



Stand Up and Stand Out:

The Business Case for

Supporting Reproductive Rights

Perhaps more than ever before, the conversation of women’s rights is at the forefront of Americans’ political, social, and economic conversations. For businesses of any size, issues ranging from workplace equality to access to contraceptives are critical to consider in today’s climate. Not only do these matters affect both current and prospective employees, but a company’s public stance on these topics can have a major impact on how consumers view – and ultimately interact with – a brand.

Many businesses have already taken a stand on issues like workplace equality, equal pay, and women’s leadership by either speaking out publicly on the subjects or at least making their policies around these issues well known to both current and prospective workers. Reproductive rights, which include ensuring access to abortion and affordable contraception, ending pregnancy discrimination, and supporting family leave, are largely absent from conversations about women’s advancement and equality in the workplace.

Knowing what may be on the line, it is reasonable that many companies may be hesitant to address this delicate matter directly. However, new research conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of NARAL reveals that providing support to employees on these points is critical and even shows taking a public stance may have its benefits.

According to employed Americans ages 25 and over, the ideas of *women's rights* and *reproductive freedom* span beyond an issue that affects only women. Two in three employed adults (67%) say *women's rights* is a social issue that is very or extremely important to them personally. Further, four in five workers agree that reproductive freedom is a human right (80%), and women's reproductive freedom is essential (80%).

A Key to Success

Reproductive freedom is critical not only as a human right, but also as a critical aspect of women's overall economic and professional empowerment. If a woman isn't able to decide if and when she has children, how can she fully participate in the workforce in the way she wants? Majorities acknowledge and agree that women's reproductive freedom is tied to their overall empowerment/equality (70%) and economic stability (64%) and is important to their success in the workplace (67%).

2 in 3

workers say women's reproductive freedom is important to their success in the workplace

The Great Abortion Debate

A critical juncture in the battle for reproductive rights includes the issue of abortion. It is continually painted as a dividing issue in both political and religious discussions. This negative perception may cause companies to hesitate to engage with the broader issue of reproductive rights to avoid stirring the pot on a sensitive subject. However, access to abortion care may be less divisive than one might think. According to the NARAL survey, more than 7 in 10 employees agree abortion should be safe and legal. This is on par with a recent poll by the NBC News/WSJ, which found that 71 percent of American voters believe that *Roe v. Wade*, which established a woman's legal right to an abortion, should not be overturned.¹

Workers most likely to say women's rights is extremely or very important include:

79%
WOMEN

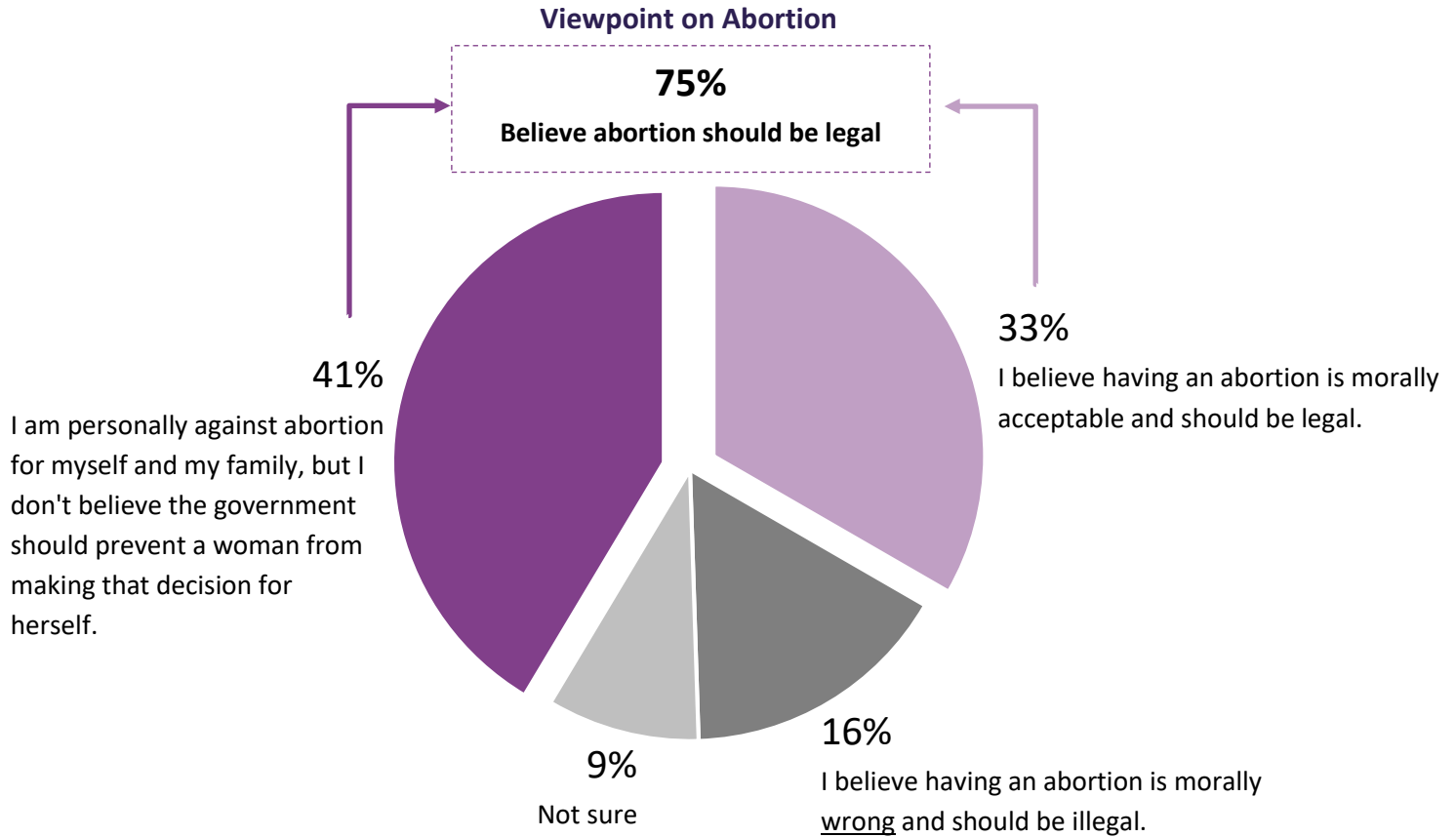
71%
MILLENNIALS

74%
URBAN DWELLERS

86%
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN

¹ Source: [2018, NBC News/WSJ Poll](#)

Even those who are personally opposed to having an abortion feel it should still be within a woman's rights to choose for herself. Overall, 3 in 4 employed adults (75%) believe abortion should be legal, including 41% who are personally against abortion but don't believe the government should prevent a woman from deciding for herself, and 33% who believe having an abortion is morally acceptable and should be legal. Just 16% feel it should be illegal, with 9% saying they are unsure.



Regardless of a company's location, protecting reproductive rights for its employees is of the utmost importance to many workers and it should be ingrained in a business's decision-making. Two in three (66%) agree that all companies should publicly support women's reproductive freedom, and most say companies need to consider reproductive health on a local level when communicating with community leaders and on a strategic basis when considering new offices or relocations.

66%

of workers agree all companies
should support women's
reproductive freedom

More than 3 in 5 (63%) agree that companies located in places with limited sex education, access to birth control, or abortion should work with community leaders to improve access to these services.

A similar proportion (61%) say access to reproductive health care should be a consideration when companies relocate or open new offices. In fact, women living in states with better reproductive health care climates have higher earnings and face less occupational segregation.²

The Benefits of Benefits

Benefits do far more than simply help an employee with their standard needs; they can have effects for generations to come. Children born to mothers with access to family planning benefit from a 20-30% increase in their own incomes over their lifetimes.³

Benefits can also make or break a decision to work for a particular employer. When looking for a new job and considering factors aside from pay, more than 7 in 10 employed adults (72%) say insurance coverage would be important.

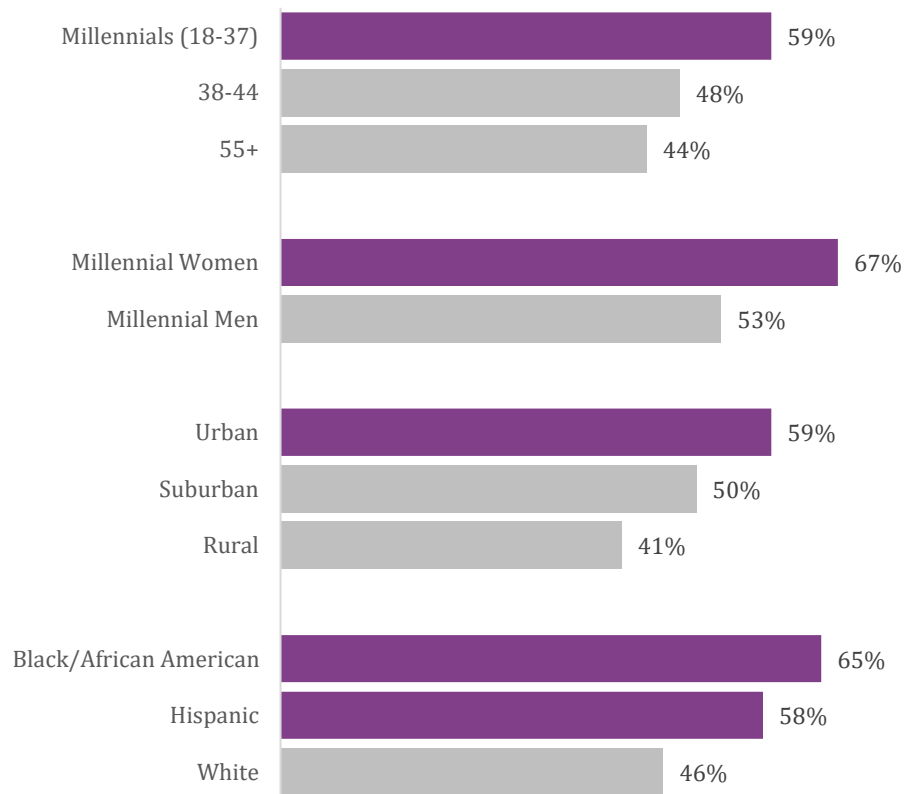
² Source: [2017, Center for American Progress](#)

