



## Opinion Poll

Women entrepreneurs see access to reproductive health as essential to their economic security

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June 14, 2023

## Executive summary

One year after the U.S. Supreme Court decision that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, a new poll reveals that women entrepreneurs believe that access to reproductive healthcare is vital to their economic well-being and to the entire small business community, and they strongly support improved access to several forms of reproductive healthcare, including abortion and birth control.

The recent poll of 500 women small business owners nationwide, with additional oversamples of 100 Black women and 100 Latina small business owners, finds that women entrepreneurs are concerned about the impact of the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* on their business, their employees and their community.

For women entrepreneurs, the freedom to decide if and when to have children is extremely important, with overwhelming bipartisan support (92% total support). It's not surprising then that women small business owners are concerned about restrictions on reproductive healthcare and birth control, with more than half sharing they are very concerned (78% concerned/59% very concerned). This is an issue of concern that cuts across race and ethnicity and political party identification. What's more, women entrepreneurs across the political spectrum support a federal law to ensure women have the right to abortion care (72% total support/55% Republican women support).

Additionally, the poll reveals that the impacts of the Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade* have been mostly negative for women small business owners. They are most concerned that the Supreme Court decision has negatively impacted the country and the people in their community. Still, more than one-quarter of respondents said that the decision has had a negative impact on their employees and on them personally. Similarly, when asked about the impacts moving forward, a majority of women entrepreneurs are concerned about the country and their community due to the decision (69% and 59% respectively), while roughly 4 in 10 are concerned about direct impacts on them, their families and their employees.

It's no secret that women were [disproportionately impacted by the pandemic](#), and women entrepreneurs continue to face challenges stemming from inflation and the current economic environment. In states where reproductive rights are being threatened or restricted, about 10% more business owners said their revenues were declining than improving. As this survey reveals, undermining access to reproductive healthcare will only further threaten women's ability to achieve financial security and launch and grow new businesses, harming our economy overall.

