

THE HILL

Poll: Most say abortion opponents should back birth control

Most adults believe policymakers who oppose abortion should “strongly” support birth control, according to a new poll.

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy found that 75 percent of adults hold this view while 21 percent disagree.

The finding comes as debates over abortion and contraception see renewed vigor in U.S. politics. Teen pregnancy and sex education — both hot-button issues in the past — have been much less prominent.

In its report, the National Campaign called recent debates about birth control “considerably less than enlightening.”

“In particular,” the report stated, “the number of public figures and policymakers cynically conflating abortion and birth control has been especially disheartening and puzzling.”

“That men and women of good will disagree about abortion is understandable,” the report went on. “The hostility to preventing the unplanned pregnancies that frequently lead to abortion is not.”

The National Campaign did not specifically say what statements it referred to, though the nexus of abortion and contraception is relevant to current debates over the Obama administration’s birth control coverage mandate.

Opponents argue that by requiring employers to cover emergency contraception, the policy forces them to tacitly condone abortion. This perspective relies on the common understanding that EC, or the “morning after” pill, ends the development of a fertilized egg. Experts recently called this understanding medically inaccurate.

According to the National Campaign survey, 90 percent of adults called teen pregnancy an “important” national problem. And 90 percent of teens said the same.

A strong majority of adults (65 percent) also said that federally funded programs should provide teens with information about birth control and postponing sex — not one or the other.

The survey noted that at least 62 percent of adults in all U.S. regions, of all levels of education and of all ethnicities support a comprehensive approach to sex education.

Social Science Research Solutions surveyed 1,032 adults and 1,002 young people for the poll. Its margin of error is about 3 points for both groups.