

Latino/a Voters' Views and Values on Abortion

Findings from a Virginia Statewide Survey

To: Interested Parties
From: PerryUndem Research/Communication
Date: October 19, 2016

I. Executive Summary

The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health commissioned PerryUndem Research/Communication to conduct a survey of Latino/a voters in Virginia on the topic of views toward abortion. For many years, myths common in the media have suggested that Latino/a voters hold conservative views on abortion. Mounting evidence, including the data presented in this study, proves this assumption wrong. The research shows that Latino/a voters in Virginia mirror the electorate nationally. Large majorities support a woman's right to make her own decision on abortion. Latino/a voters in Virginia say access for women who make this decision should be affordable, respectful, and not difficult in terms of travel and logistics. Respondents also express support for women in their lives who decide to have an abortion. Personally, close to six in ten respondents can envision a situation in which abortion would be the right decision for them or their partner.

PerryUndem conducted a statewide survey among n = 505 registered Latino/a voters from August 26 to September 21, 2016 in Virginia. The survey was administered by telephone and online by SSRS. The margin of sampling error for results is ± 5.5 percentage points. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish. See a more detailed methodology at the end of this report.

Background

Over the years, conventional wisdom has suggested that Latino/as in the US are more likely than others to hold socially conservative political views on the legality of abortion. Findings from a 2013 Pew Research Center study suggest this is in fact true. The study¹ found 40 percent of Latino/a adults support legal abortion in all or most cases and 53 percent say it should be illegal in most or all cases. Among the general public the opinions are reversed; 54 support legal abortion in all or most cases and 40 percent say it should be illegal in most or all cases.

However, more recently studies have debunked this myth among Latino/a voters. Data suggest that Latino/a voters, particularly those who turn out to vote are just as – if not more – supportive of legal abortion as others. A January 2016 general electorate national poll of registered voters conducted by PerryUndem, commissioned by the National Institute for Reproductive Health, found one-third of respondents want to see the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision overturned (32 percent); 67 percent do not want to see the law overturned. The same question was asked in a January 2016 national poll of Latino/a registered voters conducted by PerryUndem, commissioned by the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health. The results from the Latino/a voter study are virtually identical to those of the general voting public. Among Latino/a registered voters 33 percent would like to see the law overturned; 67 percent do not. Virginia Latino/a voters closely mirror both the general and Latino/a national electorates with 23 percent who would like to overturn *Roe*; and 68 percent do not.

¹ <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/05/07/the-shifting-religious-identity-of-latinos-in-the-united-states/>

II. Key Findings

- A vast majority of Virginia Latino/a voters sees the decision to have an abortion as a personal one, made by an individual. Eighty-four percent agree “each woman should have the right to make her own decision on abortion, even if I may disagree with her reasons.”
- Close to six in ten respondents say they personally could envision a scenario in which abortion could be the right choice for them or a partner (59 percent).
- In their personal lives, 91 percent say they would offer support to a loved one who had an abortion; 58 percent would provide “a lot” of support.
- When we ask questions grounded in real-life – how women access and receive abortion care – large majorities of Virginia Latino/a voters say they want care to be respectful of her decision (92 percent), supportive (84 percent), affordable (78 percent), and not difficult in terms of travel and logistics (77 percent).
- These data continue to debunk myths connecting Latino/a voters’ religious views and abortion. Three quarters (76 percent) agree “even though some church leaders take a position against abortion, when it comes to the law, I believe it should remain legal.”
- In fact, more than half of Virginia Latino/a voters (56 percent) agree with the statement: “my personal religious values can support a woman making her own decision about abortion.” Another 15 percent say they are not religious.
- Three quarters of Virginia Latino/a voters (75 percent) agree that women, no matter their source of health insurance, should “have coverage for the full range of pregnancy-related care, including prenatal care and abortion.” Fully half (53 percent) strongly agree with this statement.
- Seven in ten Virginia Latino/a voters say they tend to pay attention to a candidate’s views on a woman’s right to an abortion (71 percent).

Following are detailed findings.

