

The American Values Survey

August 9 - 23, 2006

2,502 American Adults

African American and Hispanic Over Samples

Margin of Error: $\pm 1.95\%$

Conducted by Braun Research, Inc.

All Analysis by Robert P. Jones, Ph.D. and Dan Cox

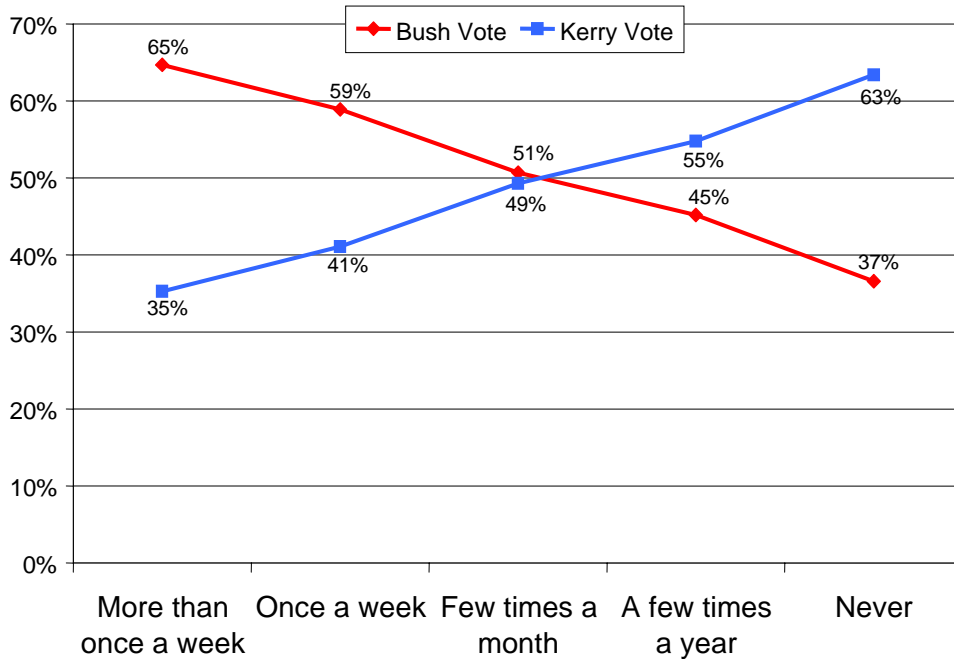
www.centerforamericanvalues.org

Funded by People for the American Way Foundation and People for the American Way



Closing the “God Gap”

The “God Gap” in 2004



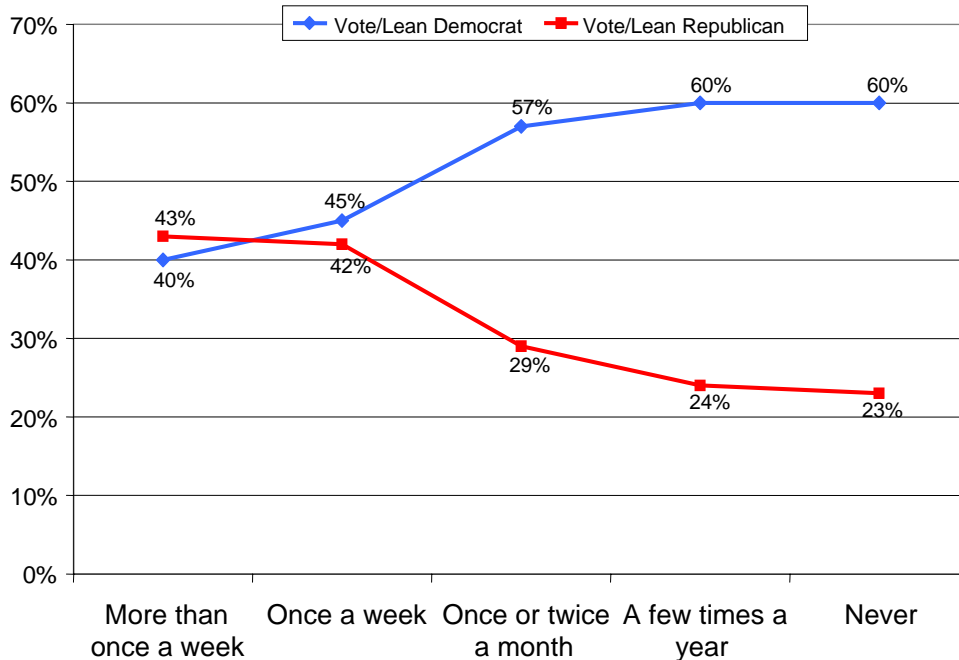
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Source: 2004 National Election Pool Exit Poll.



- The conventional wisdom that the Republican Party has a lock on religious or “values voters” is based on 2 things:
 - High 2004 support for President Bush--support that has now dramatically shifted; and
 - a sloppy exit poll question about moral values.
 - Our findings show that neither of these presuppositions remain true in 2006.
- In 2004, a linear relationship between vote and frequency of religious attendance led some pundits to speculate whether the Democratic Party faced a so-called “God Gap”, an inability to appeal to religious voters.
 - George W. Bush led John Kerry by 22 points among those who attended religious services once a week or more. Kerry performed better among those who attended less frequently or not at all.
 - This 22-point Republican advantage among weekly or more attenders was up from 6 points in 1992.
- And it was true that after race, religious attendance was the strongest single predictor of vote—stronger than gender, income, education, region; those who attended religious services once a week or more were 6 times more likely to vote for President George W. Bush.

The Closing of the “God Gap” in 2006



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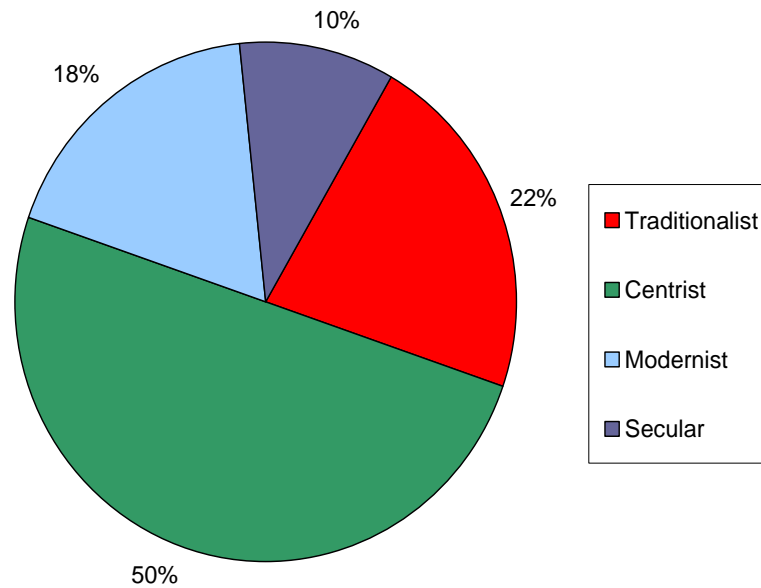
Q.53. *If the election for U.S. Congress were held today, would you be voting for the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate in your district where you live?*



- In sharp contrast to 2004, in 2006, whatever so-called “God gap” that has existed has completely closed.
- AND, the Republican Party was losing support among religious Americans long before the Foley scandal.
 - Among those who attend services once a week or more—where Republicans held their 20-point advantage in 2004—the parties are dead even among likely registered voters. In other words, the God gap has closed.
 - Among those who attend services once or twice a month, where President Bush slightly edged out John Kerry in 2004, Democrats hold a commanding 28-point lead.
 - These pretty regular attenders are an important religious constituency; President Bush made his largest gains—6 points—in that category between 2000 and 2004.
- It is clear that the most religious voters are moving away from the GOP in double-digit numbers. Contrary to the dominant rhetoric about “values voters”, our data shows that they are not the property of any political party, and no party has lost the ability to reach them.

