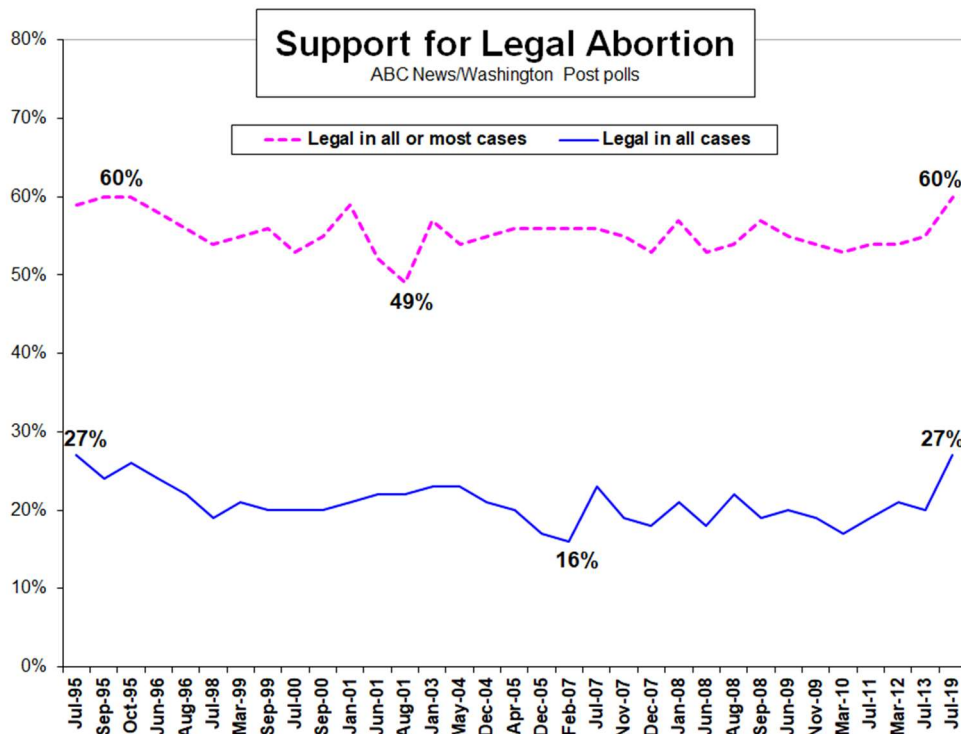
## Support for Legal Abortion Matches its 24-Year High

Sixty percent of Americans say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, the most in ABC News/Washington Post polls since 1995. More also say their state should make it easier, rather than harder, for women to have access to abortion, with a plurality favoring no change in the status quo.

Most of the change in support for legal abortion is among Americans who say it should be legal “in all cases,” now 27 percent, matching the high 24 years ago and up 11 percentage points from its low in early 2007. An additional 33 percent say it should be legal in most cases in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#).