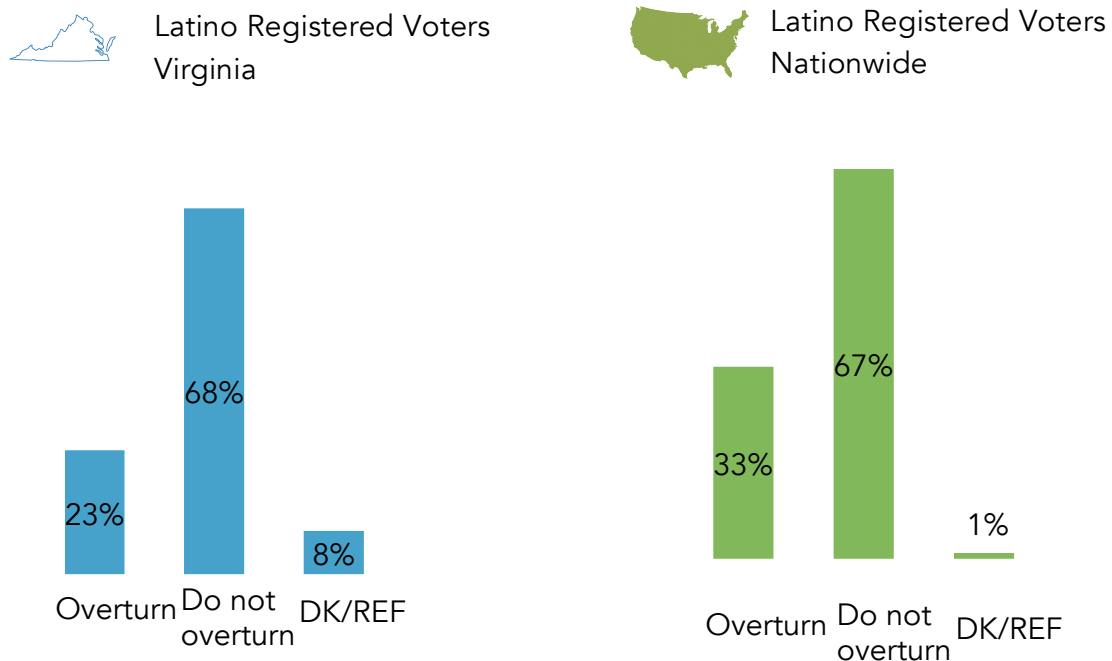
III. Detailed Findings

General Views on the Right to Abortion

A majority of Latino/a voters in Virginia do not want to see *Roe v. Wade* overturned.

Two thirds of Latino/a voters in Virginia (68 percent) say they do not want to see the decision overturned – virtually the same proportion of the Latino/a electorate nationally. (See Figure 1.)

*Figure 1: In 1973, the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision established a woman’s constitutional right to have an abortion. Would you like to see the Supreme Court overturn its *Roe v. Wade* decision, or not?*



Latino/a voters in Virginia between the ages 30 to 49, Democrats, and those who attend church less frequently are most likely to not want *Roe v. Wade* overturned. (See Table 1.)

Table 1: Would you like to see the Supreme Court overturn its *Roe v. Wade* decision, or not?

	Do not overturn	Overturn
Total	68	23
Men	69	21
Women	67	25
Democrat	73	19
Independent	68	24
Republican (n=83)	55	35
18-29 years old	70	25
30-49	73	21
50+	60	24
Catholic	66	25
Attends service 1x a week or more	51	40
1x or 2x a month (n=92)	64	22
Few times a year	79	12
Less often or never	81	14
Northern VA	64	25
Rest of VA	75	20
Central/East/Hampton Road	72	21

A large majority of Virginia Latino voters have nuanced views in support of a woman’s right to abortion. More than eight in ten (84 percent) respondents agree with the statement: “Each woman should have the right to make her own decision on abortion, even if I may disagree with her reasons.” (See Figure 2.) A slightly larger proportion (88 percent) agrees that “a woman should be able to make her own personal decisions about abortions without politicians interfering.” (See Figure 3.)

Figure 2: Each woman should have the right to make her own decision on abortion, even if I may disagree with her reasons.

