



FREEDOM  
TO MARRY

## Republicans and the Freedom to Marry

***The freedom to marry is consistent with conservative values of limited government and individual freedom, and polls show a steady increase in support among Republicans.***

- » Throughout the country, gay and lesbian couples seek to participate in the institution of marriage to uphold values as old as our nation: commitment to others, stability, responsibility and, most importantly, family. These are bedrock conservative American values.
- » Conservatives have long cited the fundamental importance of marriage because it strengthens society. Denying gay couples the freedom to marry weakens society by hurting our community, neighbors and families.
- » Support for the freedom to marry is emerging as a mainstream position in the Republican Party. More and more, conservative leaders are recognizing the freedom to marry adheres to a core conservative principle: the less intrusion into personal liberty the better. That is why prominent conservatives like former Vice President Dick Cheney, former George W. Bush Solicitor General Ted Olson, former First Lady Laura Bush, and Cindy McCain are standing up for ending gay couples' exclusion from marriage.
- » During the 2010 election, the values of limited government and individual freedom resonated with moderate and conservative voters. The freedom to marry is consistent with these principles, ensuring that the power of the government is not misused to limit the liberties of gay and lesbian Americans.
- » Data continues to demonstrate a widening gulf between older and younger conservatives on the issue of marriage for same-sex couples. Young conservatives like Meghan McCain rightfully fear that the Republican Party will risk losing ground as new voters enter the voting ranks if they continue to resist the freedom to marry.
- » The freedom to marry will reduce the size of government by, among other things, creating stability in the lives of same-sex couples, reducing their tax burden and cutting their need for government-run social services. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated repealing the so-called "Defense of Marriage Act" would save the government \$1 billion per year through new taxes and spending cuts.
- » Marriage for same-sex couples creates jobs and has proven to be a vital economic engine in states like Massachusetts, where it has pumped millions into the state's economy. The freedom to marry increases tax revenue and helps the small businesses that need it most.



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## Polling

- » A 2010 Pew Research Center poll found that among moderate and liberal Republicans, 41 percent and 51 percent, respectively, favor the freedom to marry. In a 2010 poll from the Siena Institute, 39% of all New York Republicans support passage of the marriage equality bill.
- » A 2010 poll from the Pew Research Center found that independents and other non-partisans are now divided in their view: 44% favor allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally while 43% are opposed.
- » The numbers bear out that conservatives are increasingly embracing the value in allowing the freedom to marry, especially among younger voters. A 2009 survey by Higher Education Research found that conservative college freshmen support the freedom to marry at nearly twice the rate of conservatives overall.
- » At the Conservative Political Action Conference in 2010, the straw poll taken of the attendees, many of them students, ranked “Stopping Gay Marriage” as one of their lowest priorities, scoring just 1% of the vote. This trend was consistent with a 2010 poll from Pew research that found 90 percent of registered voters ranked the freedom to marry as the least important issue to their vote.
- » 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.
- » The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) found the potential effects on the federal budget of recognizing same-sex marriages are numerous. If the freedom to marry existed in all 50 states and was recognized by the federal government, the CBO estimates government could have saved nearly \$1 billion per year between 2004 and 2014.
- » A 2008 study by the Williams Institute found that the more than 12,000 marriages in Massachusetts between 2004 and 2008 generated \$111 million for the state’s economy. In the same study, it estimated marriage would boost California’s economy by more than \$683.6 million in direct spending in just three years, while sustaining 2,178 new jobs.
- » Exclusion from marriage disproportionately creates an unfair tax, financial and emotional burden for same-sex couples. According to a *New York Times* analysis, the lifetime “cost of being gay,” which includes higher insurance rates, estate taxes and filing taxes separately, can cost a moderate-income family as much as \$467,562. [New York Times, November 2009]