



Badger Poll™ #22, Release #3  
 University of Wisconsin Survey Center  
 University of Wisconsin Madison  
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**SAME SEX MARRIAGE, UNIONS, AND REFERENDUM**

When asked about laws allowing same-sex couples to marry, 40% of the Wisconsin public said they support such laws. However, people are more likely to approve of civil unions than to approve of laws allowing people of the same sex to marry. Overall, close to 60% of the Wisconsin public approves of civil unions.

- However there are differences by gender. Gender differences in support for same-sex marriage are statistically significant at conventional levels.

**Approval, by Gender**

	Men	Women
<b>Approval of Same Sex Marriage</b>	33.5	45.2
<b>Approval of Civil Unions</b>	55.8	61.5

- There are also significant differences by partisanship:

**Approval, by Partisanship**

	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
<b>Approval of Same Sex Marriage</b>	52.6	50.4	16.2
<b>Approval of Civil Unions</b>	67.5	71.2	42.2

- There are differences by age – younger people are more likely to approve of both same-sex marriage and civil unions than older people.

**Approval, by Age Group**

	Age <30	Age 30-44	Age 45-59	Age 60+
<b>Approval of Same Sex Marriage</b>	57.7	44.2	36.4	19.8
<b>Approval of Civil Unions</b>	79.3	60.1	56.6	39.3

The poll tested whether approval for civil unions depends on whether or not the question makes explicit reference to same sex couples. The results suggest that it does. When the question about civil unions mentions same sex couples, approval is lower than when it does not. The question reads as follows:

“And how about civil unions, where [same sex] couples can register partnerships that give them most of the legal advantages husbands and wives now have. Do you approve or disapprove of laws recognizing civil unions between people?”

A random half of respondents heard the question with “same sex” in the question, and the half of the sample did not get this phrase. Those who did hear it were 14% points less likely to approve of laws recognizing civil unions between people.

This suggests that disapproval of such laws is related to disapproval of homosexuality.

<b>CIVIL UNIONS APPROVAL</b>	<b>Reference to “same sex couples” made in question</b>	<b>No reference in question</b>	<b>Overall</b>
APPROVE	51.5%	65.2%	58.7%
DISAPPROVE	44.8%	31.1%	37.5%
DON'T KNOW	3.3%	3.7%	3.5%
Total	100	100	100

Respondents were also asked about the referendum on the ballot this November. The question read:

“The ballot this November will contain a referendum proposing a state constitutional amendment on the issue of gay marriage and civil unions. The referendum proposes that: “Only a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state. A legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals shall not be valid or recognized in this state.” Do you favor or oppose this referendum?”

Overall, just over half (52.5%) of the Wisconsin public currently favors the referendum, and 43.8% oppose it.

- There are differences by gender – with men more likely than women to favor it.
- There are differences by partisanship – with over three-quarters of Republicans favoring it and about 40% of Democrats and Independents doing so.
- There are differences by age, with older people more likely to favor it than younger people.
- Among registered voters, 52.6% favor the referendum, 44.1% oppose it, and 3.2% said “don’t know” or refused to answer the question.

Having a personal connection to someone who is gay is also related to responses on these issues. People who know someone who is gay are more likely to approve of same-sex marriage, more likely to approve of laws allowing civil unions, and less likely to favor the referendum supporting a state constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage and civil unions.

	<b>Approval, by whether know someone who is gay</b>	
	<b>Yes, know someone</b>	<b>No, do not know someone</b>
<b>Approval of Same Sex Marriage</b>	53.4%	18.0%
<b>Approval of Civil Unions</b>	69.8%	41.6%
<b>Favor the referendum</b>	41.2%	69.7%

**DEATH PENALTY IN WISCONSIN**

Approximately half of Wisconsinites (55.6%) favor enacting the death penalty in the state “for cases involving a person who is convicted of first-degree intentional homicides, if the conviction is supported by DNA evidence.” The question replicated the wording of the upcoming state advisory referendum. 37.3% currently oppose the referendum.

