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**PUBLIC FAVORS CIVIL UNIONS BUT IT STILL OPPOSES
SAME-SEX MARRIAGES, ANNENBERG SURVEY SHOWS**

While a majority of the American people still opposes same-sex marriages, many of them would accept civil unions and 56 percent of the public support either same-sex marriages or civil unions, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey shows.

Moreover, the public opposes a Constitutional amendment to prohibit same-sex marriages. Last Tuesday's highly publicized decision by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ordering that state's legislature to adopt a same-sex marriage statute spurred calls in Congress for an amendment, but produced no meaningful change in public opinion on the issue.

Before the decision, in polling that began on October 7, 39 percent of the public favored such an amendment, and 51 percent opposed it. In polling conducted from last Wednesday through Monday night, 40 percent supported an amendment and 51 percent opposed it. The difference between 39 and 40 percent was not statistically significant.

On the marriage-civil union issue, 1,166 respondents polled starting Wednesday were first asked if they favored their state adopting a same-sex marriage law. Thirty-four percent said they favored such a law, but 59 percent were opposed. Then the 59 percent who were opposed were asked if they favored a civil union statute. More than a third of them did, bringing the total supporting either same-sex marriages or civil unions to 56 percent, with 34 percent opposed to either, and the rest with no opinion. The margin of sampling error for this group was plus or minus three percentage points.

But on another issue, employment discrimination against gays and Lesbians because of their sexual orientation, just 41 percent wanted Congress to prohibit it by law, while 53 percent opposed it. In 1996 such legislation was defeated by a single vote in the Senate, but it has never been voted on in the House.

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On all questions, support for gays and Lesbians was stronger among the 43 percent of the public who said they had a “friend, colleague or family member who is gay or Lesbian.” For example, 48 percent of that group favored a law allowing same-sex marriages, and 69 percent favored either same-sex marriages or civil unions. And that group was about evenly split on an anti-discrimination law, with 47 percent in favor and 50 percent opposed, a difference that was not statistically significant.

Support for gays and Lesbians was also related to education. Forty-seven percent of those with at least a bachelor’s degree, 45 percent of those with some post-high school education, and 27 percent of those with a high school degree or less, favored same-sex marriages. And 49 percent of those with bachelor’s degrees or more, 39 percent of those with some post-high school education, and 39 percent of those with a high school diploma or less favored a law against job bias.

The ideological lines were even stronger. Fifty-three percent of conservatives, compared to 37 percent of moderates and 23 percent of liberals backed a constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriages. Sixty-five percent of conservatives said they “strongly opposed” same-sex marriages. When that group was asked about civil unions, about three-fifths said they were opposed to that, too.

Another measure of the intensity of concern came when people were asked if they would be more or less likely to vote for a presidential candidate who supported civil unions. Twenty-nine percent said they would be more likely to vote for such a candidate, while 49 percent said they would be less likely and 19 percent said it made no difference. All of the Democratic presidential candidates support either same-sex marriages or civil unions.

But partisanship did not provide such clear guides as ideology. Democrats were more supportive of either marriages or civil unions than were Republicans, but independents were even stronger backers. Sixty-nine percent of independents, 60 percent of Democrats, and 42 percent of Republicans supported either same-sex marriages or civil unions.

The National Annenberg Election Survey is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. It tracks the presidential campaign, and interviewing began in October, 2003, and will continue until after Election Day.

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Survey Methodology

The National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) is a survey conducted each presidential election year by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. The 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey is based on telephone interviews which began October 7, 2003 and will continue past Election Day. Interviewing is conducted by Schulman, Ronca, Bucuvalas, Inc.

The sample of telephone exchanges called was randomly selected by a computer from a complete list of thousands of active residential exchanges across the country. Within each exchange, random digits were added to form a complete telephone number, thus permitting access to both listed and unlisted numbers. Within each household, one adult was designated by a random procedure to be the respondent for the survey.

The results have been weighted to take account of household size and number of telephone lines into the residence and to adjust for variation in the sample relating to geographic region, sex, race, age and education. From October 7 through November 18, 4,040 people were interviewed, and from November 19 through November 24, 1,167 were interviewed.

In theory, in 19 cases out of 20 the results for the earlier group will differ by no more than two percentage points, up or down, from what would have been obtained by interviewing all American adults. For the later groups the margin of sampling error is higher, at plus or minus three percentage points. Moreover, some questions were not asked of all respondents, which could lead to a larger potential sampling error. In addition to sampling error, the practical difficulties of conducting any survey of public opinion may introduce other sources of error into the poll. Variations in the wording and order of questions, for example, may lead to somewhat different results.

Questions in Survey With weighted results from interviews

A. Do You Favor or Oppose the federal government adopting a Constitutional Amendment banning gay marriage?

(If favor) Is that strongly favor or somewhat favor?

(If oppose) Is that strongly oppose or somewhat oppose?

	--11/19-24--	--10/7-11/18--
Strongly favor	32%	30%
Somewhat favor	8	9
Somewhat oppose	15	16
Strongly oppose	36	35
Neither favor nor Oppose (volunteered)	6	7
Don't know	2	2

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All below from November 19 through 24

B. Would you favor or oppose a federal law prohibiting employment discrimination against gays and Lesbians based on their sexual orientation?

(If favor) Is that strongly favor or somewhat favor?

(If oppose) Is that strongly oppose or somewhat oppose?

Strongly favor	28%
Somewhat favor	13
Somewhat oppose	14
Strongly oppose	39
Don't know	6

C. Would You Favor or Oppose a law in your state that would allow gays and Lesbians to marry a partner of the Same Sex?

(If favor) Is that strongly favor or somewhat favor?

(If oppose) Is that strongly oppose or somewhat oppose?

Strongly favor	17%
Somewhat favor	17
Somewhat oppose	11
Strongly oppose	49
Don't know	6

D. (If opposed to same-sex marriage) Would you favor or oppose a law in your state allowing gay and Lesbian couples to form civil unions that are not marriages but would give gay couples rights such as inheritance, insurance and pension coverage?

(If favor) Is that strongly favor or somewhat favor?

(If oppose) Is that strongly oppose or somewhat oppose?

Strongly favor	10
Somewhat favor	26
Somewhat oppose	13
Strongly oppose	45
Don't know	6

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E. If a candidate for president supported laws allowing gay and Lesbian civil unions, would you be more or less likely to vote for that candidate?

(If more) Is that much more likely or somewhat more likely?

(If less) Is that much less likely or somewhat less likely?

Much more likely	10%
Somewhat more likely	19
Somewhat less likely	17
Much less likely	31
Doesn't matter (volunteered)	19
Don't Know	4

F. Do you have a friend, colleague, or family member who is gay or Lesbian?

Yes	43%
No	55
Don't Know	6

Some totals may not add to 100 because of rounding.

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