

THINK PROGRESS

Americans' Support For Expanding Access To Birth Control Cuts Across Party Lines

Despite the hard line position that many GOP politicians are taking on contraception — just yesterday, Rep. Steve King (R-IA) refused to say whether he believes contraception should be sold legally in the U.S. — a new poll finds wide margins of support for increasing women's access to affordable birth control as a method of reducing unplanned pregnancies.

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy reports that the results from their poll cut across party lines, particularly when women's access to birth control is framed as a matter of economic importance or personal responsibility.

A full 70 percent of respondents reported that they believe insurance companies should cover the full cost of birth control as essential preventative care, just as Obamacare requires them to do under the health reform law's contraception provision. And broad majorities of the survey participants — 91 percent of Democrats, 80 percent of Independents, and 66 percent of Republicans — believe the government should continue to help women access the birth control they need if they cannot afford contraceptive services, a position that one in three American women have been in at some point in their lives:

“Removing cost as a barrier and helping women choose from the full range of contraceptives available, including the most effective ones, leads to dramatic declines in unplanned pregnancy and abortions.”

Sarah Brown, the CEO of the National Campaign, said a press release to announce her organization's poll results. “The magic combination of responsible public and private policies and responsible behavior on the part of men and women can make all the difference in helping reduce unplanned pregnancy and improving the education and employment prospects of women and their families.”

Indeed, women who currently use contraception report that birth control helps them achieve economic autonomy for themselves, particularly when having a child would not allow them to finish school, keep a job, or financially support their family on their own. And respondents were nearly unanimous in their agreement that taking birth control is a sign of personal responsibility among the women who could not afford to support a child if they were to become pregnant.

Although Romney surrogates have brushed off birth control as merely a “peripheral issue,” at least one in three women report that birth control policy will play a large factor in determining their vote this November.

President Obama currently has more than a 20 point lead on his birth control policy, which is largely predicated on the popular Obamacare provision that expands access to affordable contraception.