

Memo: Faith and Reproductive Freedom

May 3, 2021

To: Interested Parties

From: NARAL Pro-Choice America

Re: People of faith support reproductive freedom

The anti-choice Radical Right often falsely portrays religion as set in opposition to the fight for reproductive freedom—but the truth is that people across faith traditions have vast and nuanced positions on abortion. **For many, their support for reproductive freedom is deeply rooted in their faith.**

As Catholics for Choice President Jamie Manson [wrote in](#) an opinion piece for NBC News, "...many practicing Catholics who support reproductive rights often do so not despite their faith, but because of it. The obligation to not just care for the vulnerable but to actively privilege them over everyone else lies at the heart of the Catholic faith; it's the guiding principle of the church's work with the poor and the marginalized."

Senator Raphael Warnock (D-GA)—who is both a Baptist minister and a lifelong advocate for reproductive freedom—has similarly [said](#) his religion has affected his stance on abortion: "For me, reproductive justice is consistent with my commitment to [ensuring health care as a human right]. I believe unequivocally in a woman's right to choose."

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REV. RAPHAEL WARNOCK

U.S. SENATOR (D-GA)



Some say that their religious traditions teach them that personal decisions about pregnancy should be made by the person who is pregnant in consultation with those they love and trust, in accordance with their own faith.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America's [Clergy Advocacy Board](#), which represents a diverse group of faith leaders, explained:

"We believe that health care decisions are best left to the patient in consultation with their doctor, their family and their faith. Interference with this process endangers the physical, spiritual, and emotional well being of women and men navigating deeply personal and often complex decisions.

Because of our great appreciation for human life, we are morally opposed to any policy that denies a person their right to self-determination."

Or, as the [Presbyterian Church \(USA\)'s official position puts it:](#)

“Humans are empowered by the spirit prayerfully to make significant moral choices, including the choice to continue or end a pregnancy.”

Rabbi Raymond A. Zwerin & Rabbi Richard J. Shapiro, in an overview of [Jewish perspectives on abortion](#), wrote that:

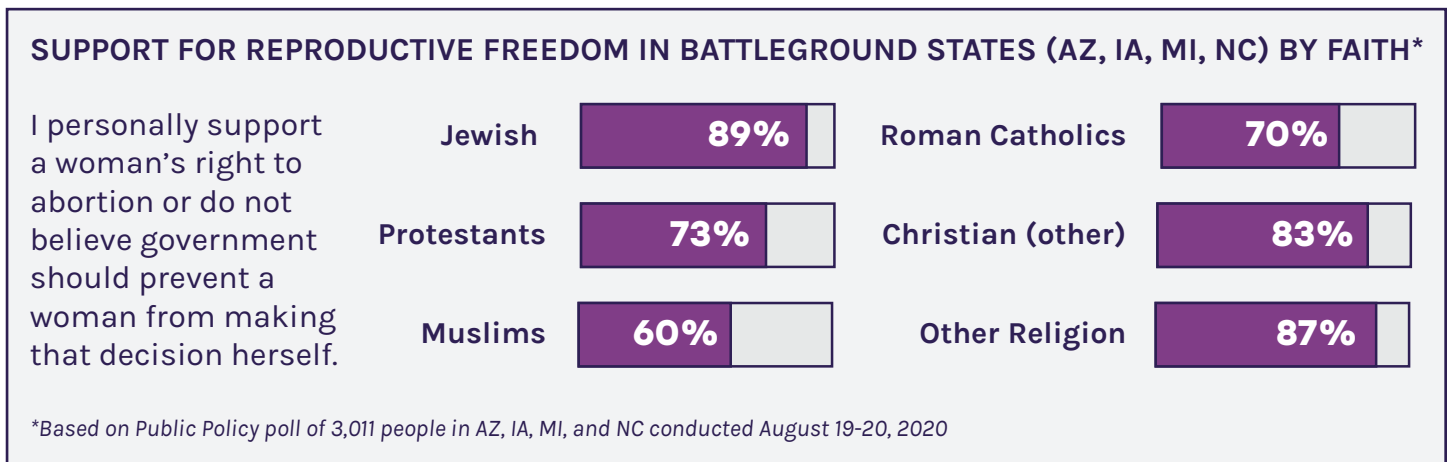
“Whatever their opinions on abortion in any given situation, a vast majority of Jewish thinkers agree that decision-making with respect to abortion must be left in the hands of the woman involved, who may consult her husband, her physician, and her rabbi.”

The [National Council of Jewish Women](#) similarly notes that:

“Pregnant individuals are moral agents who have the capacity, right, and responsibility to make their own decisions about their sexuality, reproduction, and families without political interference.”

PEOPLE OF ALL FAITHS SUPPORT REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM

Polling has found that reproductive freedom is [widely supported](#) by people of all faiths. A **majority of voters** of many faiths in battleground states support reproductive freedom and access to abortion.



Everyone ought to have the freedom to make their own decisions about their families and their futures and be treated with empathy, compassion, and kindness. These values are the tenets of every religion.

Time and again, the Right has attempted to cast President Joe Biden's support for reproductive freedom as incompatible with his Catholic faith – purporting that he could not possibly support the freedom to make personal decisions about when and if to start or grow a family if he is truly a person of faith. **But we cannot allow the Right's interpretation of religion and abortion to speak for the views and values of all people of faith.**