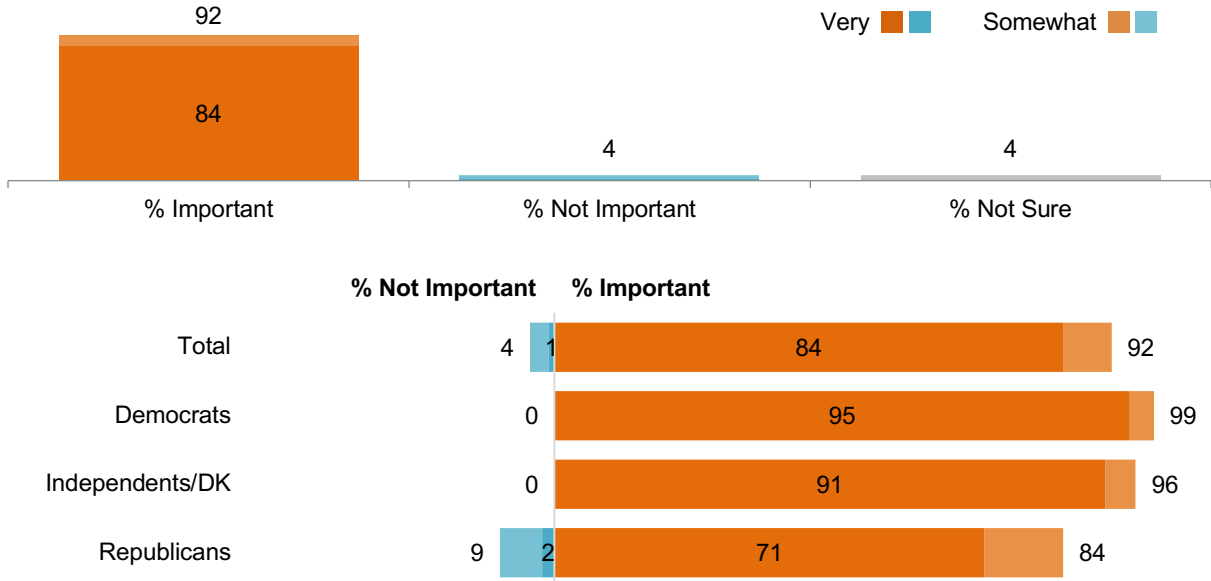
## Key findings

- Policies that would provide more access to reproductive healthcare have wide appeal among women entrepreneurs, all with large majority support. Notably, women entrepreneurs support ensuring people have the right to receive abortion care under federal law (72% total support/55% Republican women support). Additionally, they want to ensure and expand access to birth control (90% support/4% oppose) and access to abortion care (70% support).
- Nearly two-thirds of women small business owners (64%) say their ability to decide if and when to have children has allowed them to advance in their career and start their own businesses. A majority agree that their ability to decide if and when to have children impacts their financial security, as well as their ability to grow their businesses.
- The vast majority of owners agree that all women should have access to reproductive health, including abortion care and birth control (76% agree/58% strongly agree). This statement finds strong bipartisan support, with 58% of Republican women in agreement. Women entrepreneurs similarly agree that it is important for their employees to have access to reproductive health (71% agree/52% strongly agree) and that having the freedom to decide if and when to have children is an important part of their ability to make career choices (72% agree/52% strongly agree), statements that also find bipartisan support.
- When comparing opposing statements on abortion, a majority of women small business owners (57%) believe that restrictions to abortion access will force women in business to choose between their careers or their reproductive health, compared to less than 3 in 10 who think restrictions will have no effect on women's ability to have careers and own businesses. More than half of women small business owners strongly believe that restrictions will have a negative impact.
- Women small business owners report experiencing a variety of difficulties in trying to do business and are looking for solutions to these issues. For most, expenses have risen in the past year while revenue has dropped or stayed the same. In states where reproductive rights are being threatened or restricted, about 10% more business owners said their revenues were declining than improving. Half see inflation as a top challenge facing their business and more than 4 in 10 cite general economic conditions as a concern.

# Women small business owners believe reproductive health access is important for financial security

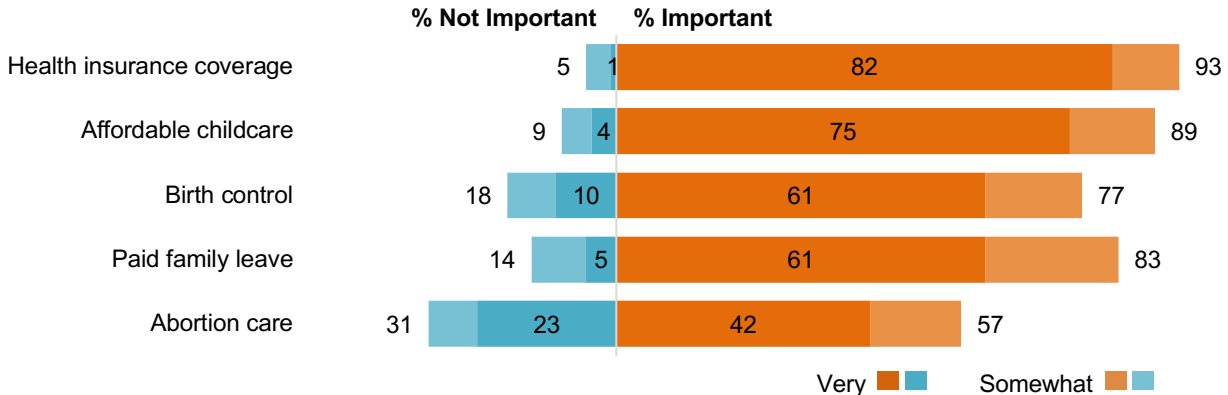
Financial security and the ability to plan one’s future is necessary for small business success, and women entrepreneurs see a clear link between reproductive health access and economic freedom. An overwhelming majority (92%) of women small business owners believe it is important for women to have the freedom to decide if and when to have children. This holds true across party lines: 99% of Democrats, 96% of Independents and 84% of Republicans believe this is important.

