



WORLD HEADQUARTERS  
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Voters Support Emergency Abortion Care and Oppose Religious Refusals and “Conscience Clauses”

Results of National Survey of Registered Voters

To: Interested Parties

From: National Women’s Law Center and GQR

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In 2022, the National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) commissioned a survey to explore voters’ attitudes towards “religious refusals” and “conscience clauses” and provision of emergency abortion care. This survey\* was in the field when the Supreme Court issued its decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, overturning the constitutional right to an abortion. The survey gauged voters’ beliefs regarding refusals of abortion care based on personal or religious beliefs and in cases when patients require emergency abortion care. It also confirmed what other polls consistently demonstrate – that a large majority of voters (65 percent) believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases.

These survey results are particularly relevant now, as there is a pending case before the Supreme Court that will decide whether states can prevent patients from getting the emergency abortion care they are entitled to under a federal law, the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA). The results from this survey show that voters overwhelmingly support patients receiving emergency abortion care – including in states where abortion is banned -- demonstrating how out of step anti-abortion activists, state lawmakers, and judges are in denying these services.

We found almost 80 percent of voters believe hospitals should still have a right to provide abortion care in cases of medical emergencies even if abortion is banned in the state. This is consistent with the current federal EMTALA requirement at issue in the case. This overwhelming support for provision of emergency abortion care includes Republican voters (76 percent total favor), conservative voters (72 percent total favor), and regular churchgoers (73 percent total favor). Even voters who think abortion should be illegal support access to abortion during emergency situations (69 percent total favor).

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\* This memo is based on a survey of 1,300 registered voters nationwide with oversamples of Black (222 unweighted), Latine (195 unweighted) and AAPI voters (117 unweighted). The survey was fielded via mixed mode of online panel and live dial interviewing from June 22-30, 2022 and carries a margin of error of +/- 2.7 percent at the 95 percent confidence interval. The margin of error is higher among subgroups.

**Figure 1: Abortion Care in Case of Emergencies Favored Among Range of Groups**

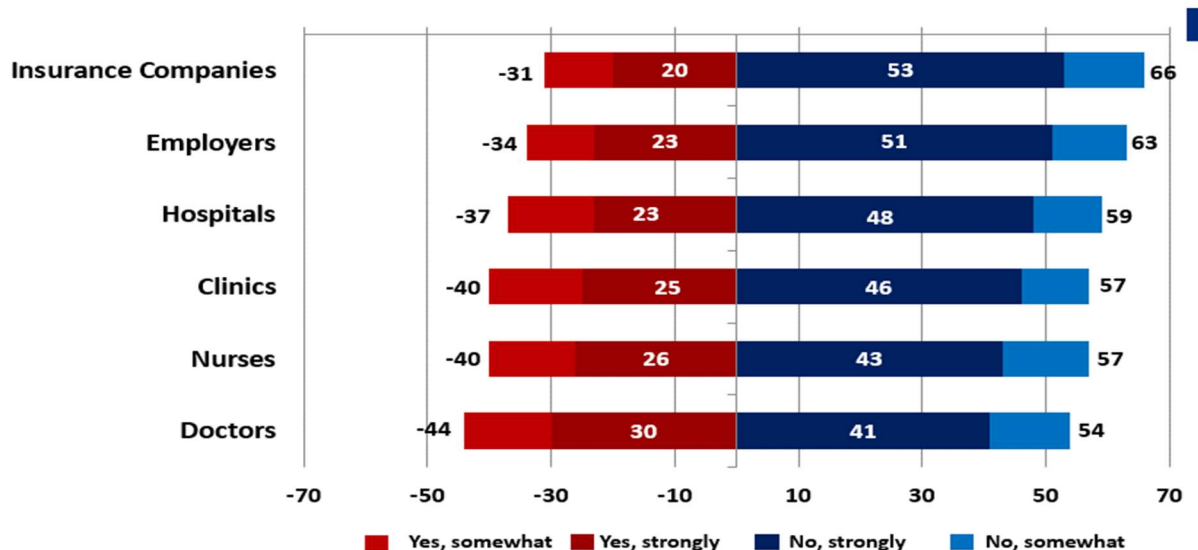
*Roe v Wade was recently overturned, and now the decision to allow abortion care will be left up to individual states. Some states have said they will ban abortion, other states have said they will keep abortion legal and others are still debating. I'm going to read you a series of things states could do and for each one, tell me if you favor or oppose these kinds of laws.*

