

March 17, 2021

Release is effective immediately

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Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab Poll: Iowans Not Favoring Constitutional Amendment on Abortion

According to a recent Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab Poll — conducted by University of Iowa faculty and students between January 13 and February 3 — a majority of Iowans do not currently support an amendment to the Iowa constitution saying that the state constitution “shall not be construed to recognize, grant, or secure a right to abortion”. The Iowa House recently passed this amendment and the Senate is currently considering it (Senate Joint Resolution 2). If approved in the Senate this session, both chambers would have to do so again in 2023 or 2024 before it would appear on the ballot. When asked how strongly they supported or opposed the amendment if it were on the ballot, 14.8% strongly supported it and 14.3% supported it compared to 12.8% that opposed it and 33.9% that strongly opposed it. 15.2% of Iowans were neutral and 9.0% did not know or declined to answer.

Opinion was similarly split among likely voters. Of those who voted in the 2020 election 30.7% supported the amendment (16.8% strongly support and 13.9% support), 12.9% were neutral, and 48.7% opposed the amendment (13.1% oppose and 35.6% strongly oppose). Positions for or against were less frequent among those who did not vote, with 26.9% responding they were neutral and 15.2% saying they didn’t know or declining to answer.

Additional differences appeared based on party identification and sex. Party identification was a strong dividing variable. When combining strongly support and support, 16.1% (7.0% strongly support and 9.1% support) of Democrats supported the amendment, 50.1% (29.5% strongly support and 20.6% support) of Republicans support it, and 26.5% of independents support (12.0% strongly support and 14.5% support) it. In contrast, 69.1% (54.8% strongly oppose and 14.3% oppose) of Democrats oppose the amendment, 24.0% (12.9% strongly oppose and 11.1% oppose) of Republicans oppose the amendment, and 46% (32.6% strongly oppose and 13.4% oppose) of Independents oppose the amendment. Support for the amendment by sex showed that males supported the amendment more at 34.2% (20.0% strongly support and 14.2% support) whereas 24.1% (9.7% strongly support and 14.4% support) of females supported the amendment. Males were also more neutral with 17.5% of males being neutral compared to 12.9% of females. 30.5% of males strongly opposed compared to 37.3% of females.

Support was also divided based on respondents’ perceptions of Iowa state government. Those who thought Iowa state government is too conservative were most opposed, with 60.8% were strongly opposed and 12.3% opposed. Among those who thought Iowa government is just right, 28.0% strongly supported the amendment and 23.0% supported it. Those that thought Iowa state government is too

liberal leaned towards supporting the amendment, with 39.4% supporting it (22.5% strongly support and 16.9% support) and 31.2% opposing it (18.8% strongly oppose and 12.4% oppose).

Fewer differences were found based on age. Individuals 70 and over were least likely to be neutral on the issue at only 11.0%. Individuals 18-34 were most likely to strongly oppose at 39.1%, compared to 30.1% of those 35-54, 33.0% of those 55-69, and 33.1% of those 70 and over. When combining strongly support and support those age 70 and over showed the most support at 31.5% (15.6% strongly support and 15.9% support). Those age 35-54 were the next highest with 31.2% in some support of the amendment (14.4% strongly support and 16.8% support). Lastly were those age 55-69 and 18-34. 27.3% of those aged 55-69 supported it (16.7% strongly support and 10.6% support) and 27.2% of individuals aged 18-34 supported it (13.2% strongly support and 14.0% support).

Respondent Identification: The Iowa Social Science Research Center (ISRC) contracted with a web panel vendor, Ipsos Observer, to field the survey to a demographically representative sample of 1,000 respondents. Respondents invited to complete the web survey were Iowa adults, aged 18-120 years, recruited for participation via web panel. To obtain a census-representative sample, quotas were set on the following demographics: sex, age, and urbanicity.

Sample: 1000 voting-age resident in Iowa, margin of error +/-3.2%

Weighting: Reported results are weighted by age, sex, and party identification. Alternate weighting schemes, such as by age, sex, and education produced substantively similar results.

About the Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab

The poll was designed by the Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab, comprised of University of Iowa faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. The Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab is co-directed by Profs. Fred Boehmke in Political Science and Kajsja Dalrymple in Journalism and Mass Communication. The poll is a teaching, research, and service project, and was implemented in collaboration with the Iowa Social Science Research Center directed by Frederick J. Boehmke. The University of Iowa Public Policy Center provided support for this poll as part of its PolicyRISE initiative to expand experiential research for UI students.

Carolina Herrera, Madison Rush, and Sierra Wicks, Research Fellows for the Iowa Policy and Opinion Lab, assisted with the preparation of this release.

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