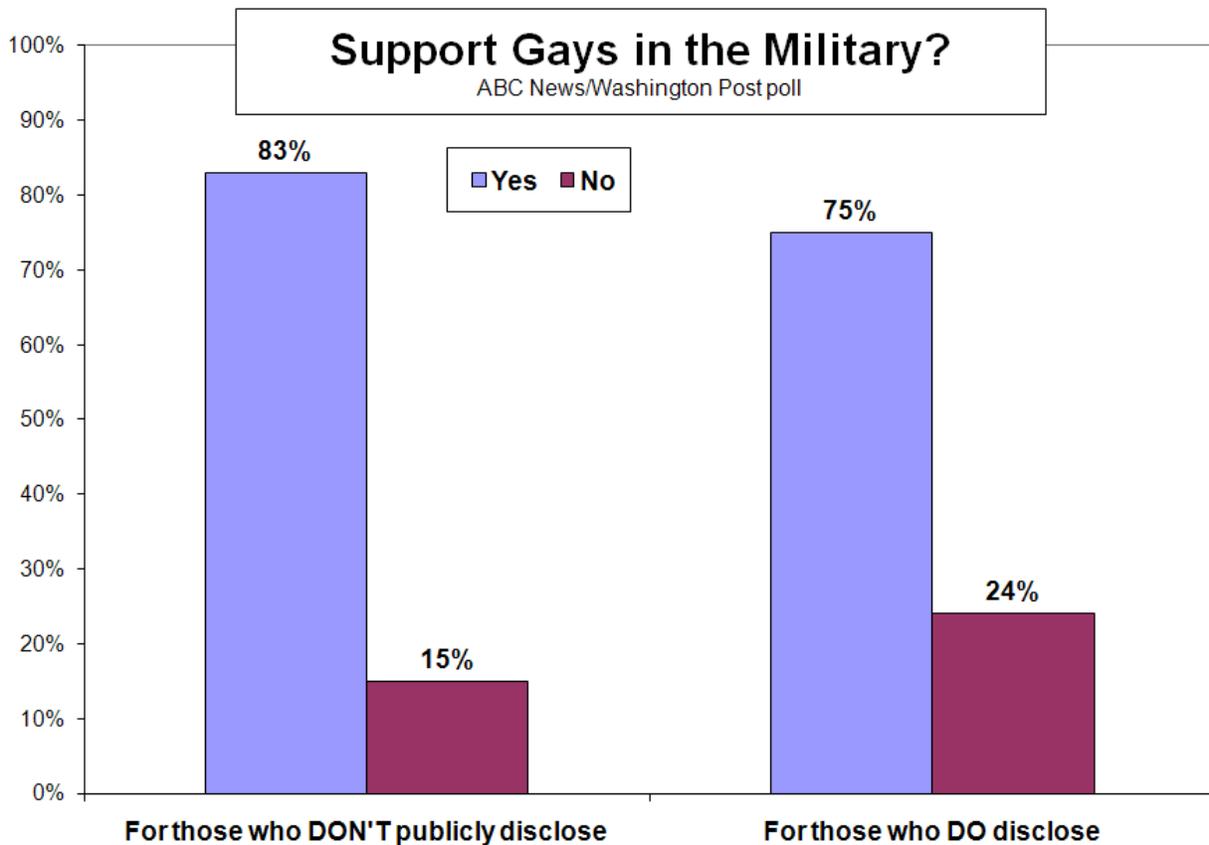


Support for Gays in the Military Crosses Ideological, Party Lines

Americans continue overwhelmingly to support allowing gays to serve in the military, even if they “tell.” And while the public remains split on gay marriage, a record two-thirds in the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll favor an alternative, civil unions for same-sex couples.

Even conservatives and Republicans widely accept homosexuals serving in the armed forces, and for the first time half in both these groups favor civil unions. Gay marriage, not.



While steady recently, views on gays in the military and gay marriage are well up from their levels years ago. The shift in this poll is on civil unions, with support 12 points higher than it was when last measured in an ABC/Post poll in 2007.

