



TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Joel Benenson, Amy Levin

DATE: September 26, 2014

RE: Recent Utah Poll Results

Key Findings

- A plurality of Utahns agree that same-sex couples should be allowed to marry in Utah: 49% agree that same-sex couples should be allowed to get a state-issued marriage license, and 48% disagree.
- Underpinning support is:
 - ✓ The overwhelming recognition that legal marriage for same-sex couples will not negatively impact their own marriages, families or Utah as a whole. Most notably, 94% of married Utahns say that giving same-sex couples the freedom to marry will not have an impact on their own marriage, and 65% believe it will not have a negative impact on Utah.
 - ✓ The fact that 70% of Utahns have a close friend or family member who is gay.
- Not only does the vast majority (67%) of Utahns want the Supreme Court to take up the case, but they say so while strongly believing that the Court will ultimately rule in favor of marriage equality. And if they do rule in favor of allowing same-sex couples to marry, most Utahns would be happy or not affected either way.
- Moreover, most believe legalizing marriage for same-sex couples in Utah is inevitable, and imminent.

Detailed Findings

- **A plurality of Utahns agree that same-sex couples should be allowed to marry in Utah.**
 - ✓ 49% agree that same-sex couples should be allowed to get a state-issued marriage license, and 48% disagree.
- Support for legalizing marriage for same-sex couples in Utah narrowly outweighs opposition despite the conservative tilt of residents here, 86% of whom identify as Republican or independent.
 - ✓ 79% of Democrats, 51% of Independents, and even 29% of Republicans agree it should be legalized.
 - ✓ Among adults under 55 – in what is the youngest state in the nation – 53% agree and just 43% disagree that it should be legalized.

- Further, more than one in five of those who disagree would support marriage for same-sex couples if they knew that churches in Utah, like the LDS church, would not be required to perform or recognize marriages of gay couples. Another 11% are unsure at that point.
 - ✓ This singular piece of information brings the percent who disagree that marriage for same-sex couples should be legal in Utah down to 34% and would push the percent who agree up to 60%.
- With 70% of Utahns saying that they have close friends or family members who are gay or lesbian, attitudes on this issue have been evolving and are likely to continue doing so.
 - ✓ 40% say they have become more open to legalizing marriage for same-sex couples in the past several years, while 38% say their view has not changed.
 - ✓ Among Mormons, 32% report becoming more open to the idea in recent years.
- **Underpinning support is the overwhelming recognition that legal marriage for same-sex couples will not negatively impact their own marriages, families, or Utah as a whole.**
 - ✓ 94% of married Utahns say that giving same-sex couples the freedom to marry will not have an impact their own marriage
 - ✓ 84% of all Utahns believe it will not have an effect on their families – or that the effect will be neutral or positive.
 - ✓ 51% believe legalizing marriage for same-sex couples will have no effect, or a neutral one, on Utah as a state. Another 14% say it will have a positive impact.
- **Overwhelmingly, Utahns want the Supreme Court to take up this case.**
 - ✓ 67% support the Supreme Court taking up this case.
- Of those who want the Supreme Court to take the case, the majority (52%) simply want the justices to “give a clear answer and settle the question once and for all.”
 - ✓ 27% of those support the Court taking the case so that they will legalize marriage for same-sex couples, and just 16% support the Court taking the case to ensure that marriage is between a man and a woman.
- Not only do the vast majority of Utahns want the Supreme Court to take up the case, but they say so while believing that the Court will ultimately rule in favor of marriage equality.
 - ✓ 66% think the Court will rule that same-sex couples should be able to marry while just 21% think the Court will rule that they should not be able to marry.
- If the Court does rule that marriage for same-sex couples is legal in Utah, most Utahns would be happy or not affected either way.
- **And regardless of Court action, most believe legalizing marriage for same-sex couples in Utah is inevitable, and imminent.**
 - ✓ Among all Utahns, 61% believe marriage equality will happen in the state within the next five years.
 - ✓ Even among those who oppose it, just under half expect same-sex couples to be able to marry in Utah within the next five years.

Methodology

Benenson Strategy Group conducted 500 telephone interviews with adults 18+ in Utah from September 21 to September 23, 2014. Both landlines and cell phones were called. The margin of error for the entire sample is $\pm 4.4\%$ at the 95% confidence level, and is larger for subgroups. Due to rounding, answer choices may not always add up to 100%.

The sample is representative of the 18+ population in Utah. Age, gender and racial demographics all mirror census data. For additional context:

- 30% report being Republican, 15% Democrat and 56% Independent
- 60% report being Mormon, and another 5% refused the question
- 37% live in Salt Lake County