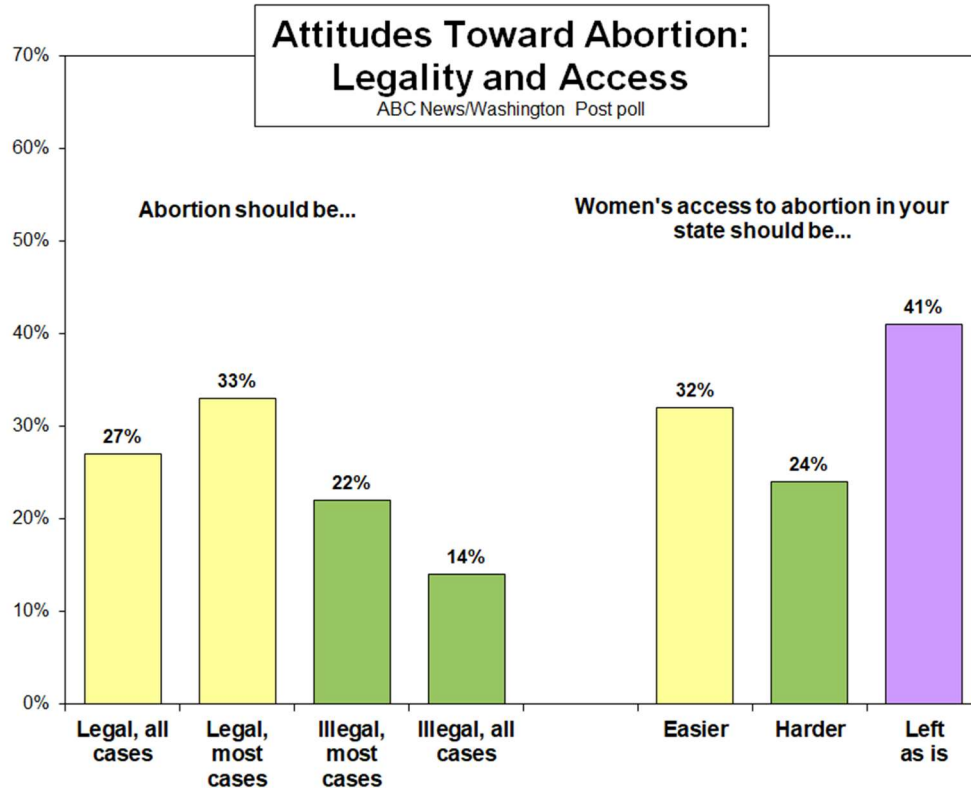
The rest, 36 percent, say abortion should be illegal in all or most cases, down from 45 percent as recently as 2010 and a high of 48 percent in 2001. This includes 14 percent who say abortion should be illegal in all cases, about half as many as say it always should be legal.

While support for legal abortion now matches its high in fall 1995, trends since then have not been consistent. The long-term average, in 32 ABC/Post polls over this period, is 55 percent, compared with today’s 60 percent.



In terms of state-level action, 41 percent say laws on women’s access to abortion should be left as they are now. Thirty-two percent say access to abortion should be easier than it is now, for a total of 73 percent favoring either no change or fewer restrictions. Twenty-four percent say abortion access should be harder. (In an ABC/Post poll last summer, 30 percent said they would like to see the Supreme Court make it harder to get an abortion, down from 42 percent in 2005.)

At least 11 states have passed more restrictive abortion laws in recent months, of which six have been stayed by court orders. Six other states have moved in the opposite direction, enacting laws to ensure or expand abortion access.



**GROUPS** – Views on abortion access at the state level are similar among men and women. Essentially equal numbers also say abortion should be all or mostly legal overall, 62 percent of women and 59 percent of men. In one difference, women are 8 points more likely to say abortion should be legal in all cases, 31 vs. 23 percent.

Through a political lens, substantial majorities of Democrats (77 percent) and independents (64 percent) support legal abortion, compared with 41 percent of Republicans. It’s 81 percent among liberals and 70 percent among moderates, vs. 38 percent among conservatives. Support for legal abortion in all cases ranges from 56 percent of liberal women to 11 percent of conservative men.

Other differences between the sexes emerge within partisan groups. Republican men are much more likely than Republican women to favor legal abortion, 51 vs. 32 percent. The opposite is true among independents, with support higher among independent women than men, 71 vs. 58

percent. Among Democrats, men and women hold similar views on abortion being legal in all or most cases, but with women 14 points more likely to say it should be legal in all cases.

Religious beliefs also influence these attitudes. Among people with no religious preference – a quarter of all adults and the fastest-growing group in religious terms – 85 percent support legal abortion. So do 71 percent of non-evangelical Protestants, compared with 52 percent of Catholics and 37 percent of evangelical Protestants. Even among evangelical Protestants, relatively few say abortion should be illegal in all cases, 27 percent.

Among other groups, support for legal abortion peaks by age at 72 percent among 18- to 29-year-olds, and it’s 69 percent among all those younger than 40 compared with 55 percent among those 40 and older.

