To: Interested Parties
From: Alex Lundry, Redbud Consulting
Re: 20 Years of Marriage for Same-Sex Couples
Date: June 2024

Below are key findings and data from new polling and research conducted on behalf of Centerline Liberties and Project Right Side around the 20th anniversary of legal marriages between same-sex couples in the United States. Our goal was to compile, review and analyze data from the last 20 years as well as today, allowing us to step back and consider the massive changes that have occurred around American attitudes towards marriage for same-sex couples.

Assessments of American opinion today come from a new national survey of 800 registered voters conducted May 16-20, 2024, including assessments of timely topics like the *Dobbs* decision, the Respect for Marriage Act and the 2024 presidential election. Historical analysis includes deep dives into same-marriage and related attitudes from the General Social Survey, the American National Election Studies, the US Census, Gallup, Pew Research and other publicly available polls.

BOTTOM-LINE

Widespread Support for Marriage Equality: An overwhelming majority (66%) of Americans support same-sex marriage, with half of Americans strongly supporting it. This represents a historic turnaround from only twenty years ago when it had only 30% support. This shift includes substantial increases in support among Republican and conservative voters. Indeed, this is the most significant and substantial shift in public opinion of the modern era. This transformation in public attitudes, alongside increased visibility and legal recognition, suggests a profound and enduring shift towards greater acceptance and inclusivity for same-sex couples in the United States.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Historic Shift in Public Opinion on SSM: Over the last two decades we have experienced the largest and fastest shift in the history of mass opinion.

- In the General Social Survey (GSS), support for same-sex marriage was only 30% in 2004, but by 2022 it had more than doubled to 67% support.
- Similarly, Gallup polling put support at 42% in 2004, growing to 71% in 2023.
- Pew Research had support at only 26% in 2004, but by 2023 it was 63%.
- Regardless of the survey organization, this is roughly an average annual increase in support of nearly 1.5 percentage points over the last 20 years.

Massive Positive Shifts Across All Demos: Not a single demographic is immune from this mass turnaround – even demographics that were initially the most opposed to it. Republicans, Conservatives, and regular church attendees are just a few of the groups that have all seen massive changes in net support of marriage for same-sex couples.

- In the GSS, across 13 key demographic categories (e.g. gender, age, education) and their 38 subgroups, the average shift in net support for same-sex marriage was 71 points. For example, among those that attend church monthly, net support grew from -38 in 2002 to +31 in 2022, a growth of 69 points.

Significant Growth Compared to Other Issues: While hundreds of other issues have stagnated or fluctuated or shifted slightly, Americans have completely reversed course on marriage.

- Compared to 150 political and policy issues the GSS studied in both 2004 and 2022, marriage equality support experienced significantly larger absolute and percentage change than every other issue.

Support Incredibly Strong Overall, Across Many Groups: Support for same-sex marriage is both broad and deep. By sweeping margins, Americans of all stripes support legal same-sex marriage, the Respect for Marriage Act, or the *Obergefell* ruling.

- 66% agree that "Same-sex couples should have the right to marry one another."
- 62% approve of the 2015 *Obergefell* decision allowing same-sex couples to marry nationwide.
- 66% approve of the 2022 Respect For Marriage Act, a federal law that requires the U.S. federal government and all states to recognize same-sex and interracial marriages legally performed in other states.

Substantial Gains Among Republicans, Conservatives: While Democrats and Independents continue to be strong supporters of marriage for same-sex couples, Republicans are catching up and plurality supporters of the issue, with age/generational patterns showing support will only grow as the electorate ages.

- Republican net support has grown from -59 in 2002 to +9 in 2022, a shift of 68 points. Now most demos within the party are distinctly supportive.
- 62% of Republican Gen Z voters support same-sex marriage.

Not Just an Aging Electorate; Minds Are Changing: While age continues to be heavily linked with levels of support, our two-decade shift is only somewhat a function of a generational replacement within the electorate. Instead, we clearly see that across all ages, minds are actively changing on the issue, steadily becoming more supportive.