Religious Orientation and Voting Values

Centrists Dominate American Religious Landscape



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Note: The religious orientation scale was based on a composite religiosity factor that utilized three basic types of religious measures: belief, practice and salience.



Denominational affiliation doesn't tell you as much about religious affiliation as it did fifty years ago. Traditionalist Mainline Protestants, for example, often have more in common with Traditionalist Catholics than with more modernist fellow church members sitting in the same pew with them.

To get a more reliable measure of cross-tradition religiosity, we adapted the work of scholar John Green, now senior fellow at the Pew Forum for Religion in Public Life. This approach constructs a composite measure of religiosity based on five measures of belief (belief in God, view of the Bible), practice (frequency of attendance and prayer), and the self-reported importance of religion to the respondent.

Contrary to claims of some of the dominant voices in the public arena, we found that fully half of Americans are centrist in their religious orientation—something worth keeping in mind when strident voices claim to speak for all people of faith.

Pluralities of every major religious group are Centrists.

Religious Orientations: Traditionalists, Centrists, and Modernists

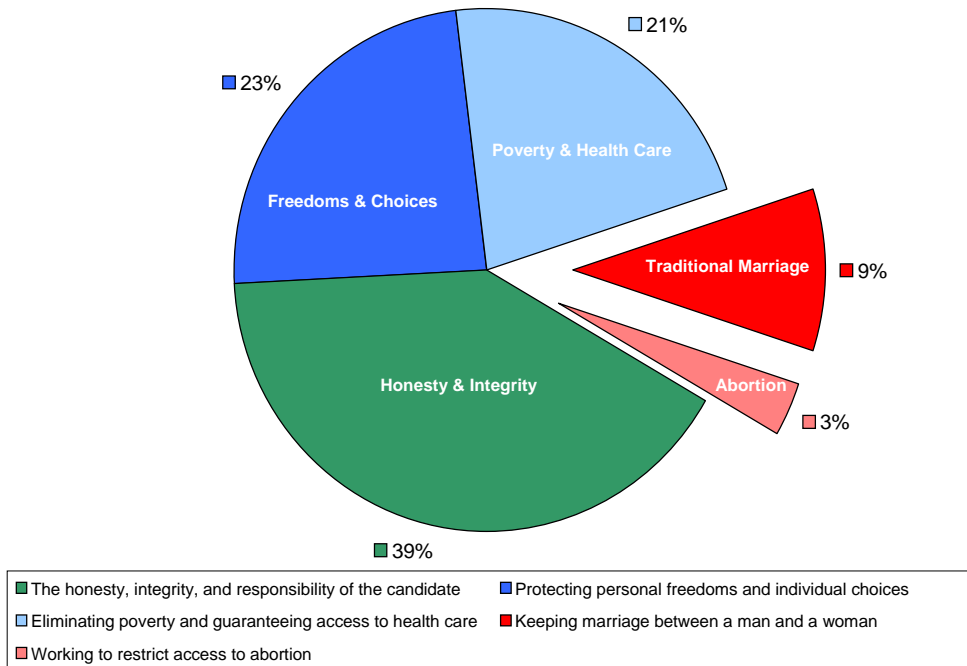


- **Religious Traditionalists Tend to:**
 - Attend religious services weekly or more
 - Pray daily
 - Believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible
 - Believe God exists without any doubts
 - Report that religion is a very important or the most important thing in their lives
- **Religious Centrists Tend to:**
 - Attend religious services weekly or a few times a month
 - Pray frequently but not necessarily daily
 - Believe that Bible is inspired but not literal word of God
 - Believe God exists without any doubts
 - Report that religion is very important part of their lives
- **Religious Modernists Tend to:**
 - Attend religious services once in a while or infrequently
 - Pray occasionally or infrequently
 - Believe that Bible is inspired but not literal word of God or an ancient book of myths and legends
 - Believe God exists but some have doubts
 - Report that religion is fairly important to their lives

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The Meaning of ‘Voting Your Values’

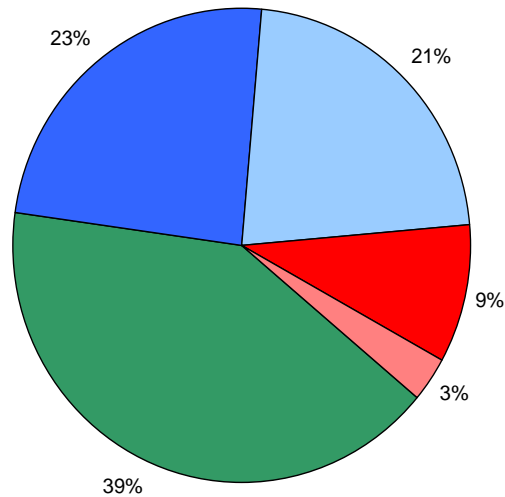


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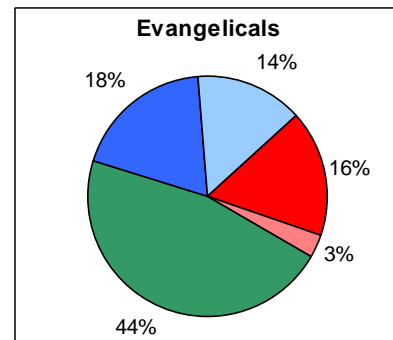
Q.22: *Moral values can mean different things to different people. What comes to mind when you think about voting your values?*

Americans have a wide range of things in mind when they think about voting their values. When people thought about “voting their values,” they thought about the honesty, integrity, and responsibility of the candidate more than any other values.

The Meaning of 'Voting Your Values'



- The honesty, integrity, and responsibility of the candidate
- Protecting freedoms and individual choices
- Eliminating poverty and guaranteeing access to health care
- Keeping marriage between a man and a woman
- Working to restrict access to abortion



