

Abortion Poll Results Continue to be Encouraging

By Dave Andrusko

After more than 32 years of debating *Roe v. Wade* (and its companion case *Doe v. Bolton*), you might think by now that the public would understand the 1973 decisions and (if you believe the media) support their radical holdings. In fact, neither is true, as illustrated by a breakdown of polling data provided by NRL Executive Director David N. O'Steen, Ph.D. at a NRLC 2005 workshop.

After more than three decades of pretending otherwise, some in the media are "beginning to recognize that there is no majority for *Roe's* holdings," he said. In truth, there has never been majority support, a conclusion demonstrated by a series of polls O'Steen showed that went back a number of years.

To take a recent snapshot, O'Steen offered the results of an April 2005 poll conducted by The Polling Company. "Which of the following statements most closely describes your own position on the issue of abortion?" 1,000 respondents were asked.

A total of 62% would eliminate almost all abortions: 17% said abortion should never be legal; another 14% said legal only for life of mother; and 31% said legal only for life of mother, rape, and incest.

By contrast, a total of 35% responded in a pro-abortion manner: 21% said abortion should be legal for any reason in the first three months; another 4% legal for any reason during the first six months; but only 10% said abortion "should be legal for any reason at any time during a woman's pregnancy." The latter is what *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* collective gave us in 1973 and is the position of Planned Parenthood, NARAL, and most leading Democratic Party officials and candidates.

"What that means is our core support is more than three times what theirs is," O'Steen said. "No wonder they talk about 'upholding

Roe' without ever getting into the specifics."

There was a lot of other encouraging data presented as well. Hispanics are now the largest minority in the United States.

In a 2003 poll nearly half (48%) of Hispanics said they opposed *Roe*, compared to less than a third (32%) who said they supported *Roe*. When *Roe's* actual holdings are included in the question—"which makes abortion legal for any reason"—the difference is nearly 2-1 (58% oppose *Roe* to 30% who support).

O'Steen explored how the public views a number of issues, including embryonic stem cell research (a majority opposes the expenditure of federal funds when they are told that "live embryos would be destroyed"); how they self-identify (it's virtually even—as many people say they are pro-life as say they are "pro-choice"); and how the issue influenced their vote (when it comes to single-issue voting, there are invariably more people who vote for candidates who oppose abortion than there are people who vote for candidates who are in favor of abortion—the "pro-life increment").

Perhaps the single most intriguing result is how the abortion factor figured into how people view the selection of nominees for the High Court.

In a May 2005 Gallup poll, 1,000 people were asked, "Now thinking about future nominees to the United States Supreme Court, how important is to you, personally, that they share your views on the abortion issue?"

A total of 76% said it was either very important (45%) or somewhat important (31%). Who were the 45% who said it was very important that nominees share their views on abortion?

According to Gallup, 39% were pro-choice but 53% were pro-life!

