

Alive & Kicking Poll of MPs

Methodology: CommunicateResearch surveyed 154 MPs on its Parliamentary Panel between 7th and 24th June 2005, on behalf of Alive & Kicking. 80 Labour MPs, 51 Conservatives and 23 MPs from the smaller parties took part. Data were weighted to reflect the precise composition of the House of Commons in terms of party and constituency region.

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Q1. The current abortion limit is 24 weeks, except in the case of serious threat to the mother's health or life, or substantial risk of severe physical or mental disability in the foetus, in which case abortion is legal up to birth.

Which of the following most accords with your view about the 24-week limit for abortions?

June 2005:

%	All	Lab	Con	LD	Other
24 weeks is too long and should be reduced	63	47	90	68	74
24 weeks is too short and should be increased	1	-	-	6	-
24 weeks is about right	33	50	7	20	26
Not stated	3	3	3	6	-

July 2004 (survey of 150 MPs):

%	All	Lab	Con	Other
24 weeks is too long and should be reduced	37	23	50	59
24 weeks is too short and should be increased	2	4	-	-
24 weeks is about right	62	74	50	41

Q2. The Joanna Jepson case highlighted the fact that a provision in the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 permitting abortion up to birth for serious abnormalities is being used to justify abortion up to birth for any abnormality including those that can be rectified surgically, such as cleft palate. Some disability groups argue that this provision of the 1990 Act should be removed so as to eliminate discrimination towards the unborn on grounds of disability.

Which one of these statements best sums up your view of this issue?

%	All	Lab	Con	LD	Other
The provision allowing abortion up to birth on grounds of disability should be removed altogether	14	7	20	-	74
The provision allowing abortion up to birth on grounds of disability should be restricted only to cases where the abnormality would be lethal outside the womb	24	19	39	19	-
The provision allowing abortion up to birth on grounds of disability should permit abortion for a defined list of abnormalities that would be both lethal and non-lethal outside the womb	26	24	24	56	-
The provision allowing abortion up to birth on grounds of disability and its enforcement should not be changed in any way	30	45	12	5	26
Other	1	1	-	-	-

Q3. Have you seen, heard or read about the recent 4-D ultrasound images from the womb pioneered by Professor Stuart Campbell?

%	All	Lab	Con	LD	Other
Yes, seen them	22	22	24	11	29
Yes, heard or read about them	35	34	40	44	-
No	37	36	30	45	71
Not sure	6	8	6	-	-

Q4. If you have seen, heard or read about these images, has this affected your opinion towards abortion?

%	All	Lab	Con	LD	Other
No	66	74	60	65	-
Yes, made me more likely to support a reduction in upper age limit	31	22	40	26	100
Other/not stated	4	5	-	9	-

Q5. Would you agree or disagree with each of these statements about the current abortion law?

Base: ALL MPs

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion
In reality, abortion is available on demand in the UK	52	39	8
A woman's right to choose generally outweighs the rights of the unborn	56	27	17
The fact that the disabled are treated differently reinforces negative stereotypes of disability	40	36	24
Continuous advances in neonatal care and our understanding of foetal development mean we ought to keep the abortion law under regular review	86	6	9

Base: LABOUR MPs

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion
In reality, abortion is available on demand in the UK	30	57	13
A woman's right to choose generally outweighs the rights of the unborn	57	22	21
The fact that the disabled are treated differently reinforces negative stereotypes of disability	38	40	22
Continuous advances in neonatal care and our understanding of foetal development mean we ought to keep the abortion law under regular review	81	10	9

Base: CONSERVATIVE MPs

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion
In reality, abortion is available on demand in the UK	85	11	4
A woman's right to choose generally outweighs the rights of the unborn	45	42	13
The fact that the disabled are treated differently reinforces negative stereotypes of disability	38	35	26
Continuous advances in neonatal care and our understanding of foetal development mean we ought to keep the abortion law under regular review	96	-	4

Base: LIB DEM MPs

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion
In reality, abortion is available on demand in the UK	62	33	5
A woman's right to choose generally outweighs the rights of the unborn	58	23	19
The fact that the disabled are treated differently reinforces negative stereotypes of disability	54	42	5
Continuous advances in neonatal care and our understanding of foetal development mean we ought to keep the abortion law under regular review	100	-	-

Base: OTHER MPs

%	Agree	Disagree	No opinion
In reality, abortion is available on demand in the UK	71	29	-
A woman's right to choose generally outweighs the rights of the unborn	100	-	-
The fact that the disabled are treated differently reinforces negative stereotypes of disability	55	-	45
Continuous advances in neonatal care and our understanding of foetal development mean we ought to keep the abortion law under regular review	55	-	45