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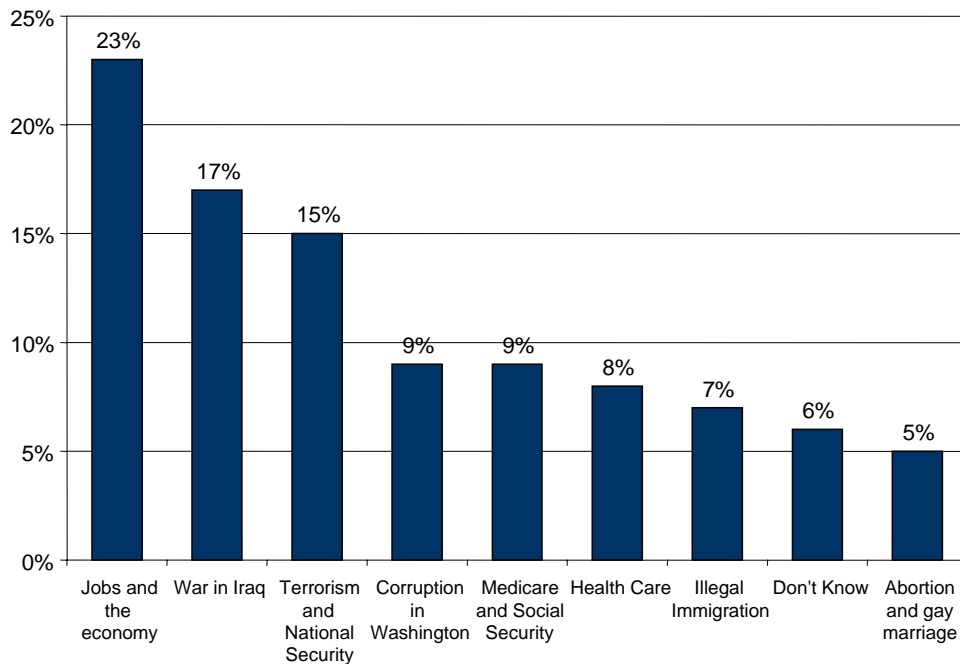
Q.22: *Moral values can mean different things to different people. What comes to mind when you think about voting your values?*



Even among Evangelicals, the honesty, integrity and responsibility of the candidate was by far the value most frequently mentioned when voting their values

Only 1 in 5 (19%) Evangelicals think primarily about traditional marriage and restricting access to abortion when voting their values.

Abortion and Gay Marriage: Least Important Issues in 2006 Vote



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Q.14: Thinking about the upcoming elections this year, which ONE of the following issue areas would be MOST important to you in deciding how to vote for a candidate for Congress?



Social issues such as abortion and gay marriage were the least important issues to the vast majority of Americans deciding how to vote.

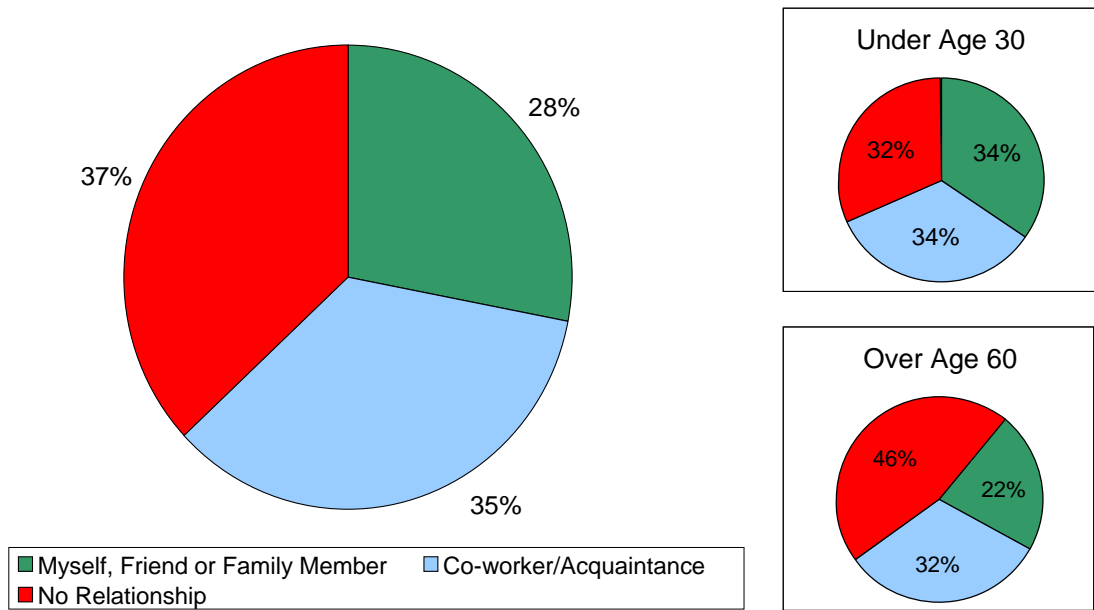
Only 1 in 10 Evangelicals said that abortion and gay marriage were the most important issues in their 2006 vote.

Even among a variety of conservative demographic groups, no more than 13% of any group said abortion and gay marriage were the most important issues in deciding their upcoming vote.

Even when abortion and gay marriage were placed head to head with poverty and affordable health care, the overwhelming majority of Americans (85% versus 12%) said poverty and health care were more important issues in the country today than these controversial social issues.

LGBT Issues and Strategies

Relationship with Gay or Lesbian Persons



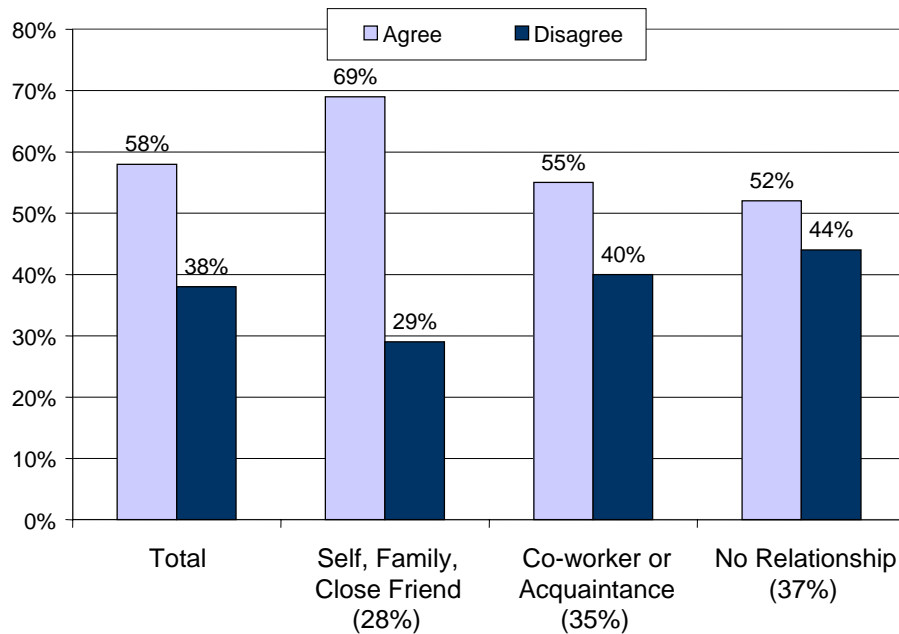
12

Q.11: Do you personally know or work with someone who is gay or lesbian? **Q.12:** Is that person yourself, a member of your family, a close friend, a co-worker or an acquaintance?

- Almost two-thirds of Americans (64%) say they know someone who is gay.
- 29% say that they have a close friend, a family member who is gay or that they themselves are gay.
- There are significant generational differences:
 - Among Americans age 18 to 29, 34% say that either they themselves, a family member or a close friend is gay;
 - The oldest Americans, age 60 and over, report knowing fewer gay or lesbian people. Only 22% say that they have a family member, close friend or that they themselves are gay. Forty-six percent say they don't know anyone who is gay.
 - Generational differences are especially pronounced in the South where 40% of 18 to 29-year-olds say they have a close friend, family member or that they themselves are gay compared to just 17% of those over the age of 60.

