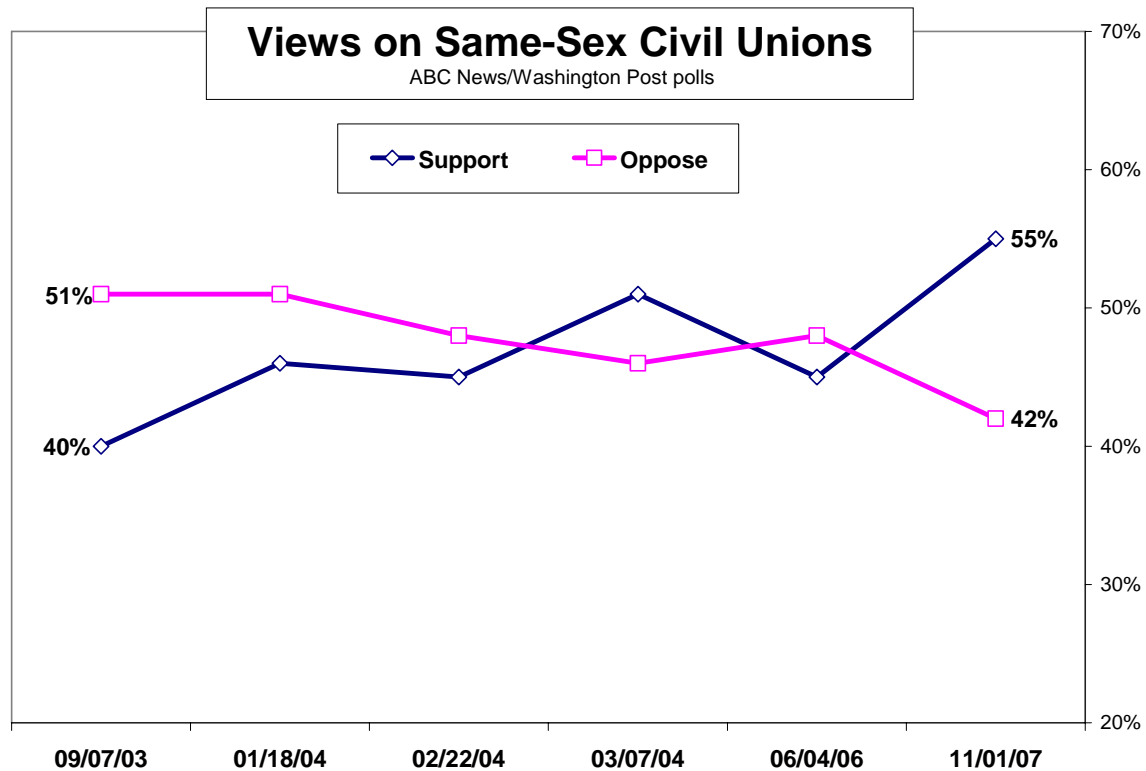


Support for Civil Unions Rises, Yet Sharp Divisions Remain

A record number of Americans in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll support civil unions for gay couples, and most continue to favor legal abortion – while behind those majority views sharp political and ideological divisions rage on.

Overall, 55 percent favor allowing homosexual couples to form legally recognized civil unions, giving them the same rights as married couples in areas such as health insurance, inheritance and pension coverage. That's up from 45 percent in an ABC/Post poll in 2006; the previous high was 51 percent in 2004.