One factor: Sixty-three percent of Americans say they personally have a friend, family member or acquaintance who's gay. Compared to those who have no such connection, they're 12 to 15

points more apt to favor gays in the military and 14 points more likely to support civil unions, as well as a narrower 7 points more apt to support gay marriage.

MILITARY – President Obama pledged in his State of the Union address last month to work to repeal the Clinton-era “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy banning openly gay people from the armed forces. Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Mike Mullen later testified in support of the move, and Mullen named a military commission to study it.

Eighty-three percent of Americans say homosexuals who don’t disclose their sexual orientation should be allowed to serve in the military, a new high, up from 63 percent when the policy was put in place in 1993. Moreover, 75 percent say gays who do disclose their sexual orientation should be allowed to serve – unchanged from 2008 but up from 44 percent 17 years ago.

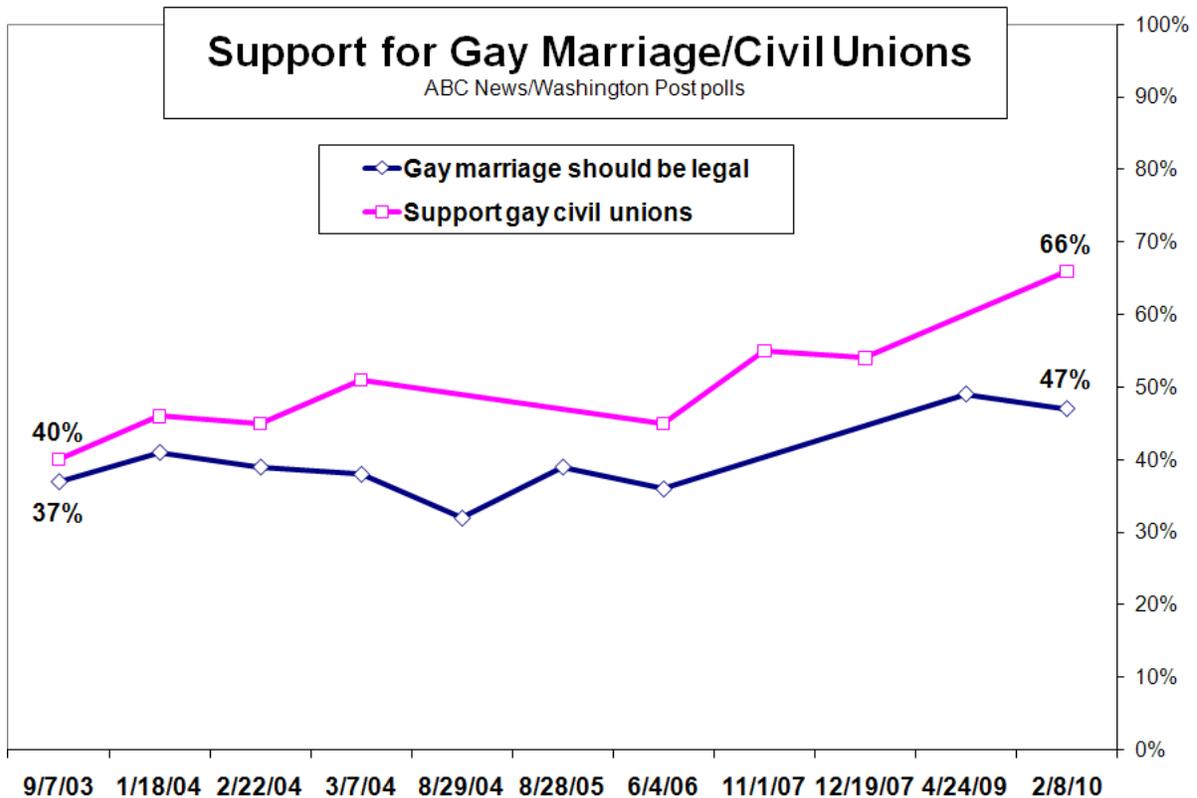
Support for gays in the military crosses demographic, partisan and ideological lines. Around three-quarters of Republicans, conservatives and evangelical white Protestants say gays who don’t disclose their orientation should be allowed to serve; indeed majorities in these groups also accept openly gay service members – 64 percent of Republicans, 61 percent of conservatives and 58 percent of white evangelical Protestants. Support rises in less conservative groups.