**Figure 1: Importance of the freedom to decide if and when to have children**



When asked about how important it is to be able to access a variety of benefits to obtain financial security, more than half of women small business owners found every benefit listed as important, with health insurance coverage (93%) garnering the highest intensity. Childcare (89%), birth control (77%) and paid family leave (83%) are also very important to most women entrepreneurs. A majority (57%) view abortion care as an important benefit to obtaining financial security, while only about one-third say it is not important, or only a little important.

**Figure 2: Importance of benefit access to obtain financial security**

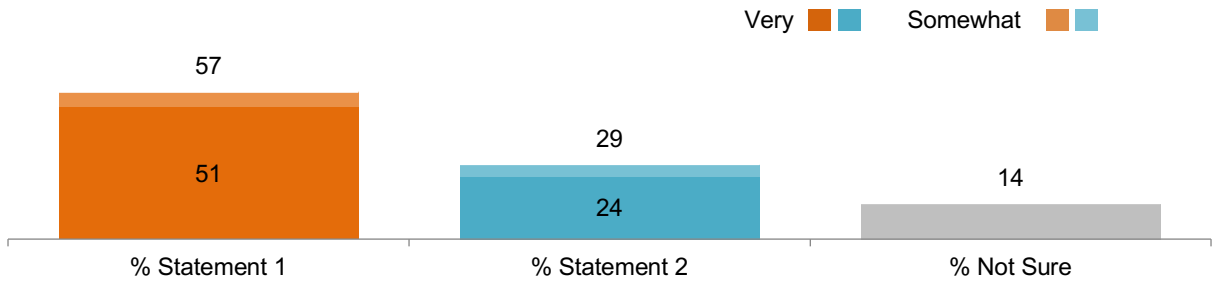


Additionally, women entrepreneurs believe access to abortion is important to obtaining financial security. Nearly 6 in 10 women small business owners (57%) believe that restrictions on abortion access will force women to choose between their careers or their reproductive freedom, with only 29% who think restrictions will have no impact on a woman’s career and business. There is a partisan split on this argument, with Democrats disproportionately favoring the first statement while Republicans side narrowly with the opposing statement. A slim majority of Independents (51%) favor the first statement.

**Figure 3: Women entrepreneurs share feedback on importance of abortion access**

**Statement 1:** Restrictions to abortion access will force women in business to choose between their careers and their reproductive health.

**Statement 2:** Restrictions to abortion access won't have any impact on women’s ability to have careers and own businesses.



In the wake of the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, many states such as Texas have begun trying to restrict or ban Plan B and birth control in addition to abortion. This is alarming for the vast majority of women small business owners, with 78% saying they are concerned about these restrictions. Ninety-two percent of Democrats, 76% of Independents and 66% of Republican women entrepreneurs are concerned about restrictions on non-abortion reproductive healthcare.

