

# MEDIA MISLEAD ON ABORTION POLL

[Bill Donohue](#)

Media bias is nothing new, and this is especially true when it comes to hot button issues such as abortion.

An AP-NORC poll on abortion conducted in late June, and released this week, resulted in four news stories that were picked up nationwide by various media outlets. In three of them, the headline was skewed toward a pro-choice position.

This is not unusual: reporters who write the stories generally do not write the headline. And headlines tend to be more sensationalistic. It is also true that most reporters, at least in the major media, take an abortion-rights position.

The survey was taken to see if public opinion on abortion had changed since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* last year, sending the issue back to the states to decide. Alas, not much has changed: most Americans have never wanted to ban all abortions, and most have never supported all abortions. This poll did not dispute that conclusion.

But one might never know this by simply reading the headlines. Here are three of them:

(1) "Few US Adults Support Full Abortion Bans, Even in States That Have Them, an AP-NORC Poll Finds."

(2) "Most Americans Support Abortion Access One Year After *Roe v. Wade*."

(3) "Most in US Don't Support Full Abortion Bans, Even in States With Them."

There was another headline, however, which conveyed a somewhat

different outcome. Here is what it said:

(4) “AP-NORC Poll: Most US Adults Support Some Abortion Limits, But Few Want Full Bans.”

The news story that followed the first and fourth headlines were identical. However, the first emphasized that most Americans don’t want full abortion bans, and the fourth emphasized that most Americans want some limitations. Both are accurate but they convey different outcomes.

In both of these stories, it was reported that “only about a quarter say it should always be legal.” That finding would likely come as a surprise to those who only read the first three headlines.

Why does this matter? Because in today’s soundbite society, where few have the time or attention span to read an entire news story, headlines carry more weight in influencing public opinion than they did in times past. The public is increasingly relying on tidbits of information provided by bloggers, social media sites, and news aggregates. Thus, when the headlines are skewed—and they are almost always slanted in a liberal direction—it is easy to deceive the public.

If it is true that “what you see is what you get,” it is also true that what you get—from reading news headlines alone—is often misleading.

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# **PUBLIC SOURS ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

[Bill Donohue](#)

The public appears to be souring on higher education. The level of confidence that Americans have for colleges and universities today is at its lowest level, as determined by Gallup. It is also true that confidence in 16 other institutions has been waning. But the big drop is scored by higher education.

The two institutions that have the highest confidence rating are small business and the military. In the poll taken in June and released in July, the level of confidence for those two entities was 65 percent and 60 percent, respectively. For higher education, the figure is 36 percent. While that number is still better than most of the other institutions that respondents were asked about, it represents a sharp decline.

In 2015, Americans' confidence in higher education was 57 percent; in 2018, it dropped to 48 percent; now it is at 36 percent. Why? "While Gallup did not probe for reasons behind the recent drop in confidence, the rising costs of postsecondary education likely play a significant role."

That conclusion reflects the political predilections of the Gallup researchers more than what their own data reveal.

Among Democrats, previous Gallup polls found that concern over costs was the big factor. For Republicans, the big concern is over the politicization of education. But since the biggest decline in confidence for higher education, as recorded by Gallup, was among Republicans—it dropped by 20 points to 19 percent—it would have made more sense to conclude that politics, not rising costs, "likely play a significant role."

Democrats are more likely to support student loan forgiveness than Republicans, so of course rising costs figure prominently for them. What needs to be addressed is why the issue of the politics, raised by Republicans, played a more prominent role in driving down the overall public confidence in higher education. There are several factors at work.

In the last several years, the decline in free speech on the campuses has worsened. Critical race theory—the lie that all white people are inherently racist and that all existing racial disparities are due solely to racism—has been institutionalized. Gender ideology—the lie that the sexes are interchangeable and that there are dozens of genders—is now almost universally acknowledged.

These three factors alone—censoring speech, critical race theory and gender ideology—will continue to drive down public confidence in higher education unless college administrators buck up. But that is not likely given the fact that administrators tend to be even more left-wing than the faculty.

If colleges and universities are to regain the prestige they once commanded, they will have to return to the very reason they were founded: the pursuit of truth. That can only happen if the pursuit of politics is first jettisoned. But to do that, they must first admit that there is such a thing as truth, and that is a tall order given the postmodernist mindset that defines education elites.

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# SOCIAL CONSERVATISM IS REBOUNDED

[Bill Donohue](#)

*This article originally appeared in [The American Spectator](#) on July 3, 2023.*

It was just a matter of time. Decent Americans have had a radical race and LGBT agenda shoved in their face for too

long, and now they are fighting back. Too bad not all conservatives are on board.

Former congressman Paul Ryan recently said that he was not a “cultural war guy,” contending that he is more concerned about the debt crisis. This is what we would expect from someone who found his home sitting on the board of directors of Fox News’ parent company, Fox Corporation.