	% Support			
	Gays in military		Gay marriage	Civil unions
	No tell	Yes tell		
Men	78%	65	42	59
Women	88	84	52	73
Gap	10 points	19	10	14
Seniors	79	69	30	52
Under 30	88	81	65	77
Gap	9	12	35	25
HS or less	77	71	43	59
Post grad	95	84	61	83
Gap	18	13	18	24
Dems	86	82	60	72
Reps	77	64	27	51
Inds	86	77	50	71
D-R Gap	9	18	33	21
Libs	90	90	71	82
Mods	85	79	54	75
Cons	77	61	26	50
L-C Gap	13	29	45	32
Friend/family gay				
Yes	88	81	50	72
No	76	66	43	58
Gap	12	15	7	14

RECOGNIZING RELATIONSHIPS – At 66 percent, support for legally recognized civil unions for gay and lesbian couples is up from a previous high of 55 percent in 2007. While the gain crosses political lines, for the first time in ABC/Post polls half of Republicans and conservatives alike support civil unions.

Gay marriage gets less support – 47 percent overall, with 50 percent opposed. That’s similar to the 49-46 percent division in an ABC/Post poll in April 2009, but with a slight, 4-point rise in opposition. Nonetheless these mark a significant increase in support from earlier last decade, when backing typically was in the 30s.

As usual, support for gay marriage and civil unions is higher among women, people with higher educational attainment, Democrats and liberals. Conservatives, Republicans and evangelical white Protestants remain broadly and strongly opposed to gay marriage.



While there’s little difference among age groups on gays in the military, younger people are more supportive of gay marriage and civil unions than are older adults. Gay marriage is backed by 65 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds but just 30 percent of those 65 and up; civil unions by 77 percent of young adults vs. 52 percent of seniors.

Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont allow gays to marry, and Congress is reviewing whether to allow it in the District of Columbia, where the city council approved it in December. In California, a federal court is weighing a lawsuit challenging Proposition 8, the gay-marriage ban state voters approved in 2008.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Feb. 4-8, 2010, among a random national sample of 1,004 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results for the full sample have a 3.5-point error margin. Click [here](#) for a

detailed description of sampling error. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Mike Mokrzycki.

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).

1-27 previously released.

28. Changing topics, do you think homosexuals who do NOT publicly disclose their sexual orientation should be allowed to serve in the military or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
2/8/10	83	15	1
7/13/08	78	18	5
1/15/01	75	22	3
5/23/93	63	35	2

29. Do you think homosexuals who DO publicly disclose their sexual orientation should be allowed to serve in the military or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
2/8/10	75	24	1
7/13/08	75	22	3
1/15/01	62	35	3
5/23/93	44	55	2

30. Do you think it should be legal or illegal for gay and lesbian couples to get married? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Legal -----			----- Illegal -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
2/8/10	47	31	16	50	9	42	3
4/24/09*	49	31	18	46	7	39	5
6/4/06	36	24	13	58	7	51	5
8/28/05	39	NA	NA	58	NA	NA	3
8/29/04 RV	32	18	14	62	10	52	5
3/7/04	38	24	14	59	11	48	3
2/22/04	39	25	13	55	6	49	6
1/18/04	41	NA	NA	55	NA	NA	4
9/7/03	37	NA	NA	55	NA	NA	7

*2009 "gay and lesbian" and "homosexual" wordings half sampled. 2005 "gay and lesbian", others "homosexual".

31. Do you think gay and lesbian 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
2/8/10	66	31	3
12/19/07*	54	43	4
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

*2007 and previous "homosexual"

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

32. Do you yourself have a friend, family member, or acquaintance who is gay or lesbian, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
2/8/10	63	36	1
8/27/98	59	40	1

33-42 held for release or previously released.

END