



What Parents Want

SC Voters Speak Out on
Sexuality Education



Introduction



For years we have known the truth but could not prove it.

Our intuition told us:

- ❖ Parents believe they should be the primary sexual health educators of their children.
- ❖ Parents believe that when schools or other educators help with the job, abstinence should be strongly emphasized.
- ❖ Parents favor public policy proposals that strengthen these basic principles.

With the *South Carolina Survey on Adolescent Sexual Health*, we now have the proof that our intuition was correct.

In the next pages, we have summarized the findings of this major new survey of the registered voters of South Carolina on issues related to adolescent sexuality. The survey was conducted by the University of South Carolina IPSPR with a sample size of 502 (margin of error +/- 4.4%)

We invite you to read this document carefully and let us know what you think.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Oran P. Smith".

Oran P. Smith, Ph.D
President and Executive Director
Palmetto Family Council

None of the research contained in this document is intended to advance or defeat any specific federal or state legislation.

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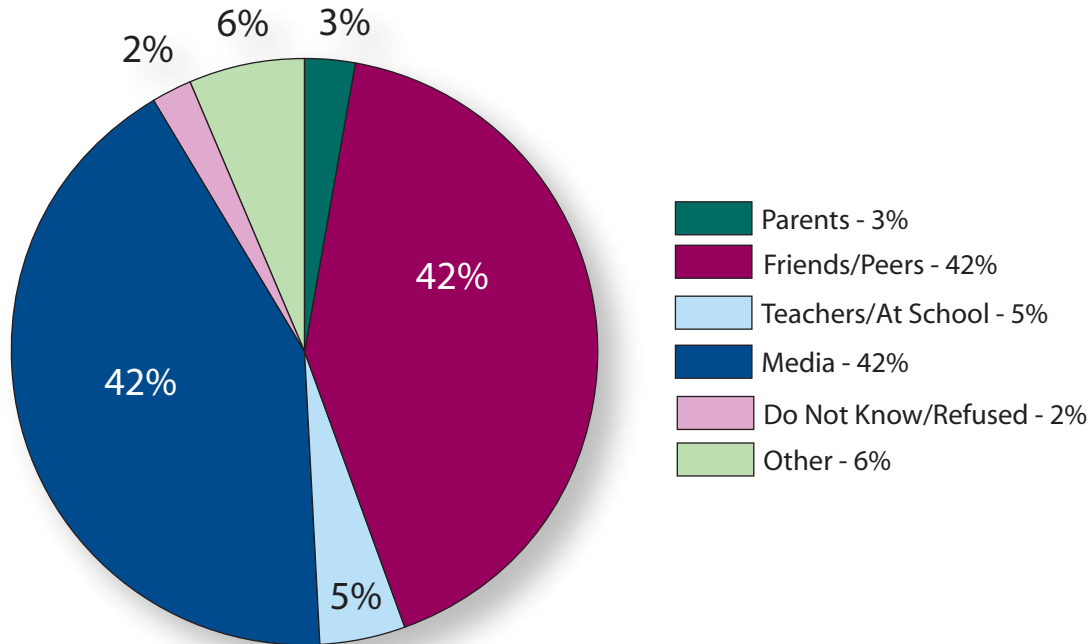
Executive Summary