³ Source: [2013, National Bureau of Economic Research](#)

*60% of workers say they would be a **more loyal employee** to a company that supports women's reproductive freedom by offering **coverage for prenatal care, family planning, and abortion care.***

In fact, if they were choosing between two employment offers, more than half of employed adults (52%) say benefits offering full reproductive care would be a deciding factor. An even greater proportion (60%) say they would be more loyal to a company that supports women's reproductive freedom by offering coverage for prenatal care, family planning, and abortion care.

Groups Most Likely to Agree an Employer Offering Reproductive Care Would be a Deciding Factor Between Two Offers



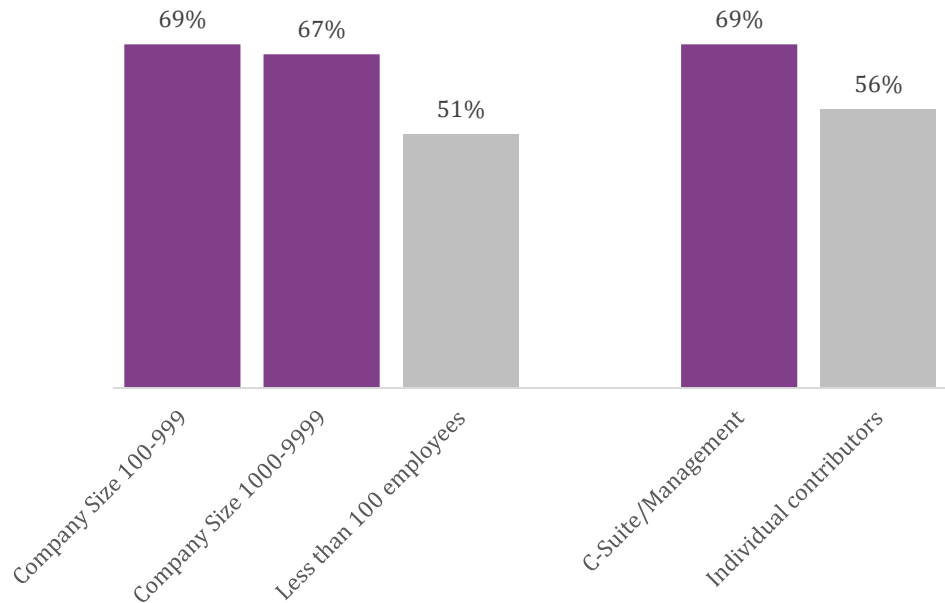
IT'S TIME TO STAND UP

While it's likely no surprise that employees seek as many benefits personally as possible, a majority of employed adults also feel it is important that their company speak out on *women's rights*.

About 3 in 5 employed adults (61%) feel it is very or extremely important for their company to take a public stand on *women's rights*, including more than 1 in 3 (36%) who say this is extremely important.

About 2 in 3 (67%) feel it is at least somewhat important for their company to take a stand on *reproductive freedom, including abortion*, with about 1 in 4 (24%) who say this is extremely important.

Groups Most Likely to Say Company Taking a Stand on Women's Rights is Very/Extremely Important



**"Individual contributors" are non-management employees. They function in a middle or senior level position without management responsibilities

Looking more broadly, beyond their own company, nearly 7 in 10 workers say companies should take a stand for what they believe in (69%). However, despite the importance of taking a stand on women’s rights and reproductive freedom to workers, few employed adults report that their company has done so: just 1 in 5 (20%) say their company has publicly spoken out on *women’s rights*, while less than 1 in 10 (8%) say their company has taken a stand on *reproductive freedom, including abortion*.