Under its founder, Roger Ailes, Fox News Network covered what I call the three “M’s” of conservatism: missiles, markets and morality. But in more recent times, with some notable exceptions, Fox News has been more concerned about the first two “M’s.” Ryan’s influence is obvious. Tucker Carlson’s absence is only one clear example.

As it turns out, Fox News is on the wrong side of history. The country is becoming more socially and culturally conservative. Consider three recent Gallup surveys.

In a Gallup poll released June 8, we learned that “More Americans this year (38%) say they are very conservative or conservative on social issues than said so in 2022 (33%) and 2021 (30%). Those who identify as very liberal or liberal on social issues are in decline.” What makes these figures so impressive is that in the past two years, the increase in conservative identification is found among nearly all political and demographic subgroups.

The Gallup poll published June 16 found that support for same-sex marriage is declining: it went from 71 percent to 64 percent in the past year, which is dramatic. This helps to explain the increase in social conservatism.

Why this is happening can be gleaned from a Gallup poll released June 9. The title says it all: “Views of State of Moral Values in U.S. at New Low.” Public assessments on the state of moral values is the worst since Gallup took these measures 22 years ago. “The 54% of U.S. adults who rate moral

values in the country as 'poor' marks a four-percentage-point increase since last year and the first time the reading has reached the majority level."

A third of Americans, 33 percent, say our moral values are "only fair"; 10 percent say they are "good"; and a mere 1 percent rate them as "excellent."

No wonder social conservatism is rebounding—most are convinced we are morally troubled, to say the least. I hasten to add that there are reasons for optimism. Some very good things are happening.

While Covid was a tough time for many Americans, there is one good thing that came of it. Parents, especially moms, found out what some of the schools were doing to their children. Instead of education, there was indoctrination. The content of this proselytization—and that is what it is—is also objectionable: students are being told how racist America is, and that they can switch their sex. Both are invidious lies.

As a result of this kind of activism, we now have Moms for Liberty, and similar other groups. Proof that they are having an effect is the ruling by the far-left Southern Poverty Law Center to name them on its "hate map." That is a badge of honor.

Disney is being beaten up all over the place. It has decided to adopt the radical LGBT agenda, most notably by inviting children to believe that they can change their sex, and that there are many sexes besides male and female. Both are palpable lies.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis led the way in taking Disney to task for adopting the woke agenda. The Catholic League documentary, "Walt's Disenchanted Kingdom," added to their problems. The blowback from customers showed up on its bottom line: it has taken quite a hit. We are also happy to note that its summertime film, "Elemental," featuring a "non-binary"

character, bombed at the box office.

Bud Light is still reeling from trying to push trans politics down our throats. It now regrets hiring a trans person to market its beer. It should never have done so in the first place. Ditto for the U.S. Navy which hired a drag queen, a man dressed as a woman, to recruit new sailors. It was a monumental flop—recruitment numbers are down.

Target got into the act by selling “tuck-friendly” swimwear—with “extra crotch coverage”—for men trying to pass as a woman. Ever since, they have been feeling the pinch of a boycott.

Muslims run the Michigan town of Hamtramck, and their city council has banned the LGBT pride flag, making the case that only the American flag should be flown.

The pushback against the Dodgers for honoring drag queens who mock Catholicism, which the Catholic League led, made international news. From all accounts, the message has been received.

Moreover, surveys show that most Americans do not believe men should be able to compete in women’s sports. They also oppose sex-reassignment surgery performed on children.

These are encouraging developments. The culture war is far from over.

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## **CATHOLIC THEOLOGIANS HONOR**

# DISHONORED MAN

[Bill Donohue](#)

If you asked 100 Catholics who Roger Haight is, less than one percent would know. That's the way it should be. Truth to tell, the man is one of the most dishonored Catholic theologians in American history. That's why he was the recent recipient of the most prestigious award given annually by the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA).

CTSA is to Catholic doctrine what the Flat Earth Society is to geography. More about them in a moment.

Roger Haight, like too many Jesuits, has a problem with fidelity. He was censured by the Vatican in 2004 for failing to adhere to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Sandro Magister, the renowned Italian journalist who has covered the Catholic Church for decades, succinctly explained why Haight was censured. It was due to "the loss of substance of key truths of the Christian faith like the preexistence of the Word, the divinity of Jesus, the Trinity, the salvific value of the death of Jesus, the unicity and universality of the salvific mediation of Jesus and the Church, the resurrection of Jesus."

Looks like Haight left nothing on the table. Had he worked at the *New York Times* and took a pro-life position, he would have been fired. But lucky for him he was just told to stop teaching theology.

Left-wing Catholics are very good at giving each other awards. In fact, they are masters of nepotism. So it was hardly surprising that CTSA would give its top award to Haight; he is a former president of the dissident organization. This kind of political stunt has a long history.



