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Millennials Far Less Aware of Historic Ruling

Roe v. Wade at 40: Most Oppose Overturning Abortion Decision

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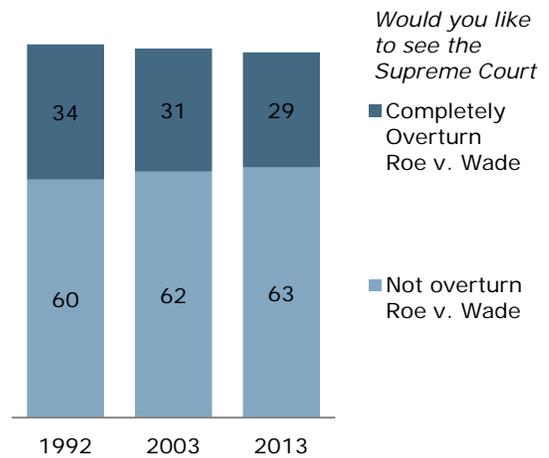
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Millennials Far Less Aware of Historic Ruling *Roe v. Wade* at 40: Most Oppose Overturning Abortion Decision

As the 40th anniversary of the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision approaches, the public remains opposed to completely overturning the historic ruling on abortion. More than six-in-ten (63%) say they would not like to see the court completely overturn the *Roe v. Wade* decision, which established a woman's constitutional right to abortion at least in the first three months of pregnancy. Only about three-in-ten (29%) would like to see the ruling overturned. These opinions are little changed from surveys conducted 10 and 20 years ago.

Decades after the Supreme Court rendered its decision, on Jan. 22, 1973, most Americans (62%) know that *Roe v. Wade* dealt with abortion rather than school desegregation or some other issue. But the rest either guess incorrectly (17%) or do not know what the case was about (20%). And there are substantial age differences in awareness: Among those ages 50 to 64, 74% know that *Roe v. Wade* dealt with abortion, the highest percentage of any age group. Among those younger than 30, just 44% know this.

Consistent Support for Maintaining *Roe v. Wade* Over Past 20 Years



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013. 1992 Figures based on registered voters.

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted Jan. 9-13 among 1,502 adults, finds that abortion is viewed as a less important issue than in the past. Currently, 53% say abortion “is not that important compared to other issues,” up from 48% in 2009 and 32% in 2006. The percentage viewing abortion as a “critical issue facing the country” fell from 28% in 2006 to 15% in 2009 and now stands at 18%.

However, the public continues to be divided over whether it is morally acceptable to have an abortion. Nearly half (47%) say it is morally wrong to have an abortion, while just 13% find this morally acceptable; 27% say this is not a moral issue and 9% volunteer that it depends on the situation. These opinions have changed little since 2006.

Wide Religious, Partisan Differences over *Roe*

There continue to be substantial religious and partisan differences over whether to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, and over the broader question of whether abortion should be legal or illegal on all or most cases. (*For more on attitudes toward abortion, see [this slideshow by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.](#)*)

More Say Abortion Is “Not that Important”

	Mar 2006	Aug 2009	Jan 2013	Change 06-13
<i>Issue of abortion is ...</i>	%	%	%	
Critical issue	28	15	18	-10
One among many important issues	38	33	27	-11
Not that important compared to other issues	32	48	53	+21
Don't know/Refused	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	--
	100	100	100	

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013. Q54. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

White evangelical Protestants are the only major religious group in which a majority (54%) favors completely overturning the *Roe v. Wade* decision. Large percentages of white mainline Protestants (76%), Black Protestants (65%) and white Catholics (63%) say the ruling should not be overturned. Fully 82% of the religiously unaffiliated oppose overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

Half of Americans who attend religious services at least weekly favor completely overturning the *Roe v. Wade* decision, compared with just 17% of those who attend less often.

Republicans are evenly divided over whether the ruling should be overturned: 46% say it should while 48% say it should not. By wide margins, Democrats (74% to 20%) and independents (64% to 28%) oppose overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

There is no gender gap in opinions about *Roe v. Wade*: Nearly identical percentages of women (64%) and men (63%) oppose reversing the decision.

Views of *Roe v. Wade*

Would you like to see the Supreme Court...