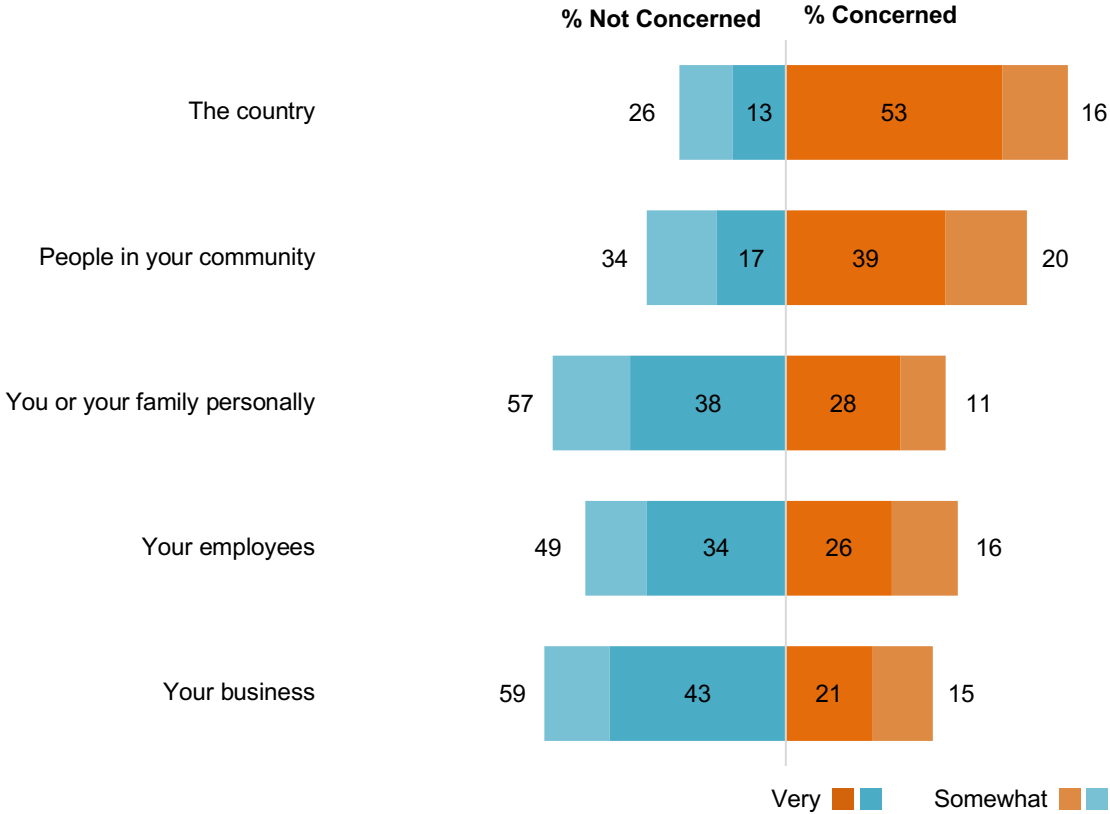
### Women entrepreneurs believe overturning Roe v. Wade has had negative effect on the country

The impacts of overturning Roe v. Wade have been mostly negative for women small business owners, and they are most concerned that the Supreme Court decision has negatively impacted the country and the people in their community.

- More than 6 in 10 (63%) say that the decision has negatively impacted the country and nearly half (47%) believe it negatively impacted the people in their community.
- When it comes to them and their businesses, owners are more neutral, with majorities saying that the court decision has had a neutral impact on them, their families, their business and employees. Still, it’s important to note that roughly a quarter say that the decision has had a negative impact on them, their families and their employees.

When asked about their concerns about the decision moving forward, women small business owners are similarly more concerned for the country (69% concerned) and people in their community (59%). However, roughly 4 in 10 expressed concerns for their employees (42%) and their businesses (36%). Women under the age of 40 in states where abortion isn’t restricted and without pending anti-abortion legislation expressed the most concerns of any demographic group of women business owners.

