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## FOCUS GROUP REPORT

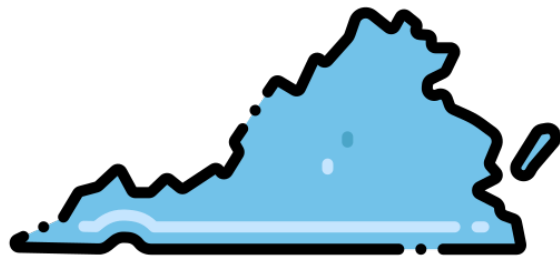
Wednesday, November 1, 2023

Independents and Weak  
Partisans on Abortion Rights



# Methodology

On October 18, 2023, GBAO conducted three online focus groups with independents and weak partisans who are personally against a complete abortion ban.



Suburban women in  
Virginia, ages 25-65



Women under 35 in  
Wisconsin



Hispanic men in  
Arizona, ages 25-65

# Key Takeaways

- The mood is largely pessimistic, with abortion being just one piece.
- Awareness of policy specifics—either state or national—is mixed and laws are seen as in flux.
- Few think “abortion up to the moment of birth” as a credible charge against Democrats.
- Even abortion supporters are unsure about the impact of other states’ bans.

# Few People See Anything Going Well Right Now, and Weakening Abortion Rights Is One of Many Problems

"I feel like there's so much things going wrong in the world... I'm trying to think of a positive besides the weather..." – VA woman, Democrat

"Not much... I just feel like the nation is so divided right now that we can't get anything done, and we [have] become us against them. We're not a nation together anymore... And it just feels like it's getting worse instead of better, and bad behavior is tolerated now. You can call people names, and they're like, 'Oh, that's okay.' We don't have any respect for each other anymore." – VA woman, Democrat

"Abortion rights also I don't think is going well." – AZ Hispanic man, Independent

"[Cost of living is too high.] Basically, our paychecks don't keep up with the cost of everything else, with rent, groceries, gas..." – AZ Hispanic man, Democrat

"I said 'unsure' just because I don't know which direction we're going or what you're talking about, but one thing that I kind of see now is, I feel like **the country is shifting back to where women don't have as much rights anymore**, or women have to work two times, 10 times more than male does. So, if I talk that way, I'm unsure." – WI woman, Independent

"I'm sure there are things that are going well. It's just like the bad things just outweigh them and stick [out] more... Mass shootings, there's been a lot of those, the wars in the different countries. **Abortion rights are always under attack.** So those are just kind of the things that stick in my mind that kind of prove to me that things aren't going so well." – WI woman, Democrat

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# Debate Largely Seen As About Government Trying to Make Decisions for Women, With Some Ties to Religion

"I do believe it is the conservative view. I really feel as if it's just the government's way of ruling our body and ruling our choices. I really feel as if it is truly the woman's choice. I don't think that the government should be trying to make that decision for us and dictate what we're allowed to do with our body. I am a Catholic, so abortion is against my religion. But I am also pro-choice, and I don't think it's appropriate for the government to dictate what I am allowed to do with my body." – VA woman, Independent

"A re-litigation of something we as a country had already decided. And that some very small and powerful right-wing groups that call themselves "conservative," and I use quote fingers on that because I don't mind admitting I most of my life have considered myself a conservative Republican... I don't believe in abortion, but I also don't believe I have the right to litigate whether someone else does." – VA woman, Republican

"If they think [abortion is] ethical or not. Because a lot of people who don't support it are constantly trying to prove that the child has rights and all this other stuff, or from a religious standpoint [they'll] say you're going to hell if you support that. And then from the other standpoint, women should have full control over their body. They should be able to make that choice themselves on if they keep the child or not, and especially under certain circumstances like sexual assault and things like that." – WI woman, Democrat

"It's more of a religious thing than anything that I've noticed, like other people's morals and beliefs about what you should do with your body. And then other people say that the woman should have the choice on herself to be able to do what she wants to do, but again, they're saying that the unborn child should have rights." – WI woman, Independent

"It feels at times that it's become a religious debate more than a human rights debate or even a concern for human life. It's more of wanting to judge each other based on personal beliefs." – AZ Hispanic man, Independent

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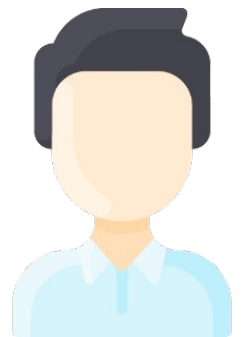
# Hispanic Men Use Language Suggesting Abortion is an Issue Women Should Decide For Themselves