	Overturn decision %	Not overturn %	DK/Ref %
Total	29	63	7=100
Men	29	63	9=100
Women	30	64	6=100
18-29	27	68	5=100
30-49	31	61	8=100
50-64	26	69	6=100
65+	36	52	12=100
White	29	66	6=100
Black	29	67	4=100
College grad+	22	73	4=100
Post-graduate	13	82	5=100
College grad	27	69	4=100
Some college	27	67	6=100
HS or less	36	53	11=100
Republican	46	48	6=100
Democrat	20	74	6=100
Independent	28	64	8=100
Protestant	35	58	7=100
White evangelical	54	42	4=100
White mainline	17	76	7=100
Black Protestant	29	65	5=100
Catholic	38	55	7=100
White Catholic	33	63	4=100
Unaffiliated	9	82	9=100
<i>Attend religious services</i>			
Weekly or more	50	44	7=100
Less often	17	76	7=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013. Q53. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic.

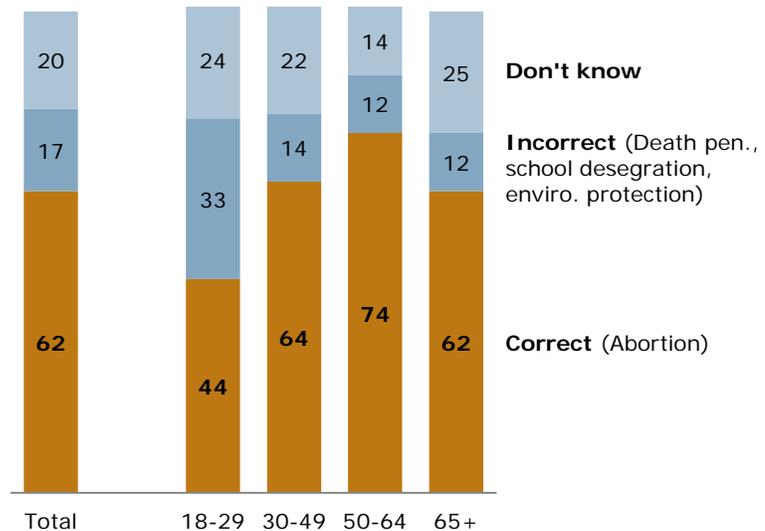
Age and Awareness of *Roe v. Wade*

About six-in-ten Americans (62%) know that *Roe v. Wade* dealt with the issue of abortion. Much smaller percentages incorrectly associate the decision with school desegregation (7%), the death penalty (5%) or environmental protection (5%); 20% do not know.

Among those younger than 30, just 44% know that the case was about abortion; 16% say it dealt with school desegregation, and 41% either say it dealt with another issue (the death penalty or the environment), or do not know. Majorities of older age groups know that *Roe v. Wade* dealt with abortion.

Most Over Age 30 Know *Roe v. Wade* Dealt with Abortion

The Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* dealt with which of the following issues?



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013.

There also are educational differences in awareness of which issue *Roe v. Wade* addressed. Fully 91% of those with post-graduate education know it dealt with abortion, as do 79% of college graduates, 63% of those with only some college experience and 47% of those with no more than a high school education.

Identical percentages of women and men (62% each) are aware that *Roe* dealt with abortion. Nearly seven-in-ten Republicans (68%) answered this question correctly, compared with 63% of independents and 57% of Democrats.

Views of Abortion's Importance

Slightly more than half of adults (53%) say that abortion is not that important compared with other issues. About a quarter (27%) say abortion is one among many important issues facing the country, while 18% view abortion as a critical issue.

Those who would like to see *Roe v. Wade* overturned are particularly inclined to view abortion as a critical issue facing the country. Nearly four-in-ten (38%) of those who support overturning the abortion ruling say abortion is a critical issue, compared with just 9% of those who oppose overturning *Roe v. Wade*. Among those who favor retaining *Roe*, 68% say abortion is not that important compared with other issues.

Nearly three-in-ten white evangelical Protestants (29%) view the issue of abortion as critical, compared with just 13% of white mainline Protestants and white Catholics. Majorities of white mainline Protestants (61%) and white Catholics (59%) say abortion is not that important compared with other issues. An even higher percentage of religiously unaffiliated Americans (71%) say abortion is relatively unimportant.