There are no significant differences overall by race and ethnicity. But in another political group of interest, college-educated white women are more apt to support legal abortion (72 percent) than college-educated white men and whites of either gender who lack a college degree (all with support in the mid- to high-50s). That said, college-educated white women are no more apt than other adults to favor making women’s access to abortion easier than it is now.

| <b>Abortion should be...</b>       | <b>Legal in all or most cases</b> | <b>Legal in all cases</b> | <b>Easier to access than now</b> | <b>Harder to access than now</b> | <b>The same to access as now</b> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>All</b>                         | <b>60%</b>                        | <b>27%</b>                | <b>32%</b>                       | <b>24%</b>                       | <b>41%</b>                       |
| <b>Men</b>                         | <b>59</b>                         | <b>23</b>                 | <b>34</b>                        | <b>22</b>                        | <b>40</b>                        |
| <b>Women</b>                       | <b>62</b>                         | <b>31</b>                 | <b>30</b>                        | <b>25</b>                        | <b>41</b>                        |
| <b>Democrats</b>                   | <b>77</b>                         | <b>42</b>                 | <b>50</b>                        | <b>13</b>                        | <b>34</b>                        |
| <b>Democratic men</b>              | <b>75</b>                         | <b>33</b>                 | <b>47</b>                        | <b>14</b>                        | <b>35</b>                        |
| <b>Democratic women</b>            | <b>78</b>                         | <b>47</b>                 | <b>53</b>                        | <b>13</b>                        | <b>33</b>                        |
| <b>Republicans</b>                 | <b>41</b>                         | <b>13</b>                 | <b>14</b>                        | <b>40</b>                        | <b>41</b>                        |
| <b>Republican men</b>              | <b>51</b>                         | <b>15</b>                 | <b>23</b>                        | <b>32</b>                        | <b>40</b>                        |
| <b>Republican women</b>            | <b>32</b>                         | <b>11</b>                 | <b>7</b>                         | <b>47</b>                        | <b>42</b>                        |
| <b>Independents</b>                | <b>64</b>                         | <b>25</b>                 | <b>28</b>                        | <b>22</b>                        | <b>47</b>                        |
| <b>Independent men</b>             | <b>58</b>                         | <b>20</b>                 | <b>31</b>                        | <b>22</b>                        | <b>43</b>                        |
| <b>Independent women</b>           | <b>71</b>                         | <b>30</b>                 | <b>25</b>                        | <b>22</b>                        | <b>51</b>                        |
| <b>Liberals</b>                    | <b>81</b>                         | <b>50</b>                 | <b>57</b>                        | <b>10</b>                        | <b>32</b>                        |
| <b>Moderates</b>                   | <b>70</b>                         | <b>25</b>                 | <b>32</b>                        | <b>15</b>                        | <b>49</b>                        |
| <b>Conservatives</b>               | <b>38</b>                         | <b>13</b>                 | <b>14</b>                        | <b>45</b>                        | <b>37</b>                        |
| <b>Somewhat conservatives</b>      | <b>50</b>                         | <b>17</b>                 | <b>19</b>                        | <b>33</b>                        | <b>41</b>                        |
| <b>Strong conservatives</b>        | <b>23</b>                         | <b>9</b>                  | <b>8</b>                         | <b>58</b>                        | <b>31</b>                        |
| <b>Evangelical Protestants</b>     | <b>37</b>                         | <b>14</b>                 | <b>18</b>                        | <b>44</b>                        | <b>31</b>                        |
| <b>Catholics</b>                   | <b>52</b>                         | <b>21</b>                 | <b>22</b>                        | <b>27</b>                        | <b>49</b>                        |
| <b>Non-evangelical Protestants</b> | <b>71</b>                         | <b>31</b>                 | <b>31</b>                        | <b>12</b>                        | <b>52</b>                        |

| <b>Abortion should be...</b> |                                   |                           |                                  |                                  |                                  |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                              | <b>Legal in all or most cases</b> | <b>Legal in all cases</b> | <b>Easier to access than now</b> | <b>Harder to access than now</b> | <b>The same to access as now</b> |
| <b>No religion</b>           | <b>85</b>                         | <b>45</b>                 | <b>58</b>                        | <b>10</b>                        | <b>31</b>                        |
| <b>Age 18-29</b>             | <b>72</b>                         | <b>36</b>                 | <b>46</b>                        | <b>17</b>                        | <b>35</b>                        |
| <b>Age &lt;40</b>            | <b>69</b>                         | <b>33</b>                 | <b>42</b>                        | <b>21</b>                        | <b>35</b>                        |
| <b>Age 40+</b>               | <b>55</b>                         | <b>24</b>                 | <b>26</b>                        | <b>25</b>                        | <b>43</b>                        |

Thinking that states should make it easier for women to have access to abortion peaks among those with no religion (58 percent), liberals (57 percent), Democrats (50 percent) and 18- to 29-year-olds (46 percent). Thinking the opposite – that states should make abortion access harder – is highest, in turn, among strong conservatives (58 percent), evangelical Protestants (44 percent) and Republicans (40 percent).

