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FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Monday, June 27, 2022

Democratic and Republican
Women on Abortion



Methodology

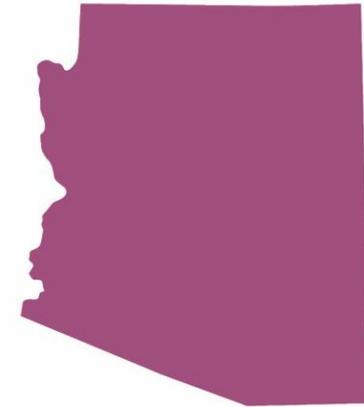
On June 15, 2022, GBAO conducted three focus groups online with Democratic and Republican women who varied across demographics—age, education, and race.



Democratic voters in Pennsylvania, ages 35-54, engaged on abortion (informed on the leaked Supreme Court decision)



Republican voters in Texas, not very favorable toward Trump or the Republican Party



Democratic voters in Arizona, ages 18-34, engaged on abortion (informed on the leaked Supreme Court decision)

Key Takeaways

- Among those who are pro-choice, abortion is a highly salient issue.
- Most would feel “revolted” or “angry” if *Roe* were overturned.
- There is some division as to how to evaluate the leaked draft decision and how the Court might ultimately rule.
- Democrats are more engaged and motivated on abortion, while some pro-choice Republicans may not vote in November.
- We have more work to do to explain codifying *Roe*, while term limits receive wide support.

Little Is Seen As Going Well In The Country Today

"Oh, geez." – PA woman

"I'm not really sure." – PA woman



"The economy isn't doing well, things like *Roe v. Wade* coming into question **isn't the direction I think the country needs to be going**, same thing [with] interest rates, cost of living. And it doesn't even seem like we're doing that great with things that I want to say we should be doing well at, like equality and moving that direction. In some ways we are, but then other ways giant setback backs again." – TX woman

"Just a whole lot, **the struggle is real every day** from groceries to gas, to formula, to tampons. It's just insane what's going on. It's unconscionable and sadly, **I don't see it getting any better anytime soon.** I just don't." – TX woman

"I don't know. **That's a hard one.** Can you come back to me?" – AZ woman

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Abortion Top-Tier For Many, Even If Not Always The Sole Important Issue

"I'm just angry about the whole situation. Because I just feel like it's, **more than anything, an attack on women and a setback.** I feel like we conquered this years ago getting our right to choose. And it's yet again part of the patriarchy that is trying to take that away and force women into situations that they don't necessarily want to be in. The thing that people don't necessarily realize is that people say, 'Oh, you could give the baby up for adoption.' Well not if the father doesn't sign off and then you're forced to essentially deal with this other human that you really might not want to for the rest of your life." – TX woman

"I have three kids, I don't plan on having more kids, so it shouldn't be an issue for me. But I have kids who might have kids in the future, and I don't know how they will be affected. And I certainly don't want any of my children coming to the point if they ever have a situation where they can't have the procedure or they have to travel elsewhere to get it. **So it might not be a top three issue for me, but I am irritated by certain states setting restrictions such as six weeks, eight weeks where a woman might not even know she's pregnant at that time.**" – TX woman

"I'm **definitely angry that it's actually coming up again**, that it's up for re-debate again, because I thought we had already decided that's what we were going to do as a country. And now it's just like, 'Oh yeah, but no, let's talk about this again.' And now we're leaning the other way, and it just feels like everybody is moving backwards." – AZ woman

"**Revolted. I feel really angry. It's like somebody hit me with a two-by-four in the back of the head.** I mean, why is this happening now? So many things going on, and this is still on the table." – PA woman

"If you had asked me this before the shooting in Texas, I probably would've said it's the top thing for me, but then you have to mentally grapple with the fact that there are so many things happening all the time. But yeah, it is [a] very important issue." – PA woman

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Most Describe The Debate As Between Religion And Rights