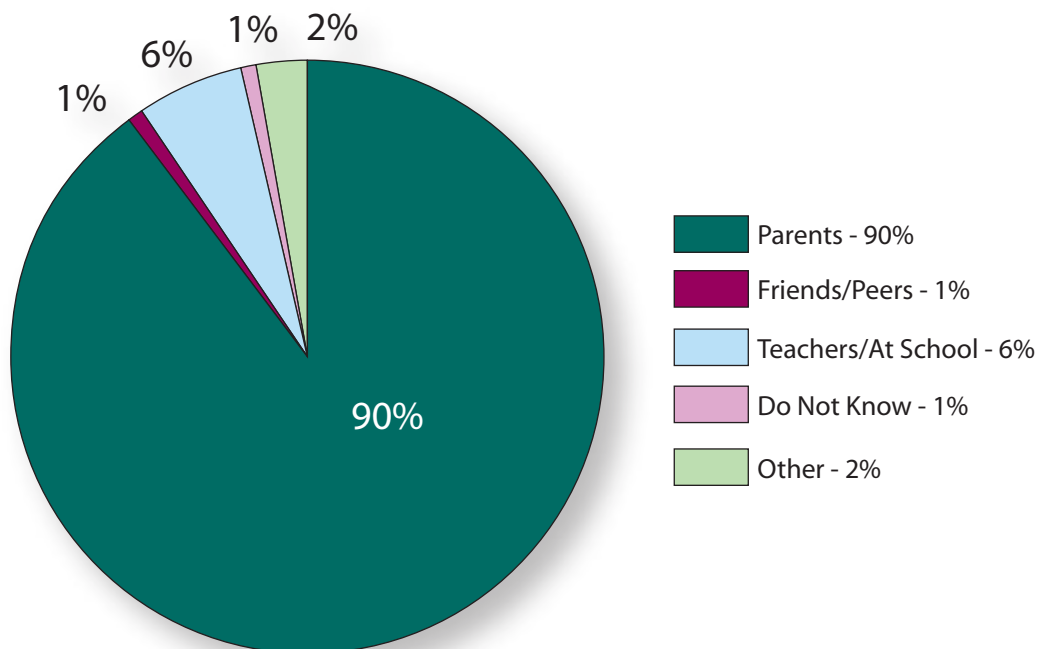
- ❖ Parents have a good idea where **youth are getting their information** about sex (peers 42%) and it is not where they **ought to be getting** it (parents 90%). [Page 3.]
- ❖ Parents draw a clear line between which **services** related to sexual health **they want in school** (mostly educational) and which services they feel are **not appropriate** for the school setting (like condom distribution). [Page 4.]
- ❖ Parents want the teaching of **abstinence encouraged** and they clearly favor it. They want abstinence **emphasized more**, want it to **dominate class time**, and are three times more likely to want **abstinence emphasized** than even pregnancy prevention methods. [Page 5.]
- ❖ Parents have very strong views about the **effects of emphasizing abstinence** versus emphasizing pregnancy prevention. Registered voter parents think placing **emphasis on abstinence** reduces sexual experimentation while emphasizing condoms may actually encourage it. [Pages 6 and 7.]
- ❖ Parents believe sexuality education in school has bounds and when those boundaries are not respected, there should be **consequences**. [Page 8.]
- ❖ Parents think their wishes could be protected through **public policy** [Page 9.]
- ❖ The Survey is **representative** of South Carolina Registered Voters and results are nearly identical by **race** and **ideology** in several key areas. [Page 10.]

Learning About Sexuality

Where **do** South Carolina's children get their information about sex?



