

Poll shows decline in support for abortion: More say reducing abortions a good idea

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Support for abortion is declining across the country, with Americans now evenly divided on whether it should be legal, a new Pew study shows.

In 2007 and 2008, supporters of legal abortion more clearly outnumbered opponents, but recent surveys by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that 47 percent now say it should be legal in all or most cases and 44 percent believe it should be illegal all or most of the time.

Those figures represent a shift away from support for abortion rights in previous years, when 54 percent of respondents supported legal abortion and 40 percent thought abortion should be illegal.

Researchers found a broad range of Americans who indicated significantly less support for abortion, including white mainline Protestants and white Catholics who attend worship services at least weekly, as well as Jews.

While increasing percentages of Republicans are opposed to legal abortion, Democrats now are more likely to be undecided.

Pollsters found an increase in Americans who agree that reducing abortions is a good idea, from 59 percent in 2005 to 65 percent this year.

The report, released October 1 jointly by the Pew Research Center and its Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, involved a total national sample of 4,013 adults and had a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points. The sample was based on phone interviews conducted in August. *-Religion News Service*