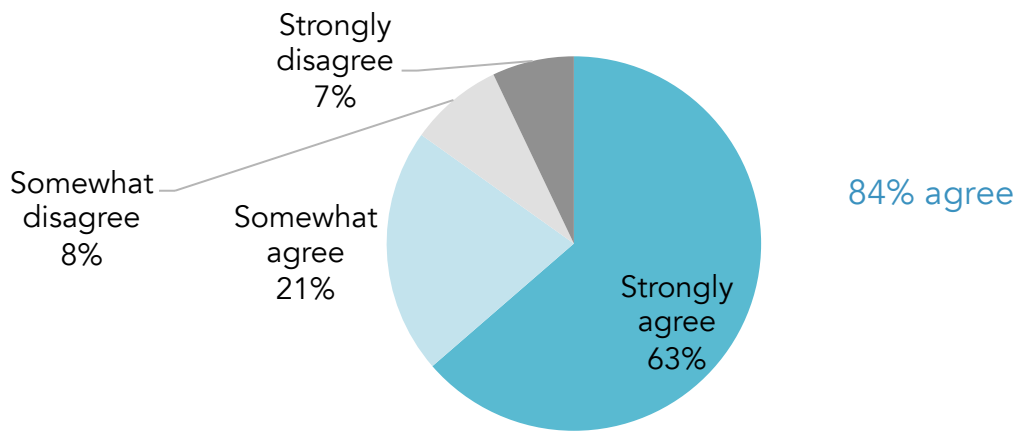
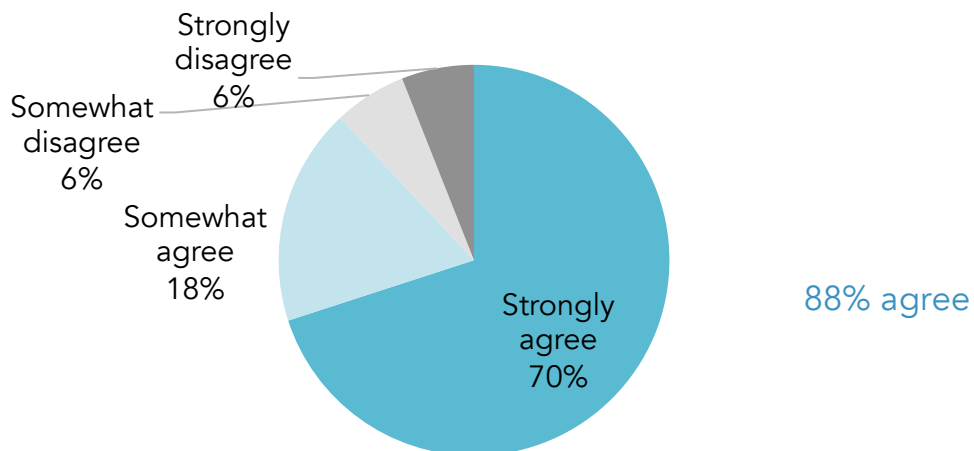


Figure 3: A woman should be able to make her own personal decisions about abortion without politicians interfering.



Democrat Latino/a voters in Virginia, 30 to 49 year olds, and those who attend religious services less often are most likely to agree women have a right to make her own decision about abortion, and that politicians should not interfere with that decision. (See Table 2.)

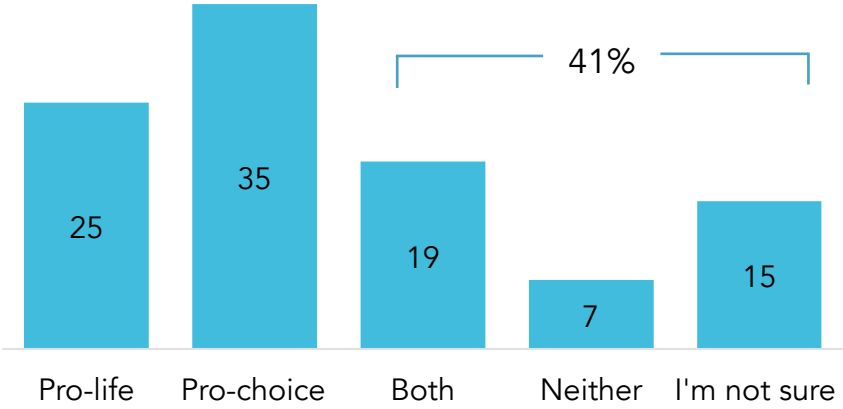
Table 2: Do you agree or disagree... (%Agree)

	A woman should have a right, even if I disagree with reasons.	A woman should be able to make decision without politicians interfering.
Total	84	88
Men	85	89
Women	83	87
Democrat	89	90
Independent	84	87
Republican (n=83)	71	82
18-29 years old	81	86
30-49	90	92
50+	81	84
Catholic	84	90
Attends service 1x a week or more	73	77
1x or 2x a month (n=92)	82	89
Few times a year	92	93
Less often or never	91	94
Northern VA	84	88
Rest of VA	84	88
Central/East/Hampton Road	86	88

Traditional Labels and Identities

Traditional labels on abortion are not relevant for many. Four in ten Virginia Latino/a voters (41 percent) do not solely subscribe to either of the traditional labels on the issue of abortion. Out of the remaining voters, more Latino/a voters identify as pro-choice (35 percent) rather than pro-life (25 percent).

