

Public Sharply Divides Over RU-486

As the FDA gears up to rule on whether the abortion pill RU-486 can be marketed in the United States, the public stands sharply divided on the matter – in fact, more divided than it is over the issue of abortion in general.

Forty-five percent in an ABC News poll say it should be legal for doctors to prescribe the pill in the United States; 47 percent say it should be illegal. For comparison, 55 percent of Americans think abortion should be legal in all or most cases; 42 percent do not.

| | RU-486 should be... | |
|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | Legal | Illegal |
| 9/10/00 | 45% | 47 |

| | Abortion should be... | |
|--------|-----------------------|---------|
| | Legal | Illegal |
| 9/6/00 | 55% | 42 |

RU-486 causes an abortion when taken in the first seven weeks of pregnancy. It has been used in France for more than a decade. The FDA determined the pill safe in 1996; final approval rests on the FDA's review of the drug's manufacturing, labeling and marketing. A decision is expected by the end of the month.

GROUPS – Views on the issue divide among demographic groups. Support for legal RU-486 is higher among younger, higher-income, better-educated Americans, and Democrats; Republicans, older, less-educated and lower-income Americans are more apt to want it banned.

| | RU-486 should be... | |
|-------------|---------------------|---------|
| | Legal | Illegal |
| Democrat | 54% | 39 |
| Independent | 47 | 44 |
| Republican | 34 | 58 |
| Age | | |
| 18-34 | 51 | 44 |
| 65+ | 33 | 55 |
| Income: | | |
| <\$25K | 37 | 53 |
| \$75K+ | 55 | 35 |
| Education: | | |

| | | |
|------------------|----|----|
| High school/Less | 40 | 52 |
| College+ | 57 | 36 |

CAMPAIGN 2000 – With the FDA decision expected by the end of the month, RU-486 could become a campaign issue. Al Gore, who supports legal abortion, says he will not block sale of the pill if it meets FDA standards. Bush, who opposes abortion except in cases of rape, incest or when the woman’s life is in danger, also opposes the sale or use of RU-486.

Abortion continues to rank low on the public's list of priorities, coming in 15th of 17 issues tested in an ABC News/Washington Post poll last week.

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News.com survey was conducted by telephone September 6-10, 2000, among a random national sample of 1,006 adults. The results have a 3-point error margin. Field work by ICR- International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:
<http://www.abcnews.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

72. There is a pill called RU-486 used in Europe that causes an abortion when it's taken in the first seven weeks of pregnancy. Do you think it should be legal or illegal for doctors to prescribe RU-486 in the United States?

| | | | |
|---------|-------|---------|----------|
| | Legal | Illegal | No opin. |
| 9/10/00 | 45 | 47 | 9 |

END