"I would say that it's a debate between religion and science." – PA woman

"I guess the fundamental question is, when does life truly begin? And there's some that believe it begins at conception, and some that believe it begins at viability." – PA woman

"I guess there's that other thought of, it's my body, so why is it that the government gets to choose what I can do medically with my doctor, with my body." – PA woman

"I don't know, I was just thinking of *The Handmaid's Tale*. I think the government just taking control of your body." – PA woman

"There is, I think, a religious hold on the Republican party at the top levels. That they've held out this carrot in front of Christian Republican voters and said, 'If you vote for me, I will take away abortion,' and that's been their playing card for many, many years. It's makes me angry." – PA woman

"I feel like the whole abortion debate, as far as the people that are wanting to outlaw it or get rid of it, is a far right, religious issue, more than anything else. I feel like this country was founded on freedom of religion. I feel like the whole abortion debate is more of a religious thing coming from the right than a freedom thing. If we are truly a free country, we should be free to make our decisions and we shouldn't be bound by someone's religious idea." – TX woman

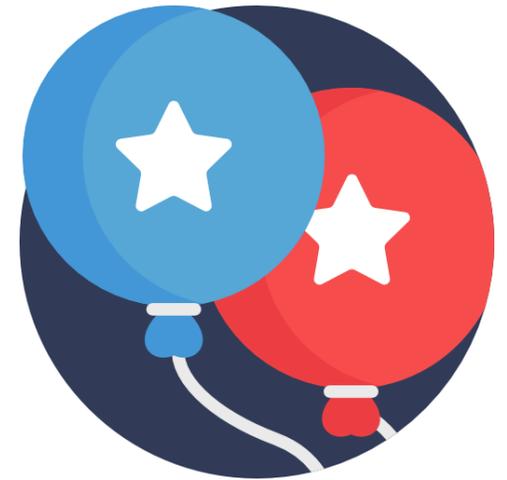
"I feel that the Republican viewpoint is very much based in puritanical religion, of acting a certain way, being good. You choose to have sex and you're going to have a kid." – AZ woman

Democrats Define Republicans' Position As More Focused On "The Fetus" Than On Children, While Republicans More Divided

"They're so pro-fetus because once that baby's popped out, it's like, 'Mm-mm. You can't have any of these services. You can't qualify for any of this. Oh, housing? Screw you. Oh, well, there's a shortage here for formula? Sucks to suck. Bye.' You can't even say pro-life anymore. They're pro-fetus. Why are y'all so obsessed?" – PA woman

"I would say it's frustrating, because you have people that want to make decisions for you... a small group of men that have no idea what it's like to carry a baby, or what you have to endure when having a child." – AZ woman

"Republicans are definitely very strong right to life, if you want to say right to life. And then [the] Democratic side, I would say I feel like they're going more extreme as far as yes 'it should be okay, but we're going to okay it up until the day the baby's born' is the new thing. And that does bother me." – TX woman



Few Are Keeping Up With The Court Day-To-Day, Yet There Is Widespread Leak Awareness



"I haven't followed up for the past couple of weeks, I've been out of town. But I think as far as I know, they were still waiting to make a voting decision." – TX woman



"I don't know. I haven't actually noticed anything other than that breach that happened with the Republican thing. I didn't know that they've done anything most recently. I haven't noticed anything in the news." – PA woman

"You got me fired up. The recent confirmations of Kavanaugh and whoever that other old fogey is and Coney Barrett, they all said that *Roe v. Wade* was precedent and the law of the land. It's just going to be really funny to see them not stand by it after they were under oath." – PA woman

"I'm interested to see what Breyer does because he is the chief justice, and even if he's in the minority, he could still... Actually no, never mind, he can't affect things. He would get the right to the dissent, honestly." – AZ woman

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Overturing *Roe* Will Make Participants Feel “Devastated,” “Disgusted,” “Revolted”



