

POLL FINDS THAT MARGIN OF SUPPORT FOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGE RIGHTS HAS GROWN

(Burlington, Vermont, March 10) Vermonters' support for allowing gay and lesbian couples to legally marry tops opposition by a 20-point margin according to a recent poll. Independent pollster ORC Macro International asked a random sample of 400 Vermonters their views about whether gay and lesbian couples should be able to legally marry. Over forty-four percent (44.25%) of those surveyed said they supported legal marriage for gay and lesbian couples, and another 12.25% said they leaned in that direction. In contrast, only 30.75% said they did not support legal marriage for gay and lesbian couples, with another 5.25% leaning that way. The gap has grown considerably since ORC Macro International tested the same question two years ago.

Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force Chair Beth Robinson wasn't surprised. "More than 200 freedom to marry supporters turned out for the Rutland hearing of the Vermont Commission on Family Recognition and Protection. That's a striking illustration of just how far Vermonters have moved in the direction of fairness for our gay and lesbian citizens. The poll numbers confirm what we have learned from similar experiences all around the state."

Although support for legal marriage rights for same-sex couples topped opposition in every age group except for those 70 or older, the exceptionally strong support among younger respondents foreshadowed the future of this once-contentious issue. Nearly 90% of those in the 18-29 age group supported the freedom to marry, with another 5% leaning in each direction. Nobody was fully opposed. Likewise, nearly 75% of people aged 30-39 supported or leaned in favor of legal marriage for gay and lesbian couples. "Younger peoples' images of gay and lesbian people are shaped by their neighbors down the street, their parents' friends, or their own family members rather than the myths that so many older citizens grew up with," Robinson

explained. “We just need to keep telling our stories so that every Vermonter has the chance to form an opinion based on the reality of our families rather than myths and scare tactics.”

The independent poll conducted February 15 -18 was commissioned by the Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force. The margin of error in the study is +/- 5%. The Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force represents Vermonters who support the freedom of same-sex couples to legally marry. For further information, call Beth Robinson at (802) 388-6356.

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E1. Which of the following comes closest to your view about whether or not gay and lesbian couples should be able to legally marry:

	AGE										HOUSEHOLD										EDUCATION									
	Total	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 or older	Living Alone	Single w/kids	Couple w/kids	Couple no kids	Some High	High Grad	Some College	2-year	4-year	Post-Grad													
Total	400	19	43	89	107	64	65	84	21	123	160	12	92	39	47	107	98													
I support legal marriage for gay and lesbian couples	400	19	43	89	107	64	65	84	21	123	160	12	92	39	47	107	98													
I am leaning toward support for legal marriage	49	1	10	10	16	6	2	9	3	21	15	1	9	6	7	12	14													
I am leaning against support for legal marriage or	21	1	2	5	9	2	2	3	0	8	10	1	4	3	2	5	6													
I do not support legal marriage for gay and lesbian couples	123	0	5	32	28	23	32	23	5	35	59	7	42	11	16	30	15													
DON'T KNOW	24	0	4	3	6	3	6	6	4	7	6	2	8	3	4	4	2													
REFUSED	6	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	0	4	4	0	3	1	0	1	1													
	1.50%	0	0	0	0	3.13%	4.62%	2.38%	0	2.50%	2.50%	0	3.25%	2.56%	0	0.93%	1.02%													

E1. Which of the following comes closest to your view about whether or not gay and lesbian couples should be able to legally marry:

	REGISTERED VOTER		POLITICAL AFFILIATION										INCOME										GENDER	
	Yes	No	Democrat	Prog-Grat	Indep-essive	Indep-ndent	Under \$15K	\$15K to \$25K	\$25K to \$35K	\$35K to \$50K	\$50K to \$75K	\$75K to \$100K	Over \$100K	Male	Female									
Total	400	367	30	75	110	14	130	28	38	48	59	65	55	54	167	233								
I support legal marriage for gay and lesbian couples	400	367	30	75	110	14	130	28	38	48	59	65	55	54	167	233								
I am leaning toward support for legal marriage	177	160	16	14	63	11	56	10	18	23	26	29	24	27	70	107								
I am leaning against support for legal marriage or I do not support legal marriage for gay and lesbian couples	44.25%	43.60%	53.33%	18.67%	57.27%	78.57%	43.08%	35.71%	47.37%	47.92%	44.07%	44.62%	43.64%	50.00%	41.92%	45.92%								
I do not support legal marriage for gay and lesbian couples	123	114	8	49	16	0	41	11	12	16	18	21	13	14	62	61								
DON'T KNOW	24	21	2	4	4	1	9	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	9	15								
REFUSED	6.00%	5.72%	6.67%	5.33%	3.64%	7.14%	6.92%	10.71%	7.89%	4.17%	5.08%	4.62%	5.45%	0	5.39%	6.44%								
Total	1.50%	1.63%	0	0	1.82%	0	1.54%	3.57%	5.26%	0	0	0	3.64%	0	1.80%	1.29%								