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Nearly two years after the Supreme Court overturned its 1973 Roe v. Wade decision making abortion a constitutional right, a majority of Americans said they support legal abortion in all or most cases, according to a new study from the Pew Research Center.

The Supreme Court issued its ruling in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization on June 24, 2022, in a case involving a Mississippi law banning abortion after 15 weeks, where the state directly challenged the high court's previous abortion-related precedents in Roe v. Wade and the 1992 Planned Parenthood v. Casey decision. The Supreme Court ultimately overturned its own prior rulings, undoing nearly a half-century of its own precedent that held abortion was a constitutional right and returning the issue to the legislature. In the two years since that ruling, individual states have moved to either restrict abortion or expand access to it.

The study found that a majority — 63% — of Americans said abortion should be legal in all or most cases, an increase of four percentage points from 2021, the year prior to the Dobbs ruling. That includes 59% of Catholics surveyed.

Although the vast majority — 85% — of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents said abortion should be legal in all or most cases, and just 41% of Republicans and Republican leaners said the same, the latter group also saw an uptick in support for legal abortion.

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A majority of Americans — 54% — said the statement "the decision about whether to have an abortion should belong solely to the pregnant woman" describes their views extremely or very well. Meanwhile, 35% said the statement "human life begins at conception, so an embryo is a person with rights" describes their views extremely or very well. But 32% of Americans said both of those statements reflect their views at least somewhat well, in what Pew described as being "cross-pressured" in their views.

The new Pew survey was conducted April 8-14 among 8,709 adults. "Everyone who took part in this survey is a member of the Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of

residential addresses," Pew said. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 8,709 respondents is plus or minus 1.5 percentage points.

The Catholic Church teaches that all human life is sacred from conception to natural death, opposing direct abortion as an act of violence that takes the life of the unborn child.

After the Dobbs decision, church officials in the U.S. have reiterated the church's concern for both mother and child, and called to strengthen available support for those living in poverty or other causes that can push women toward having an abortion.