Family Recognition

Support for Family Recognition By Relationship with Gay or Lesbian Person



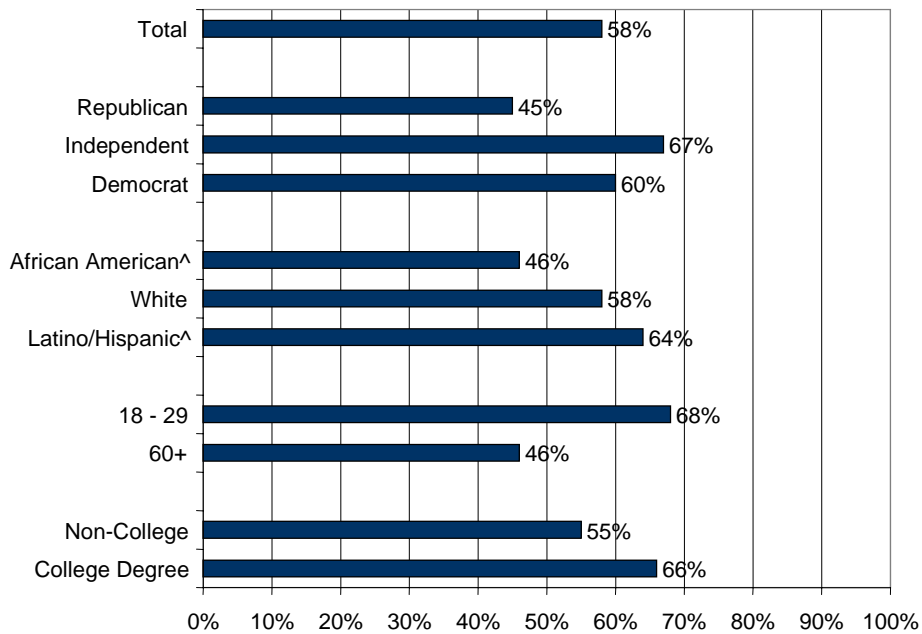
14

Q.8d: (Split A:) *Generally speaking gays and lesbians in long-term committed relationships should be able to have the same rights as married couples in areas of hospital visitation, health insurance, and pension coverage.*



- The type of relationship one has with a gay or lesbian is highly correlated with views on equal family rights for gay and lesbian couples.
- Sixty-nine percent of those who say that they are gay, have a family member who is gay or a close friend who is gay support family recognition, compared to just 52% of those who do not know anyone who is gay.
- There is little difference in support for family recognition between those who have a casual acquaintance or co-worker who is gay and those who do not know anyone who is gay.

Support for Family Recognition By Demographic Groups



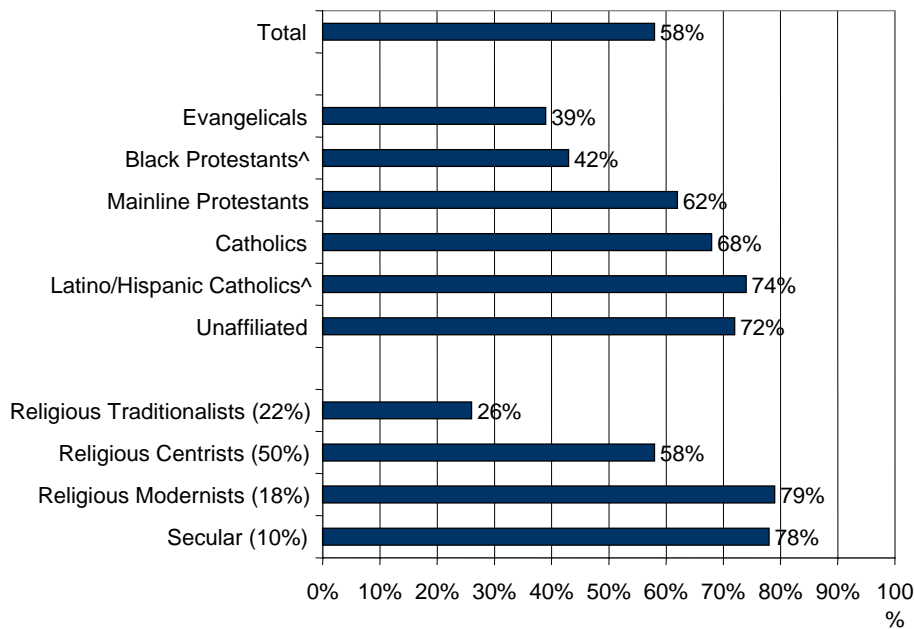
15

Q.8d: (Split A:) *Generally speaking gays and lesbians in long-term committed relationships should be able to have the same rights as married couples in areas of hospital visitation, health insurance, and pension coverage.*



- A solid majority of Americans (58%) support equal family rights for gay and lesbian couples.
- The demographic groups most supportive of family recognition are Americans under the age of 30 (68%), political independents (67%), those with a college education (66%), and Hispanics (64%).
- Republicans (45%), Americans over the age of 60 (46%), and African Americans (46%) are less supportive of family recognition.
- In terms of political affiliation, Independents are much closer to Democrats (in fact they are more progressive than Democrats on this issue) than Republicans.

Support for Family Recognition By Religious Groups



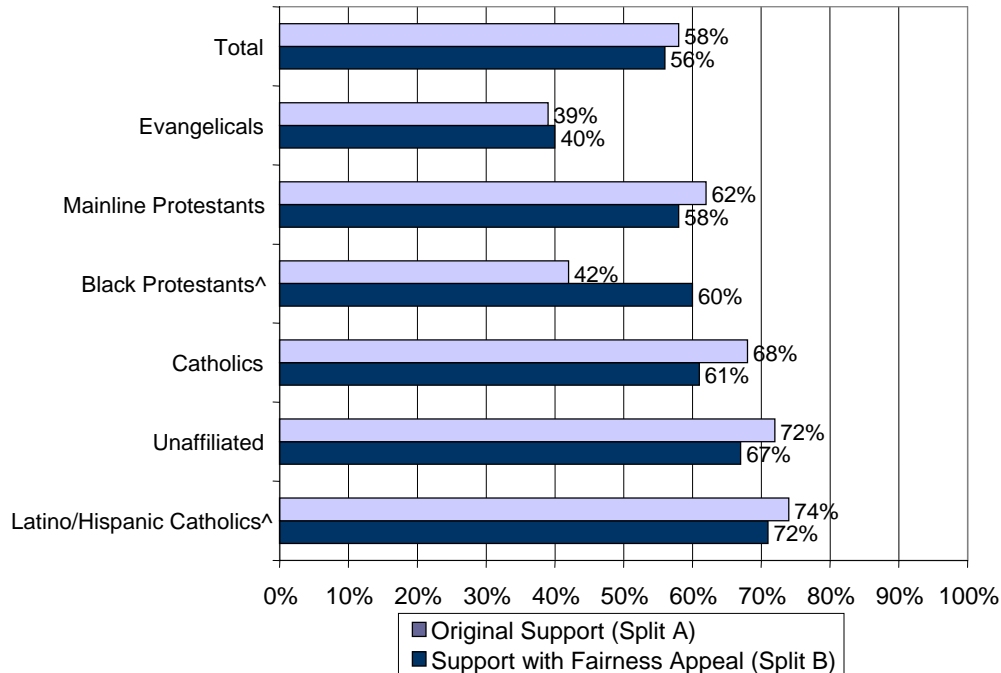
16

Q.8d: (Split A:) *Generally speaking gays and lesbians in long-term committed relationships should be able to have the same rights as married couples in areas of hospital visitation, health insurance, and pension coverage.*



- Solid majorities of most religious groups, including Centrists groups such as Mainline Protestants (62%) and Catholics (68%), support equal rights for gay and lesbian partners.
- Almost three-quarters of Hispanic Catholics (74%) support these rights, making this group the most progressive religious group of the 5 major Christian denominational families.
- Notably, Hispanic Catholics are more progressive than Hispanics as a whole (74% compared to 64% support).
- Although Secular Americans and Religious Modernists both overwhelmingly support family recognition, there are intensity differences between them. Almost half of Secular Americans (49%) strongly support gay rights compared to 30% of Religious Modernists.

