

Abstract

The goal of this project is to determine whether or not the overturn of *Roe v. Wade* will have a significant footprint on society's future bodily integrity according to the views of the Barton College community.

Introduction

To most Americans today, *Roe v. Wade* 410 U.S. 113 (1973), is problematic for just one thing: a woman's right to continue or terminate a pregnancy. However, the Supreme Court's decision once meant much more. On Dec 13, 1973, now revealed to the world as Norma Leah Nelson McCorvey, (during that time, she used the pseudonym 'Jane Roe' for safety reasons), was the plaintiff of one of the most progressive court cases of the United States, *Roe v. Wade*.

Roe was an unwed pregnant woman who brought a class-action lawsuit to court to challenge Texas' criminal abortion laws that state abortions are illegal unless medical professionals deem in necessary in order to to save a woman's life. She claimed that her rights to privacy were violated by Texas laws protected by the first, fourth, fifth, ninth, and fourteenth amendments (Blackmun & Supreme Court Of The United States, 1972).

While it took a year to try the case in court, the final decision of *Roe v. Wade* declared that "a person may choose to have an abortion until a fetus becomes viable, (the ability to live outside the womb – usually between 24 to 28 weeks after conception), based on the right to privacy contained in the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment," (Justia Law, n.d., para. 1).

However, on June 24, 2022, the case had been overturned by the Supreme Court, destroying nearly 50 years of legalized abortion protection and giving separate states once more the ability to limit abortions or illegalize abortions rights altogether.

As North Carolina has yet to follow suit of 11 states already outlawing abortions entirely, the Barton College community in Wilson, North Carolina have clashing opinions on the topic.

Purpose

The purpose of this research study is to understand society's opinion and open up a bigger discussion of *what's next?* in regards to society's bodily integrity. Participation is voluntary.

Method

The research was conducted by a 7-10 minute survey. The survey was emailed out to the entire Barton student, staff, and faculty body in order obtain their opinions on *Roe v. Wade's* ruling, overturn, and potential, if any, backlash of the overturn towards society's future bodily integrity. From the entire community, there were only 53 participants. Besides gaining background information, the survey contained seven questions that ranged from a Likert question, multiple choice, and open-ended questions.

Figures

Figure 1

On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident are you in your knowledge towards *Roe v. Wade*?