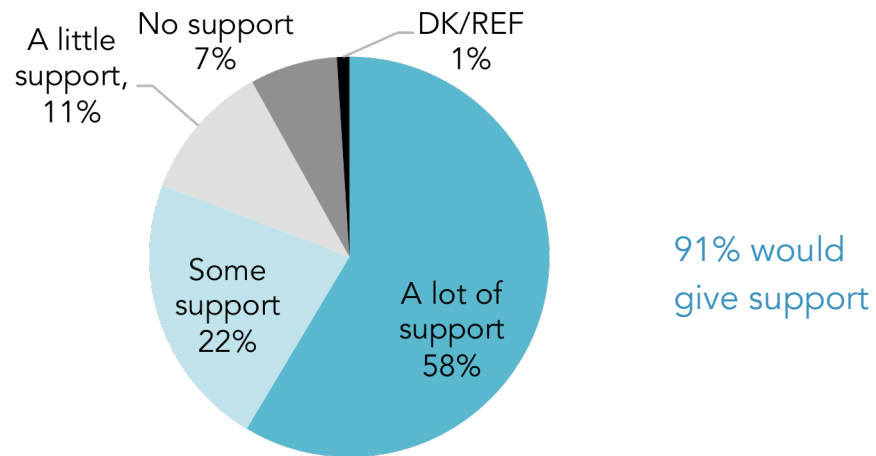
Figure 4: Do you consider yourself to be...



Abortion in Their Personal Lives

Nine in ten Latino/a voters in Virginia would support a loved one who had an abortion. Ninety-one percent would offer support to a friend or family member, with 58 percent saying they would give her “a lot” of support.

Figure 5: If a close friend or family member told you she had an abortion, would you:



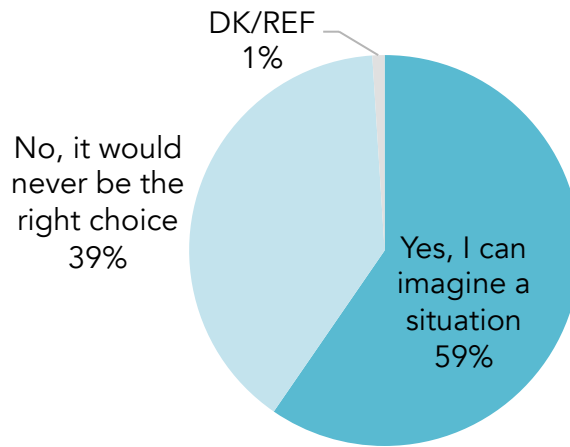
Overall, Virginia Latino/a 30 to 49 year olds and those who attend service a few times a year are likely to offer support to a family member who had an abortion. Those who attend church a few times a year are more likely to show a lot of support. (See Table 3.)

Table 3: If a close friend of family member told you she had an abortion, would you give her:

	Would give support	"A lot" of support
Total	91	58
Men	94	57
Women	90	60
Democrat	94	61
Independent	89	58
Republican (n=83)	92	51
18-29 years old	92	53
30-49	97	60
50+	86	61
Catholic	92	58
Attends service 1x a week or more	86	52
1x or 2x a month (n=92)	90	58
Few times a year	96	62
Less often or never	96	63
Northern VA	93	60
Rest of VA	92	54
Central/East/Hampton Road	93	56

Close to six in ten Virginia Latino/a voters (59 percent) could envision a scenario in which abortion would be the right choice for them or a partner. About four in ten (39 percent) say they cannot envision abortion as the right choice for them. (See Figure 6.)

Figure 6: Now or in the past, can you imagine a situation where an abortion could be the right choice for you or your partner? Would you say...



Virginia Latino/a voters between the ages of 30 to 49, Democrats, those who attend church a few times a year or less often, and those from the Central/East/Hampton Road regions are more likely to imagine a situation where abortion could be the right choice for them. (See Table 4.)

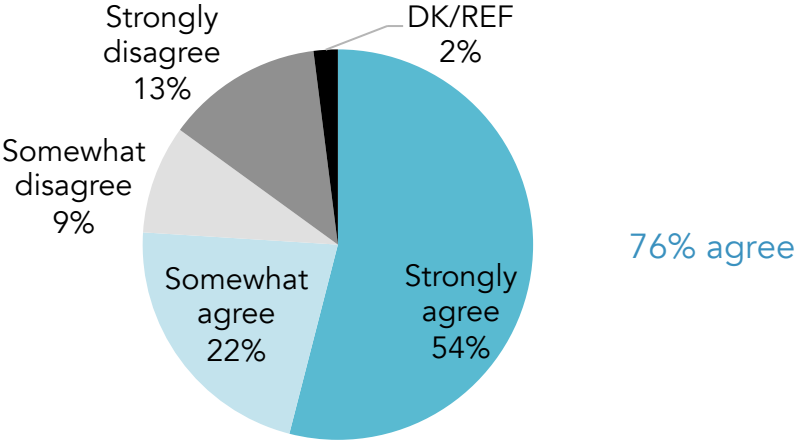
Table 4. Now or in the past, can you imagine a situation where abortion could be the right choice for you or your partner?

