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Abstract

The 1997 NES Pilot Study included a single question measuring attitudes about proposed federal legislation to ban certain types of late-term abortions, referred to by the bill's supporters as partial birth abortions. This question was designed to probe attitudes on a salient issue that has served as a focal point for mobilizing efforts by religious and political groups on all sides of the abortion debate; an issue that some have argued has the potential to re-frame the larger debate over abortion (Freedman 1997). The question was also intended to be used in conjunction with the mobilization and citizen contact batteries, and to take advantage of new NES instrumentation on attitude certainty. After examining responses to the question itself, we explore mobilization and participation around the abortion issue in the 1997 Pilot Study. Ultimately, we find decided pro-life advantages, both in terms of the distribution of opinion, as well as in patterns of mobilization and citizen contact.