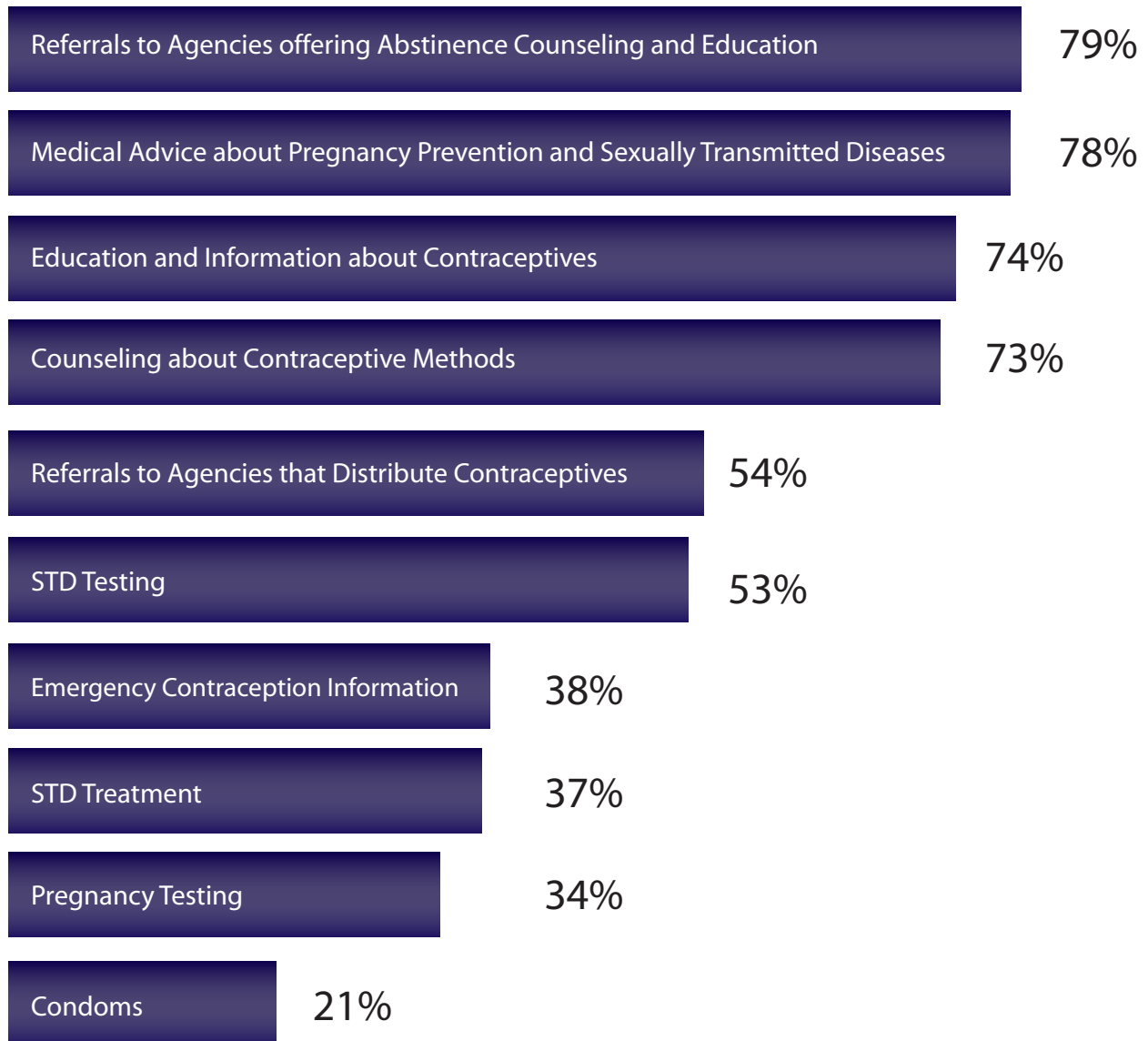
Where **should** South Carolina's children get their information about sex?



School Health Services

Which of the following services should be provided to individual students in South Carolina Schools?

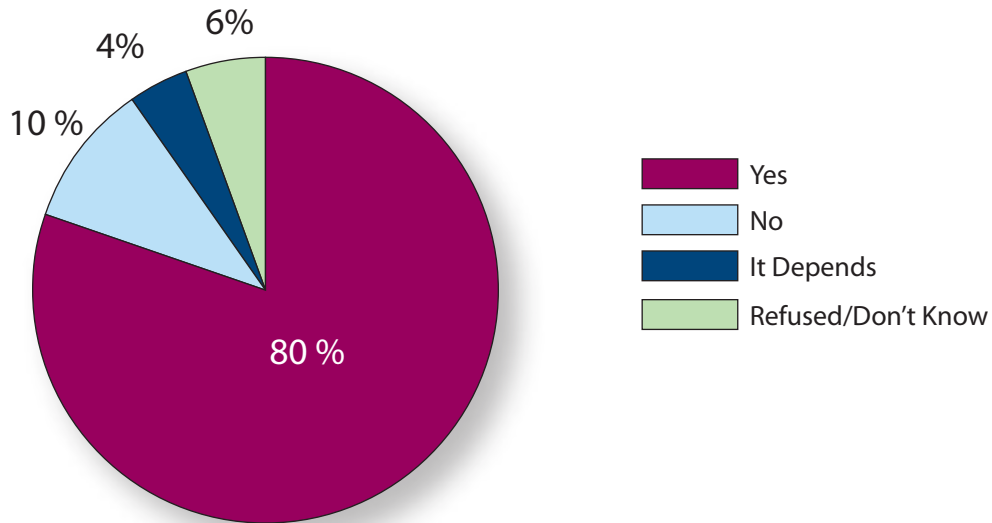
(% Yes)