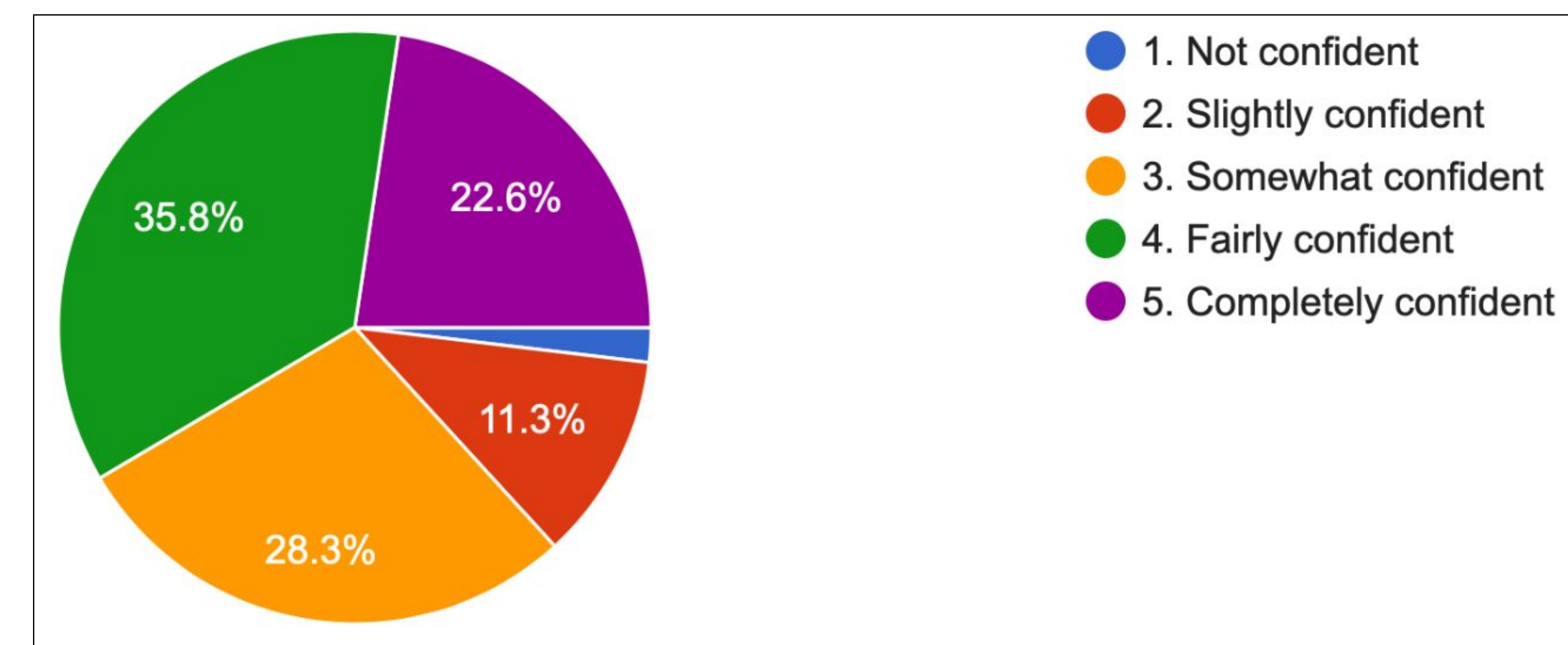


Figure 2

Are you for or against the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*?