States with more restrictive abortion laws have more Republican populations than other states; that’s part of the reason that people in these states are 13 points more likely than those in less-restrictive states to say it should be harder for women to have access to abortion. Still, relatively few take this position, 29 percent in more-restrictive states vs. 16 percent in those with less restrictions. (More- and less-restrictive states were categorized using both the Guttmacher Institute’s State Abortion Policy Landscape and the Americans United for Life 2019 Life List.)

As reported in a previous analysis Sunday, 61 percent of all adults call abortion a highly important issue in their vote for president in 2020, ranking it second to last on a list of nine items. There’s a big 27-point gender gap in this result, with abortion highly important to 73 percent of women compared with 46 percent of men. Indeed, 21 percent of women call it one of the single most important issues in their vote; just 6 percent of men say the same.

Attitudes on legal abortion are essentially the same among people who call it highly important in their vote as among those who don’t; six in 10 in both groups say it should be legal in all or most cases, including virtually identical shares of women who call it a top voting issue and of men who say the same.

TREND – Support for legal abortion in all or most cases is up a slight 5 points since last measured in an ABC/Post poll in 2013. That’s led by a 14-point rise among adults younger than 40 and 12-point increases in three groups – those with no religious preference, Democrats and people who call themselves “somewhat” conservative.

| <b>Support for legal abortion: Change since 2013</b> |            |             |              |
|--|------------|-------------|--------------|
|  | <b>Now</b> | <b>2013</b> | <b>Diff.</b> |
| <b>Age &lt;40</b>                                    | <b>69%</b> | <b>55%</b>  | <b>+14</b>   |
| <b>No religion</b>                                   | <b>85</b>  | <b>73</b>   | <b>+12</b>   |
| <b>Democrats</b>                                     | <b>77</b>  | <b>65</b>   | <b>+12</b>   |
| <b>Somewhat conservatives</b>                        | <b>50</b>  | <b>38</b>   | <b>+12</b>   |

Thinking abortion should be legal in all cases, for its part, is up 7 points overall since 2013, including 17 points among liberals, 16 points among Democrats, 15 points among under-40s and 14 points both among those with no religion and those age 65 and older.

| <b>Support for legal abortion in all cases:<br/>Change since 2013</b> |            |             |              |
|---|------------|-------------|--------------|
|   | <b>Now</b> | <b>2013</b> | <b>Diff.</b> |
| <b>Liberals</b>   | <b>50%</b> | <b>33%</b>  | <b>+17</b>   |
| <b>Democrats</b>  | <b>42</b>  | <b>26</b>   | <b>+16</b>   |
| <b>Age &lt;40</b>   | <b>33</b>  | <b>18</b>   | <b>+15</b>   |
| <b>No religion</b>  | <b>45</b>  | <b>31</b>   | <b>+14</b>   |
| <b>Age 65+</b>  | <b>26</b>  | <b>12</b>   | <b>+14</b>   |

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone June 28-July 1, 2019, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,008 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points, including the design effect. Partisan divisions are 29-23-37 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling and data collection by Abt Associates of Rockville, Md. See details on the survey’s methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Christine Filer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com. Join our [mailing list](#) to get updates on all new poll releases.

Media contacts: [Van Scott](#) (212-456-7243) or [Caragh Fisher](#) (212-456-3437).

Full results follow.

1-23, 26 previously released.

