

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Hart Research Associates
DATE: January 12, 2018
RE: New polling shows West Virginia voters strongly oppose the state legislature taking action to ban abortion coverage in Medicaid

This memo summarizes the key findings from a telephone survey among 600 likely 2018 voters. The interviews were conducted from January 4 to 7, 2018. The sample is representative of voters who are likely to vote in the 2018 midterm election and consistent with the political inclinations of West Virginia voters statewide. The sample leans Republican by 12 points (45% identify as Republican, 33% as Democrat) and by 2016 vote (64% say they voted for Trump, 27% for Clinton).

1. West Virginia voters overwhelmingly support the state's Medicaid program providing coverage for the full range of reproductive healthcare, including abortion.

- Nearly two in three (65%) West Virginia voters support the state's Medicaid program covering a range of reproductive healthcare services, including annual check-ups, prenatal and maternity care, birth control, and abortion, compared with just 27% who oppose the Medicaid program covering such healthcare services.
- At even higher rates, seven in 10 (69%) West Virginia voters align with the view that regardless of how one feels about abortion, politicians should not be allowed to deny a woman health coverage for abortion just because she is poor.
 - This is the majority view across the electorate, including among moderate and conservative Democrats (87%), independents (65%), and Republicans (55%).
 - Eight in 10 (81%) voters who are personally opposed to abortion, but do not believe the government should prevent a woman from making that choice, agree with this point of view.

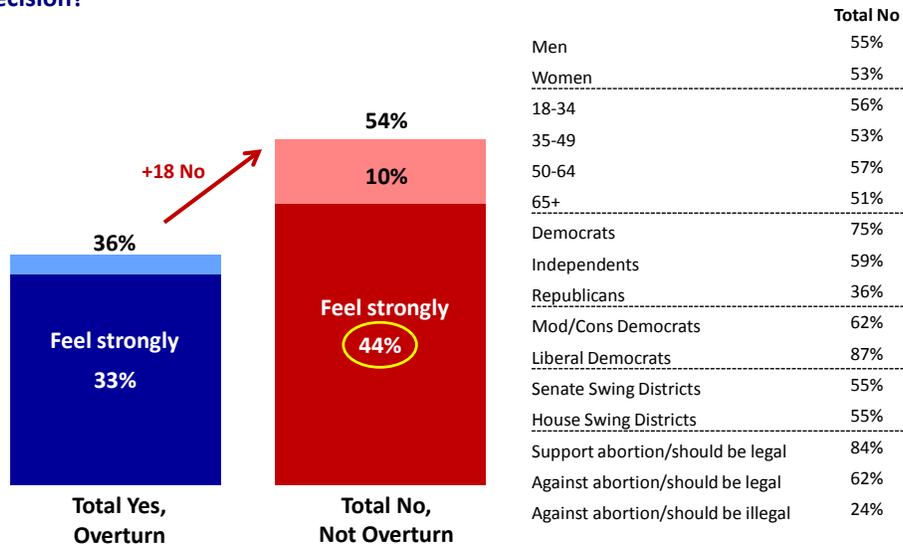
2. By very significant margins, West Virginia voters oppose the state legislature taking action to ban abortion coverage from Medicaid.

- By an 18-point margin (54% to 36%) West Virginia voters say they do NOT want the state legislature to overturn the state supreme court's decision that protects Medicaid coverage of abortion, by voting to ban it.
 - This is the majority view among Democrats (75%), including 62% of moderate and conservative Democrats, independents (59%), voters from House¹ and Senate² swing districts (55%), as well as voters who are personally opposed to abortion, but do not think the government should have a say in the decision (62%).

¹ House swing districts are defined as voters from any of the following delegate districts: 3, 4, 13, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 29, 30, 32, 34, 35, 42, 43, 44, 48, 50, 51, 55.

² Senate swing districts are defined as voters from any of the following State Senate districts: 5, 7, 8, 10, 15, 16.

Do you think the state legislature should overturn the state supreme court's decision by banning abortion coverage in the Medicaid program or do you think the state legislature should not take action to overturn the state supreme court's decision?



3. The proposed legislation is out of touch with West Virginia voters' priorities; by greater than two to one, West Virginia voters say banning Medicaid coverage of abortion is the wrong issue for lawmakers to be spending time and energy on right now.

- Sixty-four percent (64%) of West Virginia voters say that debating and passing legislation to overturn the state supreme court's decision by banning abortion coverage in Medicaid is the wrong issue for the legislature to be spending time on, compared with just 31% who want to see their legislators spending time on this issue.
- This is the majority view by very wide margins among Democrats (82% wrong issue versus only 13% who want to see the state legislature spending time on it), including moderate and conservative Democrats (78% versus 17%) and independents (65% versus 32%); and half (50%) of Republicans say this is the wrong issue, compared with 43% who hold the alternate view.
- Importantly, the belief that this is the wrong issue for West Virginia legislators to be focusing on right now also is the majority view by very wide margins among West Virginia voters who are unsure or have weaker convictions about whether the legislature should ban Medicaid coverage of abortion (76% versus 14%), those who are personally opposed to abortion, but do not think the government should have a say in the decision (73% versus 18%), and voters in House swing (64% versus 32%) and Senate swing (66% versus 30%) districts.

Would you want the West Virginia state legislature to spend time debating and passing this measure to overturn the state supreme court's decision by banning abortion coverage in Medicaid, or do you think this is the wrong issue for the state legislature to be spending time on?

