



Young Republicans Are Even More Likely Than Old Republicans to Oppose Legal Abortion

By [David Weigel](#)

One of the official narratives of CPAC is captured well [here](#) by Jonathan Martin. "Younger conservatives are more firmly staking out a libertarian orientation on social issues," he writes, "in a way that will shape the 2016 presidential primary as candidates seek to appeal to activists who are in the party because of social issues and to younger voters who see some aspects of cultural conservatism as intolerant."

There's something of a sample bias here, as the makeup of CPAC itself has grown more libertarian, more geared to Ron Paul's "liberty movement," between 2009 and today. That's due in part to the assiduous work of Paul's forces and the Cato Institute (which spawned Students for Liberty), due in part to some social conservatives angrily quitting the conference in past years, due in part to the real trend. But it's true—on gay rights, on drug policy, on prison reform, the momentum is with the social libertarians.

The problem is in what Martin buries near the end.

There is no division, however, on the issue of abortion, with young and old opposed in almost equal numbers. Still, younger Republicans are more willing to support a candidate who does not share their position on abortion than those over 45, according to the [CBS/NYT] poll.

Well, that's one result from the poll. Another: Subjects were asked which position described where they were on abortion.

"It should be generally available to those who want it?"

"It should be available but under stricter limits than it is now?"

"It should not be permitted?"

Twenty-two percent of all Republicans said abortion should be generally available. Among Republicans aged 18 to 44, the number fell to 19 percent. Young Republicans were just as likely as old Republicans to favor a total abortion ban.

That's not momentum for the leave-us-alone crowd. It's pretty easy to guess why gay marriage is gaining traction while abortion isn't. Weddings are pleasant to think about. Terminated pregnancies, less so. And it's something that complicates any general GOP trudge toward the "center."

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