Viability Limits and Abortion Later in Pregnancy Research:

Qualitative research exploring attitudes of pro-abortion supporters across party lines when it comes to viability limits and parental involvement in abortion laws, and the role of government

June 2024

The National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH) presented new qualitative findings in collaboration with Lake Research and PerryUndem – qualitative research exploring attitudes of pro-abortion supporters across party lines when it comes to viability limits and parental involvement in abortion laws, and the role of government.

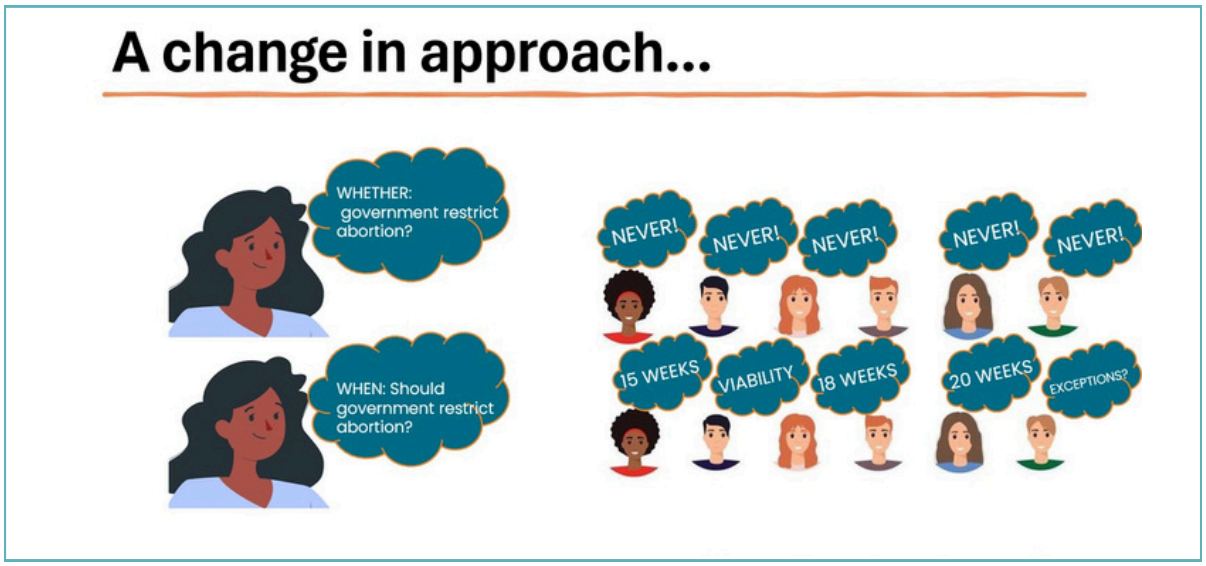
In this memo, we will recap key findings:

- Exploratory findings through focus groups and surveys show deep resistance among pro-abortion supporters against government interference at any point in pregnancy, including later gestational ages.
- Exploratory findings that show, despite differing views about abortion later in pregnancy, constitutional amendments that allow for abortions after fetal viability and/or without parental involvement may not be dealbreakers for many – in short, many people are still supportive of policies that include protections for later abortion patients and young people seeking abortion.
- Findings that suggest potential backlash among Democratic, pro-abortion supporters against advocates and organizations condoning, supporting, or pushing for viability limits

These findings are meant to help you understand where the general public stands on abortion and how they think about the role of government. If you have any questions, you can contact NIRH's VP of Communications, Bonyen Lee-Gilmore at bleegilmore@nirhealth.org

Our Approach to Qualitative Research

In a series of deep listening, exploratory exercises, NIRH, in partnership with Lake Research and PerryUndem studied pro-abortion women who identified as supportive of abortion and politically identified as a Republican, Independent, or a Democrat across states that have banned or severely restricted abortion and states where abortion access is largely protected. Our polling challenged conventional research approaches around how we ask people about abortion restrictions – instead of framing the questions around ***WHEN***, we framed the discussion around ***WHETHER*** abortion should be restricted. We recommend removing the presumption that abortion must be restricted at some point in pregnancy when talking to audiences. What we heard in these conversations challenged conventional wisdom – many participants organically shared their disapproval of any government restrictions including after viability. The sheer number of people voicing these sentiments is new.



- **Role of Government**
  - Respondents connected the issue of safety and their distrust of government to a clear desire for the government to play a ***singular*** protective role because ***they connect their ability to stay safe with their ability to get the care they need***.

- **Viability Limits**
  - Where some policymakers traditionally perceived viability and other limits like medical exceptions as politically necessary sweeteners or compromises to protect most abortion access, ***participants see them as traps***.
  - Words used to describe viability limits include: "***subjective***" and "***arbitrary***"
  - Constituents are thinking about the implementation of these policies – how they play out in real-life settings and are cynical about how viability limits would be interpreted, enforced, or weaponized against the pregnant person.

- **Dealbreakers**
  - Pollsters asked participants if policies allowed people to get an abortion after fetal viability and/or without parental involvement (for young people), would these be dealbreakers for their support? ***Most of the respondents said no, these are not dealbreakers***. They would still support the overall right to abortion for all people who need it.
  - Most of the small group that said these would be dealbreakers said they were open to changing their mind with further explanation, signaling a desire for more engagement around these topics (later abortion care and young people's access to abortion).

- **Backlash**
  - Most of the respondents in these qualitative findings were not aware of who is advocating for viability limits or why they would do so.
  - But, when asked how they would feel if they found out pro-abortion advocates were pushing for viability limits, respondents used the following words to describe their sentiments toward advocates: "***hypocrisy***", "***alarmed***", "***betrayed***", and "***contradicting***".
  - Many expressed confusion as to why a pro-abortion ally would "push for the rights to be removed".

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