“I would be **disgusted** or **disappointed**. I feel like those would be my top two words. Because the future of people's decisions would be substantially changed.” – AZ woman

“I would be **devastated**. There would be a form of devastation in me.” – AZ woman

“I think we would be **stepping back in time**.” – TX woman

“They better not.” – TX woman

“I'm going to be **really, really angry, actually**. I know that because it just makes me angry every time I see it, or think about it, really. Just losing another right.” – PA woman

“**Angry**. I think it'll be **emotional**. It would just make me immediately think, what's going to come up next that they're going to try to take away? We're not progressing. We're going backwards.” – PA woman

“So it's just **gross**, but I always felt after Trump was elected I don't think I'll ever be this sad and **upset** and just horrified again and yet here we are. **Joke's on me**.” – PA woman

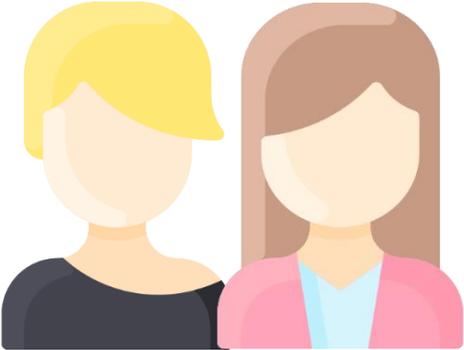


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Many Explain *Roe* Could Impact Their Voting Enthusiasm And Choice

"The gubernatorial election is extremely scary. The Republican candidate is so hardcore conservative. I think he's pretty much said he would outlaw everything." – PA woman

"I just hesitate to align myself with a political party... I mean, I'm not going to vote Republican and I'm not voting for a third party. I'm voting Democratic, but I think that maintaining an independent voter registration allows me to express some of my displeasure with the Democratic Party in some kind of small, stupid way. **But I'm not afflicted by thinking a third-party unicorn candidate is going to make any kind of difference. I will just straight up vote Democrat because they're the ones that are aligned with my political views,** but I do wish that they were more fighty. I wish that they were more vocal, I wish that they fought fire with fire." – PA woman



"It would change a lot. I definitely would vote very Democratic just because I feel like this not only has an impact on women's choice, it has an economic impact also on the state. I feel like it's going to be a detrimental thing to the state if it's overturned. So I would definitely be looking to vote in some Democrats." – TX woman

"Sadly, I would still probably vote Republican just because, well... When I say sadly, because there are so many other issues that I feel like are affecting this state and affecting this country that I'm more concerned with, that I'm more aligned with the Republican Party than a Democratic Party. **So on a lot of those things, there's no way I'd vote Democrat. So I would still, as much as it would pain me on this one issue, I feel like there's way more issues that I still am concerned about that I would still vote Republican.**" – TX woman

"It may make me not vote at all... if I don't support the platform, I'm not going to vote for him." – TX woman

"It makes me for sure vote. I will for sure be voting." – AZ woman

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Roe's End Seems Like A "Slippery Slope" Toward The Erosion Of Other Rights

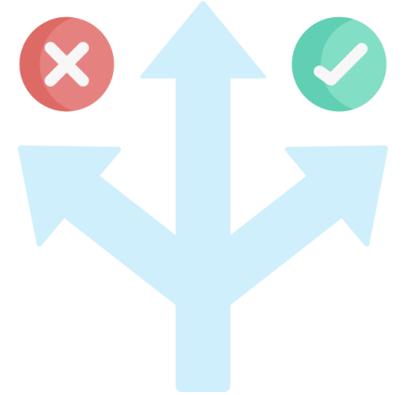
"I think that becomes a slippery slope if they decide that for this instance, the state should get to choose, what stops them from basically reexamining all of the federal protections and giving the states the decisions for those as well." – TX woman

"I'm sorry. I feel very strongly about this. Should this happen, I don't even want to begin to think what the repercussions will be." – TX woman