Fairness & Nondiscrimination Frame for Family Recognition by Religious Group



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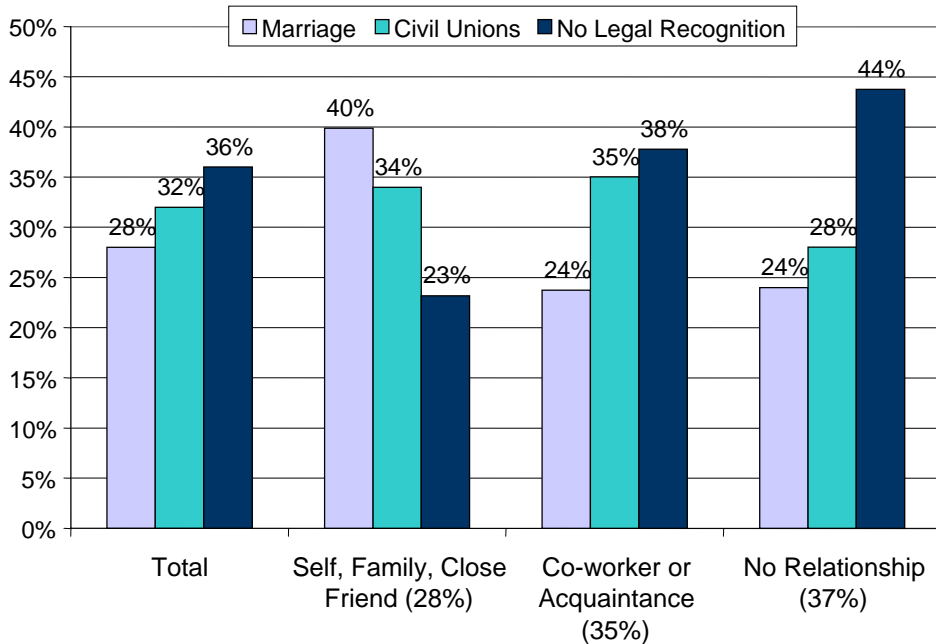
Q.8d: (Split A: *Generally speaking*) (Split B: *It's only fair that*) gays and lesbians in long-term committed relationships should be able to have the same rights as married couples in areas of hospital visitation, health insurance, and pension coverage. (Split B: *Discrimination is always wrong*).



- Framing equal rights for gay and lesbian couples in terms of fairness and nondiscrimination is an effective way to communicate with African Americans.
- Black Protestants, a group that has historically maintained relatively low support for gay rights, move from a plurality of support (42%) to a solid majority (60%), a dramatic 18-point shift. Note that this movement moves them to parity with Mainline Protestants in support for family recognition.
- However, other non-minority religious groups do not respond as well. In fact, support for family recognition among both white mainline Protestants and non-Hispanic Catholics is slightly lower when the argument is presented in the context of fairness and non-discrimination.
- These differences with regard to the fairness/nondiscrimination frame are driven by race:
 - Support for family recognition declines 6 points among whites (58% to 52%).
 - Support for family recognition increases 14 points among African Americans (46% to 60%).
 - Support for family recognition increases 4 points among Hispanics (64% to 68%).

Marriage Equality

Support for Marriage Equality By Relationship with Gay or Lesbian Person



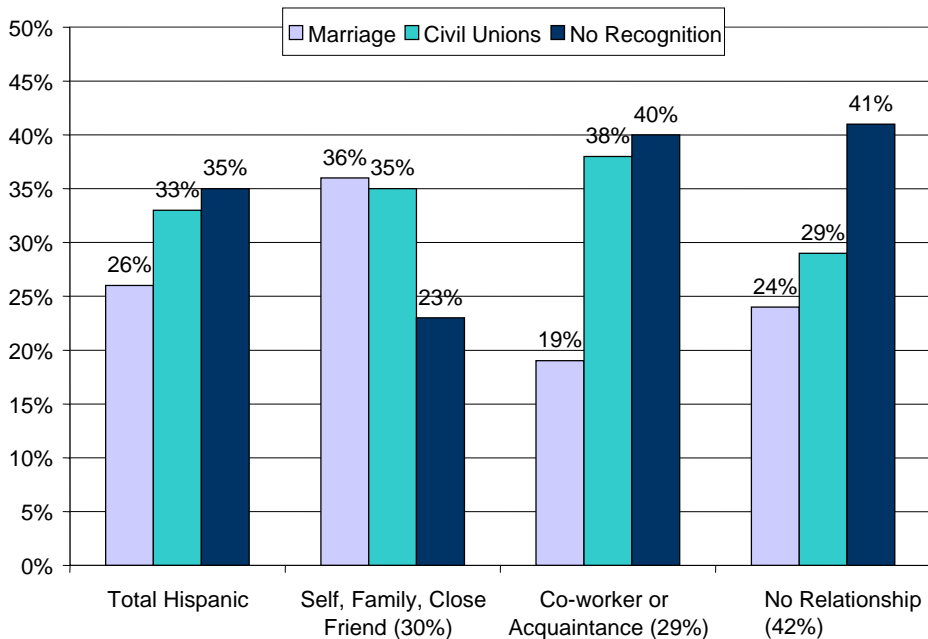
19

Q.9: Which of the following three statements comes closest to your view: Gay couples should be allowed to marry; Gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions, but not marry, OR There should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship?



- Like support for family recognition, the type of relationship one has with gay or lesbian persons is highly correlated with views on same-sex marriage. Support for marriage equality is markedly higher among those who have a close relationship with a gay or lesbian person (40%) than among those who have a casual relationship or no relationship (24%).
- Forty-four percent of those who have no relationship with a gay or lesbian person oppose any type of legal recognition for same-sex couples compared to 23% among those who have a close relationship, more than a 20 point gap.
- Those with a close relationship with a gay or lesbian person were the only group with a plurality supporting same-sex marriage (40%), although support is still well below majority. Almost three-quarters support either marriage equality or civil unions.
- Knowing a gay or lesbian co-worker or acquaintance increases support for civil unions by 7 points (28% to 35%) but does not effect support for marriage, relative to those who report no relationships with gay or lesbian persons.

