Most favor abortion to save mother

The majority of Louisiana voters responding to a year-end poll by the State Times and Merlinc Advocate said they would allow abortion to save the life of the mother or in cases of rape or incest. However, they split on the issue of allowing an abortion if the child would be born with a severe physical or mental handicap. And, fewer than one-fourth said they would allow abortion in cases of rape or incest.

The voters also are closely split on whether they would allow abortion, against a candidate based on his or her stance on abortion. However, more than three-fourths of the respondents — 79 percent — said they would support a candidate who said they would allow abortion to save the life of the mother.

Seventy-one percent of the voters statewide said they would allow abortion in cases of rape or incest. Eighty-eight percent of Baptists, 85 percent of Protestants and 77 percent of Catholics indicate support in such cases. Of those who identify themselves as "other," 43 percent favor allowing abortion to save the life of the mother.

Eighty-two percent of the voters statewide said they would allow abortion in cases of rape or incest. Eighty-eight percent of Catholics, 85 percent of Protestants and 77 percent of Baptists said they would not allow abortion under any of the circumstances polled.

Voters in the statewide poll also were asked: "If your state legislator voted the way you believe most of the time but voted against your views on abortion, how likely is it that you would vote for him — extremely likely, very likely, not too likely or very unlikely?"

Additionally, they were asked: "About a candidate for governor you agreed with most of the time? How likely is it that you would vote for her — if you are against him based on his abortion position, extremely likely, very likely, not too likely or very unlikely?"

The voters are split down the middle on whether they would vote against a state legislator who voted against their views on abortion even if the state legislator voted the way the respondent felt most of the time.

For every five of every voters statewide — 25 percent — said it is extremely likely they would vote against such a state legislator and more than two in four or 52 percent — said it was very likely they would vote against such a legislator, for a total of 44 percent.

In response to the gubernatorial candidate question, there was also a close split.

Sixteen percent of those polled said it was extremely likely they would vote against the candidate for governor who opposed their personal position on abortion and another 27 percent said they would be very likely to do the same, bringing the total to 43 percent.

Twenty-seven percent of those polled said they would not be too likely to vote against such a candidate while 21 percent said it was extremely unlikely, for a total of 48 percent.

"It's only in the rated category — the extremely likely — who would allow such an abortion in cases of rape or incest. Blacks are a little more likely than whites to allow abortion in cases of rape or incest. The color of the mother's skin seems to be a factor.

Religion seems to be a factor in the abortion issue. Catholics, 37 percent of the respondents, 20 percent of the Catholics would allow abortion in cases of rape or incest. Seventeen percent of the Catholics would allow abortion in cases of rape or incest.

Eighteen percent of the respondents would not allow abortion under any of the circumstances measured in the poll.

The numbers are similar for those who said it is extremely likely they would vote against a state legislator who voted against their views on abortion. 32 percent would allow a woman to end her pregnancy for whatever reason and 34 percent would not allow abortions under any instance measured.

Working women are less likely to vote against a state legislator or candidate for governor based on his abortion position than are women who stay at home. Romerick said.

"Among working women the percentages were 68 percent to 55 percent and among women who stay at home, 51 percent to 42 percent," he said. "Women for or against a state legislator based on his abortion stance, he said.

Forty-two percent of the working women said they were likely to vote against a gubernatorial candidate opposing their abortion views while 31 percent were unlikely to do so. Females who stay at home split 69 percent to 82 percent.

Voters surveyed also were asked: "Do you favor or oppose requiring a female under 18 years of age to obtain parental permission to get an abortion?"

More than three out of every voters statewide — 78 percent — would require females under 18 to have their parents’ permission for an abortion. Blacks and whites said they would favor such a law and 5 percent did not know.

These figures indicate that voters have a definite position on requiring parental permission for all abortions. Those who are against such a law are split between those who favor and against the provision of abortion services to minors, as well.

There is little difference between whites and blacks on the issue, with 79 percent of whites and 77 percent of blacks saying they favor requiring parental permission for abortion.

Many voters who identified themselves as independents said they favor requiring parental permission. The poll found.

While 51 percent of Catholics and 76 percent of Protestants and 77 percent of Baptists oppose abortion, they favor requiring parental permission for abortion. While 51 percent of Catholics and 76 percent of Protestants and 77 percent of Baptists oppose abortion, they favor requiring parental permission for abortion as well.