Few See Abortion as Critical Issue Facing the Country

	Critical issue %	One of many important %	Not that important %	DK %
Total	18	27	53	2=100
Men	18	26	54	2=100
Women	18	28	52	2=100
18-29	13	23	62	2=100
30-49	17	29	52	1=100
50-64	18	28	51	3=100
65+	25	27	45	4=100
Republican	23	30	46	1=100
Democrat	15	27	56	2=100
Independent	18	25	55	2=100
Protestant	21	30	47	2=100
White evangelical	29	35	35	1=100
White mainline	13	23	61	2=100
Black Protestant	25	25	48	2=100
Catholic	19	27	52	2=100
White Catholic	13	27	59	1=100
Unaffiliated	8	19	71	2=100
<i>View of Roe v. Wade decision</i>				
Overturn	38	36	25	1=100
Do not overturn	9	22	68	1=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013. Q54. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Abortion and Personal Morality

Nearly half of Americans (47%) say they personally believe that it is morally wrong to have an abortion, compared with 27% who say it is not a moral issue, 13% who find it morally acceptable and 9% who volunteer that it depends. These opinions have changed only modestly in recent years.

There are deep differences among religious groups, as well as a wide partisan gap, in opinions about the moral acceptability of having an abortion.

Most white evangelical Protestants (73%), as well as 55% of white Catholics and 53% of black Protestants, say it is morally wrong to have an abortion. That compares with 36% of white mainline Protestants and just 20% of the religiously unaffiliated.

A majority of Republicans (63%) view having an

abortion as morally wrong, compared with 45% of independents and 39% of Democrats.

Relatively small percentages of people in all religious, partisan and demographic groups say it is morally acceptable to have an abortion. However, nearly half of Democrats say either that having an abortion is morally acceptable (17%) or that it is not a moral issue (31%). Among independents, roughly four-in-ten say it is either morally acceptable (12%) or that abortion is not a moral issue (30%).

Those who favor overturning *Roe v. Wade* overwhelmingly say it is morally wrong to have an abortion; fully 85% express this view. Opinions about the morality of abortion are more divided among those who oppose overturning *Roe*. Nearly four-in-ten (38%)

Is Having an Abortion Morally Acceptable?

	Morally wrong	Morally acceptable	Not a moral issue	Other/DK
	%	%	%	%
Total	47	13	27	13=100
Men	45	16	26	13=100
Women	49	10	28	14=100
Republican	63	7	18	12=100
Democrat	39	17	31	14=100
Independent	45	12	30	13=100
Protestant	56	9	20	15=100
White evangelical	73	6	11	10=100
White mainline	36	15	32	17=100
Black Protestant	53	8	23	16=100
Catholic	58	9	24	9=100
White Catholic	55	9	29	8=100
Unaffiliated	20	24	43	13=100
<i>View of Roe v. Wade decision</i>				
Overturn	85	5	7	3=100
Do not overturn	29	17	38	16=100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013. Q18a. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

say abortion is not a moral issue, while 29% say having an abortion is morally wrong; just 17% of those who favor retaining *Roe* view abortion as morally acceptable.

Overall, nearly one-in-five Americans (18%) say they personally believe that abortion is morally unacceptable, yet also oppose the Supreme Court overturning its *Roe v. Wade* ruling.

Views of the Parties on Abortion

The survey finds that 41% say that the Democratic Party can do a better job of representing their views on abortion; nearly as many (36%) say the Republican Party could do better.

Last March, the Democratic Party held a 16-point advantage as better representing people's views on abortion (47% to 31%). In October 2011, the Democrats led by eight points on this issue (44% to 36%).