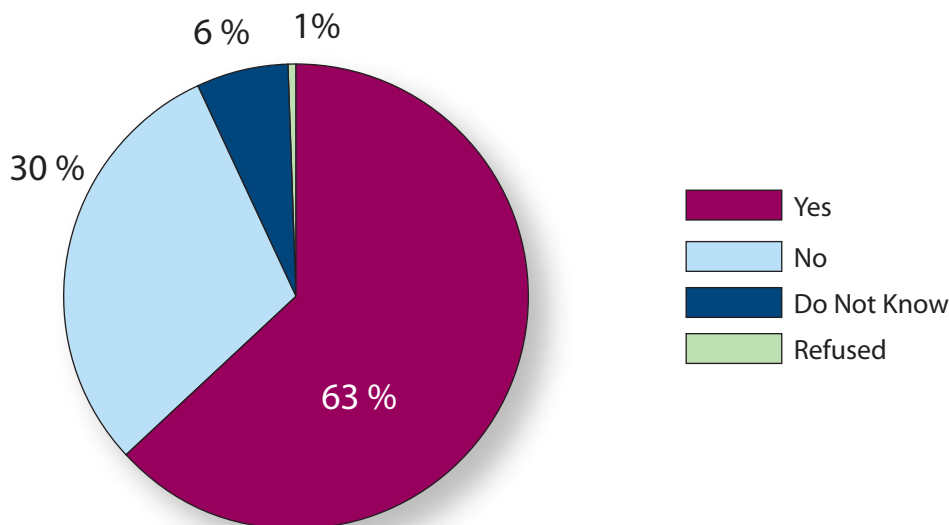
STD = Sexually Transmitted Disease

The Role of Abstinence

Should schools emphasize abstinence as the first and best option for youth?



Should abstinence education occupy the majority of sexuality education time?



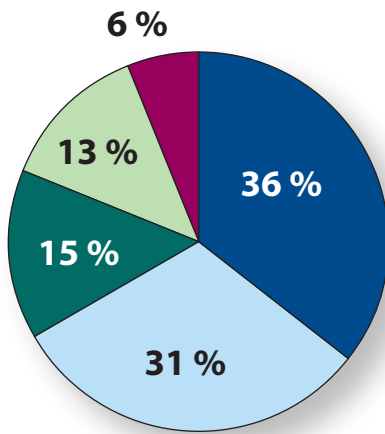
How much weight should abstinence and contraceptive education receive?



Abstinence Education or Comprehensive Sex Ed

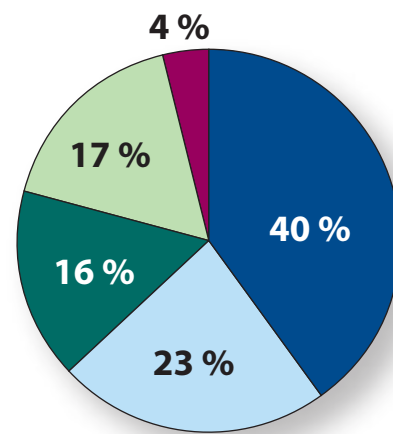
Part 1

Emphasizing Abstinence...



Emphasizing abstinence decreases rate of pregnancy and disease

67% Agree

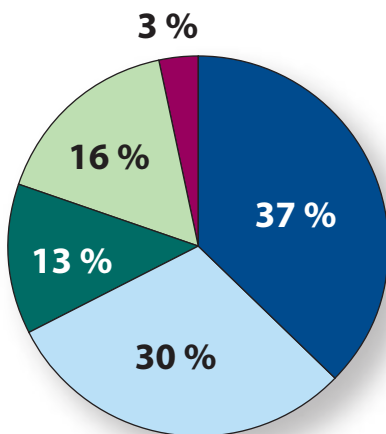


Teaching students to abstain from sex until marriage and emphasizing failure rates of contraception encourages students to delay having sex.