	Yes	No
Total	59	39
Men	62	36
Women	57	42
Democrat	66	33
Independent	56	42
Republican (<i>n</i> =83)	50	47
18-29 years old	58	41
30-49	67	32
50+	50	45
Catholic	58	40
Attends service 1x a week or more	40	59
1x or 2x a month (<i>n</i> =92)	53	44
Few times a year	72	28
Less often or never	74	23
Northern VA	55	43
Rest of VA	68	31
Central/East/Hampton Road	68	31

Most Virginia Latino/a voters are willing to disagree with church leaders on abortion.

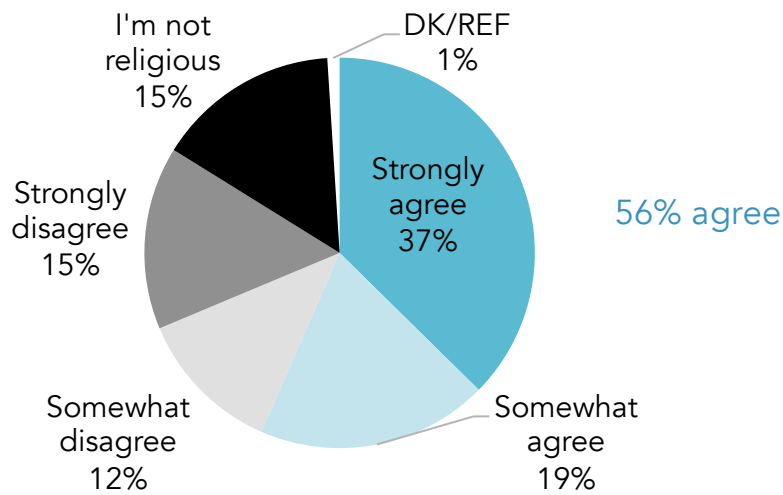
Seventy-six percent agree with the statement: “Even though some church leaders take a position against abortion, when it comes to the law, I believe it should remain legal.” More than half (54 percent) of Virginia Latino/a voters strongly agree. Sixty-eight percent of national Latino/a voters agree with this statement; 47 percent strongly agree.

Figure 7: Even though some church leaders take a position against abortion, when it comes to the law, I believe it should remain legal



Further, more than half of Latino/a voters in Virginia agree that their religious values can support a woman making her own decision about abortion. More than half (56 percent) agree with this sentiment; 27 percent disagree; and 15 percent say they are not religious. Nationally, half of Latino/a voters (50 percent) agree; 30 percent strongly agree. Thirty-seven percent disagree and 13 percent say they are not religious.

Figure 8: My personal religious values can support a woman making her own decision about abortion; or are you not religious?



A majority of Catholics and respondents who attend religious services regularly agree with these positions. (See Table 5.)

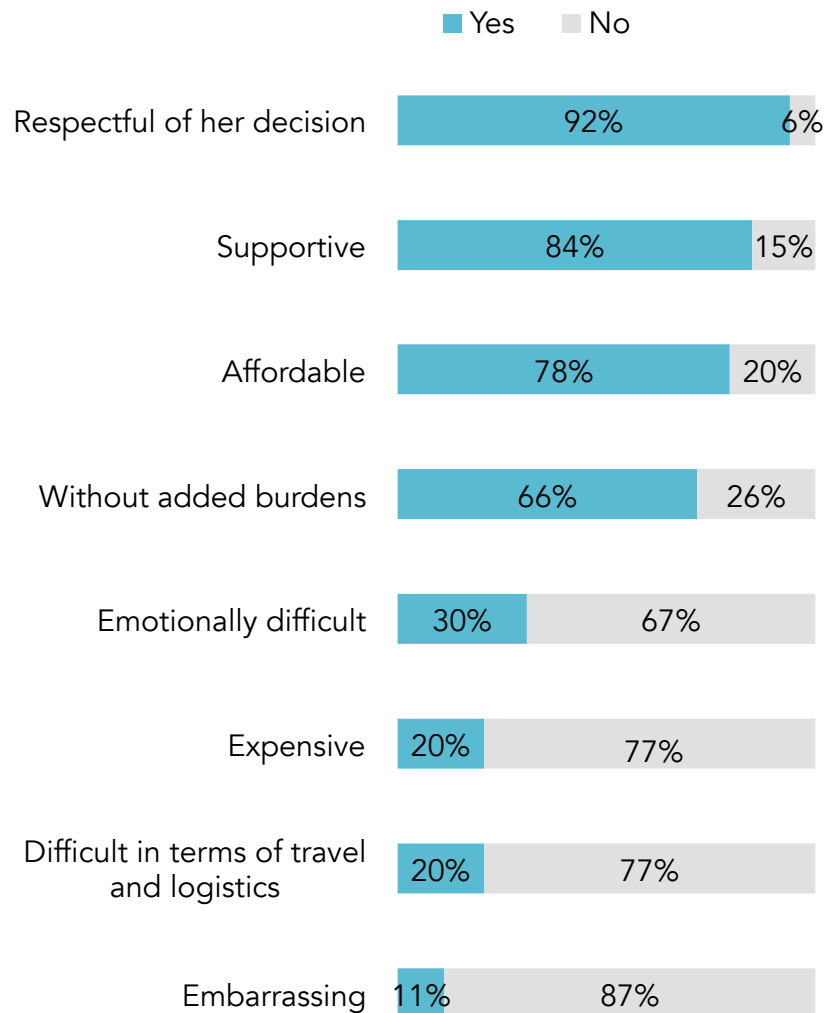
Table 5: Do you agree or disagree... (% Agree)