“That's her right [to choose to have an abortion or not]. It's her body. I have nothing to say because I'm not a girl.” – AZ Hispanic man, Republican



“I feel like it's more on the women's side choice more so than allowing the government... It sounds better to come to [the] choice through them than through men who can't relate...” – AZ Hispanic man, Democrat

“I've got two young daughters... but it actually becomes very real. The situation used to be a theory or just a conversation, but when you actually have daughters, and you look at a situation where if they so choose to have an abortion, which I believe would ultimately be their right... It's a real tangible thing.” – AZ Hispanic man, Democrat



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# State and National Abortion Rights Viewed as in Flux

*Moderator: Do you think abortion rights are under threat in your state/in the country?*



"I think it's a national thing [abortion rights being under attack], not just Arizona." – AZ Hispanic man, Republican

"It's just going to make it to where it's a backdoor procedure, and a lot of bad things are going to come from [a ban]. It's not going to stop people from doing it." – AZ Hispanic man, Independent

"I honestly feel like it kind of depends on the [November 2024] election, depending on who the president is, what they decide to do on a federal level... It really just depends on who gets elected in [the next election]." – WI woman, Independent

"I do [feel that abortion rights are under threat], but I also feel like, bit by bit, people are standing up against it. It's unfortunate that, like somebody said, we're having to re-litigate it. But I'm hopeful because nobody's going to take it lying down, and I feel hopeful in that respect. **But, yeah, it's under threat. We can't become complacent.**" – VA woman, Democrat

"I think there's a good chance with Youngkin that it could be lowered from **26 weeks**. I do. I think he's quiet. He walks softly and carries a big stick." – VA woman, Democrat

"It's scary to think that this one decision is left in the hands of the court, and they've overturned it and they've taken this right away from us women. **What are the things are they going to do next? That's what I always say to myself, what's next?**" – VA woman, Independent

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# Democratic and Republican Approaches Clear, But Details are Sometimes Fuzzy

"I believe Republicans are more conservative, so they are more on the line of this whole reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, whereas Democrats are, more or less pro-choice, but I could be wrong." – VA woman, Independent

"I think that the Democrats, obviously, didn't want *Roe v. Wade* to be overturned. And I think the Republicans, some of them are pro-life, and then some of them aren't necessarily all the way there at pro-life, but they have to be on that side. So, they say, 'Just let the states decide. That's what we should do.' So, I feel like not even the Republican Party is fully unified, but they are definitely just like, 'Let's reverse this thing.'" – VA woman, Democrat

[Moderator: Could you explain what the Republicans think about abortion?] "I'm not sure. I'm not really up to date at the moment..." – WI woman, Independent

"I think [Democrats are] for abortion in certain situations. They believe that women should have the right to abort if they feel it's necessary." – WI woman, Democrat

"Since the Democrats are for it, then the Republicans aren't going to really want it and they're going to want to ban it." WI woman, Independent



"[Democrats believe] Their body, their choice... [Republicans] are against it." – AZ Hispanic man, Republican

"[Republicans want to] ban it all together." – AZ Hispanic man, Democrat

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# Few See “Abortion up to the Moment Before Birth” as A Credible Charge Against Democrats

*Moderator: Some people say that Democrats support abortion up to the moment of birth. What do you think of that?*

“I know that Democrats support abortions, but I never heard that it was all the way up until the day before they were born.” – WI woman, Democrat

“I feel like it doesn't happen, and that was a statement that was made up just from different politicians.” – WI woman, Democrat

“I think it's a political game, but I think most people want the women to decide. I think that's what Democrats decide for the most part. It's pro-choice.” – AZ Hispanic man, Republican

“I think it happens in emergencies. I don't think there's a lot of women that are 39 weeks pregnant lining up to get abortions.” – AZ Hispanic man, Independent

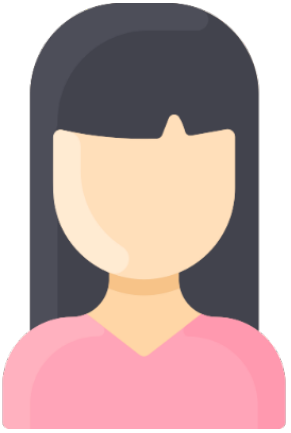
“I think that statement sounds like a jab to Democrats, right? They're just basically saying, ‘Democrats are so liberal that they would allow a woman to have the abortion a day before full term or whatever.’ It sounds like a jab... I don't think that's the truth. I think Democrats are just saying what most of us are saying that it's a woman's choice.” – AZ Hispanic man, Democrat