	<i>Total Favor - Oppose</i>	<i>Ind</i>	<i>Rep</i>	<i>Non-College Women</i>	<i>Seniors</i>	<i>Irregular religious attend</i>	<i>Illegal in most/all cases</i>
In states where abortion is banned, giving hospitals the right to provide abortion care in emergency situations where the patient could suffer life threatening and long term physical and mental harm.	<b>78 Favor</b> - <b>20 Oppose</b>	78 - 10	76 - 23	75 - 22	79 - 18	80 - 18	69 - 29

We expect the issue about whether institutions and individuals should be able to refuse abortion care because of personal or religious beliefs to come up when the Supreme Court hears the case. Our survey shows that **majorities oppose policies that allow institutions and providers to refuse abortion care**. Voters object most strongly to refusals by institutional entities, like insurance companies (66%) and hospitals (59%), but a majority also opposed refusals by individual providers like nurses (57%) and doctors (54%).

▪ **Figure 2: Majorities Oppose Providers and Institutions Refusing Abortion Care**

*I am going to read you a list of healthcare providers and organizations. For each one, tell me if they should be able to refuse abortion care based on personal or religious beliefs.*



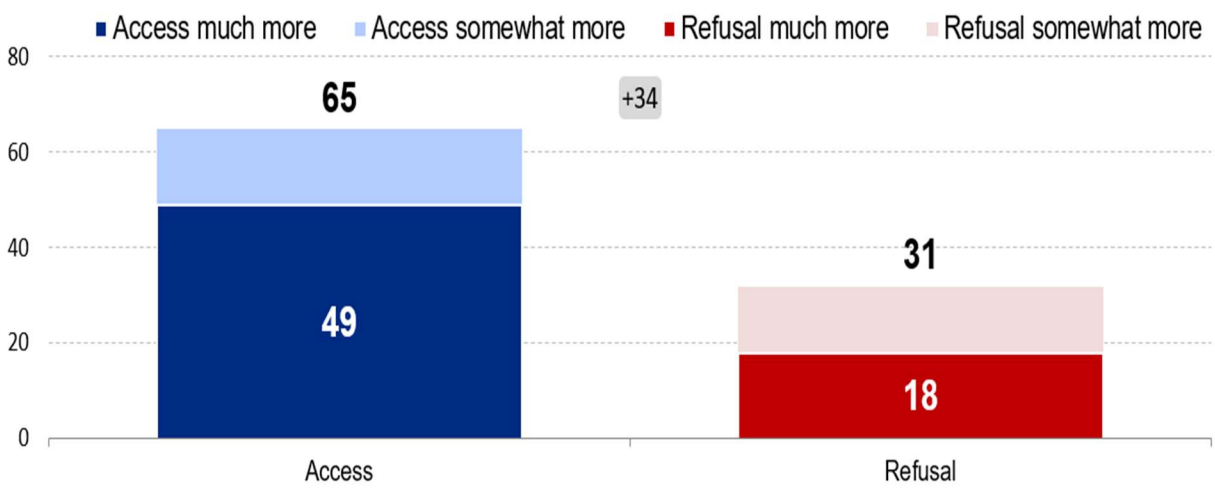
This poll shows that a large majority – 65 percent – say that it is more important to guarantee access to reproductive healthcare regardless of the religious or personal beliefs of providers or hospitals. Significant numbers of Republican voters (48 percent total access) and regular churchgoer voters (53 percent total access) say it is more important to guarantee access to reproductive health care.

■ **Figure 3: Voters Prioritize Ensuring Patients Can Access Reproductive Healthcare**

Please indicate which is closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.

It is more important to guarantee access to all reproductive healthcare regardless of the religious or personal beliefs of healthcare providers or hospitals

It is more important to make sure that healthcare providers or religious hospitals can refuse to provide patients reproductive health care because of their religious or personal beliefs



When voters were asked about states where abortion is legal, majorities of voters oppose allowing health care providers (54 percent total oppose) and hospitals (57 percent total oppose) to deny abortion care and strongly object to doctors and nurses refusing to give information about abortion care (61 percent total oppose). Important voting blocs like independent voters, seniors, and non-college women do not want to give health care providers or hospitals the right to refuse care or information about abortion care.