Neither Party Has Advantage on Abortion

<i>Which party can do a better job representing your views on abortion?</i>	Rep Party	Dem Party	Both/ Neither/ DK	Dem adv
	%	%	%	
January 2013	36	41	23=100	+5
March 2012	31	47	22=100	+16
October 2011	36	44	19=100	+8
August 2009	33	41	26=100	+8
September 2006	33	44	23=100	+11

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Jan. 9-13, 2013. Q34j. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted January 9-13, 2013 among a national sample of 1,502 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (752 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 750 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 369 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2011 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2012 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus...
Total sample	1,502	2.9 percentage points
Republicans	403	5.7 percentage points
Democrats	473	5.2 percentage points
Independents	557	4.8 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER
JANUARY 2013 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
January 9-13, 2013
N=1,502**

QUESTIONS 1-2, 9-12, 16 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 3-8, 14-15

QUESTION 17g.F2 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

QUESTIONS 17a-17f.F1 AND 17h.F2-17j.F2 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

ASK ALL:

Now, a different kind of question ...

Q.18 Do you personally believe that **[INSERT ITEM AND RANDOMIZE]** is morally acceptable, morally wrong, or is it not a moral issue. **[IF NECESSARY: And is [INSERT ITEM] morally acceptable, morally wrong, or is it not a moral issue?]**

		Morally <u>acceptable</u>	Morally <u>wrong</u>	Not a moral <u>issue</u>	(VOL.) Depends on <u>the situation</u>	(VOL.) <u>DK/Ref</u>
a.	Having an abortion					
	Jan 9-13, 2013	13	47	27	9	4
	Feb 8-12, 2012	13	48	25	9	5
	Aug 11-17, 2009	10	52	25	8	4
	February, 2006	12	52	23	11	2

QUESTIONS 18b-c, 20-25, 30, 31-32, 35-36 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 19, 26-29, 33, 37-39

QUESTION 34I PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

QUESTIONS 34aF1-34jF2 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

QUESTIONS 40-43, 50 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

NO QUESTIONS 44-49

ASK ALL:

Thinking about a different subject,

Q.51 The Supreme Court's decision in Roe versus Wade dealt with which of the following issues? **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]?**

Jan 9-13

2013

62	Abortion
5	The death penalty
7	School desegregation [OR]
5	Environmental protection
20	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

NO QUESTION 52

ASK ALL:**[IF Q.51=2-4, READ: "Actually,"]**

Q.53 In 1973 the Roe versus Wade decision established a woman's constitutional right to an abortion, at least in the first three months of pregnancy. Would you like to see the Supreme Court completely overturn its Roe versus Wade decision, or not?

		-----Gallup----- (RVs)						
Jan 9-13 <u>2013</u>		Nov <u>2005</u>	Jul <u>2005</u>	Jun <u>2005</u>	Jan <u>2003</u>	Mar <u>2002</u>	Aug <u>1992</u>	Oct <u>1989</u>
29	Yes, overturn Roe versus Wade	25	29	30	31	36	34	33
63	No, not overturn Roe versus Wade	65	65	63	62	60	60	61
7	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	9	6	7	7	4	6	6

ASK ALL:

Q.54 Do you think the issue of abortion is a critical issue facing the country, one among many important issues, or not that important compared to other issues?

Jan 9-13 <u>2013</u>		Aug <u>2009</u>	Mar <u>2006</u>
18	A critical issue facing the country	15	28
27	One among many important issues	33	38
53	Not that important compared to other issues	48	32
2	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	3	2

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
Jan 9-13, 2013	25	32	38	2	*	2	15	16
Dec 17-19, 2012	21	32	38	4	*	4	15	14
Dec 5-9, 2012	23	33	38	3	1	2	14	19
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012	26	34	34	3	1	3	13	16
Oct 24-28, 2012	28	33	33	4	*	2	12	16
Oct 4-7, 2012	27	31	36	3	1	3	15	15
Sep 12-16, 2012	24	35	36	2	*	2	14	16
Jul 16-26, 2012	22	33	38	4	*	3	14	15
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	24	33	37	3	*	3	15	17
Jun 7-17, 2012	24	33	39	2	*	2	17	17
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	24	32	36	4	*	4	13	14
Apr 4-15, 2012	24	31	39	3	*	2	15	15
Mar 7-11, 2012	24	34	36	3	1	2	16	17
Feb 8-12, 2012	26	32	36	4	1	2	13	17
Jan 11-16, 2012	22	31	42	3	*	2	17	16
Jan 4-8, 2012	26	31	35	4	*	4	14	14
Yearly Totals								
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6

PARTY/PARTYLN CONTINUED...

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	No	Other	DK/Ref	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>
				preference	party			
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--