



FocusFamilyINSIGHT

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Helping Families Thrive

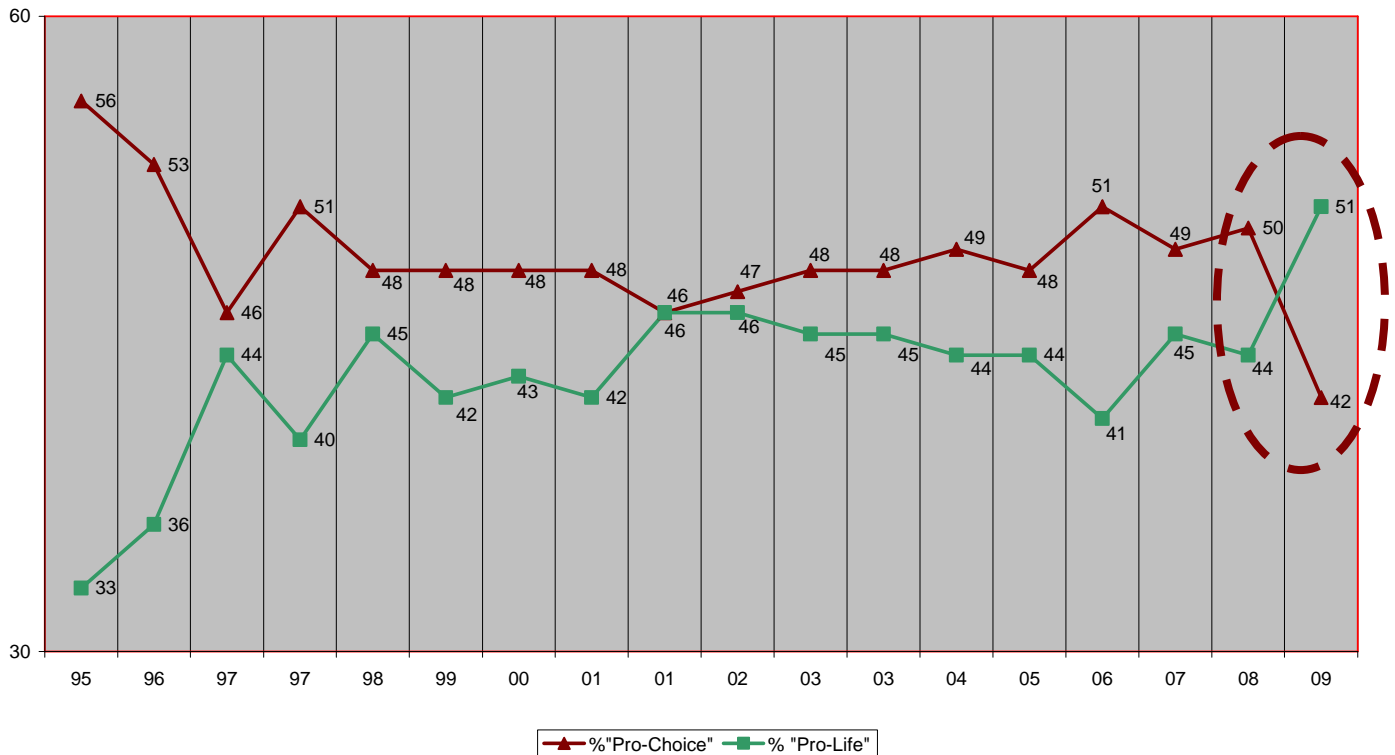
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Date: May 22, 2009
To: FOF Leadership and Management
Re: More Americans identify as “Pro-Life”

Gallup conducts an annual poll on public attitudes on abortion and their 2009 poll was just released, showing a rather dramatic shift in those who identify as “pro-life” and “pro-choice.”

As seen in the timeline below, 2009 is the first year since Gallup has conducted this poll that a majority of Americans identify themselves as “pro-life” due to a sizable shift – slightly more than complete reversal – from last year. Gallup reports this “recent shift toward the pro-life position is confirmed in two other surveys.”

On abortion, do you consider yourself pro-choice or pro-life?



Additionally, a recent national Pew survey show an 8% point *decline* since last August in those saying abortion should be *legal* in all or most all circumstances (from 54 to 46%). The proportion saying abortion should be *illegal* in all or most instances *increased* from 41 to 44% over the same period. Support for



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these two distinct positions is now nearly even (23% for “illegal under *all* circumstances” and 22% for “legal under *any* circumstances), a marked shift.

Republicans/Moderates Grow and Democrats Not

The percentage of Republicans (and R-leaning Independents) calling themselves “pro-life” rose by 10 points over the last year, from 60 to 70%. There has been essentially no change in the views of Democrats and D-leaners in the past year.

This means the radical pro-abortion stance of President Obama has had more impact on Republicans in a more pro-life direction contrasted with no change on Democrats.

People who identify as “conservative” and “moderate” are both moving in markedly “pro-life” directions, particularly since 2006. Conservatives who call themselves “pro-life” have increased 10 percentage points since then, and moderates saw a remarkable 15 percentage point increase.

Even those who identify as “liberals” have been moving slowly in a slightly more “pro-life” position since 2001.

Christians and Women More Pro-Life

Both Catholics and Protestants have seen bigger increases than other religious affiliations in “pro-life” identification, 7 and 8 percentage points respectively.

While women have tended to identify more as “pro-choice” in years past, both men and women now have majorities that consider themselves “pro-life.”

Reasons and Conclusion

Reasons for this dramatic and recent shift are difficult to discern.

Gallup considers the possibility that the President’s actions and support for abortion are a factor, explaining that possibly “Obama has pushed the public’s understanding of what it means to be ‘pro-choice’ slightly to the left, politically.” Citizens might be moving in the other direction as a “balance” to the most pro-abortion President our nation has seen.

It is curious to consider why such a dramatic change took place in just one year. Of course, it will be interesting to see what direction this one-year shift takes next year and years following.

Gallup concludes, “Americans -- and, in particular, Republicans -- seem to be taking a step back from the pro-choice position. However, the retreat is evident among political moderates as well as conservatives.”

But this much is sure – the pro-life movement has done a successful job of helping citizens see the importance of valuing life over the last few decades. That long, hard work is paying off.

Source: “More Americans ‘Pro-Life’ than ‘Pro-Choice’ for First Time” The Gallup Organization, Princeton, N.J. May 15, 2009.

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/118399/More-Americans-Pro-Life-Than-Pro-Choice-First-Time.aspx>