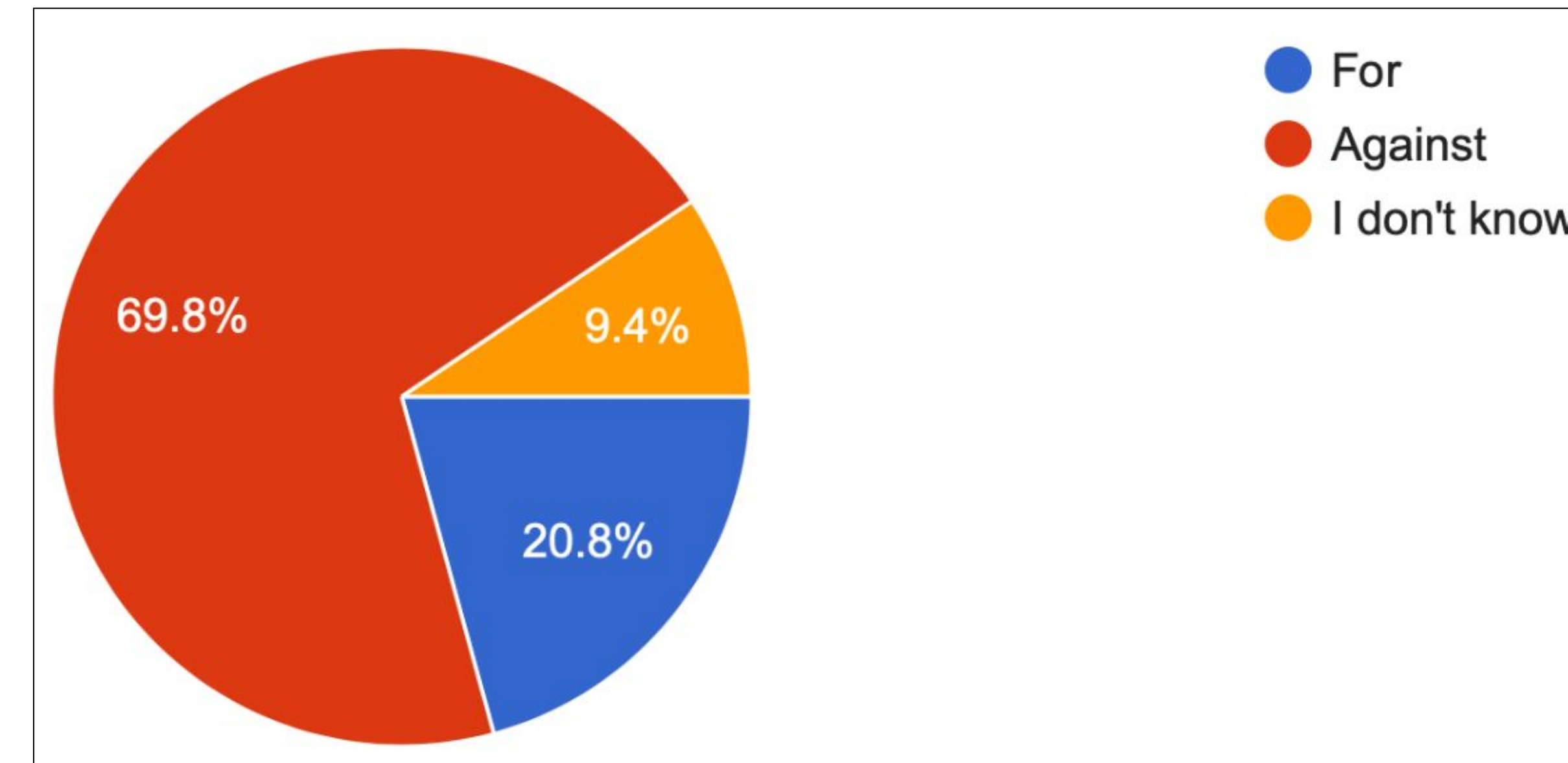
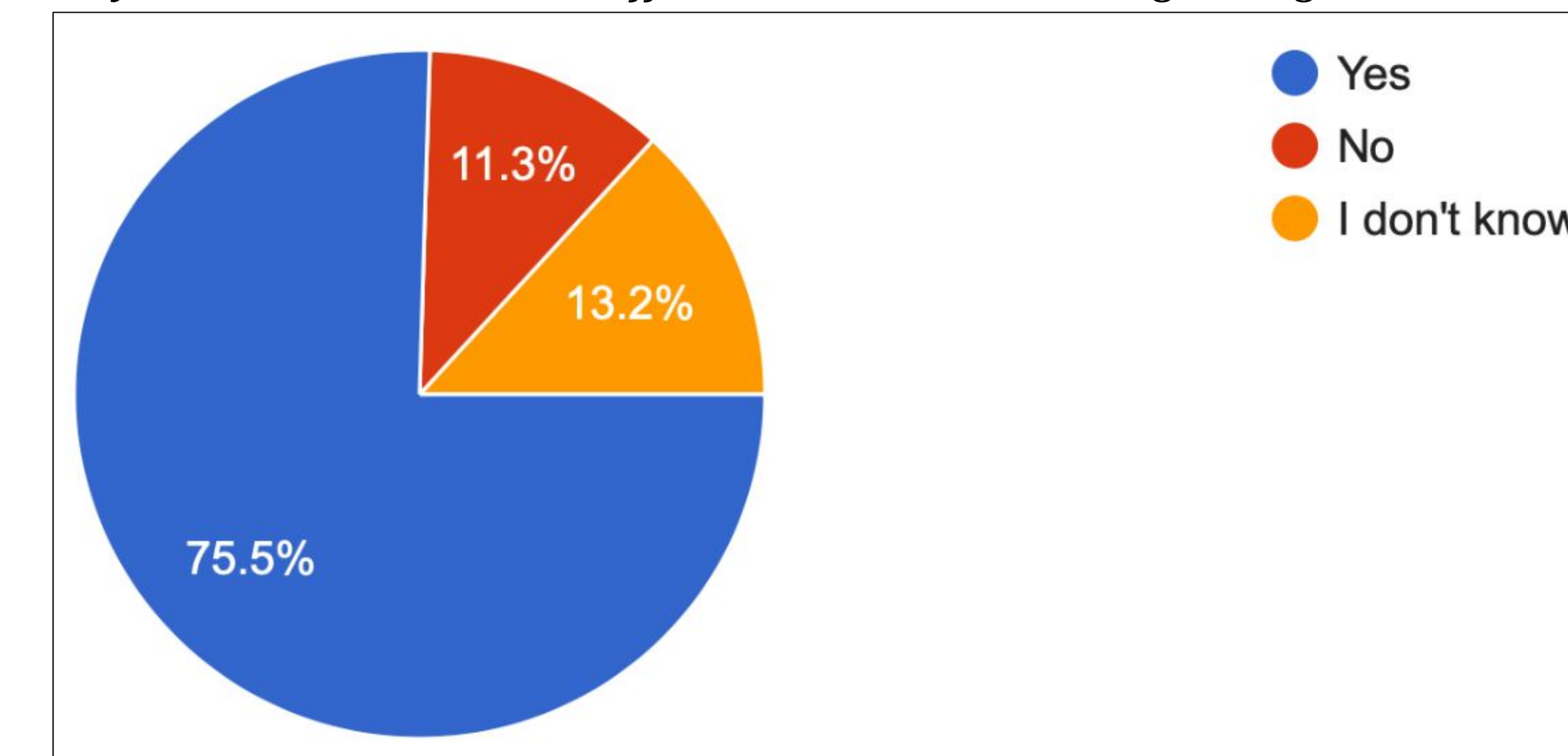