**Figure 4: Impacts and concerns of Supreme Court decision will have in the future**

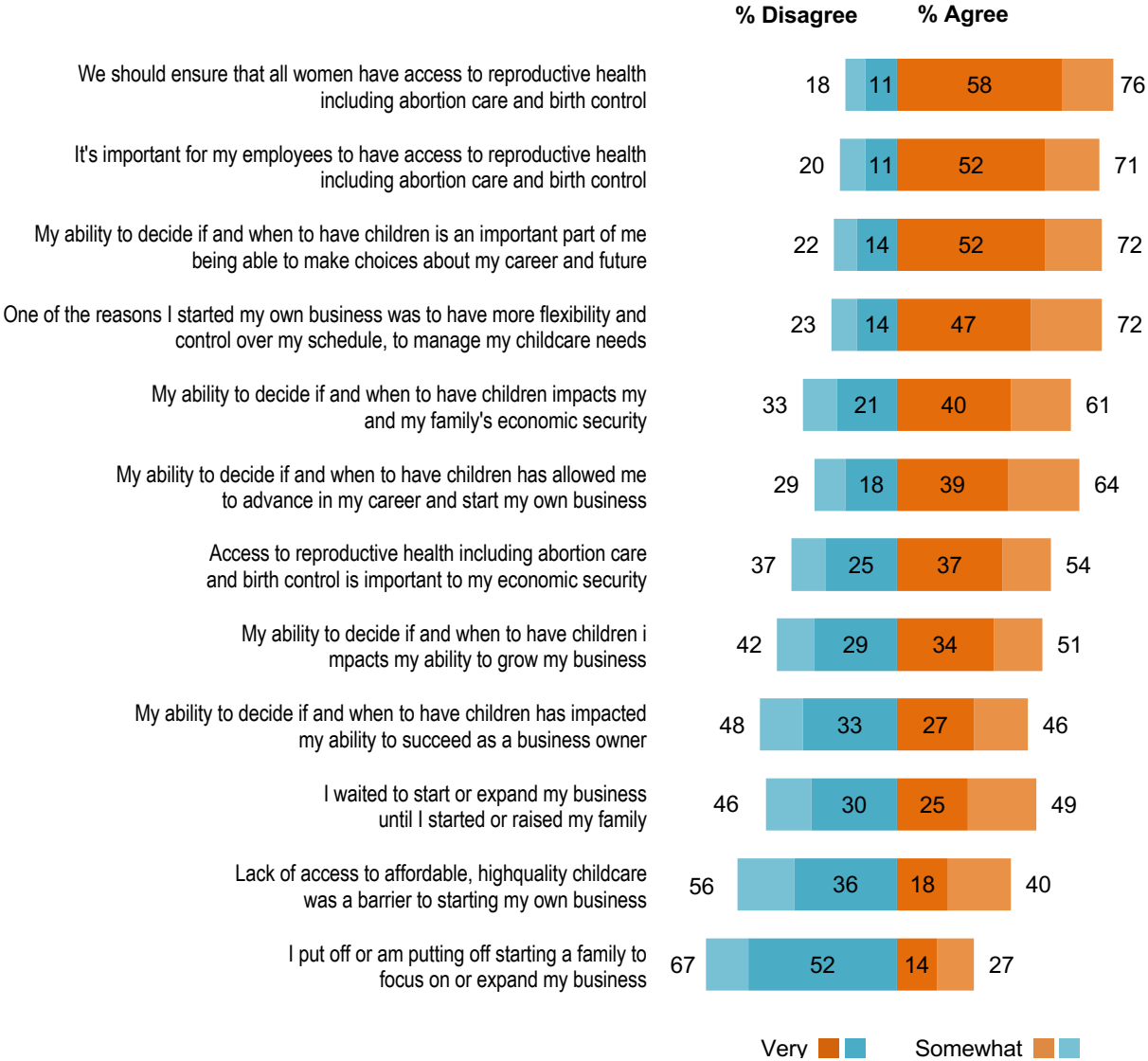


In response to these concerns, some small business owners are taking steps to update their employee benefits. Roughly 3 in 10 women entrepreneurs with employees have taken action or considered taking action to update their benefits in order to support employees who may need to travel out of state for abortion care.

**Strong majorities of business owners support access to reproductive healthcare**

The vast majority of owners agree that all women should have access to reproductive healthcare including abortion care and birth control (76% agree, 58% strongly). Statements highlighting the importance of employees having access to reproductive health (71% agree, 52% strongly) and that their ability to decide if and when to have children is important to being able to make career choices (72% agree, 52% strongly agree) also reach majority strong support. All three of these statements find majority support across party lines.

**Figure 5: Women entrepreneurs share views on reproductive healthcare**



Democrats are particularly strong on nearly every statement, while independents also agree strongly with most of the statements above. Republicans agree the most with the statement that says they started their own business to have more flexibility and control over their schedule.

