



March 28, 2013

Anzalone Liszt Grove Research National Polling Summary

Friends,

Below you will find the Anzalone Liszt Grove Research National Polling Summary, which provides a pollster's take on data and trends that affect political campaigns.

This week we focus on the Supreme Court's review of California's Proposition 8 and the Defense of Marriage Act, as well as the public's fast-evolving perceptions of marriage equality. As pollsters who work on behalf of a number of gay rights organizations, and were proud to be part of the team to help defeat Amendment One in Minnesota, it is an issue we feel passionately about.

Following our analysis are additional news items and data we thought you'd enjoy.

John Anzalone, Jeff Liszt and Lisa Grove

This week, the Supreme Court heard arguments in *Hollingsworth v. Perry* and *Windsor v. United States*. The first is a federal challenge to Proposition 8, the same-sex marriage ban that California voters approved of in 2008. The second questions Section 3 of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which defines marriage as solely between a man and a woman.

While we will have to wait until the end of June for the justices' ruling, support for marriage equality has been gaining strength in the court of public opinion for some time now. Last November, Minnesota became the first state in the country to reject a constitutional amendment to ban marriage between same-sex couples. At the same time, Maine, Maryland and Washington became the first states to legalize marriage equality through a popular vote, bringing the total to nine states and the District of Columbia where same-sex couples have the freedom to marry.

Support for marriage equality continues to gain ground

The latest ABC News/Washington Post [poll](#) finds that support for marriage equality stands at the highest it's been in the ten years the question has been asked. Right now, 58% of Americans



believe it should be legal for gay and lesbian couples to get married, while 36% think it should be illegal. In 2003, those numbers were an almost mirror-opposite: 37% supported legal marriage for same-sex couples, while 55% opposed it. According to the poll, marriage equality enjoys [majority support](#) from men and women and across major educational, income and regional divides for the first time.

The most recent CNN/ORC [poll](#) also found majority support for marriage equality, with 53% of adults saying marriages between gay and lesbian couples should be recognized by the law as valid, and 44% saying they should not be recognized as valid. CNN's findings are a flip of their numbers from 2008, when 44% said such marriages should be recognized as valid and 53% said they should not be valid.

On the other hand, the newest [poll](#) from Pew Research shows a lower level of support for marriage equality. When asked whether they “favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally,” 49% of adults favored it, while 44% opposed. A small difference in question wording makes a big difference here, showing the power of minor language differences in polling: The Washington Post requires opponents of gay marriage to say they think gay marriage should be illegal (36% do so), while the Pew poll only requires them to say they oppose legalizing gay marriage (44% do so). The Washington Post poll also mentions “gay and lesbian couples” while the Pew poll only uses the phrase “gays and lesbians.”

Nonetheless, these recent polls elucidate two key facets of the current same-sex marriage landscape. Foremost, support is continually growing. Our own [polling](#) on behalf of the Americans for Equal Rights found that 75% of Americans now believe that the ability to marry the person you love is a Constitutional right. Secondly, this once hot-button political issue is as much a generational divide as a partisan one.

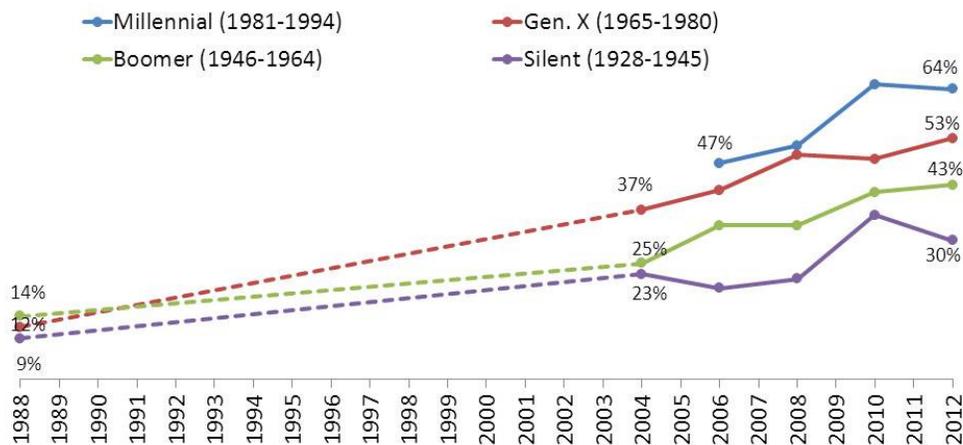
Generational differences

In each of these recent polls, support for marriage equality increases with each successive generation. Pew finds that young adults age 18-29 are roughly [twice](#) as supportive of legalizing same-sex marriage as senior citizens, regardless of which political party they identify with. Similarly, The Washington Post finds that 52% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents under age 50 support marriage equality, but support [drops](#) to just 25% among those Republicans and Republican-leaning over 65.