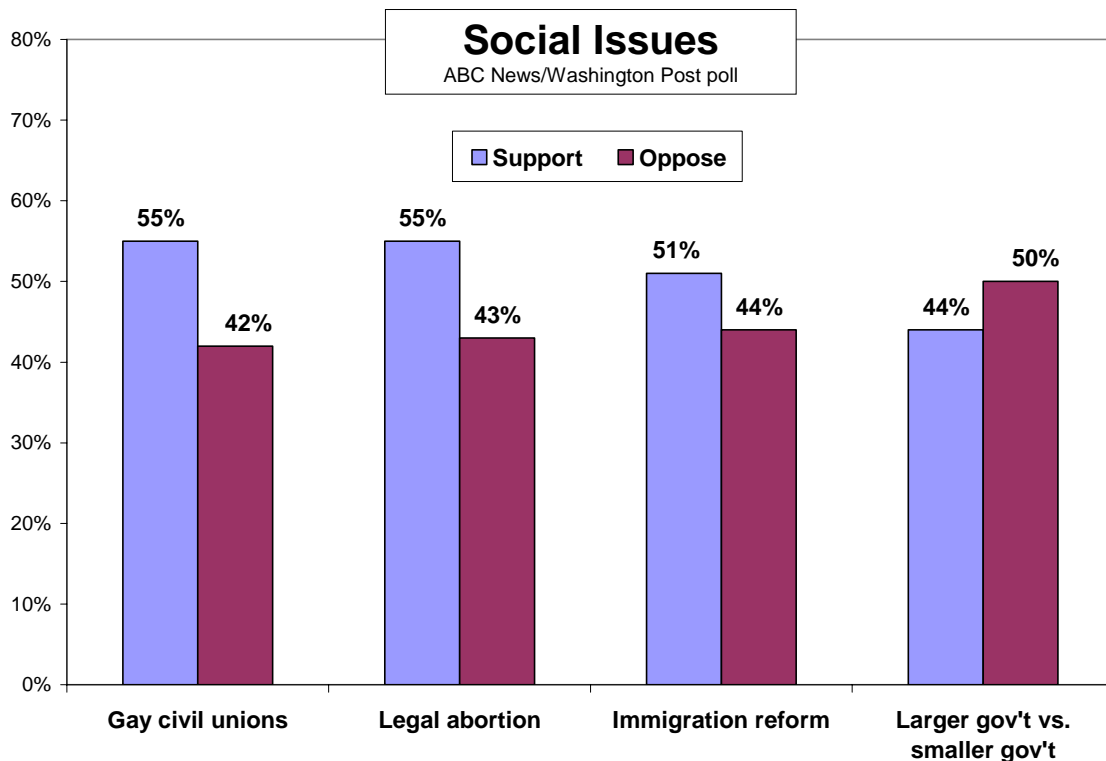


Republican presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani's support for gay civil unions (and legal abortion) has been disconcerting to core groups within his party. Conservative Republicans and evangelical white Protestants oppose civil unions by more than 2-1, and Republicans overall oppose them by 58-39 percent. Yet some are willing to overlook it, notably televangelist Pat Robertson, who endorsed Giuliani yesterday.

Similarly, while 55 percent of Americans support legal abortion – steady the last five years, and almost exactly the 12-year average in ABC/Post polls – that ranges from 78 percent of liberal Democrats to a low of 31 percent of conservative Republicans.

There are differences among other groups. On civil unions, support peaks among adults under age 30, and tanks among seniors. It’s highest in the East and West, notably lower in the Midwest and South. Whites overall are more apt than blacks to support gay civil unions, and the idea wins more support among women (59 percent) than men (51 percent, and 47 percent among married men).

Support for legal abortion, by contrast, is identical among men and women, and also among blacks and whites. But legal abortion creates an especially stark dividing line between evangelical white Protestants (63 percent oppose it) and their non-evangelical counterparts, among whom 65 percent support it. Legal abortion also is supported by 53 percent of white Catholics.



IMMIGRATION – On another much-debated issue, immigration, a bare majority, 51 percent, supports a program offering a path to permanent status to illegal immigrants; 44 percent oppose it. (Support for this kind of program goes higher in polls that propose deportation as the only alternative.)

There are partisan and ideological divisions on immigration, as well, but within a closer range. Support for a legal-status program ranges from 67 percent of liberal Democrats to 43 percent of conservative Republicans. The idea’s much more popular among young

adults (63 percent support) than among their elders (44 percent of those 50 and older), and among women than men.

SIZE of GOV'T – A yet more fundamental issue pertains to the role of government in society; 50 percent of Americans say they favor “smaller government with fewer services” while 44 percent prefer “larger government with more services.” That’s the same as in 2004, with less preference for “smaller government” than previously – majorities in polls from 1992 to 2002.

The biggest differences on this question again are by political party and ideology. Two-thirds of conservatives, 69 percent of Republicans and nearly three-quarters of conservative Republicans prefer smaller government; 62 percent of Democrats, and 72 percent of liberal Democrats, say the opposite.

Support for larger, more active government doubles among young adults compared to senior citizens. It’s 12 points higher among women than men. And there’s a particularly striking racial gap on this question: Fifty-six percent of whites favor smaller government; 67 percent of blacks, by contrast, favor larger government with more services.

