

**More Than Half of Americans Support Same-Sex Marriage**  
November 16-19, 2012

Following an election that saw voters in three states – Maine, Maryland, and Washington – approve measures to legalize same-sex marriage, a recent CBS News Poll finds 51% of Americans nationwide think same-sex marriage should be legal, while four in 10 do not.

With the addition of these three states, same-sex marriage will become legal in nine states plus the District of Columbia. Also, Minnesota voters rejected an amendment to their state's constitution that would have defined marriage as only between a man and a woman.

The American public's views on allowing same-sex couples to marry are the same as they were in September, but support for same-sex marriage has risen since the spring and summer of this year.

	<b>Same-Sex Marriage Should Be...</b>	
	Legal	Not Legal
Now	51%	41
9/2012	51%	41
7/2012	46%	44
5/2012	42%	51

There is a generational divide on this issue. Young Americans (those ages 18-29) are some of the strongest proponents of allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry. 72% of them support it, as do a majority --albeit a smaller one-- of Americans ages 30-44. However, support for same-sex marriage drops to 44% among those who are age 45-64 and even further to just a third of Americans age 65 and over. In fact, 56% of seniors oppose permitting same-sex couples to marry.

The CBS News Poll also finds more women (53%) than men (48%) think same-sex marriage should be legal. Women voters were instrumental in getting the ballot measures legalizing same-sex marriage passed. According to exit polls conducted in each of the three states, majorities of women approved of the same-sex marriage initiatives, while men opposed them.

Nationwide, opinions on same-sex marriage also differ by marital status. Married Americans are divided in their views, while 57% of unmarried Americans support allowing same-sex couples to marry.

As might be expected, there are differences by political party. Most Democrats think it should be legal for same-sex marriage couples to marry, while most Republicans do not. 55% of independents support marriage for gay and lesbian couples.

### Same-Sex Marriage Should Be...

	Legal	Not Legal
Total	51%	41
Age 18-29	72%	22
30-44	53%	38
45-64	44%	49
65+	33%	56
Men	48%	43
Women	53%	40
Married	45%	47
Not married	57%	35
Republican	25%	66
Democrat	63%	29
Independent	55%	37

Prior to this past summer, the CBS News Poll had asked a different three-part question to measure attitudes on same-sex relationships which included a “civil unions” category. This question was last asked in May 2012 and that survey found most Americans supported some type of legal recognition for same-sex couples (38% through marriage and 24% through civil unions). Over the years that this question was asked, the percentage supporting marriage increased from just 22% in 2004 reaching a high of 42% in April 2009.

### Same-Sex Couples...

	5/2012	2/2012	9/2011	4/2010	4/2009	6/2006	7/2005	3/2004
Should be allowed to marry	38%	40%	38%	39%	42%	27%	27%	22%
Should be allowed civil unions	24	23	27	24	25	30	27	33
Should have no legal recognition	33	31	28	30	28	40	43	40

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This poll was conducted by telephone from November 16-19, 2012 among 1,100 adults nationwide. Phone numbers were dialed from samples of both standard land-line and cell phones. The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus three percentage points. The margin of error for the sample of registered voters could be plus or minus three points. The error for subgroups may be higher. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

**CBS NEWS POLL**  
**Same-Sex Marriage**  
**November 16-19, 2012**

q3 Do you think it should be legal or not legal for same-sex couples to marry?

	** TOTAL RESPONDENTS **				
	*** Party ID ***				
	Total	Rep	Dem	Ind	Sep12a
	%	%	%	%	%
Legal	51	25	63	55	51
Not legal	41	66	29	37	41
Don't know/No answer	8	8	8	8	7

	<u>UNWEIGHTED</u>	<u>WEIGHTED</u>	
Total Respondents	1,100		
Republicans	298	272	(25%)
Democrats	394	380	(35%)
Independents	408	448	(40%)