

A Project of OneOne Ventures
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Abortion Messaging Project

Winning the Argument in the Wake of *Roe*





Project Team

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The Opportunity

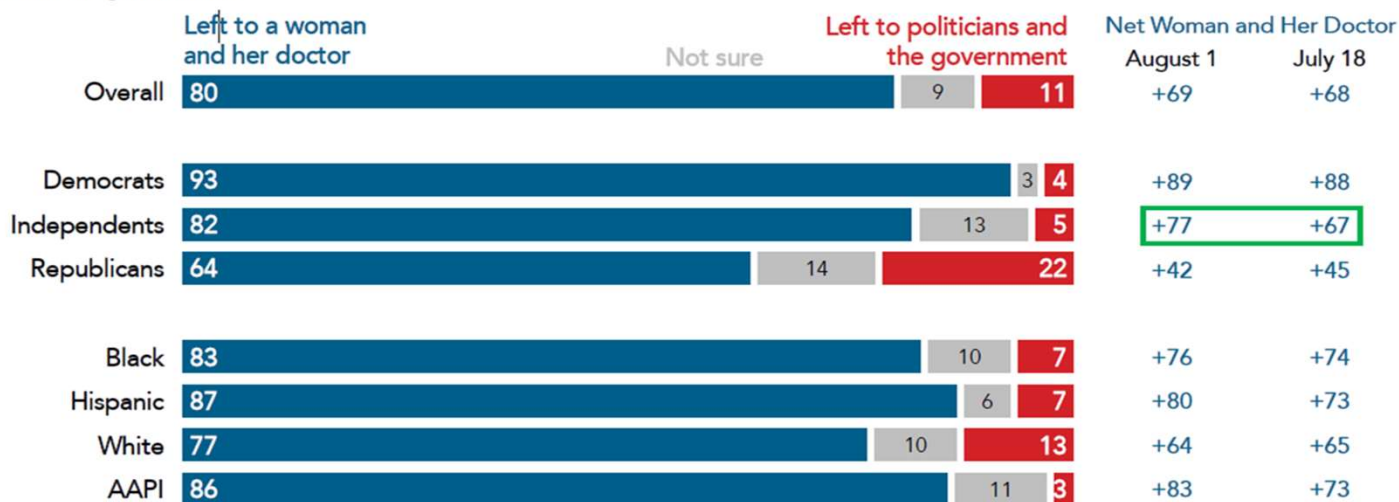
- American public widely supports access to abortion – bans are not popular in any state
- Republicans are on record opposing majority position
- More than twice as many women are registering to vote right now than men



The Vast Majority of Americans Continue to Feel the Decision to Have an Abortion Should Be Left to Women and Their Doctors

Since mid-July, the share of independents who feel the decision “should be left to the woman and her doctor” has grown by a net 10 points (from +67 to +77).

Overall, do you think the decision of whether or not a woman can have an abortion should be left to the woman and her doctor or should it be left to politicians and the government?



Nationwide surveys of registered voters; Each wave represents approximately 1,000 interviews taken over the prior three-five days. Latest wave conducted July 28-August 1, 2022. For more info, visit navigatorresearch.org

navigator*



Different Questions, Different Perspectives

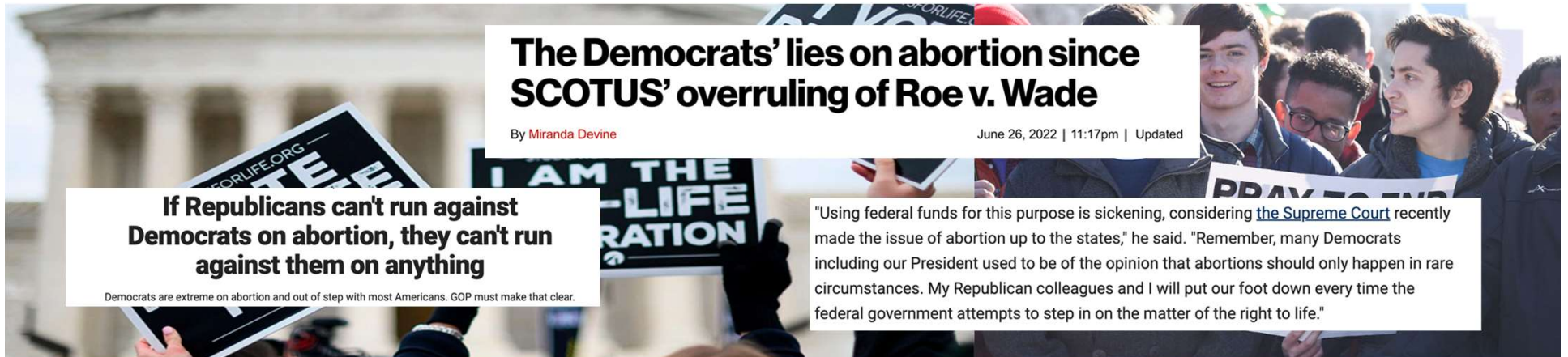
Abortion should be generally legal and available to all women.....	29%
Regulation of abortion may sometimes be necessary, although it should remain legal in most circumstances...	15
Abortion should be legal only in the most extreme cases such as to save the life of the woman or in the cases of rape and incest.	36
All abortions should be made illegal.....	14
(Don't know/Refused).....	6
PRO-CHOICE (NET).....	44%
ANTI-CHOICE (NET).....	50

