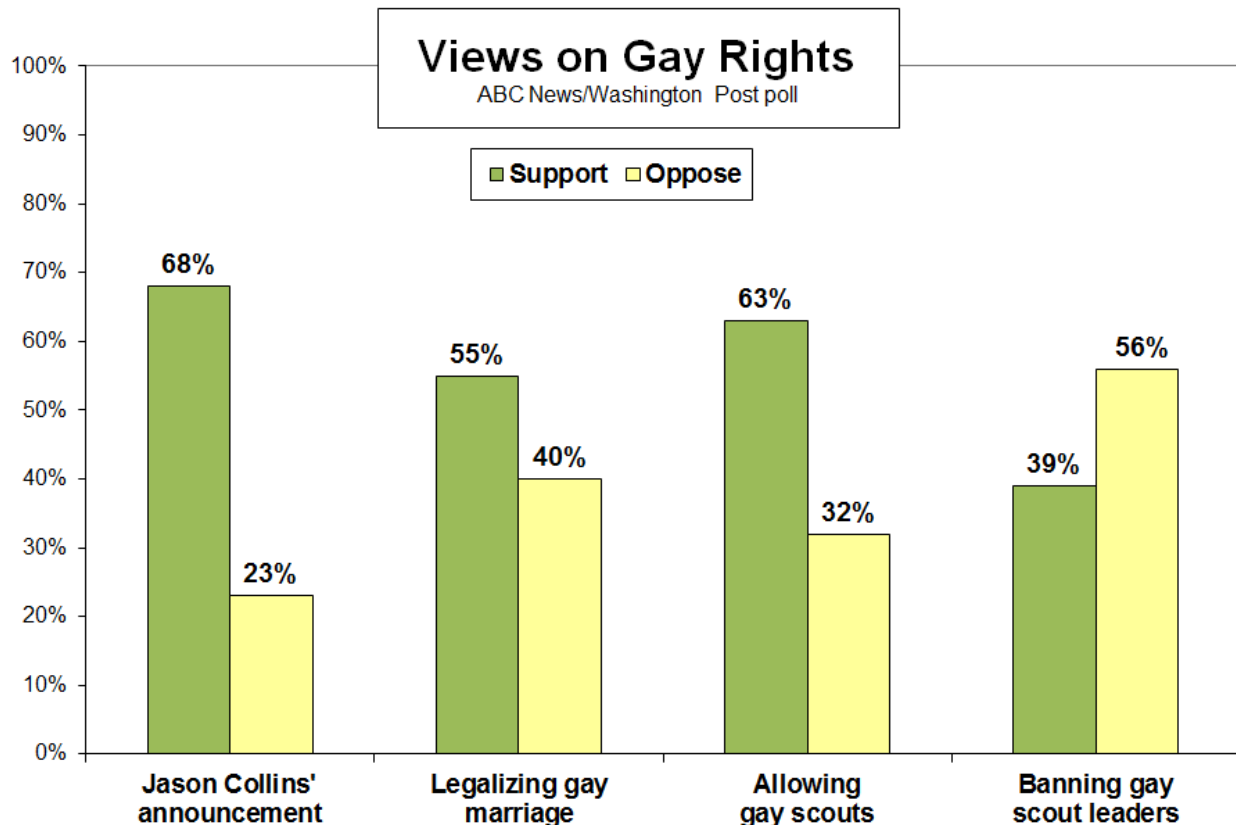


## **Poll Finds Majority Acceptance of Gays From the B-ball Court to the Boy Scouts**

A new ABC News/Washington Post poll finds further public acceptance of gay rights in the United States, in areas ranging from the professional basketball court to the Boy Scouts, as well as the institution of marriage.

Nearly seven in 10 Americans support the decision by professional basketball player Jason Collins to disclose publicly that he's gay, the survey finds. Most support the Boy Scouts of America's plan to admit gay scouts, while opposing its continued ban on gay adults. And 55 percent say gays and lesbians should be allowed to marry legally.



While partisan and ideological differences on each of these are large, centrist groups – e.g., independents and moderates – tilt the balance, underscoring a dramatic shift in favor of gay rights that's accelerated in recent years.

**STRENGTH OF SENTIMENT** – Backing is widest and deepest for Collins, with 68 percent of Americans saying they support the NBA center’s decision to announce his sexual orientation. Those who “strongly” support his step outnumber his strong critics by a 3-1 margin.