"I definitely think it's the slippery slope for, like the first domino to fall, to start attacking individual rights. There's already bills across the country being proposed to prevent other forms, legitimate forms of birth control. And declassifying IUDs, Plan B, things like that, that aren't abortion, but lumping them into that." – AZ woman

"I think it's a slippery slope. I think they're going to start pulling away at other things. Yeah, it's very scary." – PA woman

"The decision in *Roe v. Wade* was to guarantee the right of privacy to individual citizens, so anything that you do, like who you choose to have sex with and gay marriage, that all, kind of, is leaning on the precedent of *Roe v. Wade*." – PA woman



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Democrats And Republicans Vary Tremendously On What They Think The Court Will Do, Pointing To Ulterior Motives



"It's not necessarily that I think it's not a real leak. I think it was planned, and I think that it was... I don't know. I feel like we're kind of almost in a political game where we're just constantly being shown little things here and there so that it works us up and distracts us from a lot of things that are going on, and also just causes more dissension. It's easier to control people when they're fighting. [Moderator: Who is doing the controlling?] Honestly at this point I'm not even sure." – TX woman

"I think that to some degree it was a political move and potentially a completely falsified document just to cause a shake up in the politics, in particular, in the Congressional and Senate seats." – TX woman



"Because I see people protesting it. I see people actively working against it, and it gives me a little hope. [Moderator: That the Court won't overturn it?] Yeah." – AZ woman

"Maybe the draft decision was, there's a news term for it where you preview a decision like that. And they want to see what the outcome is going to be, and what the support or emotional distress is going to be." – AZ woman

Judicial Term Limits Is Far And Away The Most Popular Reform



"I think that's an excellent idea." – PA woman

"I think we should add term limits. They shouldn't just be able to be there until the day they die." – PA woman

"I don't mind that one. I think that's a good one." – TX woman



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Participants Question The Details Around Expanding the Court Or Eliminating The Filibuster



SCOTUS Expansion

"I actually think it's a good idea, but I would need to know is this going to be over a certain period of time because then whoever's in office right now gets to add in three more. Well, that might work right now, but if things change... I'd need to see the specifics." – PA woman

"If you can't get the number there to agree, how will adding more people come to an agreement?" – TX woman

"I feel like there's not much that can be added to a system that's already broken. If you're not building a foundation from the bottom up, then we're building on a broken foundation." – AZ woman

"It might be a short-term solution, but then what's the point? The next person that's in power is going to add someone else, and then they're going to switch it again. Then they'll add someone else and switch it again. It's a broken system. It's not really a solution." – AZ woman



Eliminating the Filibuster

"I'll be honest, I don't know enough about that." – PA woman

"I've heard of it, but I don't know much about it." – PA woman

"I would say, yeah, get rid of it, but at the same time **what if it was a filibuster in a different favor?** I don't know. It's hard. What if it was for bettering something else?" – PA woman

"I think they absolutely should eliminate filibusters, it wastes everyone's time and causes issues to not get addressed that need to be addressed." – TX woman

"I don't want it to just be like, 'Okay, well, now we can pass it,' and then we get one more Republican next time and now they **pass something else.** Then we get one more Democrat next time, and they pass something else. I don't know. I'm a little on the fence about it." – AZ woman

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Participants Are Still Learning About Their States' Law, With Texans Slightly More Aware; But What They Hear, They Don't Like

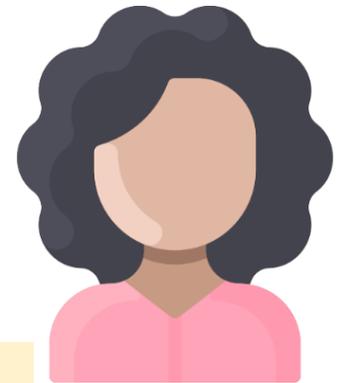


"Yeah. It's completely against the rights and choice." – TX woman

"It says that, well, we don't have to sit here and do anything. We'll just let everybody else in the world take personal issue with something and sue somebody in court. 'Oh, we'll just let Joe public, if they find out that somebody is trying to have an abortion, we'll let them [go] to civil court and try to collect money from them.'" – TX woman

