



FREEDOM
TO MARRY

Catholics and the Freedom to Marry

Fair-minded Catholics are increasingly supportive of the Freedom to Marry, despite positions taken by Church hierarchy.

- » The Catholic faith has called us to fully commit to each other — laws in five states and the District of Columbia now provide couples with recognition of their lifetime commitment.
- » How the Catholic Church handles the sacrament of marriage is rightfully within the bishops' purview, however ending civil marriage discrimination is a matter of promoting fairness and freedom.
- » Many Catholics who support marriage for same-sex couples are guided by the Church's tradition as a leader in social justice issues. Faithful Catholics have consistently been among the most supportive of the freedom to marry. (See reverse for polling data)
- » While Catholic bishops often hold certain positions, Catholic faithful have a diversity of opinions, including strong stances in support of same-sex couples. They in turn want their money and resources to aid their church, dioceses and the most needy, not anti-gay campaigns that fuel division and violate the Golden Rule.
- » Many people, including Catholics, are starting to recognize it should be up to each faith to decide for itself whether it chooses to recognize marriage of same-sex couples, without being imposed on by the government. Marriage is the best way to preserve not just personal freedom in America, but also religious freedom. We call upon more people of faith to stand up both for the American values of fairness and freedom and to respect the boundaries between church and state.



FREEDOM
TO MARRY

Polling

- » A 2010 report from the Pew Research Center found a majority of Catholics (46 percent to 42) support the freedom to marry. Support has also ticked upward in all religious categories including black protestant, mainline Christians, and Evangelicals.
- » Support for marriage for same-sex couples is significant among young religious Americans. According to a 2008 study by the group Faith in Public Life, among young white mainline Protestants and Catholics, close to half (48% and 44% respectively) support the freedom to marry. The same study found that young white evangelicals are more than twice as likely as older evangelicals to say that gay couples should be allowed to marry.
- » 65 percent of college freshmen surveyed in Fall 2009 supported the freedom to marry, compared with 58 percent of Americans 18 to 29 years old. The Higher Education Research Institute also broke down freshmen's support for the freedom to marry by religious affiliation. Sixty-six percent of Catholic students expressed support, as did between 50 and 75 percent of students affiliated with most Protestant Christian denominations.
- » The Rhode Island Marriage Coalition (RIMC) released a poll showing for the first time, majority support for the freedom to marry among Rhode Island voters. The poll found that 59 percent of Rhode Island voters support marriage for same-sex couples, representing a 10 percent increase in support from the last poll conducted in 2008. The majority finding is also significant in its demographic diversity. The voter majority includes 57 percent of Catholics, 58 percent of independent voters, 56 percent of women over 50, and 64 percent of parents.
- » A California Field poll of registered voters found 51 percent of Californians support the freedom to marry, with 42 percent opposed. Democrats and independents are supportive, younger voters are strongly supportive, and a narrow majority of Californian Catholics support marriage equality. [Field Poll, July 2010]
- » A Public Religion Research Institute poll found 58 percent of Californians believe it is appropriate to apply the Golden Rule to marriage for same-sex couples. 57% of Latino Catholics say they would vote for the freedom to marry. [Public Religion Research Institute, July 2010]