	Even though some church leaders take a position against abortion, when it comes to the law, I believe it should remain <i>legal</i>.	My personal religious values can support a woman making her own decision about abortion. Or are you not religious?
Total	76	56
Men	77	52
Women	73	60
Democrat	82	64
Independent	72	50
Republican (n=83)	63	50
18-29 years old	73	44
30-49	81	66
50+	72	56
Catholic	75	58
Attends service 1x a week or more	57	52
1x or 2x a month (n=92)	78	61
Few times a year	86	67
Less often or never	86	51
Northern VA	74	56
Rest of VA	76	57
Central/East/Hampton Road	78	56

Views about Abortion Access and Care

When we ask questions grounded in real-life – how women access and experience abortion care – large majorities of Virginia Latino/a voters want it to be respectful of her decision, supportive, affordable, and without difficulty in travel or logistics. These measures are very consistent with the Latino/a electorate at large².

Figure 9: Let's say a woman has decided to have an abortion.
Would you want the experience to be...



² <http://latinainstitute.org/en/2016-national-public-poll>

Views toward Recent Restrictions

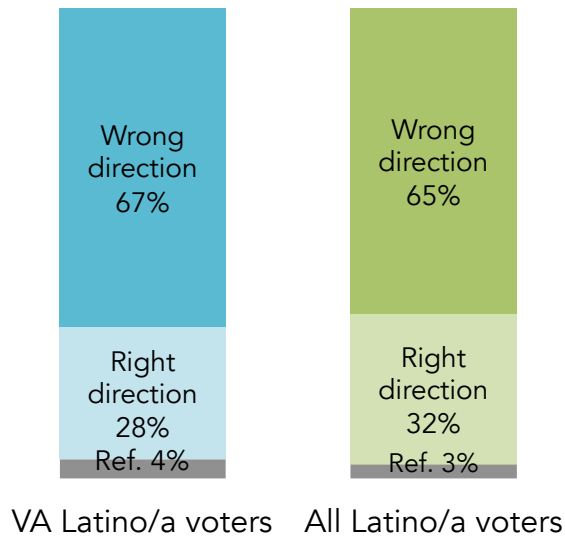
When given a brief description of the trend to restrict access to abortion, a majority of Latino/a voters say the restrictions are going in the wrong direction. To measure opinion toward new laws that restrict abortion access, respondents heard the following information about the trend and types of laws.

Since 2010, politicians across the country have passed over 300 new laws that make it harder for women to get abortion care. In Virginia, politicians have passed laws that do things like:

- Require women to have an ultrasound, whether or not the doctor says it is necessary,
- Make it illegal for Medicaid to cover abortion even if the woman's health is at risk,
- Make it illegal for health insurance in the online marketplace to cover abortion care except in cases of life endangerment, rape or incest.

Two thirds (67 percent) of Virginia Latino/a voters say the restrictions trend is going in the wrong direction, and 28 percent say the trend is going in the right direction. (See Figure 10.) This is consistent with the Latino/a electorate nationally (65 percent say wrong direction and 32 percent say right direction).

Figure 10: Do you feel this trend is going in the right direction or the wrong direction?



There are no demographic segments in which a majority feel restrictions are going in the right direction. (See Table 6.)

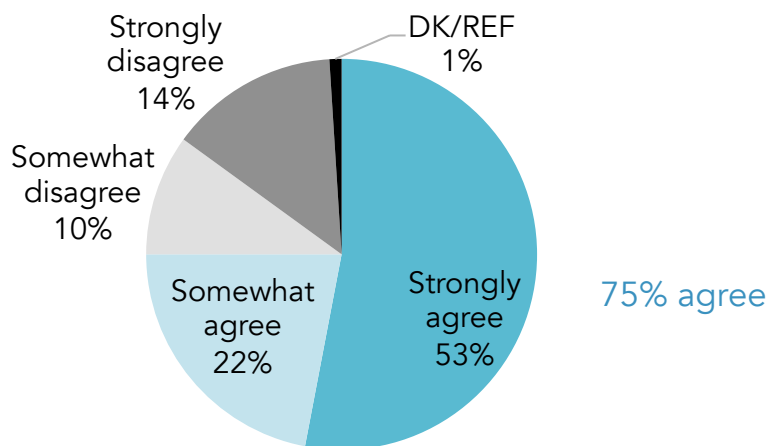
Table 6: Do you feel these laws are going in the...