	% Support			
	Gay civil unions	Legal abortion	Legal status for illegal immigrants	Larger gov't, more services
All	55%	55%	51%	44%
Men	51	55	47	38
Women	59	55	55	50
Democrats	66	67	58	62
Independents	58	57	53	40
Republicans	39	40	44	28
Liberals	69	73	59	60
Moderates	64	60	56	48
Conservatives	35	37	41	30
Liberal Dems.	79	78	67	72
Conserv. Reps.	31	31	43	22
18-29	66	53	63	59
65+	44	49	43	30
Blacks	45	55	56	67
Whites	56	56	49	38
Evang. white Protestants	30	36	45	32
Non-evang. white Protestants	66	65	44	40
White Catholics	61	53	51	36

VOTE – One of these issues that informs vote choices in the presidential primary contests is abortion in the Republican race; Giuliani is supported by 39 percent of Republicans who say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, vs. 28 percent of those who say it should be illegal in all or most cases.

Given his greater appeal among moderate rather than conservative Republicans, Giuliani also does better among those who favor larger government (with 43 percent support) than among smaller-government Republicans (among whom 30 percent support him).

On the Democratic side, Clinton sees an opposite effect: She does 12 points better with Democrats who favor larger government to those who want it smaller. John Edwards does a slight 6 points better with smaller-government Democrats.

There are greater differences in general election match-ups, given the partisanship in views on these issues. Matching Clinton against Giuliani, supporters of larger government with more services break 2-1 for Clinton; those favoring smaller government with fewer services favor Giuliani by a 26-point margin.

On abortion, similarly, Clinton claims 60 percent of supporters of legal abortion, while Giuliani's backed by 58 percent of those who say it should be generally illegal. The divisions on civil unions are about the same; on immigration less so, but still significant.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Oct. 29-Nov. 1, 2007, among a random national sample of 1,131 adults, including an oversample of African Americans for a total of 203 black respondents (weighted back to their correct share of the national population). The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

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Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-31. Previously released.

32. Generally speaking, would you say you favor (smaller government with fewer services), or (larger government with more services)?

	Smaller govt. fewer services	Larger govt. more services	No opinion
11/1/07	50	44	5
6/20/04	50	46	4
11/4/02 LV	61	34	5
11/3/02 LV	60	34	5
11/2/02 LV	62	34	3
7/15/02	53	42	6
1/27/02	54	41	5

10/9/00 RV	58	32	10
10/1/00 RV	58	33	9
7/23/00	59	34	7
7/23/00 RV	61	32	7
4/2/00	56	38	7
8/16/98	59	35	6
8/5/96	63	32	5
7/8/92	55	38	7

33. Do you think homosexual couples should or should not be allowed to form legally recognized civil unions, giving them the legal rights of married couples in areas such as health insurance, inheritance and pension coverage?

	Should	Should not	No opinion
11/1/07	55	42	3
6/4/06*	45	48	7
3/7/04	51	46	3
2/22/04	45	48	7
1/18/04	46	51	4
9/7/03	40	51	9

* Strongly/somewhat follow asked 6/4/06 and others

34. Do you think abortion should be legal in all cases, legal in most cases, illegal in most cases or illegal in all cases?

		----- Legal -----			----- Illegal -----		
		All	Most		Most	All	No
	NET	cases	cases	NET	cases	cases	opinion
11/1/07	55	19	36	43	27	16	2
7/21/07	56	23	34	41	28	14	2
2/25/07	56	16	39	42	31	12	2
12/18/05	56	17	40	41	27	13	3
4/24/05	56	20	36	42	27	14	3
12/19/04	55	21	34	42	25	17	3
5/23/04	54	23	31	44	23	20	2
1/20/03	57	23	34	42	25	17	2
8/12/01	49	22	27	48	28	20	3
6/24/01	52	22	31	43	23	20	4
1/15/01	59	21	38	39	25	14	1
9/6/00 RV	55	20	35	42	25	16	3
7/23/00	53	20	33	43	26	17	4
9/2/99	56	20	37	42	26	15	2
3/14/99	55	21	34	42	27	15	3
7/12/98	54	19	35	42	29	13	4
8/5/96	56	22	34	41	27	14	3
6/30/96	58	24	34	40	25	14	2
10/1/95	60	26	35	37	25	12	3
9/21/95	60	24	36	36	25	11	4
7/17/95	59	27	32	40	26	14	1

35. Would you support or oppose a program giving ILLEGAL immigrants now living in the United States the right to live here LEGALLY if they pay a fine and meet other requirements?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
11/1/07	51	44	4
6/1/07	52	44	4

36-38. Previously released.

END