<i>I personally support a woman's right to abortion and believe it should be legal and available.....</i>	36%
<i>I am personally against abortion, but I do not believe government should prevent a woman from making that decision for herself.....</i>	34%
<i>I personally believe having an abortion is wrong and should be illegal.....</i>	28%
<i>Not sure.....</i>	2%
PRO-CHOICE (NET).....	70%
ANTI-CHOICE (NET).....	28%



The Challenge

- Disinformation / Hypotheticals from the Right
- Removal of woman from the story
- Feeding off of stereotypes around gender, race and class
- Complexity of individual circumstances
- Unpleasant topic





Recommendations: Use Resonant Language

DO's:

- Understand that the emotional heart of this for voters is the **freedom to make your own decisions** about your own life and family.
 - Use the word “**freedom**” balanced with heavier words like “**decision,**” “**personal,**” “**family,**” “**dignity**” and “**respect.**”
- Say the word “**abortion**” at least once at the outset (i.e. “On the issue of abortion...”)
- Share the experience of the woman and her family

EXAMPLE

“When it comes to abortion... For 50 years our Supreme Court recognized that our constitution protects all Americans’ freedom to make our own personal decisions about our own families. That was the right decision for our country.”



Recommendations: Use Resonant Language

DON'T's:

- **Do not call abortion “healthcare.”** Regardless of whether or not it actually is healthcare, many swing voters find this emotionally incongruous.

- **Use unfamiliar jargon or euphemisms - e.g.**
 - Bodily autonomy
 - Reproductive justice
 - Defend choice
 - Medical decision (unless talking about pregnancy difficulties)

- Use the term “baby” or “child” when talking about a fetus, and don’t use the term “mother” as proxy for a pregnant woman (i.e., life of the mother)



Recommendations: Identify the Culprits

- **Be clear it's Republicans' fault that we now have to talk about this.**
 - Be serious and calm. Do not show anger (except at regular people's pain).
- **Explain that taking away Americans' abortion rights is a top GOP priority.**
 - They're taking away your freedom to gain political power for themselves.

EXAMPLE

“On abortion, **it's important to recognize why we are having this argument today.**
For 50 years our Supreme Court recognized that our constitution protects all Americans' freedom to make our own personal decisions about our own families. That was the right decision for our country. **But some Republican politicians think Americans' family decisions should be theirs to make. And they want to take away Americans' freedom, just to gain more political power for themselves.”**



Illustrate Impact to Real People and Families

- [If Republicans ban abortion...] That means that Americans no longer have the freedom to decide what their families and futures look like.
- It means that American women who have an ectopic pregnancy, or cancer, or a miscarriage leading to sepsis, can't get the expert medical care they need from the doctors they trust.
- It means that predators who commit rape or incest would have more rights than their victims.
- We're already seeing this happen in states across the country.



Recommendations: Choose your Audience

Option 1: Woman, women

Pros:

- Speak directly to highly motivated voters
- Easy to understand and picture

Cons:

- Narrows audience
- Trans men, inclusivity issue

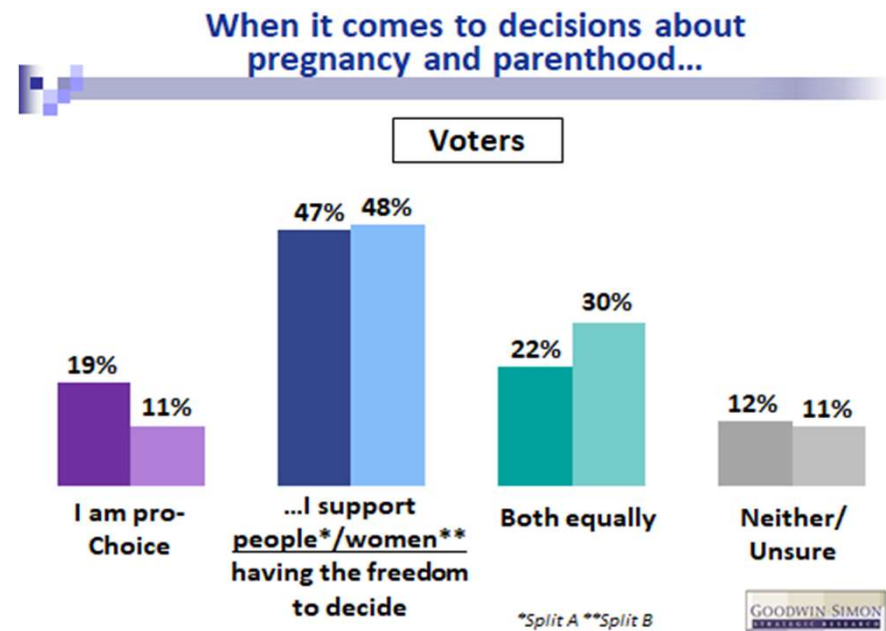
Option 2: American, Americans, everyone, people

Pros:

- Cast as universal, not “just” a “women’s issue”
- Invites men to recognize their roles
- Avoids trans issue

Cons:

- Does not highlight those most affected





Recommendations: “Abortion Up Into Birth”

- I believe women should be able to access abortion **when there are serious circumstances later in pregnancy**, like when parents who very much want that child get heartbreaking medical news -- like the fetus can't survive, or the woman's health is in jeopardy.
- That's when it's most important that a woman be able to get the expert care she needs from the doctors she trusts.
- But when politicians pass **one-size-fits-all laws** that keep doctors from using their best medical judgment, women and families get hurt.



Abortion Later in Pregnancy Cont.

I'm going to read you another statement that a candidate for office could make, and then ask you if hearing that statement would make you much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, or much less likely to support that candidate, or if it wouldn't make a difference.

Here's the statement: **"I would allow abortion later in pregnancy when something during a pregnancy has gone wrong such as a fetus that can't survive, danger to a woman's life or health, or other serious circumstances."**

Results:

Much more likely.....	40%
Somewhat more likely	24%
Somewhat less likely	7%
Much less likely.....	10%
It wouldn't make a difference	14%
Not sure	6%



Infanticide Questions and Attacks

- Key values frame: parenting in difficult and complex circumstances.
- Refute false claims:
 - “Killing anyone, including a newborn, is already illegal, as it should be.”
- (State facts, when responding to legislation)
 - When people are making difficult, complicated, personal medical decisions, **one-size-fits-all laws** don't work.
- Share true motivation:
 - It's wrong for politicians to **interfere in people's lives** like this, for political reasons.

...with empathy!



Language: Do you support any restrictions?

- I do think that abortion should only happen later in a pregnancy if there's some extraordinary issue, like a tragic medical complication where the fetus can't survive, or the woman's health is in jeopardy
- We just need to make sure that when a woman does face serious circumstances, she can get the expert care she needs from doctors she trusts.
- (I don't support abortion restrictions that take personal medical decisions in complicated situations out of the hands of women, families and their doctors and give them to the government.)
- [THEN pivot to offense, i.e. opponent's unpopular position]



Recommendations: Parental Consent

- While we all hope our daughters would come to us, even in the best of families, teens are afraid of disappointing their parents, and teens sometimes do desperate things.
- Most **parents want what's best** for their daughters and for them to be **safe**.
- We have a responsibility to keep them safe, even when they're upset, even if they feel they can't come to us for whatever reason.
- At the end of the day, legally mandating communication may sound good, but in the real world, it can drive teenagers into real danger.



Recommendations: Government Funding

- I totally respect the feeling of not wanting to see your tax money used for things you don't agree with.
- The thing is, we all recognize that if somebody can't even afford an abortion, it's going to be very hard for them to raise a kid. However we feel about abortion, politicians shouldn't deny a woman health coverage just because she is poor.
- That's why most Americans (62%) feel that Medicaid should cover abortion for people who want to make that decision but otherwise just can't afford it.
- So, whatever health coverage a woman may have, she should have the same basic options everyone else has, including abortion.



Recommendations: Follow the Science

- Taking away people's freedom to make decisions about their bodies and lives is not modernizing—it's taking us all backward.
- Leading medical groups like the American Medical Association have made it clear that abortion bans are not based on science,
- And in fact, abortion bans jeopardize women's health because they interfere with the treatment of a range of common pregnancy complications.



Good Language Garage

Freedom to Decide

Abortion Later in Pregnancy

Abortion Ban

Political Interference

Doctors, Not Politicians

Not So Good Language Garage

Heartbeat Bills

Late-term Abortion

Partial-birth Abortion

Life of the Mother

Choice