63% Agree

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree Do Not Know

Emphasizing Contraception...



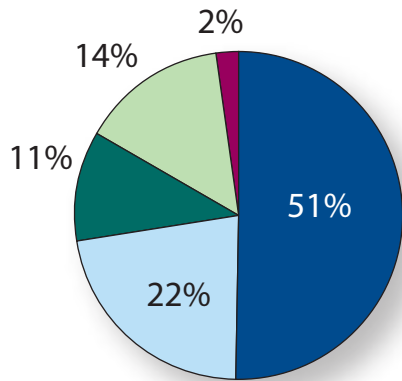
Emphasizing how to use and obtain contraceptives may encourage students to think sex can be conducted safely or with little risk.

67% Agree

Abstinence Education or Comprehensive Sex Ed

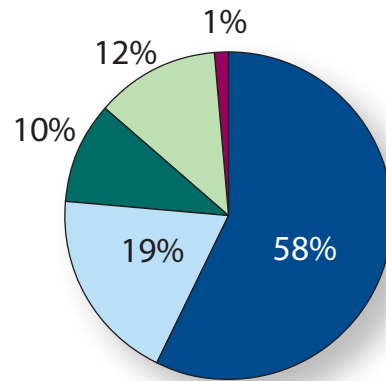
Part 2

Making Contraceptives Available in School ...



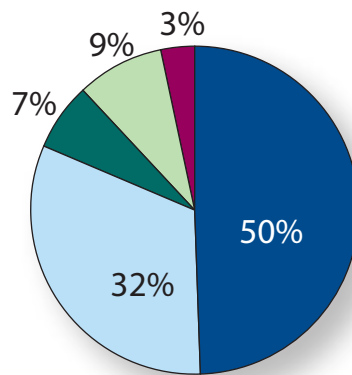
Making contraceptives available in school may encourage students to believe sex can be safe.

73% Agree



Making contraceptives available in school may encourage students to have sex.

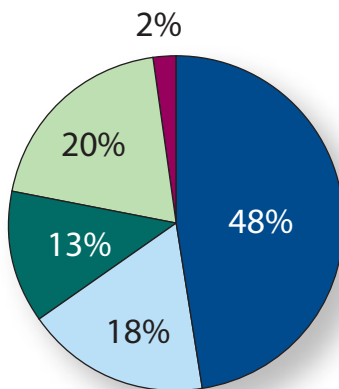
77% Agree



Making contraceptives available in school may increase the use of contraception and/or condoms.

82% Agree

Demonstrating Condom Use in School ...

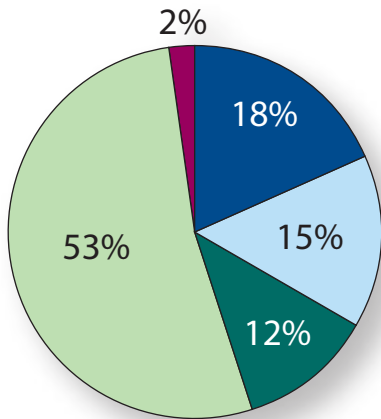


Demonstrating how to use condoms and contraceptives may suggest sex is ok as long as one is protected.

66% Agree

Strongly Agree
 Somewhat Agree
 Somewhat Disagree
 Strongly Disagree
 Do Not Know