A substantial 63 percent in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), also support the Boy Scouts’ plan to begin admitting gay scouts younger than 18, while 56 percent oppose its intention to continue to ban gay adults. Again strength of sentiment favors gay rights, by 16- and 12-point margins, respectively. Both policies go to a vote of the group’s governing council, meeting the week of May 20 in Grapevine, Texas.

Some of these views even overcome political sentiment to some degree. Majorities of Republicans and conservatives, 52 and 54 percent, respectively, support Collins’ step, and 53 percent of Republicans support admitting gay scouts. These groups are much less apt to support admitting gay scout leaders or legalizing gay marriage.

Support’s far higher in other groups. Nearly three-quarters of moderates and independents support Collins, as do more than eight in 10 Democrats and liberals. Than two-thirds or more in each of these groups favor admitting gay scouts, and six in 10 or more oppose continuing to ban gay adults from scouting.

Support for gay marriage, for its part, reaches six in 10 or more in each of these groups, far higher than its support among conservatives and Republicans, 33 percent in both groups.

	----- Support-Oppose -----			
	Collins’ announcement	Legalizing gay marriage	Allowing gay scouts	Banning gay scout leaders
All	68-23%	55-40	63-32	39-56
Democrats	81-13	70-27	70-27	29-68
Republicans	52-40	33-64	53-40	61-36
Independents	73-21	62-35	67-29	35-61
Liberals	85-10	79-20	79-20	24-75
Moderates	73-20	62-32	70-25	35-59
Conservatives NET	54-38	33-62	49-44	53-40
Somewhat cons.	59-32	39-55	52-41	48-46
Very cons.	45-47	24-72	45-50	62-33
Men	67-24	50-43	60-35	46-49
Women	69-22	59-37	66-29	32-63
College grad	81-12	68-29	71-25	38-58
Non-grad	63-28	50-45	59-35	39-55
18-29	81-14	76-21	73-25	22-75
30-39	75-17	60-33	65-28	39-57
40-64	63-26	49-47	59-35	45-48
65-plus	58-32	39-55	58-37	45-50

There are other differences among groups. Gender differences are especially wide on one issue: While men divide about evenly on the question of gay scout leaders, women oppose their exclusion by nearly 2-1. There's a customary age gap on each item, with support for gay rights higher among younger adults; most strikingly, 76 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds favor gay marriage, while just 39 percent of seniors agree. And on all issues except scout leaders there's a gap among education groups, with more-educated adults more supportive of gay rights.

ABC/Post polls since 2003 have asked if people think it "should be legal or illegal for gay and lesbian couples to get married"; the number saying this should be legal rose from a low of 32 percent (among registered voters) in 2004 to 58 percent this March. This poll asks people if they support or oppose "allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally." Support is similar, 55 percent, while strength of sentiment divides more closely. The Supreme Court is expected to rule on two gay marriage cases next month.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone May 1-5, 2013, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,008 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS/Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

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Full results follow.

1. Overall, do you support or oppose (ITEM)? Do you feel that way strongly, or somewhat?

a. allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
5/5/13	55	35	20	40	9	32	5

Compare to: Do you think it should be legal or illegal for gay and lesbian couples to get married? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Legal -----			----- Illegal -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
3/10/13	58	41	17	36	6	30	6
5/20/12	53	39	14	39	7	32	8
3/10/12	52	36	17	43	7	36	5
7/17/11	51	32	19	45	9	36	4
3/13/11	53	36	17	44	9	35	3
2/8/10	47	31	16	50	9	42	3
4/24/09*	49	31	18	46	7	39	5
6/4/06	36	24	13	58	7	51	5
8/28/05	39	NA	NA	58	NA	NA	3
8/29/04 RV	32	18	14	62	10	52	5

3/7/04	38	24	14	59	11	48	3
2/22/04	39	25	13	55	6	49	6
1/18/04	41	NA	NA	55	NA	NA	4
9/7/03	37	"	"	55	"	"	7

\*2009 "gay and lesbian" and "homosexual" wordings half sampled. 2005 "gay and lesbian", others "homosexual".

b. the decision by professional basketball player Jason Collins to publicly announce that he's gay

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
5/5/13	68	47	21	23	8	15	8

c. the plan by the Boy Scouts of America to admit scouts who are gay

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
5/5/13	63	39	24	32	9	23	5

d. the plan by the Boy Scouts of America to continue to ban gay adults from being scout leaders

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
5/5/13	39	26	13	56	17	38	5

\*\*\* END \*\*\*