Support for Marriage Equality By Relationship with Gay or Lesbian Person—Latinos



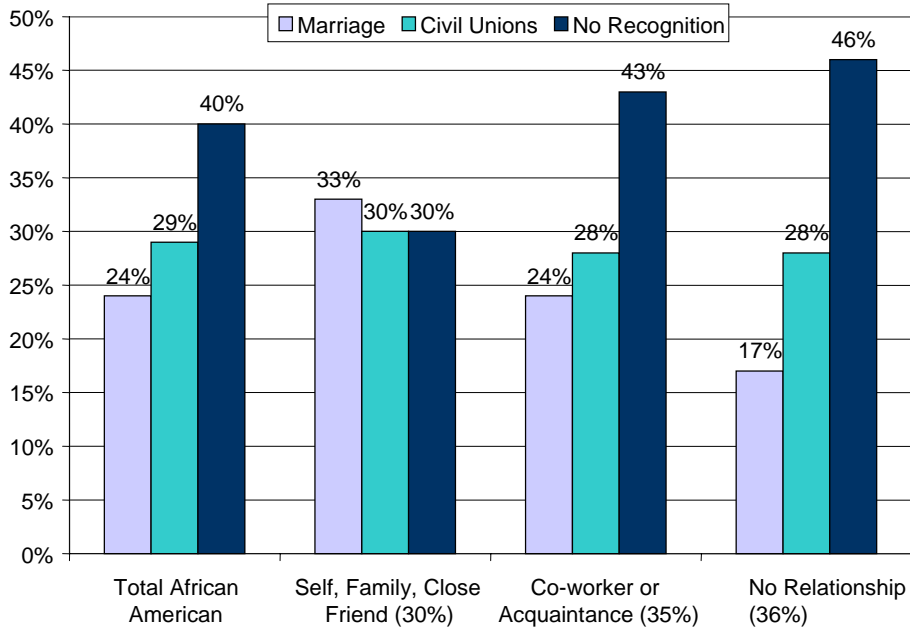
20

Q.9: Which of the following three statements comes closest to your view: Gay couples should be allowed to marry; Gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions, but not marry, OR There should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship?



- Among Latinos, social relationships also have a significant effect on support for marriage equality. Support for marriage increases by 10 points among those with a close friend or family member (26% to 36%).
- Having a co-worker or acquaintance slightly increases support for either marriage or civil unions (53% to 57%) relative to those with no relationship with a gay or lesbian person.
 - This increase in support is entirely in the civil unions category, which increases from 29% to 38%.
 - Support for marriage is actually slightly lower (24% to 19%) among those who report their closest relationship is with a gay or lesbian co-worker or acquaintance compared to those who know no one gay or lesbian.
- Slightly More Hispanics report that they have no relationship with a gay or lesbian person (42%) than either the total population (37%) or African Americans (36%).

Support for Marriage Equality By Relationship with Gay or Lesbian Person—African Americans



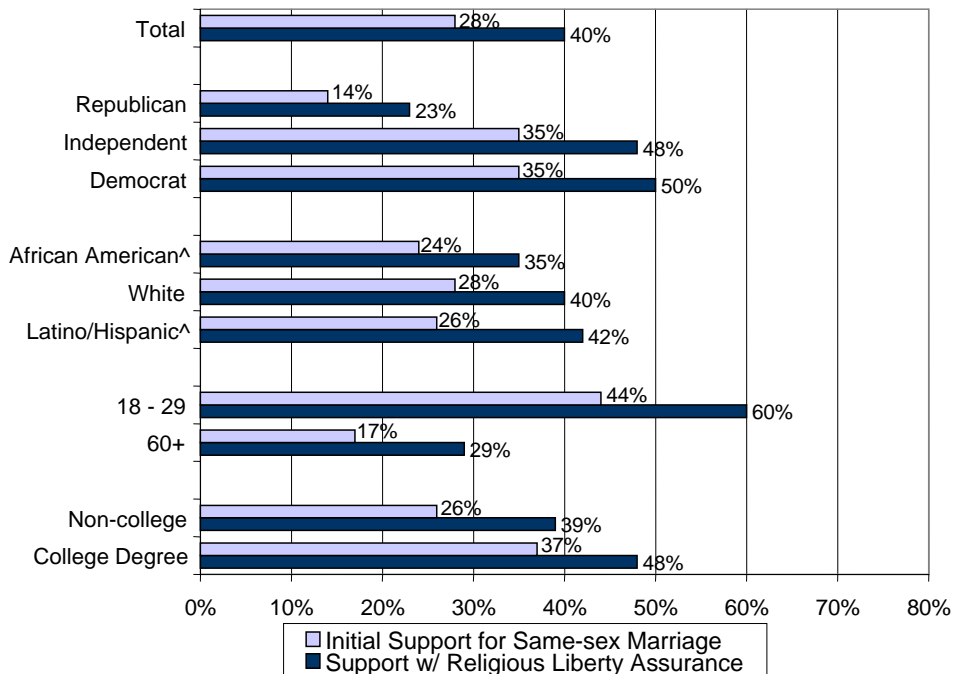
21

Q.9: Which of the following three statements comes closest to your view: Gay couples should be allowed to marry; Gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions, but not marry, OR There should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship?



- Among African Americans, having a close relationship with a gay or lesbian person has a less dramatic effect than with the population as a whole, but support for marriage increases by 9 points (24% to 33%).
- Unlike other populations, having a co-worker or acquaintance does not significantly increase support for civil unions, but it does increase support for marriage relative to those who have no relationship with a gay or lesbian person.

Increased Support for Marriage Equality With Religious Liberty Assurance



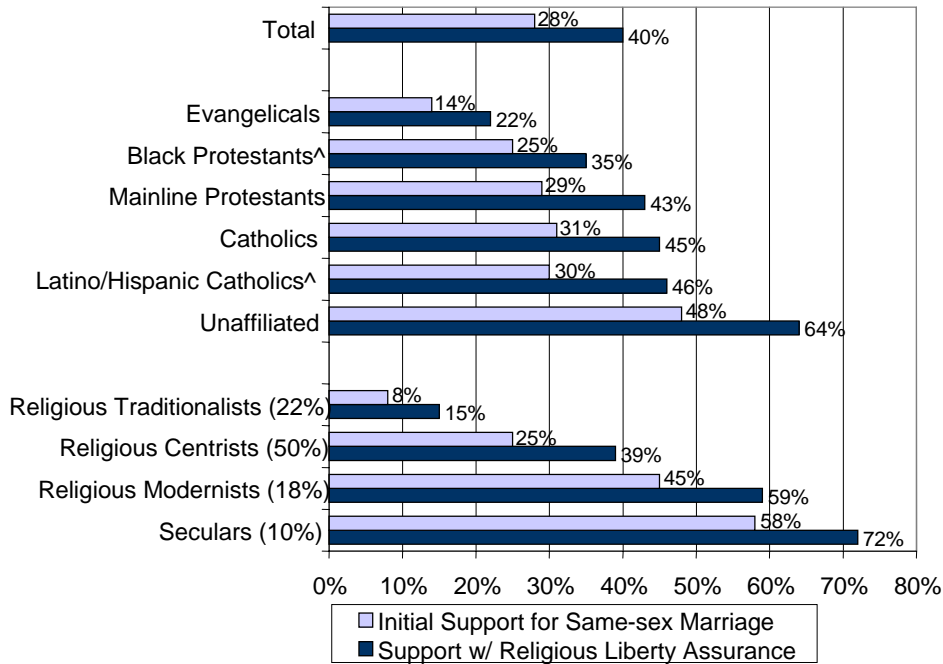
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Q.10: *If the law guaranteed that no church or congregation would be required to perform marriages for same-sex couples, I would support allowing gay couples to legally marry.*



- In a very religious country it is not surprising that some citizens' concerns about same-sex marriage relate to maintaining the integrity and independence of their congregation or church
- Currently only 28% of Americans support same-sex marriage, about another third support civil unions and a third oppose any legal recognition. However, if provided with an assurance that their church or congregation would not be required to perform marriages for same-sex couples, support for same-sex marriage increases significantly to 40%, a 12 point increase.
- Among some groups the increase is more dramatic:
 - Young Americans (18 – 29) go from a plurality of support (44%) to a solid majority (60%).
 - Hispanics move from 26% support to 42% support a 16 point shift.
 - Democrats move from about a third support to a slim majority (50%); Independents move similarly to a near majority (48%). Independents are much more closely in line with Democrats (48% to 50%) than Republicans (23%).