Sexuality Education & The School

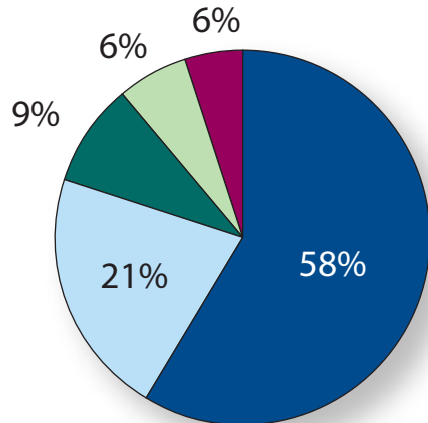
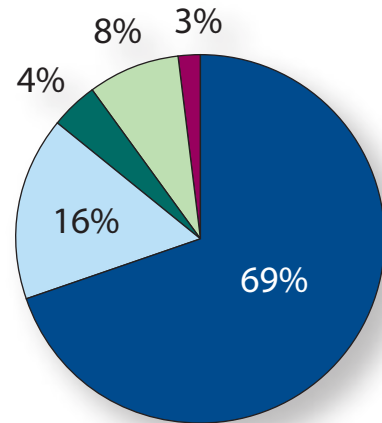


High school females should be taught how to put a condom on a male.

65% Disagree

School districts with the highest rates of sexually transmitted diseases should have to reevaluate the way they teach sexuality.

85% Agree

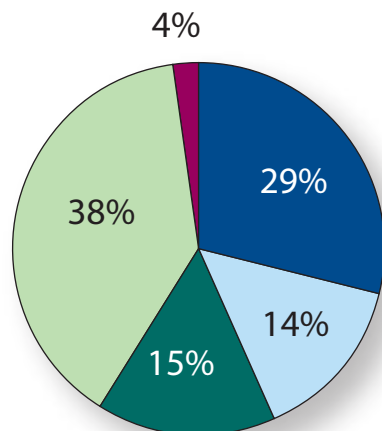


Health education teachers who do not follow state law should be reprimanded.

79% Agree

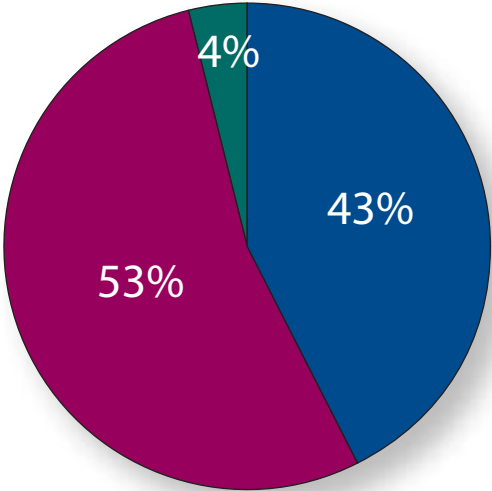
Day care services should be provided during school hours for students with children.

53% Disagree



■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Somewhat Agree
 ■ Somewhat Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree
 ■ Do Not Know

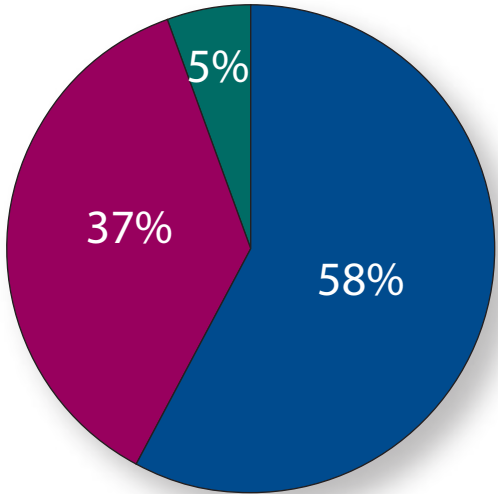
Policy Ideas



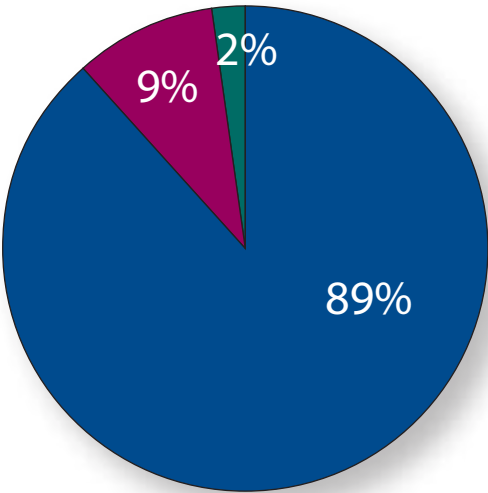
Do you favor or oppose the current law, which allows teenagers to obtain contraceptives without parental permission?

