

NO. 49

JOURNAL
OF THE
SENATE
OF THE
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA



REGULAR SESSION BEGINNING TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021

MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2021

Monday, April 5, 2021
(Local Session)

~~Indicates Matter Stricken~~
Indicates New Matter

The Senate assembled at 11:00 A.M., the hour to which it stood adjourned, and was called to order by the ACTING PRESIDENT, Senator CROMER.

ADDENDUM TO THE JOURNAL

The following remarks by Senator STEPHENS were ordered printed in the Journal of January 28, 2021:

Remarks by Senator STEPHENS

Thank you, Mr. PRESIDENT. Thank you, my esteemed colleagues. I never thought I would be standing here this afternoon to discuss one of the most important issues that affects not only South Carolina but also the United States as a whole. As I look back through my many emails since I took the oath of office, there have been in excess of 120 e-mails concerning the Abortion Bill. Looking at and going back, evaluating those emails and seeing the opinions and reading the opinions of those emails, I did a survey and out of the 120 emails, there were 70 persons who asked me to vote “no” on the Heartbeat Bill. That is the majority as relates to the number of individuals that asked me to do such. Now more than four decades after the Supreme Court Roe v. Wade decision, many opponents and supporters are still battling over the issue -- courts and at ballot boxes throughout the United States. Recently, enacted Alabama law has been described, as the nation, most restrictive. Several other states also passed new restrictions on abortion with an eye towards giving the Supreme Court the chance to overturn its decision in Roe. As the debate when abortion continues -- there are five facts I would like to share with you as it relates to polling that was done by a pew research center. About six in ten U.S. adults, 60 or more percent, said in a 2019 survey that abortion should be legal in all or most cases compared to 38% who said it should be legal all, or most of the time. Now on both sides of the issue -- Americans are more likely than not to leave room for exceptions with more saying abortions should be legal or illegal most of the time rather than always. Public support for legal abortion remains high as it has been in two decades of polling. There is virtually no difference between views of men and women. There is substantial and growing partisan divide on abortion as we know that exists here in this

MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2021

Chamber and chambers throughout the United States of America. With Democrats, those who lean toward the Democratic Party -- more likely Republicans and GOP leaders to support legal abortion in all and more likely than GOP leaders that support abortion in all or most cases -- 82% versus 36%. There are large gaps based on religious affiliation. Now get this, everyone, please. For example, three-quarters of white evangelical, and private citizens, 77%, say abortion should be illegal in all or most cases -- while all or most cases the largest share of unaffiliated Americans, 83% take the opposing view, saying that abortion should be mostly or entirely legal. Now, when it came to the Supreme Court in the 1973 landmark abortion ruling, Americans, 70%, in a 2019 survey -- *Roe v. Wade* should not be completely overturned. Again, Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to hold this view. Republicans are roughly evenly divided, with 50% saying they do not want to see *Roe v. Wade* completely overturned and 48% said they would like the decision to be tossed out. Now overall, a similar majority of women at 70% and men at 69% do not want *Roe v. Wade* overturned. In December 2017, roughly half of Americans, 48%, said having an abortion is morally wrong while 20% said it was morally acceptable and 31% said it was not a moral issue. These views also differ. They differ by religious affiliations. About three-quarters of evangelical and Protestants, 77%, say having abortion is morally wrong. Just 24% of religious unaffiliated people agreed. Now the vast majority of Americans, the vast majority of Americans expect abortion to remain at least mostly legal in the United States. Now a survey conducted in 2018 asked Americans what you think the status of abortion laws in the country will be in 2050. About three-quarters of them said it would either be legal with no restrictions, 22% or legal with some restrictions, 55% or fewer said it would be illegal except in certain cases -- 68%. Now ladies and gentlemen, I was sent here to voice the concerns of the constituents in Senate District 39, but I also will sit here to voice the concerns of South Carolinians as a whole. Now, I may have just been targeted by those who cared for me just to vote "no" but it took a lot of thinking. I had a mother, I have sisters, I have nieces, and in conversation with those individuals they asked would you please voice the concerns of women having the authority over their bodies. When hearing that and being reminded of my responsibility as an elected official in voicing the concerns of those who sent me here, I have no other choice but to stand as I said to those by text messages and to those by emails that I stand firmly with them in not supporting this Bill as it is presently written. I understand numbers and I understand that this Bill will pass. It will go to the other Chamber and it will be slashed, cut up,

MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2021

however you want to phrase it, and it will probably come back to a conference committee. As I listen to the debates throughout, I am truly concerned about the direction that this Assembly will go. I have all confidence that our PRESIDENT will lead us in the right direction -- our Majority leader and Minority leader will help lead us in the right direction. I am asking us to please when we stand before this Assembly that we take in regards those individuals who sent us here to do a job. With that being said, Mr. PRESIDENT and my esteemed colleagues, I say thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:03 A.M., on motion of Senator McLEOD, the Senate adjourned to meet tomorrow, Tuesday, April 6, 2021, at 12:00 Noon.

* * *