



**TO:** SUSAN B. ANTHONY LIST  
**FROM:** MARK C. BLANKENSHIP  
**SUBJECT:** WV POLLING MEMORANDUM  
**DATE:** JANUARY 30, 2021

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### **Overview**

West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin is in the national spotlight because of his pledge NOT to repeal the legislative filibuster in the U.S. Senate. The repeal of the filibuster would allow Democrats to pass virtually any legislation and attempt to stack the Supreme Court without a single Republican vote. Both Republicans and Independents are sharply opposed to these ideas, but so are nearly half of Democrats in West Virginia.

This statewide opinion survey looked at key policy proposals that Democrats are considering if they can repeal the filibuster. These proposals are met with strong resistance from West Virginia voters.

For example, a majority opposes making Washington, D.C. a state, and that support swells to a supermajority when the possibility of such statehood could create a near-permanent Democrat majority in the U.S. Senate. Seven in 10 respondents to this survey are also opposed to President Biden *stacking the U.S. Supreme Court* by expanding the number of current justices to something greater than nine and picking the new justices himself with approval in the Senate.

Respondents to this statewide opinion survey of registered voters are decidedly pro-life. Moreover, a strong majority of voters believe it is important for their U.S. senators to share their pro-life position generally. West Virginia voters also oppose the use of federal tax dollars to pay for most abortions and further oppose U.S. foreign aid being distributed to organizations that perform abortions.

The survey also makes clear that voters prefer a U.S. senator who is independent and willing to vote against his/her national political party if it means voting for what is best for the state of West Virginia. In fact, 75% of WV voters say it is very important that their U.S. senator does what is right for West Virginia even if it means voting against their party. Senator Joe Manchin's approval rating is essentially 1:1 and voters still have a relatively favorable opinion of him. Defending the filibuster and stopping the Democrats' extreme pro-abortion agenda is a huge opportunity for Manchin to build trust

with conservatives and Independents essential to winning as a Democrat in a state trending rapidly away from the extremism of the national Democratic Party.

## Specific Issues

- **Expanding the Supreme Court and D.C. Statehood**

Seven in 10 (71%) **oppose any effort by President Biden and Democrats in Congress to expand the number of justices** on the U.S. Supreme Court and allowing them to choose who those new justices would be. Interestingly, a 64% majority not only opposes such a proposal but **STRONGLY** opposes said proposal. Nearly all GOP voters (94%) oppose potential Supreme Court expansion, as do four of five (80%) Independent voters and 44% of Democrats. Majorities of conservatives (93%) and moderates (65%) oppose this proposal compared to only 21% of liberals. Strong majorities of both men (73%) and women (69%) oppose Supreme Court expansion.

**More than half (56%) oppose granting statehood to Washington, D.C.**, compared to just 31% who support. Strong support for D.C. statehood is at just 18%, compared to 44% strong opposition. While 53% of Democrats support granting D.C. statehood, one-third (31%) oppose. GOP voters (76%) and Independents (66%) are opposed and most of each group are **STRONGLY** opposed. Opposition to D.C. statehood grows even higher to 67% when respondents are informed that the possibility of statehood could create a near-permanent Democrat majority in the U.S. Senate.

- **Abortion Restrictions**

Just 8% of respondents believe abortion should be permitted at any time during a woman's pregnancy and only 3% believe abortion should be permitted during the first six months of a woman's pregnancy – both positions advocated for by national Democrats and pro-abortion advocacy groups. In fact, just 17% of Democrats indicate they believe abortion should be permitted at any time during a woman's pregnancy, and just 6% of Democrats believe such should be permitted during the first six months of a woman's pregnancy. In fact, four in five (80%) believe more significant restrictions should be placed on abortion, including 28% who say abortion should only be allowed during the first trimester, 28% who say abortion should be allowed only in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother, 17% who say abortions should only be performed to save the life of the mother and 19% who indicate abortion should never be permitted. Democrats, Independents and Republican voters all indicate some restrictions (greater than abortion during the first six months of pregnancy) should be in place.

Nearly seven in 10 (69%) of voters say it is important for their U.S. senator to be pro-life, including 48% who say it is **VERY** important. While 93% of GOP voters say this is

important, so do 64% of Independents and nearly half (48%) of Democrat voters.

Seventy-three percent (73%) of those surveyed oppose using federal tax dollars to pay for abortions in most instances, compared to just 21% who support. A majority of all political classifications (95% GOP, 51% Dem, 72% Ind) oppose the use of federal tax dollars to pay for abortion. Regardless of party affiliation: 93% of self-described conservatives, 61% of moderates and even 29% of liberals oppose the use of federal tax dollars for abortion.

Similarly, two-thirds (73%) oppose allowing money the United States sends to other countries for foreign aid to be used by organizations that perform abortions. As with other questions regarding abortion, the issues transcend party affiliation with 92% of GOP voters in opposition, half (50%) of Democrat voters and 78% of Independents. Opposition also transcends every major media market/geography in West Virginia.

- **Biden/Trump/Manchin**

**One-third (33%) approve of the job President Biden is doing, compared to 57% who disapprove.** Nine in 10 GOP voters (88%) disapprove, compared to 60% of Independents and 25% of Democrats. About seven in 10 Democrats approve of the job President Biden is doing in office.

**Former President Trump's favorability rating among WV voters is 59%, while his unfavorability rating is 38%.** Nine in 10 GOP voters have a favorable opinion of the former president, compared to 61% of Independents and 27% of Democrats. 71% of Democrats say their opinion of Donald Trump is unfavorable. Additionally, when asked if they believe Senator Joe Manchin should vote to convict Donald Trump in his impeachment trial, 62% of voters say he should NOT vote to convict, compared to 34% who believe he should. More than nine in 10 (94%) self-described liberals believe Manchin should vote to convict Trump, while 92% of conservatives believe he should NOT vote for conviction. Of note, 48% of the sample self-described as conservative, 28% as moderate, and just 16% as liberal.

## **Methodology**

The voter opinion survey was sponsored by Susan B. Anthony List and conducted by MBE Research to better understand voter opinion on a host of important, current issues in the public square. 504 completed interviews among registered, likely West Virginia voters were conducted the week of January 25, 2021.

The standard deviation on a survey of 504 registered West Virginia voters is +/-4.6%. The interviews were conducted using telephone: 25% cellular and 75% landline. All

interviews were conducted by live, trained telephone interviewers.

Demographics: 39% Dem, 38% GOP, 23% Ind; 51% female, 49% male.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

Some data (such as gender) was weighted to correct for unequal selection probability, nonresponse, etc., in the sampling frame.