Increased Support for Marriage Equality With Religious Liberty Assurance



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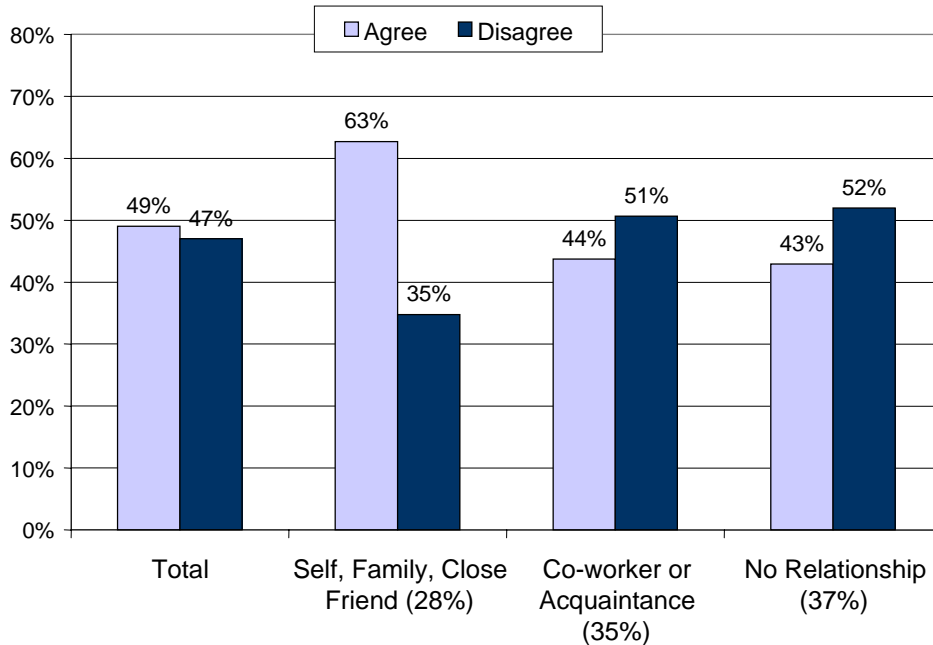
Q.10: *If the law guaranteed that no church or congregation would be required to perform marriages for same-sex couples, I would support allowing gay couples to legally marry.*



- The assurance that no congregation or church will be required to perform same-sex marriages resonates with many religious groups.
- Catholics increase their support for same-sex marriage from 31% to 45%, Mainline Protestants from 28% to 43%.
- This message seems to be most effective among Hispanic Catholics who move from 30% to 46%, a 16 point increase.
- Religious Traditionalists and Evangelicals are much less inclined to support same-sex marriage even after being provided a religious liberty assurance; only 22% of Evangelicals and 15% of Religious Traditionalists support same-sex marriage even with this assurance of religious liberty.

Adoption

Support for Adoption By Relationship with Gay or Lesbian Person



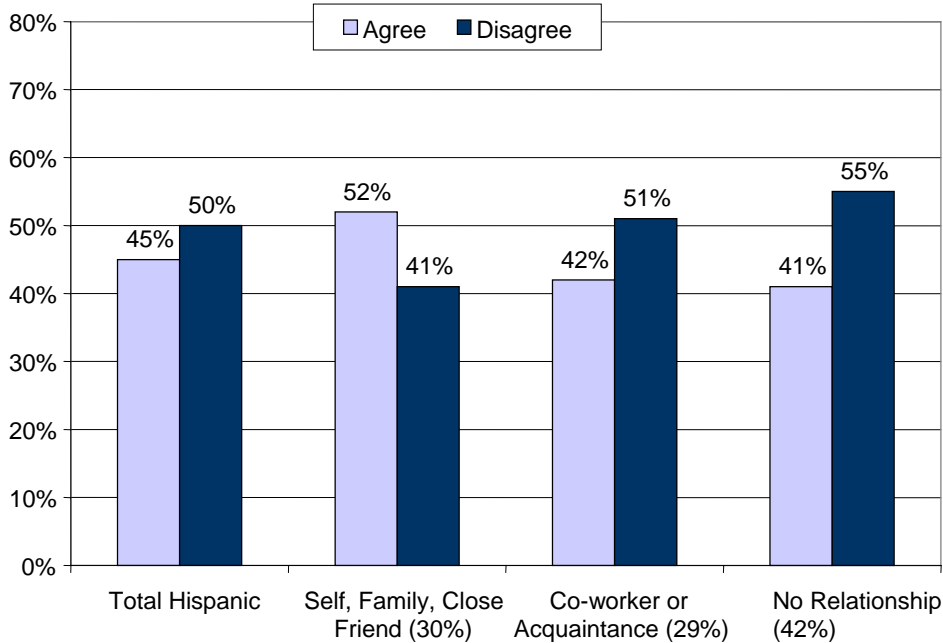
25

Q.8e: *Gay and lesbian people who meet all other qualifications should legally be able to adopt children.*



- Support for adoption by gay and lesbian people is much higher among those with a close relationship to a gay person; 63% support adoption.
- There was virtually no difference in support for adoption between those with no relationship and those with a casual relationship with a gay person.

Support for Adoption By Relationship with Gay or Lesbian Person—Latinos



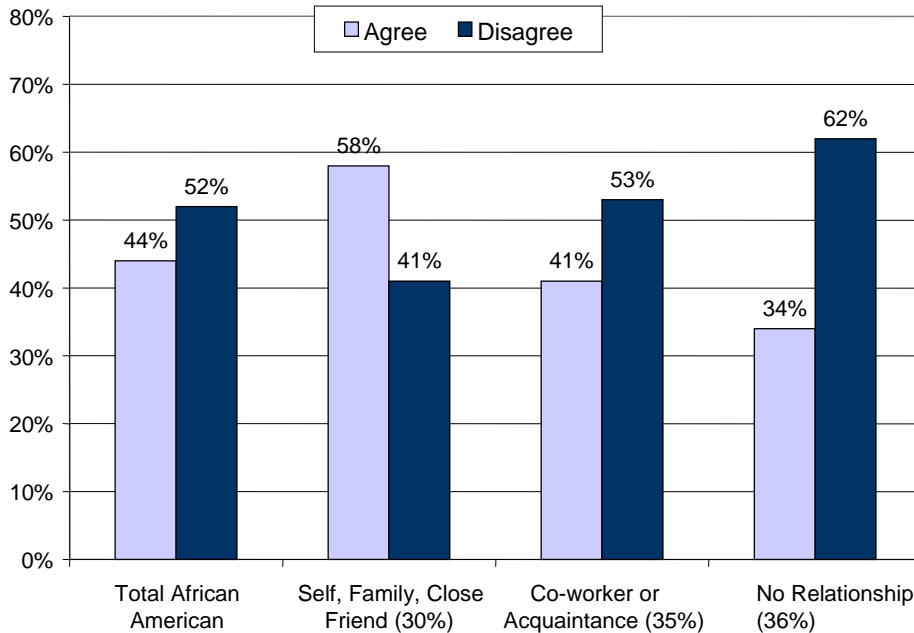
26

Q.8e: *Gay and lesbian people who meet all other qualifications should legally be able to adopt children.*