“I've heard it. My experience is that that isn't true.” – VA woman, Republican

“I've heard that, but the thing that I hear it from is the Republicans who are trying to promote getting rid of abortions. Jim Jordan's one of them. They're the ones that say, well, these ladies are having these abortions at birth. No one's had an abortion at birth.” – VA woman, Democrat

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# Not Many Sense an Impact from Inconsistent State Bans



"I don't foresee people not attending college or people not moving to a certain state or having headquarters or doing business." – VA woman, Independent

"I don't think it would really matter as much, to be honest." – VA woman, Democrat

"It's not so much of a concern because... it's been a year we would've seen that happen by now. We would've seen an influx in the hospitals. **We would've seen people move out of state, but we haven't seen it. So, I don't really see it being an issue, to be honest.**" – WI woman, Independent

[Concern about potential doctor shortages] "I'm not too worried about that happening... I think it's enough business. I think there's a shortage of healthcare, so even if it's not here, **there's elsewhere that they can go and practice.**" – WI woman, Democrat



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# Storyteller Content Reminds People of the Limitations of One-Size-Fits-All Laws



"I'm also a mother myself, and if I was to have to carry my child that it's already in pain, that you know is not going to be living with me, why would I be carrying my child for nine months and then give birth so that they're no longer with me? So that's a situation where I wouldn't want to see myself walk in or seeing anybody else that would be in the same shoes." – WI woman, Independent

"I think it's sad, but it's truthful. I think that she had to make a very hard decision, and I agree with her on getting an abortion. I mean, that's a very hard process to do. Even trying to commit suicide because you're taking something that's in your body that's growing that you can hear its heartbeat. So, I do agree with her." – VA woman, Democrat

"Well, I didn't even think about the suicide issue. I mean, you're trying to save a life, but then you're going to kill a life anyway. It makes no sense sometimes." – AZ Hispanic man, Republican

"I think the whole thing is just concerning just because I think it speaks more and more to why ultimately women should make this choice. We just don't really have any right to make laws when it comes to something that is so personal, and private, and intimate, and affects their mental state and also their physical state as well." – AZ Hispanic man, Independent

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# Storyteller Content Reminds People of the Limitations of One-Size-Fits-All Laws



“It was reality. Watching that, just anybody who's forgotten what people could face, it was real. And it's emotional, but it was like, ‘hey, this is the reality.’ So, I mean, I responded to it. To me it was a positive just to remind people that may need reminding.” – VA woman, Democrat

“I think that video was going a lot on the lines of what I was explaining earlier, on how people think that banning abortion is the route that's in the benefit of the child, but then you hear her explain that it's not always in the best interest for the child, because if someone is already living in poverty and then they're forced to bring another child in. And then for those mothers who already know that they don't want to be a mother again, and then they're forced to, that may affect not only [from] a poverty aspect, it may affect how that child is loved and cared for... So it makes you see it from multiple perspectives.” – WI woman, Democrat

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# Many Say Abortion is One Important Vote Driver, but Not the Only One

“Yes, it's going to be a thought in my mind for voting... I did like the student loan [issue]. That was something that was high up for me. **But with that change going on, [abortion] is a bigger issue than that, honestly.**” – VA woman, Democrat



“**Yes, it is [important to my vote in the next election].** It is important... I have three sons. None of them are married, but one day they will be or maybe they might be expecting and one of these many things could come up. **And even if I didn't have children, I think it's something that's important, definitely.**” – VA woman, Democrat

“I think inflation [is more important to my vote in the next election].” – VA woman, Democrat

“There's a whole bunch of other factors. **Even though abortion rights isn't top one, it's definitely top three for me.**” – WI woman, Independent

“For me, the biggest thing about politics, and voting, and the whole abortion thing is the fact that they're slowly trying to take away our rights and fighting against that is just basically us fighting for our rights.” – AZ Hispanic man, Democrat

“I have two daughters, but I mean, thinking about everything that you said, if states around us are banning or not banning, a lot of changes are going to happen, which may or may not affect us in different ways... I'm not sure how much it would impact [abortion would have], I would say I'd have to first educate myself more and then really see how important my vote would take account.” – AZ Hispanic man, Democrat

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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: Jessica Floyd, 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 October 18, 2023 with independent and weak partisan women in Virginia and Wisconsin and independent and weak partisan Hispanic men in Arizona. Some quotes have been lightly edited for brevity. Qualitative results are not statistically projectable.

For Press inquiries contact:

[press@navigatorresearch.org](mailto:press@navigatorresearch.org)

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Navigator:

<http://navigatorresearch.org>

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