	Right direction	Wrong direction
Total	28	67
Men	28	66
Women	29	68
Democrat	22	76
Independent	29	63
Republican (n=83)	45	49
18-29 years old	29	65
30-49	29	68
50+	27	67
H.S. or less (n=95)	27	64
Some college	31	66
College +	27	70
Catholic	27	68
Attends service 1x a week or more	43	53
1x or 2x a month (n=92)	32	61
Few times a year	27	67
Less often or never	12	85
Northern VA	29	65
Rest of VA	29	68
Central/East/Hampton Road	31	66

Values Around Insurance Coverage for Pregnancy-Related Care

A large majority of Virginia Latino/a voters (75 percent) believe health insurance should cover abortion care, no matter the source of her coverage. More than half (53 percent) strongly agree with this idea; a quarter (24 percent) disagrees.

Figure 11: Whether she has private or government funded health coverage, every woman should have coverage for the full range of pregnancy-related care, including prenatal care and abortion.



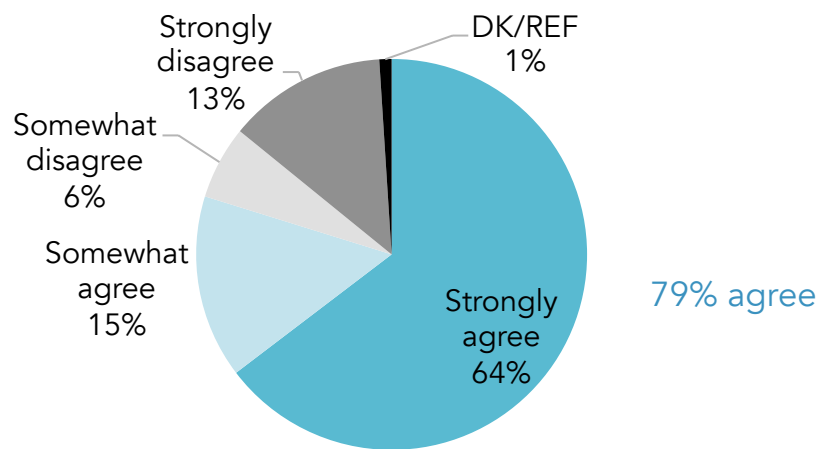
Majorities across all demographic segments agree women should have coverage for the full range of pregnancy-related care including prenatal care and abortion. (See Table 7.)

Table 7: Whether she has private or government funded health coverage, every woman should have coverage for the full range of pregnancy-related care, including prenatal care and abortion.

	Agree	Disagree
Total	75	24
Men	73	26
Women	79	20
Democrat	87	12
Independent	71	27
Republican (n=83)	55	44
18-29 years old	81	19
30-49	79	21
50+	67	30
Catholic	74	25
Attends service 1x a week or more	70	28
1x or 2x a month (n=92)	72	27
Few times a year	79	20
Less often or never	81	19
Northern VA	73	25
Rest of VA	80	20
Central/East/Hampton Road	79	21

A large majority of Virginia Latino/a voters (79 percent) also feel politicians should not deny coverage for abortion based on income. Nationally, 81 percent of Latino/a voters also agree with this statement (67 percent strongly); 18 percent disagree.

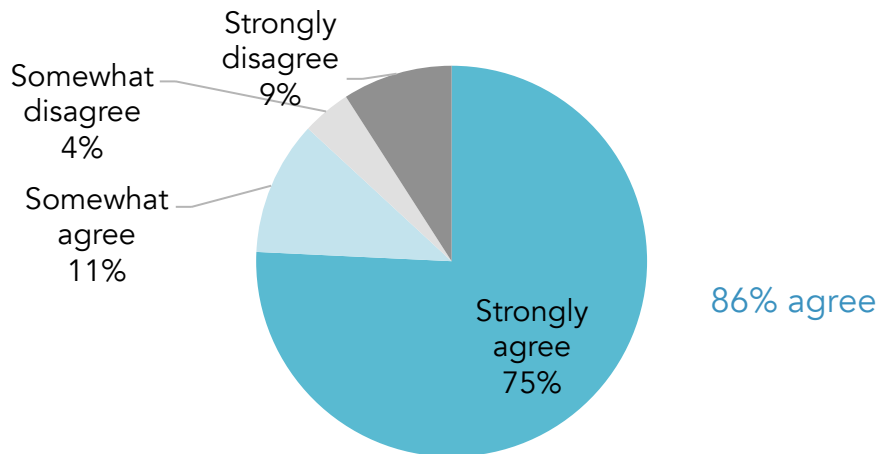
Figure 12: However, we feel we feel about abortion, politicians should not be allowed to deny a woman's health coverage for it just because she's poor.