In 1969, CTSA elected Charles Curran president. Like Haight, his heretical views got him in big trouble. In 1997, the organization endorsed women priests. Some critics of CTSA, such as Catholic historian James Hitchcock, blame it for punishing orthodox Catholic faculty members.

Worse still is CTSA's role in promoting the clergy sexual abuse scandal.

In the 1970s, it commissioned a book by Father Anthony Kosnik, *Human Sexuality: New Directions in American Catholic Thought*, that was used in seminaries across the nation. Kosnik taught that homosexual acts were not intrinsically evil, arguing instead that they need "to be evaluated in terms of their relational significance." In doing so, he rejected Catholic sexual ethics as it had been understood throughout the ages.

Kosnik even went so far as to question the validity of condemning bestiality, never mind homosexuality. Human sexuality, he said, should be "self-liberating" and "joyous." He was as blunt as anything found in *Playboy*. "The importance of the erotic element, that is, instinctual desire for pleasure and gratification, deserves to be affirmed and encouraged."

The book won first prize by the Catholic Press Association.

As I argued in *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse*, a normal seminarian who read this stuff would not be enticed to molest a minor. But an abnormal one—and the seminaries were loaded with disordered men in the 1970s—would likely interpret what Kosnik said as a green light.

It was not priests who were sexually uptight who preyed on adolescents—it was priests who followed their libido, not their vows. CTSA should own up to its destructive role. Ditto for the *National Catholic Reporter*, which to this day praises guys like Kosnik and Haight.

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# SCOTT WIENER: A RISING STAR?

Michael P. McDonald

At the end of 2022, Rep. Nancy Pelosi announced she would not seek a leadership position in the House Democratic Caucus, signaling she might retire soon. While we can only hope that such an ardent foe of Catholic teachings might bow out of national politics, unfortunately, those waiting in the wings to replace her are just as radical.

At the top of that list is California State Senator Scott Wiener. He has represented San Francisco and parts of San Mateo County since December 5, 2016. Wiener has garnered attention as an advocate for many progressive causes; however, what has brought him the most notoriety during his political career is his promotion of radical LGBT causes.

Wiener has a reputation for being an outspoken proponent of the most extreme LGBT positions. For instance, he condemned legislation in Texas that would make it illegal to take children to drag shows. Wiener tweeted that the bill had given him an idea of “offering Drag Queen 101 as part of the K-12 curriculum.”

It would be bad enough if Wiener’s support for radical LGBT causes was limited to public statements. Unfortunately, he has used his seat in the California Senate to craft legislation ensuring these causes are enshrined into law.

He drafted legislation that allows men in prison who self-identify as women to gain access to the women’s facilities. Since this bill became law on September 26, 2020, a number of women have been impregnated by men taking advantage of this law.

Wiener also sponsored legislation, which allows homosexual adult men not to register as a sex offender if they have relations with minors provided the ages of the victim and perpetrator are less than ten years apart, and the minors are older than 14. This also became law in 2020.

His biggest legislative victory for LGBT causes was his 2021 bill that made California a sanctuary state for sexually confused children and their abusive parents. When this became law in 2022, it essentially turned the Golden State into a destination for child mutilation.

Wiener is not only a supporter of radical LGBT causes, but he also flagrantly disregards parental rights.

For instance, in his legislation making California a sanctuary state for trans kids, he makes it clear if children run away to California because their parents do not support transgenderism then the state will not work to reunite the children with their parents.

Early this year, Wiener killed legislation that would require schools to notify parents in writing that their child has changed his gender identity.

However, his greatest assault on parental rights came when he amended legislation so that it would compel parents under the California Family Code to affirm their “child’s gender identity as part of the health, safety, and welfare of the child.” If this legislation were to become law, parents who do not endorse this madness risk losing their children to state authorities.

In addition to these positions, Wiener is openly hostile to religion. He has long supported the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, one of the most virulent anti-Catholic groups among LGBT activists. He was highly supportive of the Los Angeles Dodgers reinventing the “Sisters” to the team’s “Pride Night” ceremonies. He went so far as to present the anti-

Catholic bigots with an award at the State Capitol.

Wiener has additionally been extremely critical of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. On several occasions, he has lambasted Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco. He also blasted the Vatican for ruling that the Church could not bless same sex unions.

Wiener has even put his hatred of religion into legislation. In 2021, he introduced a bill that requires the University of California healthcare to break existing partnerships with hospitals, particularly Catholic ones, that refuse to provide elective abortions, sex reassignment surgeries and sterilizations.

While it is bad enough that he has inflicted his radical agenda on California, Wiener has started to lay the ground work to bring these policies to the national stage. In March of 2023, he announced that he formed an exploratory committee for the congressional seat currently held by Pelosi.

Given the hard left turn taken by the Democrats, Wiener could easily find himself in a prominent role within party leadership. In such a position, Wiener would be in a strong position to influence national policy. With Pelosi gone, we could be jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire.

*To read our full report on Scott Wiener, click [here](#).*