

May 24, 2012

Anzalone Liszt Research

National Polling Summary

Friends,

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

As *The Daily Show* noted last week, public opinion on same-sex marriage is moving so quickly that the Republican message has rapidly gone from, "Gay marriage will destroy civilization as we know it," to, "Obama only supports this because it's politically popular." This week's newsletter provides updated numbers on support for same-sex marriage, and the likely political ramifications of the President's announcement.

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

John Anzalone and Jeff Liszt

Mawwage is what bwings us too-gethah too-day

The ABC News / Washington Post poll has shown majority support for same-sex marriage since 2011. Currently 53% say it, "should be legal for gay and lesbian couples to get married," while 39% say it should be illegal. In ABC/WaPo polling, support jumped long before Obama's announcement, rising from 36% in 2006 to 49% in 2009. That's not to say Obama's announcement hasn't had an impact – for the first time, the poll shows strong support for gay marriage (39%) higher than strong opposition (32%). In 2004 strong opposition to gay marriage (49%) outweighed strong support (24%) by 25 points.

Gallup's [numbers](#) are similar, with 50% saying, "marriages between same-sex couples should be recognized by the law with the same rights as traditional marriages," and 48% saying they should not. The higher opposition in Gallup's polling is likely due to their explicit equation of same-sex and traditional marriage in the question language.

There is clearly a soft middle that favors legal recognition of same-sex relationships but isn't adamant that those relationships be called marriage. In Fox News polling, 37% say, "gays and lesbians should be allowed to get legally married," 33% say they

should be, “allowed a legal partnership similar to but not called marriage,” and just 25% say there should be, “no legal recognition given to gay and lesbian relationships.” CBS/NYT [results](#) are similar, with 38% saying, “gay couples should be allowed to legally marry,” 24% saying, “gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not legally marry,” and 33% saying, “there should be no legal recognition of a gay relationship.” So in Fox News polling, 70% favor some sort of legal recognition for same-sex relationships, and in CBS/NYT polling 62% favor recognition

The President’s Announcement

There are two main measures of the impact of the President’s announcement – the horse race against Romney, and support for same-sex marriage. Gallup’s tracking shows no movement in the vote since the President’s announcement, while ABC News polling shows opposition to gay marriage declining slightly since Obama’s announcement (from 43% to 39%). That movement in the numbers on gay marriage but not in the horse race is what you’d expect given that NBC News / Wall Street Journal poll showing that 62% of voters and 75% of independents say the President’s support for gay marriage doesn’t make a difference in their vote. Just 17% say it makes them more likely to vote for him, and just 20% say it makes them less likely. This is an issue on which the most ardent supporters and opponents were probably not up for grabs in the Presidential election even before the announcement.

In CBS/NYT polling, 67% say the President made his decision, “mostly for political reasons,” while 24% said it was, “mostly because he thinks it is right.” That’s par for the course given the level of cynicism permeating the electorate.

Of course, these are national numbers while the election will be decided state-by-state. Obama’s announcement came a day after North Carolina passed a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage with over 60% of the vote. (North Carolina vote was on the same day as a low-turnout primary).

In Florida, the most recent Quinnipiac poll [shows](#) Romney with a 47 / 41 lead. That’s up from a 1-point Romney advantage before Obama’s announcement, and Quinnipiac pollster Peter A. Brown says, “while the issue of same-sex marriage looks like it affects only one-third of Florida voters, we know from experience what a few votes can mean in the Sunshine State”. But there has also been a 7-point net shift in party self identification from the last Quinnipiac poll (from D+4 to R+3), so it seems more likely that we’re looking at two polls with different partisan makeups rather than a wholesale shift in the electorate.

And of course much has been made of the potential for erosion in Obama’s African-American support. However, ABC News shows a new high in support for gay marriage among African-Americans at 59%. And PPP polling has shown shifts in

favor of same-sex marriage among African-Americans in [North Carolina](#) and [Pennsylvania](#) (though the percentage of African-Americans who support same-sex marriage remains significantly lower than the percentage who are supporting Obama in every poll).

Mitt Romney's Position (virtually unchanged since 1994!)

There's little consensus in public polling on the Romney position on gay marriage (Romney told the Ames Tribune Editorial Board in December he supports a federal standard and an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that ban gay marriage).

It was not long ago (1994 to be exact) that Mitt Romney wrote a letter to the gay rights group, the Log Cabin Club, endorsing full equality for gay and lesbian Americans. He even went so far as to say that his opponent, Senator Ted Kennedy, would not be as strong an advocate for Gays and Lesbians as he would, if elected.