**Figure 6: Women entrepreneurs’ views on reproductive healthcare by party identification**

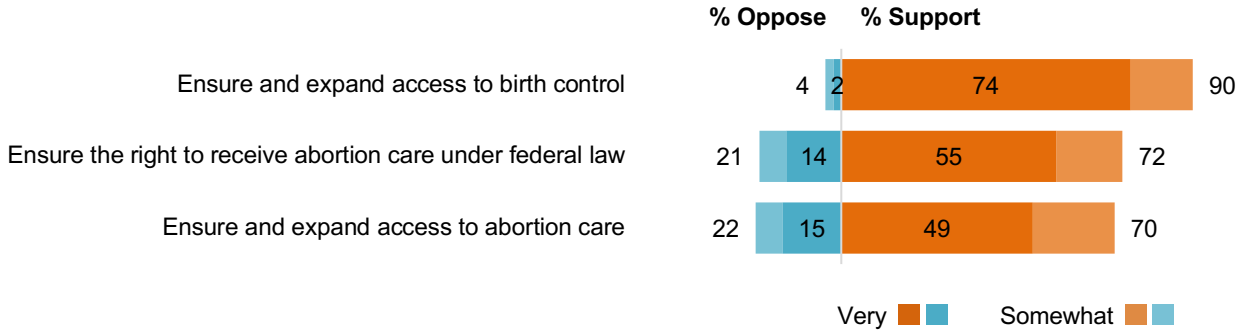
<b>% Total Agree</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Rep</b>
<i>We should ensure all women have access to reproductive health</i>	76	92	86	58
<i>Important for employees to have access to reproductive health</i>	71	88	69	59
<i>Ability to decide on children important part of making choices about career</i>	72	82	72	66
<i>Started business to have more flexibility to manage childcare</i>	72	76	68	70
<i>Ability to decide on children impacts family’s economic security</i>	61	72	70	49
<i>Ability to decide on children allowed me to advance career</i>	64	75	60	58
<i>Access to reproductive health important to economic security</i>	54	72	53	39
<i>Ability to decide on children impacts ability to grow business</i>	51	63	47	44
<i>Waited to start business until started family</i>	49	58	51	42
<i>Ability to decide on children impacted ability to succeed</i>	46	58	48	35
<i>Lack of affordable childcare barrier to starting business</i>	40	52	46	28
<i>Put off starting family to focus on business</i>	27	35	30	19



# Majorities of women small business owners support policies relating to reproductive healthcare

Women entrepreneurs were asked about a number of policies to ensure and expand access to reproductive healthcare. Out of a short list of reproductive healthcare policies, ensuring and expanding access to birth control is the most popular issue among women small business owners. Ensuring people have the right to receive abortion care under federal law (72% support/55% Republican women support) and ensuring and expanding access to abortion care (70% support/51% Republican women support) also were strongly favored by women small business owners.

*Figure 7: Women entrepreneurs support policies to expand reproductive healthcare*



Democrats are particularly strong on every policy, while independents largely support every policy. Unsurprisingly, Republicans are the weakest group, but more than half still support all the policies.

	% Support	Total	Dem	Ind	Rep
<i>Ensure and expand access to birth control</i>	90	97	87	86	
<i>Ensure people have the right to receive abortion care under federal law</i>	72	92	74	55	
<i>Ensure and expand access to abortion care</i>	70	93	73	51	

## Conclusion

As the report shows, women small business owners are strongly supportive of policies that ensure and expand access to reproductive healthcare, including abortion and birth control. The majority of them believe that the freedom to decide if and when to have children is crucial to their ability to start and grow their business while also contributing to their business’ success and financial security. Additionally, women entrepreneurs are concerned about the Supreme Court’s overturning of Roe v. Wade and think abortion restrictions will force women in business to choose between their reproductive health and their career. They note that it has had a negative impact on the country and their community, and that women’s businesses are already threatened by inflation, declining revenues and general economic conditions. Autonomy over their reproductive health plays a significant role in the success of women small business owners and that’s why it’s critical to promote policies which protect and expand it.

## Methodology

This poll reflects a national survey of 500 small business owners, with additional oversamples of 100 Black women entrepreneurs and 100 Latina entrepreneurs in the United States. Respondents were politically diverse, with 42% identifying as Republican or Republican-leaning, 39% as Democrat or Democrat-leaning, 14% as pure independent and 3% as other/not sure. The poll was an online survey conducted by Lake Research Partners during April 19-30, 2023. The margin of error for the base sample is +/- 4.4%, and higher for subgroups and split-sampled questions.