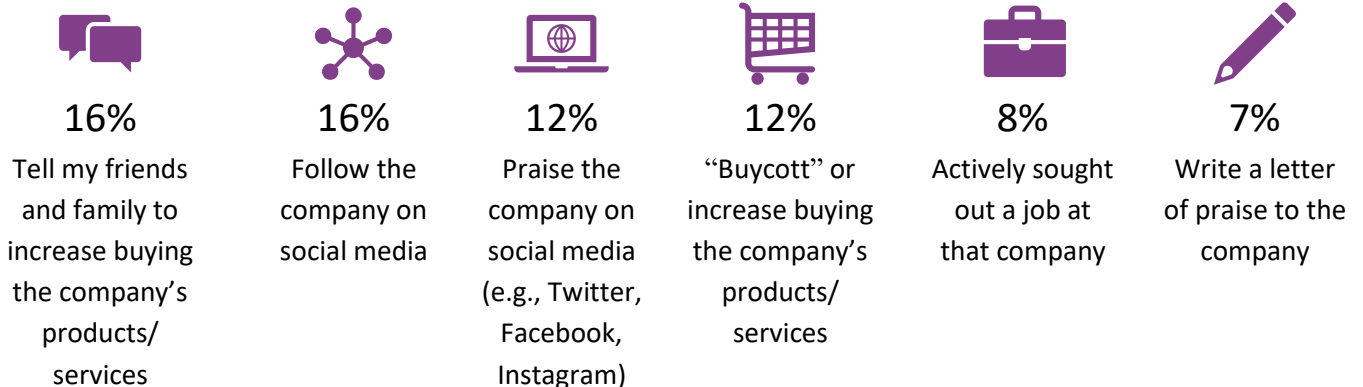
Just 8% of workers say their company has publicly spoken out on “reproductive freedom, including abortion”

The Perks of Speaking Out

Companies that do choose to speak out on these issues may see a positive impact to their bottom line. As consumers, employed adults are more likely to have taken a positive action to signal agreement with a company position than they are to have taken a negative action to signal disagreement with a company’s position.

Over half of employed adults (56%) say they would be more likely to purchase from a company that takes a public stand in support of women’s reproductive freedom.

Actions Taken to Signal Agreement with Company’s Stand



CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The concept of reproductive rights in today's world goes beyond ensuring that every woman should be able to make her own decisions about if, when, and with whom to start or grow her family. It has implications for businesses, their employees, and their consumers – a company's ability to support its employees and take a stand on the issues happening in the world today can have a ripple effect on every aspect of the business.

It can be a scary time to stand up for what you believe in, especially when a company feels their consumer or employee loyalty may be on the line, but it is more critical than ever.

Companies can start taking steps today to ensure every woman, from their employees to their consumers, feels supported when it comes to their reproductive rights.

- **Recognize what is important.** Stay up-to-date on what is happening both in the company and in the world that affects women's rights.
- **Expand benefits whenever possible.** As opportunities allow, continue to re-evaluate what offerings are available to employees. Ask what is currently missing.
- **Communicate clearly with employees.** Take every opportunity to make employees aware of what benefits are available to them.
- **Be cognizant of the impact of business decisions.** Understand how seemingly unrelated business decisions – such as where to place a new office – may affect both the ability to offer employees what they need and how consumers view the business.
- **Take a public stance & support reproductive freedom.** Use your company's voice and platform to affirm that a woman's ability to access reproductive care is critical to her autonomy, economic success, health and general empowerment in the workplace. Stand up and stand out for all women.

Research Method

This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of NARAL from October 10-16, 2018 among 1,271 U.S. adults ages 25+ who are employed full-time (i.e., “workers” or “employed adults”).

Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and postsurvey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Poll avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in online surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the U.S. population of full-time employed adults ages 25+. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

About The Harris Poll

The Harris Poll is one of the longest running surveys in the U.S. tracking public opinion, motivations and social sentiment since 1963 that is now part of Harris Insights & Analytics, a global consulting and market research firm that strives to reveal the authentic values of modern society to inspire leaders to create a better tomorrow. We work with clients in three primary areas: building twenty-first-century corporate reputation, crafting brand strategy and performance tracking, and earning organic media through public relations research. Our mission is to provide insights and advisory to help leaders make the best decisions possible.

About NARAL

The 2 million members of NARAL Pro-Choice America fight for reproductive freedom for every person in every state. Each day, we organize and mobilize to protect that freedom by fighting for access to abortion care, birth control, paid parental leave and protections from pregnancy discrimination. Like 7 in 10 Americans, we believe abortion must remain legal and accessible. We are the foot soldiers who work to ensure that abortion access is not only protected but expanded for every American. Since 1969, our member-driven campaigns have propelled political and cultural change at every level, from the statehouse to the White House.

NARAL Pro-Choice America Foundation was established in 1977 to provide a policy and educational component to the work of our sister organization, NARAL Pro-Choice America. With more than 1.2 million member activists representing every state in the union, we are on the front lines of the fight to preserve and expand reproductive freedom and abortion access in the 21st century. We believe in the power of people to make a difference, and we help to drive that positive change by educating Americans about the threats to reproductive freedom and holding bad actors accountable at every level.