"Shoot. I should know, but I can't remember if we have a trigger law or not." – AZ woman

"We're all from Arizona, I think there's probably going to be tons of... I don't know, here, if it would be banned completely, but probably pretty close to it. And there would be tons of hoops to jump through, and with laws similar to that in Texas." – AZ woman



"It just sends me down the spiraling thoughts of, 'Okay, cool. So you're forcing people to have children that they don't want, which will now end up in systems where nobody cares for them, which will now end up probably on the streets, in jail, or poor.' It just leads me down that way of thinking, and it gets me very upset." – AZ woman

"That's disgusting. I'm sorry, but hearing that's very frustrating. It sounds disgusting. I don't understand how somebody can literally fight for this and sleep well at night." – AZ woman

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In 50 Years, Democrats Hope This Is A Long-Forgotten Controversy

"I hope one way, but the pessimistic and realistic part of me thinks that, in 50 years from now, you'll be put on a list for even looking up how to get an abortion." – AZ woman

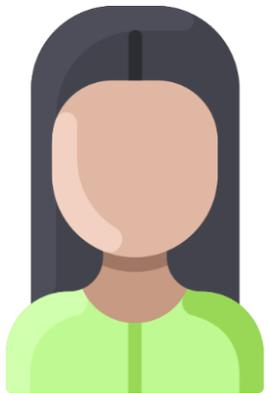
"I think, for my mental health, I have to be more optimistic. And I think then 50 years from now, hopefully we will be talking about how silly this was, because now we have way more advanced options, and better birth control, hopefully for men, and that'll solve the problem right away." – AZ woman

"At first, when you said 50 years, I was like, 'Oh yeah, that's plenty of time.' Hopefully this won't be an issue anymore. But then I realized, you said it was 50 years since it was decided. And I was like, 'Oh dang.' And here we are talking about it still. So like everyone else said, that big word, hope, like **hopefully it's not an issue.**" – AZ woman



"If *Roe v. Wade* gets overturned, in 50 years there's going to be some societal decline and everyone's going to be scratching their heads [wondering] why the maternal death rate is so high and why schools are failing and this, that, and the other thing without connecting the dots to the decision that were made in the past. **And so, I can only hope that 50 years from now, they're just like those dumb idiots in the past, like Trump was a stain on modern society.** And we've overcome and gotten through whatever amount of shit we had to be buried under for however many years, and we're in a much better place and we don't need to talk about this anymore." – PA woman

"Oh, no. I don't know. I want to be hopeful. And I hope it's like, oh, remember that little scare? Whoops. But I'm so glad everyone protested and came together for this, that was awesome." – PA woman



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About Navigator

In a world where the news cycle is the length of a tweet, our leaders often lack the real-time public-sentiment analysis to shape the best approaches to talking about the issues that matter the most. Navigator is designed to act as a consistent, flexible, responsive tool to inform policy debates by conducting research and reliable guidance to inform allies, elected leaders, and the press. Navigator is a project led by pollsters from Global Strategy Group and GBAO along with an advisory committee, including: Arkadi Gerney, The Hub Project; Joel Payne, The Hub Project; Christina Reynolds, EMILY's List; Mike Podhorzer, AFL-CIO; Jesse Ferguson, progressive strategist; Navin Nayak, Center for American Progress Action Fund; Stephanie Valencia, EquisLabs; and Melanie Newman, Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

About the Study

GBAO conducted three online focus groups on June 15, 2022, with women voters in three states: Pennsylvania (Democratic, ages 35-54), Texas (Republican), and Arizona (Democratic, ages 18-34). Some quotes have been lightly edited for brevity. Qualitative results are not statistically projectable.

For Press inquiries contact:

press@navigatorresearch.org

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