

July 25, 2011

Domestic Partnerships in Big Sky Country

To: Interested Parties

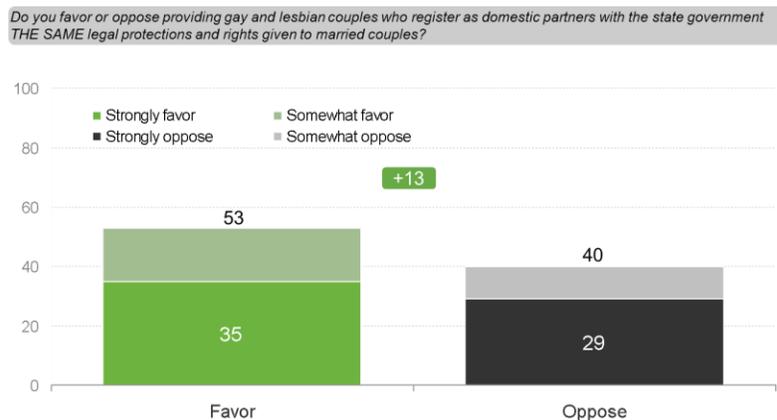
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America is moving toward equality and voters in Montana are no exception - they are ready and willing to support domestic partnerships for gay and lesbian couples. Montanans, known for their independence and willingness to allow people to lead the lives they choose, do not believe that they should stand in the way of other people's happiness. Montana voters believe that gay and lesbian couples should have some of the most important rights as married couples.¹

Key Highlights

- **Most Montanans favor domestic partnership.** By a 13 point margin, voters in Montana favor allowing gay and lesbian couples to enter into domestic partnerships – 53 percent favor, 40 percent oppose. There is more intensity among those who favor; 35 percent strongly favor, while 29 percent strongly oppose.

■ Figure 1: Majority of Montana Voters Support Domestic Partnership



¹ This memorandum is based on a national survey of 512 likely voters conducted between June 26 and June 26, 2011. The survey was commissioned by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and carries a margin of error of +/- 4.33 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval.

- **More than half of Catholics (55 percent) favor domestic partnerships, including 36 percent who strongly favor allowing domestic partnerships.** This measure also wins the support of nearly half (47 percent) of seniors, a majority of older women (54 percent), and blue collar women (52 percent).
- **Support for domestic partnerships seems to be increasing.** A 2008 survey conducted by Lake Research Partners asked voters a four-part question asking them to choose between traditional marriage, marriage with another name, civil unions, and no legal recognition. The survey found that 33 percent of Montanans thought that gay and lesbian couples should have the same right to marry as straight couples, or should have the same right to marry but it should not be called marriage.²
- **Voters recognize discrimination against gays and lesbians.** A 47 percent plurality believe gay people in Montana face a lot of discrimination; only 38 percent think that gays and lesbians in the state do not face much discrimination.
- **This is not a vote driving issue.** More than half of Montanans say that other issues are more important to their vote than whether or not a state legislator supported domestic partnerships. Only 26 percent say they would be less likely to support a candidate who supports domestic partnership while 18 percent would be more likely to support such a candidate.

Conclusion

Montana voters believe in fairness and also believe in staying out of other people's business. As a result, Montana voters are ready to take this important step and make the state a more just and equitable place.

² Actual question wording: "Which of these statements do you most agree with when it comes to the issue of gay and lesbian couples? Gay and lesbian couples should have the same legal right to marry as do a man and a woman; Gay and lesbian couples should have the same legal right to marry as do a man and a woman, only it should not be called marriage; Marriage under the law should only be between a man and a woman, but there should be civil unions or some other legal rights that would give same-sex couples many of the benefits and protections of marriage; There should be NO legal recognition of gay and lesbian couples."