- While there are no large differences by gender, men are slightly more likely than women to support this.
- There are no differences by age groups.
- Republicans are more likely than Democrats, Independents, or those who categorize themselves as other to support this.
- Overall, close to 7% of people say they do not know or refuse to answer the question.
- Among registered voters, 55.2% support the referendum, 38.4% oppose it, and 6.4% said “don’t know” or refused to answer the question.

When people are presented with an alternative to the death penalty – namely life imprisonment without parole -- they are less likely to support the death penalty than when this alternative is not mentioned. Presented with the life imprisonment option, 50% of people favor this and 45% favor the death penalty.

- While there are no large differences by gender, men are slightly more likely than women to favor the death penalty, and women are more likely to favor life without parole.
- Over half of Democrats and Independents favor life without parole, and 42% favor the death penalty. The reverse is true for Republicans – just over half prefer the death penalty, and 37% prefer life without parole. Republicans are also more likely than other groups to be undecided on the issue, with 10% of them saying “don’t know” when asked about these alternatives.

**Percent Who Favor the Death Penalty or Life Imprisonment Without Parole, By Partisanship**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>DEMOCRATS</b>	<b>INDEPENDENTS</b>	<b>REPUBLICANS</b>
FAVOR DEATH PENALTY	44.7	41.1	44.0	53.3
FAVOR LIFE WITH NO PAROLE	49.6	56.3	52.8	37.0
DON'T KNOW	5.1	2.6	0.8	9.6
REFUSED	0.6	--	2.4	--
Total	100	100	100	100

**APPENDIX: Question Text and Statewide Percentages for Key Groups**

GAY07 Moving on to a different topic... Do you approve or disapprove of laws allowing homosexual people to marry members of their own sex?

	Total	M	W	DEM	REP	IND	OTHER	<30	<45	<60	60+
APPROVE	39.4	33.5	45.2	52.6	16.2	50.4	40.5	57.7	44.2	36.4	19.8
DISAPPROVE	54.2	61.7	47.1	40.1	79.4	42.4	52.4	35.1	49.3	56.6	75.0
DON'T KNOW	3.6	3.2	3.9	5.9	2.2	0.8	6.0	2.7	5.1	4.2	2.6
REFUSED	2.8	1.6	3.9	1.3	2.2	6.4	1.2	4.5	1.4	2.8	2.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

\* Differences are statistically significant by party ID (p<0.000), gender (p<0.008), age (p<0.000), and whether know someone who is gay (p<0.000)

GAY08 And how about civil unions, where [same sex] couples can register partnerships that give them most of the legal advantages husbands and wives now have. Do you approve or disapprove of laws recognizing civil unions between people?

	Total	M	W	DEM	REP	IND	OTHER	<30	<45	<60	60+
APPROVE	58.7	55.8	61.5	67.5	42.2	71.2	54.8	79.3	60.1	56.6	39.3
DISAPPROVE	37.5	41.0	34.2	29.1	53.3	25.6	41.7	20.7	35.5	39.2	54.7
DON'T KNOW	3.5	3.2	3.8	3.3	4.4	2.4	3.6	--	4.3	4.2	5.1
REFUSED	0.2	--	0.4	--	--	0.8	--	--	--	--	0.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

\* Differences are statistically significant by party ID (p<0.000), age (p<0.000), and whether know someone who is gay (p<0.000)

CIVIL UNIONS APPROVAL	Reference to "same sex couples" made in question	No reference to "same sex couple"	Overall
APPROVE	51.5%	65.2%	58.7%
DISAPPROVE	44.8%	31.1%	37.5%
DON'T KNOW	3.3%	3.7%	3.5%
Total	100	100	100

\* Difference is statistically significant (p<0.01).

GAY20 The ballot this November will contain a referendum proposing a state constitutional amendment on the issue of gay marriage and civil unions. The referendum proposes that: "Only a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state. A legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals shall not be valid or recognized in this state." Do you favor or oppose this referendum?

