

Sample Moderator Agenda: Small-Group Discussions

10:30 – 11 (check in and refreshments)

Welcome participants to table and be sure that people have the background materials open before them, listen to the opening comments (5 minutes starting at 11)

11:05 - – 11:10

Thank people for coming and allow for a greeting period where participants can introduce themselves (just some basics). Review "Guidelines for Participation"; explain role of moderator; remind participants that they are free to respond to, ask questions of, and engage directly with other participants; explain how discussion will be broken-up into time-frames to discuss each of the main topics [about 15 minutes for each]

11:10-11:25

Let's talk about the types of situations where a woman might consider terminating a pregnancy. Here are some to start with: They feel that they are not ready for a child or another child; they feel they are too young or not mature enough; they feel they can't afford another child or they simply do not want children. They feel that they are finished with child bearing. Can you think of other situations or know of someone who faced these or similar situations?

Since almost 90 percent of abortions occur during the first trimester (the first 12 weeks), what are your personal feelings here and what do you think our public policy should be? Think for a second about specific consequences regarding public policy.

11:25-11:45

Topic 1: Supreme Court Decisions

Now let's look at how the arguments in the Roe v Wade case have framed the discussion of constitutional law in regard to the issue. And how this led to the Dobbs decision and its Dissent. [It would be helpful to have a summary of these decisions at the table.]

Discuss Question 1: How do you view the Dobbs decision and its dissent? What kind of arguments or reasons can you give for or against these positions? Overall, how would you weigh in on a choice between Roe or Dobbs?

11:45 - 12

Topic 2: State Laws

Since Dobbs, the issue of abortion has been returned to the states. Some states have bans ranging from the moment of fertilization to six weeks and to 15 weeks. In many cases, but not all, there are varying exceptions to rape, incest and the life of the woman. All these laws involve penalties for physicians and those aiding women who receive abortions beyond the restriction period.

Other states continue to protect the right to abortion in line with the Roe decision, which does allow for state oversight around 20-22 weeks or after viability. Exceptions beyond this period (around 1.3%) are allowed for serious cases of fetal abnormality or in situations where the life and health of the woman is at stake.

How do you view 1. state bans on abortion and 2. those states that adhere to the Roe decision?

12:00 - 12:15

Topic 3: Federal Laws

There are those who believe that we will not truly deal with the issue of abortion until we have federal laws that will provide consistency across the country. Consider these two:

“Protecting Pain-Capable Unborn Children from Late-Term Abortions Act” outlines fetal development and seeks to restrict abortion at 15 weeks. It allows for exceptions due to documented instances of rape and incest and in matters of the woman’s life or in cases of severe fetal abnormalities resulting in the death of the unborn child. It includes penalties for physicians who violate the law but not for the women who might undergo an illegal abortion.

Reproductive Freedom For All Act seeks to codify Roe as the law of the land.

Do you think that a Federal Law is the way we should proceed? Regardless, as a matter of law and policy, which one of these proposals would you prefer and what reasons can you give for this preference.

12:15- 12:25 Formulate of Question for Panel

We are out of time again. Thank you so much. You all have done some hard work, and now we have to work on developing some questions for the resource panel of experts.

We need to agree on two questions that our group wants to ask the resource panel of experts.

Now that we have our questions, we need someone to volunteer to ask our questions to the panel.

12:45-1:35 Plenary Session: Expert Panel Q&A

1:45-2:00

The survey is a critical part of the process. It will capture your individual opinions about the issues we have been discussing today. But before we

do that, does anyone want to discuss any thoughts they have after hearing the panel and the other group's questions? Participants fill out surveys and hand them to moderators.