- Figure 4: Where Abortion is Legal, Voters Reject Refusals Laws

*Roe v Wade was recently overturned, and now the decision to allow abortion care will be left up to individual states. Some states have said they will ban abortion, other states have said they will keep abortion legal and others are still debating. I'm going to read you a series of things states could do and for each one, tell me if you favor or oppose these kinds of laws.*

<i>Oppose - Favor</i>	<i>Total Oppose-Favor</i>	<i>Ind</i>	<i>Rep</i>	<i>Non-College Women</i>	<i>Seniors</i>	<i>Irregular religious attend</i>	<i>Illegal in most/all cases</i>
(SPLIT) In states where abortion is legal, <b>allowing hospitals to refuse</b> to provide abortion care based on religious objections.	<b>54 Oppose</b> - <b>43 Favor</b>	55 - 40	41 - 58	55 - 43	54 - 41	62 - 34	31 - 67
(SPLIT) In states where abortion is legal, <b>allowing individuals to refuse</b> to provide abortion care based on religious or personal beliefs.	<b>57 Oppose</b> - <b>40 Favor</b>	53 - 42	39 - 59	72 - 26	60 - 35	63 - 34	27 - 71
In states where abortion is legal, <b>allowing doctors and nurses to refuse to give information</b> about abortion care or referral to other places that might provide abortion care.	<b>61 Oppose</b> - <b>36 Favor</b>	65 - 30	49 - 50	65 - 32	63 - 32	66 - 30	44 - 54

The most convincing reason to oppose refusals laws centers on putting a patient’s health and unique circumstances first. Voters believe that the religious beliefs of hospitals, doctors, and nurses should not determine the type of care a patient receives. Voters are concerned that refusal laws put patients’ health and lives in danger, including hospitals turning away patients seeking abortion care when their life is in jeopardy.

Putting a patient’s health first and concern about putting a patient’s life in danger are the top two reasons voters oppose refusals laws across party lines, religious, and demographic groups.

■ **Figure 5: Reasons to Oppose Refusals Laws**

*Now I am going to read you a few statements about laws that allow healthcare providers and organizations to refuse abortion care based on personal and religious beliefs. After each one, please tell me whether you find it a very convincing reason to OPPOSE these refusals laws, a somewhat convincing reason, a not very convincing reason or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE refusals laws.*

<i><b>Total Convincing</b></i>	<i><b>Total</b></i>	<i><b>Dem</b></i>	<i><b>Ind</b></i>	<i><b>Rep</b></i>	<i><b>Non-College Women</b></i>	<i><b>Seniors</b></i>	<i><b>Irregular religious attend</b></i>	<i><b>Illegal in most/all cases</b></i>
A patient's health should always come first. Refusals laws allow hospitals, doctors, and nurses to determine a patient's care based on their religious or personal beliefs, not based on what is best for the patient's health and circumstances...	<b>68</b>	75	70	57	67	65	68	59
Refusals laws put patient's health and lives in danger. Some hospitals turn away patients seeking abortion care or information about abortion care, even when their life is in jeopardy. Hospitals have refused to treat a patient having a life-threatening miscarriage...	<b>63</b>	64	70	56	56	53	64	64
Refusals laws allow hospitals receiving government funding to deny medical care because of religious or personal beliefs. Hospitals that take taxpayer dollars should not be allowed to use religious or personal beliefs...	<b>62</b>	67	67	52	63	57	65	56
Refusals laws put patients' health and lives in danger and take away their ability to make decisions about their health care. This type of government overreach forces patients to remain pregnant and give birth against their will...	<b>57</b>	69	52	49	51	57	61	41
Refusals laws mean some people have different access to healthcare than others. In rural	<b>53</b>	66	47	46	50	43	55	42

<p>areas or areas where all of the hospitals are run by the Catholic church, patients could be denied care and there will be no other place to turn...</p>								
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■ Figure 6: Full Messages on Refusals

<p>A patient’s health should always come first. Refusals laws allow hospitals, doctors, and nurses to determine a patient’s care based on their religious or personal beliefs, not based on what is best for the patient’s health and circumstances. A health care provider’s religious or personal beliefs should never determine the care a patient receives.</p>
<p>Refusals laws put patient’s health and lives in danger. Some hospitals turn away patients seeking abortion care or information about abortion care, even when their life is in jeopardy. Hospitals have refused to treat a patient having a life-threatening miscarriage. These practices put individual beliefs over patients’ needs, and they can -- and have -- resulted in infertility, infection, and even death.</p>
<p>Refusals laws put patients’ health and lives in danger and take away their ability to make decisions about their health care. This type of government overreach forces patients to remain pregnant and give birth against their will. These practices put individual beliefs over patients’ needs, and they can -- and have -- resulted in infertility, infection and even death.</p>
<p>Refusals laws allow hospitals receiving government funding to deny medical care because of religious or personal beliefs. Hospitals that take taxpayer dollars should not be allowed to use religious or personal beliefs as a reason to refuse to treat or serve a patient, including a patient seeking an abortion.</p>
<p>Refusals laws mean some people have different access to healthcare than others. In rural areas or areas where all of the hospitals are run by the Catholic church, patients could be denied care and there will be no other place to turn. Even if abortion is legal in a state, if it has refusals laws on the books, for many people, it will be like the state having an abortion ban.</p>