	Total	M	W	DEM	REP	IND	OTHER	<30	<45	<60	60+
FAVOR	52.5	57.3	47.9	37.5	77.6	44.4	47.1	43.6	47.4	53.1	65.8
OPPOSE	43.8	41.1	46.3	59.2	20.1	51.6	45.9	51.8	48.9	44.8	29.1
DON'T KNOW	3.0	1.2	4.6	3.3	2.2	2.4	5.9	4.5	1.5	1.4	5.1
REFUSED	0.8	0.4	1.2	--	--	1.6	1.2	--	2.2	0.7	--
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

\* Differences are statistically significant by party ID (p<0.000), gender (p<0.03), age (p<0.003), and whether know someone who is gay (p<0.000)

CAPPUN15 Should the death penalty be enacted in the state of Wisconsin for cases involving a person who is convicted of first-degree intentional homicides, if the conviction is supported by DNA evidence?

	Tot	M	W	DEM	REP	IND	OTHER	<30	<45	<60	60+
YES	55.6	59.0	52.3	49.3	64.0	54.8	50.0	50.9	63.0	55.2	52.1
NO	37.3	35.3	39.2	42.8	26.5	40.3	44.0	43.6	31.9	39.2	35.0
DON'T KNOW	5.9	4.0	7.7	5.9	8.8	3.2	4.8	5.5	4.3	4.9	9.4
REFUSED	1.2	1.6	0.8	2.0	0.7	1.6	1.2	--	0.7	0.7	3.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

\* Differences are not statistically significant by these groups.

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
YES	42.3	70.2	61.1
NO	52.6	22.8	30.6
DON'T KNOW	4.6	4.4	7.8
REFUSED	0.5	2.6	0.6
Total	100	100	100

\* Differences are statistically significant (p<0.000)

CAPPUN16 If you could choose between the following two approaches, which do you think is the better penalty for murder: [ ]the death penalty or life imprisonment with absolutely no possibility of parole / life imprisonment with absolutely no possibility of parole or the death penalty?

	Tot	M	W	DEM	REP	IND	OTHER	<30	<45	<60	60+
DEATH PENALTY	44.7	47.0	42.5	41.1	53.3	44.0	37.6	40.5	56.5	43.7	35.9
LIFE WITH NO PAROLE	49.6	45.8	53.3	56.3	37.0	52.8	52.9	53.2	37.0	54.2	55.6
DON'T KNOW	5.1	6.4	3.9	2.6	9.6	0.8	8.2	6.3	5.8	1.4	7.7
REFUSED	0.6	0.8	0.4	--	--	2.4	1.2	--	0.7	0.7	0.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

\* Differences are statistically significant by party ID (p<0.01) and age (p<0.02).

\* No difference by order of response options.

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
DEATH PENALTY	34.2	59.1	48.0
LIFE WITH NO PAROLE	62.2	37.4	41.3
DON'T KNOW	3.1	2.6	9.5
REFUSED	0.5	0.9	1.1
Total	100	100	100

\* Differences are statistically significant (p<0.000)

### HOW THE POLL WAS DONE

This BADGER POLL™ was conducted by the University of Wisconsin Survey Center as part of its ongoing program of research designed to benefit the research community and the people of Wisconsin. The Director of the poll operations is Danna Basson, UW Survey Center. The Faculty Director of the Poll content is Professor Katherine Cramer Walsh, Department of Political Science, UW-Madison. The BADGER POLL™ is intended to be a "poll of record" for the state, investigating matters of concern to Wisconsinites including politics, culture, and their daily lives, adhering to the highest standards of polling methodology and rigorous independence.

Results shown here are based on 508 persons who were randomly chosen within households with working telephone numbers and interviewed between June 23 and July 2, 2006. Telephone numbers were generated by

computer. Theoretically, results from this survey have a "margin of error" of a little over +/- 4%. This means that, had we asked every potential voter in Wisconsin, exactly these questions at the time the survey was conducted, there is only a one in twenty chance that the answers would differ by more than that in either direction from what we report here. There could be differences because of changes in question wording, events occurring in the meantime, or any of the practical difficulties involved in taking a scientific survey. Results based on subgroups are subject to a larger "margin of error". Results reported here are based on weighted data.