Even within each generation, people are growing more comfortable with legalizing marriage for gay and lesbian couples. The National Opinion Research Center, which has tested public support for marriage sporadically since 1988, finds that even as each generation gets older, support increases.

Support for gay marriage increasing among every generation

(% Who “agree” homosexuals should have right to marry one another)



Source: General Social Surveys, conducted by National Opinion Research Center.

Race and Religion

Support has risen across racial groups and religious affiliations, as well, though substantial [divides](#) still exist. A majority of Catholics (both white and Hispanic) support marriage equality, but only a third of Protestants do. Part of the reason Protestant support is lower is that support among white Evangelicals stands at just 19%. There is also a big difference between white mainline Protestants, a majority of whom support same-sex marriage, and black Protestants, of which only a third support marriage equality.

While support has grown among the religiously affiliated, this does not necessarily mean their religious views have [changed](#). In fact, 56% of Americans believe same-sex marriage conflicts with their religious beliefs, yet 66% think that same-sex couples should have the same legal



rights as heterosexual couples. Among the 28% who agree with both statements, support for marriage equality is split, 46% favor to 44% oppose.

Support among African Americans has increased dramatically in recent years. Some of this increase may be due to President Obama's declaration of support last May. Polls conducted by Public Policy Polling in [North Carolina](#) and [Maryland](#) saw a major shift of support after the announcement, as did a [national](#) poll conducted by ABC News/Washington Post, which found 59% of African Americans in support of same-sex marriage, an 18-point jump from the average of 41% in polls before Obama's announcement.

Why the shift?

While generational changes can explain part of the shift (Millennials make up a larger share of the adult population today than 10 years ago) that is not the whole story. Politicians like President Obama, former Vice President Dick Cheney, Senator Rob Portman and former Secretary of State Colin Powell have publically spoken about their personal journeys on the topic, and they are not alone. According to Pew, 14% of the public, or one in seven Americans, has [changed](#) his or her mind in support of gay marriage.

When asked what it was that made them change their mind, 32%, like Portman and Cheney, attributed it to knowing someone who is homosexual. Another 25% have had an "evolution" like Obama, saying they had given it more thought and grown more open. And after an election season that saw voters in three states approve measures legalizing same-sex marriages, and voters in another state reject an amendment that would have denied same-sex couples the right to marry, 18% said they changed their mind because they think the world has changed and same-sex marriage is inevitable.



OTHER NEWS FROM THE POLLING AND POLITICAL WORLD

Smart Politics crunched the numbers on 1,829 gubernatorial elections and found out the most [competitive](#) state

Mark Blumenthal defines [waste](#) for us: it’s money spent on some government program I don’t like

RNC performs its own [autopsy](#) and learns that voters see the GOP as “scary” and “out of touch”

Gallup finds that nearly two-thirds of Americans support the government using [drones](#) against foreign terrorists

Public Polling

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
RCP Average	3/4 - 3/20	--	48	47
Gallup	3/18 - 3/20	1500 A	46	45
Rasmussen	3/18 - 3/20	1500 LV	52	47
FOX News	3/17 - 3/19	1002 RV	47	47
CNN/ORC	3/15 - 3/17	1021 A	47	50
Democracy Corps	3/9 - 3/12	840 LV	48	49
ABC/Wash Post	3/7 - 3/10	RV	51	46

CONGRESSIONAL JOB APPROVAL

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
RCP Average	3/7 - 3/19	--	14	81
FOX News	3/17 - 3/19	1002 RV	14	79
ABC/Wash Post	3/7 - 3/10	RV	14	82
Gallup	3/7 - 3/10	1022 A	13	83

PARTY SELF ID

Polling Firm	Date	Dem	Rep	Ind/Other
Pollster.com Trend	March 21	36.1%	27.0%	30.3%

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