24. On another subject, do you think abortion should be legal in all cases, legal in most cases, illegal in most cases or illegal in all cases?

|           |     | ----- Legal ----- |            |     | ----- Illegal ----- |           |            |
|-----------|-----|-------------------|------------|-----|---------------------|-----------|------------|
|           | NET | All cases         | Most cases | NET | Most cases          | All cases | No opinion |
| 7/1/19    | 60  | 27                | 33         | 36  | 22                  | 14        | 4          |
| 7/21/13   | 55  | 20                | 35         | 41  | 26                  | 15        | 3          |
| 3/10/12   | 54  | 21                | 33         | 43  | 25                  | 17        | 3          |
| 7/17/11   | 54  | 19                | 35         | 44  | 30                  | 15        | 2          |
| 3/26/10   | 53  | 17                | 35         | 45  | 27                  | 18        | 2          |
| 11/23/09  | 54  | 19                | 35         | 43  | 28                  | 16        | 2          |
| 6/21/09   | 55  | 20                | 35         | 43  | 26                  | 17        | 2          |
| 9/7/08 RV | 57  | 19                | 38         | 39  | 24                  | 15        | 4          |
| 8/22/08   | 54  | 22                | 32         | 44  | 26                  | 18        | 3          |
| 6/15/08   | 53  | 18                | 35         | 44  | 28                  | 16        | 3          |
| 1/12/08   | 57  | 21                | 36         | 40  | 25                  | 15        | 3          |

|          |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|
| 12/9/07  | 53 | 18 | 35 | 44 | 27 | 17 | 3  |   |
| 11/1/07  | 55 | 19 | 36 | 43 | 27 | 16 | 2  |   |
| 7/21/07  | 56 | 23 | 34 | 41 | 28 | 14 | 2  |   |
| 2/25/07  | 56 | 16 | 39 | 42 | 31 | 12 | 2  |   |
| 12/18/05 | 56 | 17 | 40 | 41 | 27 | 13 | 3  |   |
| 4/24/05  | 56 | 20 | 36 | 42 | 27 | 14 | 3  |   |
| 12/19/04 | 55 | 21 | 34 | 42 | 25 | 17 | 3  |   |
| 5/23/04  | 54 | 23 | 31 | 44 | 23 | 20 | 2  |   |
| 1/20/03  | 57 | 23 | 34 | 42 | 25 | 17 | 2  |   |
| 8/12/01  | 49 | 22 | 27 | 48 | 28 | 20 | 3  |   |
| 6/24/01  | 52 | 22 | 31 | 43 | 23 | 20 | 4  |   |
| 1/15/01  | 59 | 21 | 38 | 39 | 25 | 14 | 1  |   |
| 9/6/00   | RV | 55 | 20 | 35 | 42 | 25 | 16 | 3 |
| 7/23/00  | 53 | 20 | 33 | 43 | 26 | 17 | 4  |   |
| 9/2/99   | 56 | 20 | 37 | 42 | 26 | 15 | 2  |   |
| 3/14/99  | 55 | 21 | 34 | 42 | 27 | 15 | 3  |   |
| 7/12/98  | 54 | 19 | 35 | 42 | 29 | 13 | 4  |   |
| 8/5/96   | 56 | 22 | 34 | 41 | 27 | 14 | 3  |   |
| 6/30/96  | 58 | 24 | 34 | 40 | 25 | 14 | 2  |   |
| 10/1/95  | 60 | 26 | 35 | 37 | 25 | 12 | 3  |   |
| 9/21/95  | 60 | 24 | 36 | 36 | 25 | 11 | 4  |   |
| 7/17/95  | 59 | 27 | 32 | 40 | 26 | 14 | 1  |   |

25. Should your state make it (easier) for women to have access to abortion, make it (harder) for women to have access to abortion, or leave the law on women's access to abortion as it is now?

|        | Easier | Harder | Leave as<br>it is now | No<br>opinion |
|--------|--------|--------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 7/1/19 | 32     | 24     | 41                    | 4             |

Compare to:

Would you like to see the Supreme Court (make it harder to get an abortion than it is now), (make it easier to get an abortion than it is now), or (leave the ability to get an abortion the same as it is now)?

|          | Harder | Easier | Same | No opinion |
|----------|--------|--------|------|------------|
| 8/29/18  | 30     | 21     | 45   | 4          |
| 12/18/05 | 42     | 11     | 45   | 2          |
| 8/28/05  | 42     | 9      | 47   | 2          |

Generally speaking, do you think it should be made easier or harder for a woman to obtain a legal abortion?

|          | Easier | Harder | Same (vol.) | No opinion |
|----------|--------|--------|-------------|------------|
| 3/31/92* | 39     | 47     | 8           | 7          |

\* Washington Post

\*\*\* END \*\*\*