

CBS NEWS POLL

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THE DEBATE OVER SAME-SEX MARRIAGE March 12-16, 2009

As the Iowa Supreme Court overturns a ban on same-sex marriage - Americans overall remain divided on the issue.

Although six in 10 Americans think some form of legal recognition is appropriate for same-sex couples, only a third of Americans think those couples should be allowed to marry. Another 27% of Americans support civil unions for same-sex couples, while 35% thinks there should be no legal recognition of same-sex relationships at all.

SHOULD SAME-SEX COUPLES BE ALLOWED TO...?

	Now	8/2008	3/2007	3/2004
Legally marry	33%	34%	30%	22%
Form civil unions	27	22	28	33
No legal recognition	35	39	26	40

Support for legalizing same-sex marriage has remained about the same for the past two years, though it is up from 2004, when only 22% of Americans supported the idea.

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

How Americans feel about the issue of same-sex marriage varies greatly upon their age, gender, political affiliations, and the regions of the country from where they live.

- While 41% Americans under 45 support legalizing gay marriage, only 18% of Americans over 65 agree, and nearly half of seniors do not think there should be any legal recognition of same-sex marriage. Americans between 45 and 64 generally support some form of civil unions between same-sex couples, though only 29% think same-sex couples should marry.
- Women (38%) are more likely than men (27%) to support same-sex marriage by a margin of 11 percentage points.

- Republicans, conservatives, and white evangelicals oppose any legal recognition of same-sex couples, while Democrats and liberals are more likely to support same-sex marriage.
- Regionally, same-sex marriage is most popular in the Northeast - where Massachusetts and Connecticut have already established same-sex marriage as legal - and it is popular in the West. Same-sex marriage is far less popular in the Midwest and the South.

SHOULD SAME-SEX COUPLES BE ALLOWED TO...?

	Legally Marry	Form Civil Unions	No Legal Recognition
Total	33%	27	35
Age			
18-45	41%	23	32
45-64	29%	32	35
65+	18%	27	47
Men	27%	28	42
Women	38%	26	30
Republicans	6%	34	59
Democrats	46%	23	26
Independents	37%	26	30
Liberals	64%	22	14
Moderates	32%	31	33
Conservatives	15%	27	52
White Evangelicals	9%	25	62
Northeast	44%	25	26
West	38%	34	20
Midwest	30%	25	41
South	25%	25	47

This poll was conducted among a random sample of 1142 adults nationwide, interviewed by telephone March 12-16, 2009. Phone numbers were dialed from RDD samples of both standard land-lines and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The error for subgroups is higher.

This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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q71 Which comes closest to your view? 1. Gay couples should be allowed to legally marry OR 2. Gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not legally marry OR 3. There should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship?

** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **

	Total	*** Party ID ***			Aug08a
	%	Rep	Dem	Ind	%
Should be allowed to marry	33	6	46	37	34
Should be allowed to form	27	34	23	26	22
No legal recognition	35	59	26	30	39
DK/NA	5	1	5	7	5

	<u>Unweighted</u>	<u>Weighted</u>
Total Respondents	1142	
Total Republicans	301	265
Total Democrats	419	442
Total Independents	422	435