53% Oppose

Would you favor or oppose a law providing parents with a registry to tell the State Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) whether they want condoms or other contraceptives provided to their children?



58% Favor



Would you favor or oppose a law that would require DHEC to notify parents of a minor if he or she is diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease?

89% Favor

 Favor  Oppose  Do Not Know

Who Was Surveyed?

DEMOGRAPHICS

Registered Voters

All participants were randomly selected registered voters.

Age

18-29	6%	}	68% <i>Key Parent Demographic</i>
30-44	27%		
45-64	41%		
65+	26%		

Race

White	74%
Black	21%
Native-American	1%
Hispanic	<1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	<1%
Refused	3%

Sex

Men	35%
Women	65%

Faith

Protestant	82%
Catholic	7%
Atheist/Agnostic	5%
Refused/Do Not Know	4%
Other	2%
Jewish	<1%

Ideology

Conservative	49%
Moderate	29%
Liberal	15%
Do Not Know	7%

COMPARISONS

The findings of the *South Carolina Survey on Adolescent Sexual Health 2007* were similar across the categories of race, party, ideology, marital status, region and religion. The results were particularly salient in three questions across race and ideology.

Should schools emphasize abstinence?

Black - 72%	Conservative - 84%
White - 83%	Liberal - 83%

Does abstinence education decrease pregnancy and disease?

Black - 62%	Conservative - 70%
White - 68%	Liberal - 71%

Should sex-ed teachers who do not follow laws be reprimanded?

Black - 75%	Conservative - 83%
White - 82%	Liberal - 74%

Findings were also similar to recent national survey data conducted by Zogby International.

Methodology

The South Carolina Youth Sexuality Survey is a telephone survey of registered voters in South Carolina sponsored by the Palmetto Family Council. Data collection was done by the Survey Research Laboratory of the University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research (IPSPR).

The substantive items included in the questionnaire used in this survey were originally developed by the staff of the Palmetto Family Council. The technical aspects of this questionnaire (question wording, format, order, etc.) were reviewed by IPSPR staff and a draft of the instrument pre-tested on 26 randomly selected South Carolina adults. The purpose of this pretest was to determine whether or not the questions could be easily understood by respondents, if the order of the questions seemed logical to the interviewers and respondents, or if it contained other identifiable weaknesses. Based on the results of this pretest a number of changes were made to the instrument that was used in data collection. No identifiable weaknesses were detected in the actual conduct of the survey.

The respondents interviewed in this survey were selected from a random sample of households with telephones in the state. Each of these numbers was called by the survey interviewers, and approximately thirty percent of them were discarded because they were found to be businesses, institutions, or not assigned. The remaining numbers, when called, resulted in contacts to residences. Within these residences a respondent, 18 years of age or older who was a registered voter in the State of South Carolina, was randomly chosen from the household's occupants.

The interviewing was conducted by the interviewing staff of the Institute for Public Service and Policy Research. Prior to the actual fieldwork (interviewing), the interviewers and interviewing supervisors received one day of specialized training for this survey. The interviewing was conducted from the Institute's offices on the University of South Carolina Columbia campus. Many of the interviews were monitored to insure that instructions were being followed. Calls were made from 9:00 AM to 9:30 PM Monday through Friday, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Saturday, and 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Sunday. The main survey period was from August 18 to September 13, 2006. A total of 502 fully completed interviews and six partially completed interviews were conducted. The response rate for this survey was 41.5%.

Interviews were conducted using the Institute's computer-aided telephone interviewing facilities. After the interviews were completed, the open-ended questions were coded. Following this coding, analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Like all surveys, this survey has a potential for sampling error due to the fact that not all registered voters in the state were interviewed. For all questions that were answered by five hundred (500) or so respondents the potential for error is +/- 4.4%. Results for questions answered by significantly fewer than 500 respondents and results for subgroups of the population have a potential for larger variation than those for the entire sample.



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