

HHS Policy on Abortion Drugs at Odds With GOP & MAHA Base, Imperils Midterm Enthusiasm

DATE: February 17th, 2026
TO: Interested Parties
FROM: John Rogers, Senior Partner & Pollster, Cygnal
RE: National Survey of n1,000 GOP Primary Voters Re: Abortion Policy

Executive Summary

A national survey of Republican primary voters conducted February 8-10 shows GOP primary voters are overwhelmingly committed to pro-life principles, but frustrated with federal health agencies' abortion policies under HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. The national data show a significant disconnect between base Republican voter expectations and current federal actions, creating real enthusiasm risks for the November midterm general election. There was an additional oversample of n411 GOP primary voters in Iowa and n423 in South Carolina.

Three Critical Findings:

1. **The Pro-Life Base Remains Solid:** 86% oppose federal tax dollars being used to fund abortions, 79% want to keep the Hyde Amendment, and 75% support defunding Planned Parenthood. This is not a marginal constituency, it is the GOP primary core.
2. **HHS Secretary Kennedy's Actions Are at Odds With the Trump/MAHA Base and Are Creating a Trust Crisis:** 71% of Republican primary voters oppose Kennedy's decision to continue to allow the chemical abortion drug mifepristone to be prescribed online and mailed nationwide without any in-person consultation. Opposition rises among self-described MAHA Republicans (76% opposed) and Trump Republicans (77% opposed).
3. **Midterm Enthusiasm Is at Risk:** 74% of GOP primary voters say a candidate's position on abortion is important when deciding whom they will support. 75% say it's important for congressional Republicans to aggressively oversee HHS actions on abortion. 32% would be less enthusiastic about voting in the November midterm election if GOP leaders abandon pro-life policies. 34% would be less willing to volunteer. Among the most committed GOP voters, these numbers spike higher.

The Core Problem: Awareness Meets Disappointment

What Republican Voters Know: Only 20% of GOP primary voters know that abortion numbers have increased post-*Dobbs*. But when informed that 1.1 million abortions occur annually (an increase since *Roe* was overturned), 73% find this concerning. Republican voters likely expected that *Dobbs* would lead to fewer abortions and certainly expected that the leaders around President Trump would work hard to extend pro-life protections everywhere possible in the federal government. Instead, under Secretary Kennedy, HHS is actively facilitating access to the chemical abortion drug mifepristone.

The Kennedy Factor: Secretary Kennedy's decisions are creating fractures in the GOP base:

- 80% overall (including 84% of Trump Republicans and 85% of MAHA Republicans) believe the FDA should again require in-person visits for chemical abortions.
- 71% oppose allowing Biden's COVID-era policy on mail-order mifepristone to continue, including 77% of Trump Republicans and 76% of MAHA voters.
- 72% oppose approving generic mifepristone before completing the promised safety review—again, Trump (73%) and MAHA (74%) Republicans' opposition is higher.
- 65% oppose the overall HHS direction on abortion (released Planned Parenthood funding, approved new abortion drug, delayed safety study) under Secretary Kennedy—including 68% of Trump and 69% of MAHA Republican voters.

Critical Insight: The national data make clear that self-identified MAHA Republicans (69% of primary voters) *do not regard* abortion access as part of the Make America Healthy Again promise.

The Enthusiasm Problem for the Midterm General Elections

Here is what should alarm the GOP:

If Republican leaders weaken or abandon pro-life policies:

- 32% of GOP voters say they will have *decreased enthusiasm* for voting in the midterm general election.
- This includes 36% of the most engaged (4/4) GOP primary voters.
- A diminution in enthusiasm among one-third of the Republican base would be devastating in close U.S. House and U.S. Senate races in November.

Abandoning pro-life principles' effect on volunteering/activism:

- 34% say they will be *less willing* to volunteer or take part in general election campaigns.
- This includes 37% of the most engaged GOP voters and 45% of evangelicals.

Hyde Amendment importance:

- 79% of Republican primary voters say keeping the Hyde Amendment is important.
- If GOP leaders drop support for Hyde, 30% of GOP voters say they will be *less enthusiastic* about voting in November.

Iowa and South Carolina Primary Voters at the Vanguard

Iowa and South Carolina Republican primary voters out-perform the national numbers:

- 89% of Iowa voters (+5 *compared to national*) and 86% of South Carolina voters (+2 compared with national) **oppose federal funding** for abortion.
- 77% of Iowa Republican primary voters (+6) and 71% of South Carolinians (even) **oppose Kennedy's decision** to retain the Biden-era policy of allowing mifepristone to be prescribed on the internet and mailed out nationwide.
- 84% of Iowa (+5) and 80% of South Carolina (+1) Republicans say it is important to keep the **Hyde Amendment** in place.
- 80% of Iowa (+6) and 74% of South Carolina (even) of voters say allowing abortion drugs to be mailed to states where abortion is limited **undermines pro-life states**.
- 77% of Iowa (+6) and 70% of South Carolina (-1) Republicans say that it is important to them for a **future Republican presidential candidate** to clearly articulate a pro-life policy agenda to drive down the number of abortions.

Methodology: This probabilistic survey was conducted February 8-10, 2026, with n1,000 likely Republican primary election voters nationwide. The nationwide survey has a margin of error of +/-3.10%. There were additional oversamples of n411 voters in Iowa (±4.83% margin of error) and n423 voters in South Carolina (±4.76% margin of error). Known registered voters were interviewed via online panel and SMS. This survey was weighted to a likely Republican primary election voter universe.

About Cygnal: Cygnal is an award-winning international polling, public opinion, and predictive analytics firm that pioneered multi-mode polling, text-to-web collection, and emotive analysis. Cygnal consistently ranks as the most accurate firm in the nation, and its clients rely on Cygnal's ability to create intelligence for action. Its team members have worked in all 50 states and multiple countries on more than 4,500 corporate, public affairs, and political campaigns.