

A young woman with dark, wavy hair is shown in profile, looking out a window. The window is covered in rain, and a bright light source is visible through the glass, creating a soft glow. The woman's expression is thoughtful and serene.

**How do West Virginians really feel
about a woman's right to choose?**

You might be surprised.

Voters in West Virginia are united in the belief that it is unfair for a woman to be denied an abortion based on her inability to pay.



Statewide Survey Results for WV FREE

While most likely voters in West Virginia indicate they oppose Medicaid paying for an abortion, their opinions move substantially when given hypothetical scenarios about a woman's health.

West Virginians believe that the use of public funds for abortion should depend upon a woman's health and personal circumstances. Additionally, a large majority of West Virginia voters believe it is unfair for a woman to be denied an abortion if she cannot afford it.



The Survey Instrument

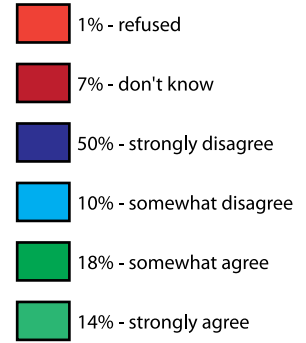
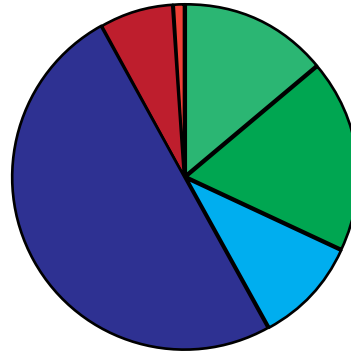
This survey, commissioned by WV FREE, was conducted by PhoneBase Research among likely voters in all 55 West Virginia counties. Professional interviewers conducted the survey from Friday, March 20 through Sunday, March 22, 2009. Four hundred and seventy-five respondents make up the statewide sample. Individuals who indicated they work for a radio station, a television station, a newspaper, an advertising agency, a market research firm, or as an active political campaign worker were excluded from this sample. The sample of 475 individuals statewide gives this research a margin of error of +/-4.5% at the 95% confidence level. All interviews were conducted by telephone and each lasted approximately five minutes. The sample was based on past and present turnout data by scientific random sampling methods that gave every likely voter with a telephone number from past voter files an equal opportunity to be part of the sample. The sample and instrument were prepared by Rainmaker Media Group of Charleston.



Question 1

“Do you agree or disagree that Medicaid, as part of its comprehensive health coverage, should cover abortions for poor women? Is that strongly or somewhat (agree/disagree?)”

See pie chart for a breakdown of responses.



Hypotheticals:

Voters were then asked two questions about whether they supported Medicaid funding for abortions. They were given specific information about individuals’ health and personal information. **Public opinion greatly moves in favor of Medicaid funding for abortion upon learning more about the individuals’ personal circumstances.**

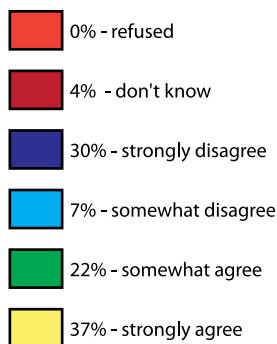
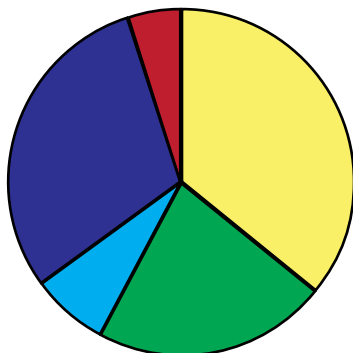


Question 2: Ann, 19 yr. old woman

“Now I am going to read you a couple of scenarios about women on Medicaid. After each, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with Medicaid’s policy about covering the cost of the abortion.

Ann is a 19 year old woman from West Virginia who is homeless as a result of domestic violence. She is being treated for paranoid schizophrenia and manic depressive disorder and she has discovered that she is pregnant. Because Ann is dependent on her medications to preserve her health and function normally, her doctor recommends that she have an abortion. Do you agree or disagree with Medicaid’s policy of covering the cost of an abortion in cases such as this where a woman needs to protect her health? Is that strongly or somewhat agree/disagree?”

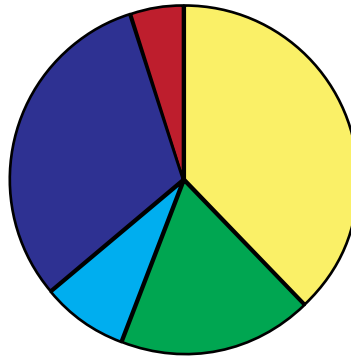
In this scenario, voters move to 59 percent in favor of allowing Medicaid funding for abortion while 37 percent remain opposed and another 4 percent are undecided or refused.





Question 3: Jennifer, low-income woman

“Jennifer is a low-income woman who relies upon Medicaid for her healthcare. In the course of routine pre-natal tests, she learns from her doctor that her fetus has a severe genetic disorder and is likely to be stillborn or die shortly after birth. Do you agree or disagree with Medicaid’s policy of covering abortions when a fetus has a severe or fatal genetic disorder? Is that strongly or somewhat agree/disagree?”



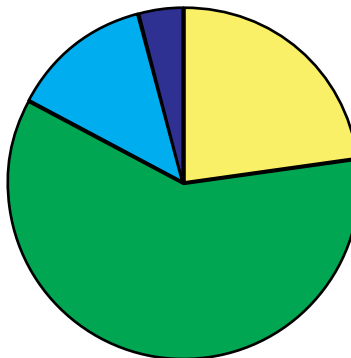
- 0% - refused
- 5% - don't know
- 31% - strongly disagree
- 8% - somewhat disagree
- 18% - somewhat agree
- 38% - strongly agree

In this second scenario, voters move to 56 percent in favor of allowing Medicaid funding for abortions while 39 percent remain opposed and another 5 percent are undecided or refused.



Question 4: Fairness

“Do you think it is fair that a woman’s ability to pay should determine if she gets a needed abortion or not?”



- 4% - refused
- 13% - don't know
- 60% - no, not fair
- 23% - yes, fair

The pie chart outlines the results:

West Virginia voters overwhelmingly believe it is not fair that a woman’s ability to pay should determine whether she should get a needed abortion.

Conclusion

Voters in West Virginia are united in the belief that it is unfair for a woman to be denied an abortion based on her inability to pay. Therefore, any attempt to outlaw the use of Medicaid funds for abortions is not in line with public opinion among West Virginia voters. Voters want medical and personal circumstances considered when deciding whether to use state funds for abortions for poor women.



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