Figure 3

Do you think this case will affect other court cases regarding the human body?



Results

Out of the 53 participants, 41 identified themselves to be women. From the 41 women, 60.4% stated to be between the ages of 18 and 34, which according to experts, is the age range (late 20s and early 30s) considered to be the best childbearing age range in order to achieve the best outcome for both the woman and the child. That means the majority of participants answering this survey are the one who will likely be affected the most. Despite the fact that the mass majority of participants universally agreed that overturning *Roe v. Wade* is a setback for society, many had misconceptions about the viability of a fetus, and for most, the discussion of *Roe v. Wade* appeared to be more than the bodily autonomy of women.

Future Implications

In the future, this information can aid in further research and will open a bigger discussion of *what's next?* in regards to society's bodily integrity. It may open eyes and raise questions others may not have asked or seen before such as, *what will happen to the LGBTQIA+ and Black community?*

As for the survey, one participant believed that the most controversial question (are you for or against the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*?) was a leading question as the terms "for" and "against" have a positive and negative connotation. In the case that someone else adapts research from this project or conducts research similar to it, asking questions that do not implicate bias in any way, shape, or form is necessary. Perhaps asking the question as such prevented participants from answering more critically.

However, for the time being, to develop a fuller capacity of abortion laws and history, future researchers should also review court case, *United States v. Vuitch* 402 US 62 (1971), as it occurs nearly a year before *Roe v. Wade* in the District of Columbia, and is referred to during the case as well. As research prior to *Roe v. Wade* has been determined to the point of the case and a decade afterwards, in order to expand this research, details into the far future in terms of the aftermath of the case are necessary.

References

Black, H. L. & Supreme Court Of The United States. (1970) *U.S. Reports: United States v. Vuitch*, 402 U.S. 62 [Periodical]. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/usrep402062/>.

Blackmun, H. A. & Supreme Court Of The United States. (1972) *U.S. Reports: Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 [Periodical]. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/usrep410113/>.

Justia Law. (n.d.). *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973). Justia Law. Retrieved from <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/410/113/>

Watson, S. (2018, June 6). *Childbearing age: What's ideal and what are the risks?* Healthline. <https://www.healthline.com/health/womens-health/childbearing-age>

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by Professor Michael K. Brantley, Assistant Professor of Communications at Barton College; Dr. Gerard Lange, director of the Whitehurst Family Honors Program at Barton College; and in part by Dr. Garnett Whitehurst, benefactor of the Whitehurst Family Honors Program at Barton College.