Virginia Latino/a voters 30 to 49 years old, Democrats, and those who attend religious services with less frequency are most likely to agree a woman should not be denied abortion coverage due to her income. (See Table 8.)

Large majorities (86 percent) of Latino/a voters in Virginia agree that each woman should be able to get birth control through health insurance even if her employer disagrees. Three quarters (75 percent) strongly agree that birth control should be accessible through health insurance. 87 percent of national voters also agreed with this statement (68 percent strongly); 11 percent disagree.

Figure 13: A woman should be able to get birth control through her health insurance, even if her boss disagrees with the idea of birth control.



Large majorities across demographic segments agree with access to birth control regardless of employers' positions. (See Table 8.)

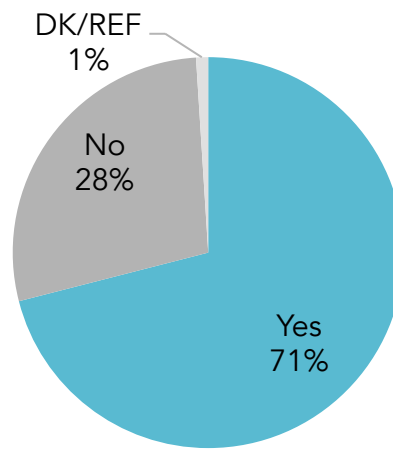
Table 8: Do you agree or disagree... (% Agree)

	However, we feel about abortion, politicians should not be allowed to deny a woman’s health coverage for it just because she’s poor.	A woman should be able to get birth control through her health insurance, even if her boss disagrees with the idea of birth control.
Total	80	86
Men	78	85
Women	82	86
Democrat	85	94
Independent	75	82
Republican (n=83)	75	70
18-29 years old	77	87
30-49	87	86
50+	73	85
Catholic	75	84
Attends service 1x a week or more	70	77
1x or 2x a month (n=92)	79	88
Few times a year	88	90
Less often or never	84	90
Northern VA	79	85
Rest of VA	80	87
Central/East/Hampton Road	77	88

Views toward Politicians' Positions on Abortion

Voters care about a candidate's view and are paying attention to them. Seven in ten Virginia Latino/a voters (71 percent) say they pay attention to a candidate's views on abortion.

Figure 14: In general, do you tend to pay attention to a political candidate's views on a woman's right to get an abortion?



Women are slightly more likely to pay attention to a candidate's position on abortion than men. Virginia Latino/a voters 18 to 29 years old and 50 and older, those with some college or more, and who attend religious services a few times a year or never are more apt to pay attention. (See Table 7.)

Table 9: In general, do you tend to pay attention to a political candidate’s views on a woman’s right to get an abortion?

	Yes	No
Total	71	28
Men	68	32
Women	75	23
Democrat	73	26
Independent	72	27
Republican (n=83)	65	33
18-29 years old	76	24
30-49	71	28
50+	68	31
H.S. or less (n=95)	57	42
Some college	79	21
College +	80	19
Catholic	73	25
Attends service 1x a week or more	66	32
1x or 2x a month (n=92)	71	27
Few times a year	76	24
Less often or never	74	26
Northern VA	67	31
Rest of VA	78	22
Central/East/Hampton Road	76	24

Detailed Methods

The study collected data from a sample of $n = 505$ Latino/a Virginia registered voters. $N = 353$ interviews were completed by phone and $n = 152$ through a web panel. The survey was administered in both English and Spanish.

The incidence of Latino/a voters in Virginia is 3.8 percent. Because of the small incidence, SSRS used a multi-mode and sample approach, including a combination of sample from a registered voter file in Virginia, prescreened sample determined to include Hispanic registered voters from the appropriate states from SSRS's weekly omnibus survey, and high incidence Hispanic listed landline and cell sample in Virginia.

The survey was also administered through a web panel in order to reach sufficient numbers of this low-incidence population. All web respondents to this survey were asked to complete the entire survey immediately after completing the screening eligibility questions. These eligibility questions were the same as the phone component.

Invitations to complete the web survey were sent directly to potential respondents by the web panel company. The field period for the web survey was September 15 through September 21, 2016.

The final data were weighted to correct for variance in the likelihood of selection for a given case and to balance the sample to known population parameters in order to correct for systematic under- or over-representation of meaningful social-demographic categories.

The field period for the phone study was August 26 through September 21, 2016. The margin of sampling error for results is ± 5.5 percentage points.