In ABC News / WaPo polling, just 49% think marriage should be left to the states, while 46% say we should have one law made by the federal government. In contrast, CBS/NYT finds that just 32% say laws regarding the legality of same-sex marriage should be determined by the federal government, while 57% say they should be left to the states to decide. Both polls were conducted after the President's announcement, with the ABC/WaPo results one week later than CBS/NYT.

Fox News polling also disagrees with the CBS/NYT results. Fox News polling shows that just 38% favor, "amending the U.S. Constitution to define marriage as being between a man and a woman, while 53% are opposed. In contrast, CBS/NYT shows that 50% would favor, "an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would allow marriage only between a man and a woman," with 46% opposed.

The Moral Majority

The movement in support for equal rights is likely tied to familiarity. According to ABC News, the percentage saying they have a friend, family member, or acquaintance who is gay is up almost 20 points since 1998, and currently stands at 78%.

In 2010, the percentage of Americans who say homosexual relations are "morally acceptable" crossed 50% for the first time, according to [Gallup](#). Currently 54% say same-sex relations are morally acceptable, while 42% say they are "morally wrong." That's a significant shift over the last decade – in 2002, Gallup tested slightly different language ("homosexual behavior" as opposed to "homosexual relations"), with just 38% describing same-sex relations as "morally acceptable" with 55% calling them "morally wrong."

In Gallup's polling, women (59%) are 10 points more likely than men (49%) to believe gay and lesbian relations are morally acceptable. There is also a significant age gap – 65% of 18-34-year-olds believe same sex relations are morally acceptable compared with 55% of 35-54-year-olds and just 46% of those 55 and older. While 58% of independents and 66% of Democrats say same-sex relations are morally acceptable, just 36% of Republicans agree. Along racial lines, 65% of Whites believe Gay/lesbian relations should be legal while Nonwhites lie at 59%. And while just 41% of Protestants say they are morally acceptable, 66% of Catholics and 84% of non-Christians say same-sex relations are morally acceptable.

Apart from the issue of morality, 63% of Gallup respondents say gay or lesbian relations between consenting adults should be legal, while 31% say they should be illegal. Surprisingly, these numbers tightened in the lead-up to the 2004 Presidential campaign, and for a brief period things were divided fairly evenly after trending in favor of legality since the late 1990s.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE POLLING AND POLITICAL WORLD

Age is a big factor in Presidential election. [Gallup](#) poll shows that President Obama has a 21 point advantage with voters aged 18 to 29, while Romney has a 14 point advantage with people aged 70 and older.

Is Congress getting dumber? [Sunlight Foundation](#) finds that Congress speaks at 10.6 grade level, compared to 11.5 in 2005.

Obama leads in election, tied on who would be best with the economy. A new [Washington Post/ABC News](#) poll shows that while Obama leads 49 to 46 against Romney in the presidential election, people are tied 47 to 47 on who would be best at handling the economy.

Economic confidence in U.S. hits a new high. According to the [Gallup Economic Confidence Index](#), economic confidence is the highest it's been since 2008.

Catholics support contraception. [Gallup](#) finds that 82% of Catholics in the United States say birth control is morally acceptable.

What if People No Longer Talk to Pollsters?

Pew Research and Mark Blumenthal respond in this article from [The Political Wire](#).

“We’ve Got This”

Governor Christine and Mayor Booker release [parody video](#) for the New Jersey Press Association Legislative. It's a must watch.

Missed a past newsletter? They can be found on our website, [here](#).

PUBLIC POLLING

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
<i>Gallup</i>	May 20-May 22	Adults	47%	47%
<i>ABC News/Washington Post</i>	May 17-May 20	Adults	47%	49%

PRESIDENTIAL HEAD TO HEAD

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Obama	Romney
<i>ABC News/Washington Post</i>	May 17-May 20	Reg. Voters	49%	46%
<i>Gallup</i>	May 16-May 22	Reg. Voters	46%	46%

PARTY SELF ID

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep	Ind/Other
<i>Pollster.com Trend</i>	May 23	Adults	35.4%	31.1%	29.9%

GENERIC HOUSE BALLOT

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep
<i>USA Today/Gallup</i>	May 14-May 20	Adults	44%	50%

OBAMA POPULAR VOTE SHARE

Polling Firm	Date	Polly Vote	Polls	Iowa Electronic Markets	Econometric Models	Index Models
<i>PollyVote</i>	May 24	51.8%	51.1%	52.7%	49.9%	54.3%

DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Right Direction	Wrong Track
<i>NBC News/Wall St. Jrnl</i>	May 16-May 20	Adults	33%	58%
<i>Associated Press/GfK</i>	May 3-May 7	Adults	37%	56%