

**TO:** Project Right Side  
**FROM:** Alicia Downs, TargetPoint Consulting  
**DATE:** June 15, 2012  
**RE:** Project Right Side Findings

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TargetPoint Consulting conducted a battleground survey of 2,000 Independent voters across eight states (CO, FL, IA, NC, NH, NV, OH and VA) on behalf of Project Right Side June 9-14, 2012 (26% lean Republican, 30% lean Democrat, 34% Neither). 79% of these Independents say they are extremely or very likely to vote in the November election.

This survey was a follow up to our October 2011 MicroTargeting survey of 5,000 nationally representative Republicans and Republican leaning independents (50% strong Republicans, 27% Weak Republicans and 24% Republican leaning Independents). 79% of these Republicans said they were extremely likely to vote in November.

## **OVERALL TAKEAWAY**

***The independent electorate is overwhelmingly pro gay rights and highly supportive of recognition for same sex couples. These data, in concert with our 2011 survey of Republicans, which showed a party ready for their elected officials, candidates and party leader to move on from their previous anti gay messages and policy stances, reflect a growing electorate supportive of gay rights and equality that will only increase over time.***

*The independent study data reveal an overwhelming 79% of the Independent electorate favor same sex couple recognition with 56% supporting marriage equality. Additionally, across every opportunity given, more independents were pro gay rights than those that were against. Independents were given fourteen opportunities to express either a positive or negative opinion on various issues and messages regarding gays and lesbians and in 11 out of 14 instances at least 60% of the independent electorate expressed a pro gay rights sentiment. In 14 out of 14 instances, more Independents were pro gay rights than those that were against.*

*The Republican data revealed an electorate at odds with the conventional wisdom of a robustly anti-gay GOP. Instead, this survey showed that a pronounced majority of Republican voters were more favorable than unfavorable to an expansion of a variety of legal rights to gays and lesbians. Moreover, very few Republicans believed that social issues like gay marriage should have been a high priority during the party's presidential primary.*

## **KEY FINDINGS**

- 1) **Independent voters overwhelmingly support legal recognition of gay relationships.** Nearly eight out of ten voters support legal recognition of same sex relationships. A small minority of 11% distinctly believe there should be no legal recognition of same sex relationships. That level of recognition remains strong regardless of partisanship lean amongst independents, with 73% of Republican leaning Independent voters supporting legal recognition and 89% of Democrat leaning Independent voters supporting legal recognition. The balance of independent voters rank at 77% support of full legal recognition. Additionally, four out of ten voters believe gay and lesbian couples should have the same legal right to marry as do a man and a woman. Looking at the specific breakout of those who favor granting legal recognition to gays and lesbians: 40% of the sample are completely on board with full legal recognition called marriage, while another 16% would

grant full legal recognition without actually calling it “marriage,” and 23% would support domestic partnerships or some other legal rights for gay couples.

- 2) **Across every opportunity given, more Independents were pro-gay rights than those that were against gay rights.** In all, these Independents were given fourteen opportunities to express either a positive or negative opinion on various issues and messages regarding gays and lesbians. In 11 out of 14 instances, at least 60% Independents expressed a pro-gay rights sentiment. Further, we can combine these fourteen items into a composite attitude scale, which in turn reveals that a pronounced majority – a full 84% of Independent voters – are more favorable than unfavorable to expansions of gay rights. Conversely, a minority of 14% are net opponents of gay rights.
- 3) **There is overwhelming Independent support for a number of key pro-gay messages and policy positions.** 87% of Independents agree that “we should all follow the Golden Rule and treat others as we’d like to be treated, including gays and lesbians.” Meanwhile an equally impressive 80% of Independent voters agree that “the government should stay out of the private lives of adults, including gays and lesbians.” Additionally, 80% agree “people shouldn’t be fired from their jobs based on sexual orientation,” and 74% agree “we should protect gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people from discrimination in the workplace. Lastly, 75% believe “freedom means freedom for everybody, including gays and lesbians who should have the freedom to enter into relationships with each other,” and 72% agree that “laws against bullying and harassment of minority groups in schools, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students helps keep kids safe.”