

Survey finds strong support for same-sex marriage

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(Phys.org)—A Brown University survey of Rhode Island voters finds that 60.4 percent of respondents favor extending the right to marry to gay and lesbian couples, a number nearly identical to a survey conducted by Brown in May 2009. Voters continue to be pessimistic about Rhode Island's economy and most express little confidence that state government officials will make the right decisions for the state's future.

Researchers at the A. Alfred Taubman Center for Public Policy and American Institutions and the John Hazen White [Public Opinion](#) Laboratory at Brown University surveyed a random sample of 593 Rhode Island voters Feb. 21-23, 2013. The poll has an overall margin of error of plus or minus 4.0 percent.

Among those who favor same-sex marriage, 62.1 percent said they were strongly in favor. The poll showed that belief in equality is the main driver among same-sex marriage supporters. When asked why they support same-sex marriage, nearly half (49.2 percent) cited same-sex marriage as an equal rights issue and 27.7 percent said they support it because it is a [personal choice](#) issue unrelated to [sexual orientation](#).

Twenty-six percent of Rhode Island voters oppose same-sex marriage, with 59.5 percent of this group strongly opposed. Among the opponents of same-sex marriage, [religious beliefs](#) are the main driver. Asked why they oppose same sex-marriage, 40.8 percent cited religious reasons and 22.4 percent said that marriage should be between a man and a woman. However, 10.5 percent of the opponents of same-sex marriage believed

that [civil unions](#) are sufficient for same-sex couples who want to legalize their commitment.

The poll found generational differences among supporters and opponents of same-sex marriage. The highest level of support for same-sex marriage came from registered voters ages 30 to 39 (88.9 percent favor/11.1 percent oppose) and voters ages 18 to 29 (77.1 percent favor/22.9 percent oppose). Support for same-sex marriage dropped considerably for those voters who are 70 years or older; 34.6 percent said they favor same-sex [marriage](#).

Confidence in state government

The poll indicates that few Rhode Islanders trust state government to make good decisions for the state's future. Just 16.7 percent of voters say they have a good or great amount of confidence in state leaders to make the right decisions for Rhode Island's future. Rhode Island voters have slightly more confidence in Democratic state legislators to make the right decisions: 23.1 percent expressed a good or great level of confidence in Democrats and 13.7 percent expressed a good or great level of confidence in Republicans.

The economy

Rhode Islanders continue to view the economy in a negative light. An overwhelming majority thinks the national economy is not so good or poor (83.7 percent) and the state's economy is not so good or poor (94.2 percent), numbers that are nearly the same as in the Taubman Center's [February 2012 poll](#). However, a majority (56.7 percent) feels their own finances are in good or excellent shape.

Approval ratings

Approval ratings—the percentage of respondents rating an official's performance as good or excellent—changed slightly for state and local elected officials, compared to [October 2012](#). Providence Mayor Angel Taveras's approval rating stands at 63.7 percent. Gov. Lincoln Chafee's approval stands at 25.5 percent, and Lt. Gov. Elizabeth Roberts has a 30.9-percent approval rating. State Treasurer Gina Raimondo received a rating of good or excellent from 56.0 percent of voters.

Among national officials, President Barack Obama has an approval rating of 51.6 percent. Sen. Jack Reed earned an approval rating of 54.1 percent, and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse has 43.7 percent of voters' approval. Rep. David Cicilline has an approval rating of 27.1 percent, and Rep. Jim Langevin's approval rating stands at 41.4 percent.

Provided by Brown University

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