

To: NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts

October 12, 2018

From: Steve Koczela
President, MassINC Polling Group

Re: Summary of findings from statewide voter poll

The MassINC Polling Group (MPG) recently conducted a statewide poll of Massachusetts registered voters about issues related to abortion law. In addition to the statewide registered voter sample, the poll also reached an oversample of Catholic voters. Below are the key findings from the project. Please see the appendix for a full description of the project methodology. The project was sponsored by NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts with support from the National Institute for Reproductive Health Action Fund.

Massachusetts voters are strongly in favor of maintaining Roe vs. Wade and strengthening state-level abortion protections if it is overturned or weakened.

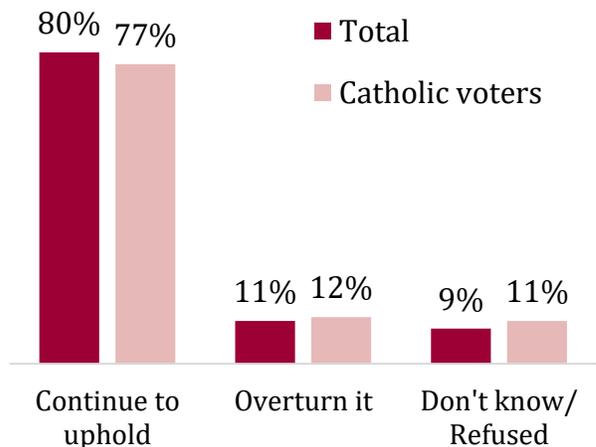
There is little division among Massachusetts voters when it comes to the issue of Roe vs. Wade, the landmark Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion nationwide. In all, 80 percent of voters statewide say the Supreme Court should continue to uphold the decision, while 11 percent say it should be overturned (Figure 1). Similarly, 83 percent say abortion should be legal in almost all (47 percent) or most cases (36 percent).

Voters were asked about various state-level policies in light of the national political climate that could lead to Roe v. Wade being “significantly scaled back or overturned”. In that context, majorities of voters supported all of the policies tested, including:

- 78 percent of voters support a state law guaranteeing the legal right to abortion.
- 77 percent support a new law ensuring abortion services are covered for low-income residents through MassHealth.
- 76 percent support an exception to the ban on abortion after 24 weeks of pregnancy to protect a woman’s health or in cases of a grave fetal anomaly.
- 74 percent support requiring all health insurers in Massachusetts to cover abortion.
- 70 percent support a law allowing trained and qualified mid-range medical professionals to provide abortion care.

Figure 1: Registered voters & Catholics alike want Roe vs. Wade to be upheld

Q: Would you like to see the Supreme Court continue to uphold the Roe vs. Wade decision or should it be overturned?



Voters want Massachusetts to be a model for other states and the country – 85 percent of voters agree

that Massachusetts should be a leader in ensuring that a woman who has made a decision to get an abortion is able to get safe, supportive, respectful care in her community.

Catholic voters in Massachusetts favor abortion rights.

This poll included an oversample of Catholic registered voters, bringing the total number of Catholics to 787 out of 1,816 total respondents. This enabled a deep examination of opinion among Catholic voters. Catholic voters were of particular interest in this project as they have often been viewed as a more conservative group on this issue. This poll tells a different story.

Even among Catholic voters, 77 percent say Roe vs. Wade should stand. Another 78 percent of Catholics think abortion should be legal in almost all or most cases. Even in the case of a moral disagreement with abortion, 85 percent agree with the statement “I can hold my own moral views about abortion and still trust a woman and her family to make this decision for themselves”; 65 percent strongly agree with that statement.

As they assess laws passed by the Trump administration and other states to restrict abortion access and make it more difficult for women to receive care, 63 percent of Catholic voters (69 percent overall) think these laws are going in the wrong direction.

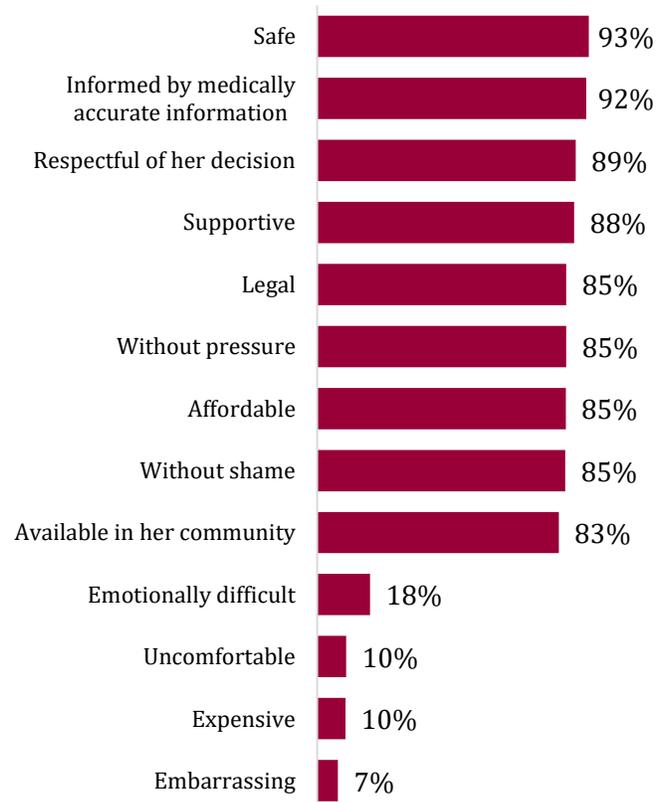
Voters want abortion services to remain legal, and to come without stigma or struggle.

Some restrictions are less about outright bans on abortion and more about making access abortion harder or the experience more difficult. Voters also object to that. Most voters (74 percent) agree that if someone they care about has made the decision to have an abortion, they want them to have support. Further, if a woman decided to have an abortion, they want it to be in a safe, respectful, without shame, and locally available (Figure 2).

A total of 69 percent of voters think that laws enacted by the Trump administration and other states against abortion that make it more difficult for a woman to access care are heading in the wrong direction.

Figure 2: If a woman has decided to have an abortion, voters want the experience to be...

Q: Think of a woman who has decided to have an abortion. How would you want that experience to be? Would you want it to be READ FIRST or not?



Appendix – Methodology

These results are based on a survey of 1,816 registered voters in Massachusetts, including 602 live telephone interviews were conducted between September 28 and October 2, 2018 via both landline and cell phone using conventional registration based sampling procedures. Another 1,214 responses were collected online between September 28 and October 3, 2018.

The total sample included 787 Catholic voters from the general sample and an online oversample. Catholic voters were weighted to match the demographics for Catholics registered voters in Massachusetts. The entire sample was then weighted to match the demographics of registered voters in the state. The margin of sampling error is 3 percentage points with a 95 percent level of confidence. The poll was sponsored by NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts with support from the National Institute for Reproductive Health Action Fund.