- Latinos show slightly less support for adoption by gay or lesbian persons than the population as a whole (45% versus 49%).
- Having a close relationship with a gay or lesbian person has a less dramatic effect on support for adoption compared to the general public (7 point increase versus a 14 point increase).
- As with the total populations, there was virtually no difference in support for adoption between those with no relationship and those with a casual relationship with a gay person.

Support for Adoption By Relationship with Gay or Lesbian Person—African Americans



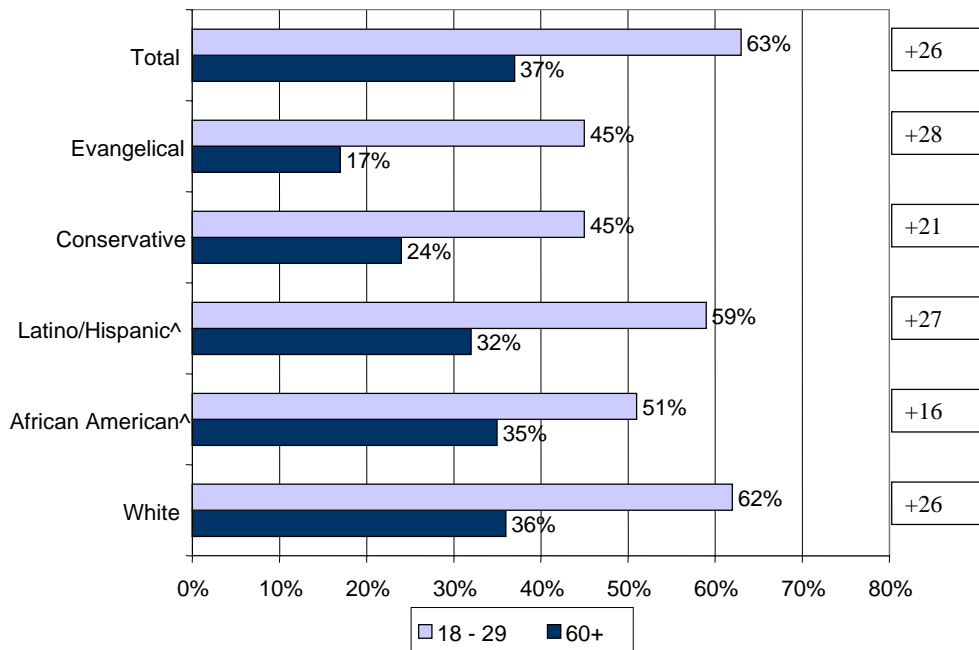
27

Q.8e: *Gay and lesbian people who meet all other qualifications should legally be able to adopt children.*



- African Americans show slightly less support for adoption by gay or lesbian persons than the population as a whole (44% versus 49%) and almost identical support compared to Latinos (44% versus 45%).
- Having a close relationship with a gay or lesbian person has a significant effect on support for adoption, a 14 point increase, which is the same increase seen in the national population.
- As we found with other LGBT issues, having a casual acquaintance with a gay or lesbian person has a stronger effect on African Americans than on other populations, increasing support for adoption by 7 points (from 34% to 41%) compared to those with no relationship.

Support for Adoption By Age and Demographic Groups

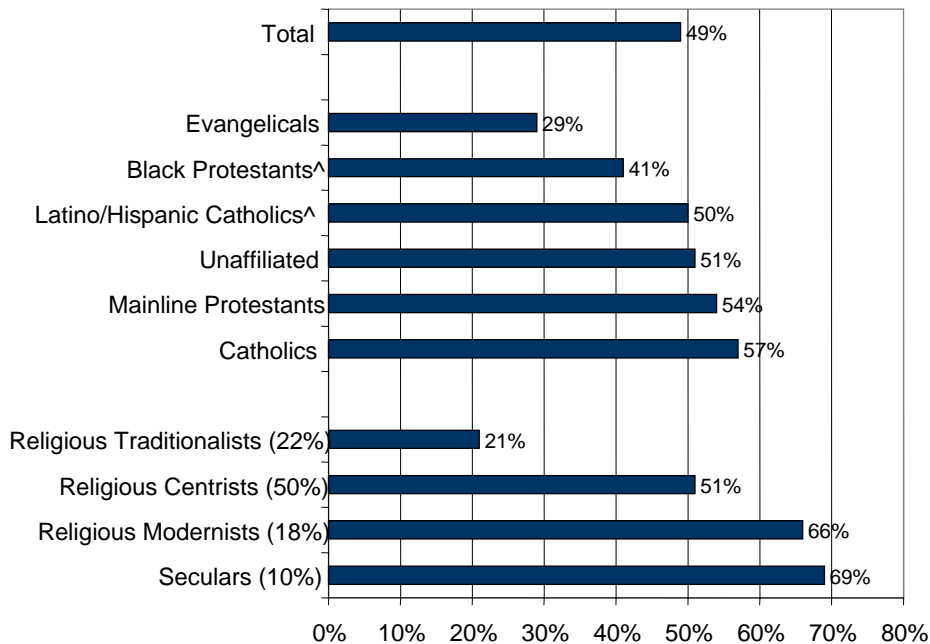


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Q.8e: *Gay and lesbian people who meet all other qualifications should legally be able to adopt children.*

- Like most other LGBT issues, age is highly correlated with support for adoption by people who are gay and lesbian.
- Close to two-thirds of young Americans (under the age of 30) support adoption, compared to just 37% of Americans over the age of 60.
- This pattern holds even among certain ethnic and religious groups that are more conservative on LGBT issues:
 - A majority of young African Americans support adoption;
 - 45% of young Evangelicals support adoption rights, while just 17% of those over the age of 60 support it.

Support for Adoption By Religious Group



29

Q.8e: *Gay and lesbian people who meet all other qualifications should legally be able to adopt children.*

- Unlike same-sex marriage which garners less than one third public support, the country is almost evenly divided over adoption rights for gay and lesbian people, with a slim plurality supporting adoption rights (49% vs. 47%).
- Among most major religious traditions there is a majority support for adoption rights, including 57% of non-Hispanic Catholics and 54% of Mainline Protestants.
- A majority of Religious Centrists (51%), who represent half the country, support adoption rights for gay and lesbian people.
- The only religious groups where a majority does not support adoption rights for gay and lesbian people are Religious Traditionalists (21%), Evangelicals (29%), and Black Protestants (41%).