- There is at least plurality support for marriage equality in every single generation, from the Silent Generation at 45% support and 36% oppose, to Gen Z at 82% support and 7% oppose.
- Looking at how attitudes on the GSS changed every two years, you can see older generations becoming more and more favorable.

Attitudes Towards LGBTQ+ Community Also Changing: Along the way the LGBTQ+ community has experienced significant gains among Americans when it comes to favorability ratings, moral acceptance and impact on society - each item being both an important precursor to and effect of changing attitudes on same-sex marriage.

- While other group ratings - such as Labor Unions, Big Business and Feminists - have remained relatively stable over the last 20 years, ratings of gay people have grown from 48 on a 0-100 scale in 2004 to 65 in 2022.
- Similarly, in 2004 only 31% of Americans said that "sexual relations between two adults of the same sex" are "not wrong at all" but by 2022 that had completely flipped to 61%.

Personal Relationships & Visibility a Big Influence: Meanwhile, other societal trends in LGBTQ+ visibility keep the issue's momentum going: increasing LGBTQ+ identification, more people knowing someone that is LGBTQ+, better representation in pop culture and politics, and last but most certainly not least: more happy and loving married LGBTQ+ couples across the country.

- The number of Americans identifying as LGBTQ+ has surged from 3.5% in 2012 to 7.2% in 2022, including a remarkable 20% of Generation Z (Gallup).
- In 2008 only about half of the country knew someone that was gay, lesbian or bisexual, but in 2020 that had grown to 64% (ANES).
- GLAAD tracks the number of LGBTQ+ characters in broadcast primetime television - only 1% in 2006 when they began. This season it is 11%.
- Out for America tracks the number of LGBTQ+ people in elected office: it has grown from 448 in 2017 to 1,185 in 2023.
- And of course, the number of married same-sex couples has increased dramatically from 142,000 in 2008 to 741,000 in 2022 (US Census).

Less Evidence Now of SSM Campaign Impacts: SSM is not as politically defining and motivating as it used to be:

- 61% of Americans - including 56% of Republicans - believe that someone who supports same-sex marriage can be considered a good Republican.

KEY FINDINGS

WHERE THINGS STAND NOW

Overall Support

In a May 2024 national survey of registered voters conducted on behalf of Centerline Liberties and Project Right Side, 66% of Americans agreed that "Same-sex couples should have the right to marry one another." This represents a distinct shift in preferences from 2004 when only 30% agreed with that statement in the General Social Survey. But before we dig deeply into that change, let's first consider where things currently stand.

The 66% number alone is incredibly powerful. But consider also the passion behind it: half of Americans STRONGLY agree with that statement, while only 27% oppose it. Support is positive across nearly every demographic collected in the poll, with only a handful of holdouts: evangelicals, weekly church attenders, and voters that say they don't know any gay people. Otherwise, we see that Southerners, African-Americans, Trump voters, Republicans, Rural voters, people with a High School degree, and many, many others that may have traditionally been thought of as opponents are indeed supporters of marriage equality.

This is especially interesting when we consider that a large number of Americans believe that the majority of the country is opposed to same-sex marriage! 33% believe that Americans are mostly opposed to it, while another 17% say they don't know, and only 51% correctly believe that the issue has majority support. This is certainly an improvement from 2013 when only 34% believed that a majority of Americans supported it.

Strong support for legal same-sex marriage holds regardless of how we ask it:

- 66% approve of the Respect Marriage Act that requires the federal government and states to recognize the validity of same-sex marriages in the United States. This includes 66% of Independents and 48% of Republicans.
- 62% support the Supreme Court's *Obergefell* ruling that state laws banning same-sex marriage are unconstitutional.

The Centerline/PRS survey also tested a number of statements supportive of marriage equality, and every single one enjoyed widespread agreement:

- 74% agree (54% strongly) that "Recognizing same-sex marriage promotes equality under the law, ensuring that all couples have access to the same legal rights and protections."
- 73% agree (54% strongly) that "Strong families and lasting relationships strengthen communities and marriage is a fundamental freedom deeply rooted in the history and traditions of our country. American citizens - including same-sex couples - should have the freedom to marry the person they love."
- 73% agree (52% strongly) "Same-sex couples show the same capacity for love, commitment, and parenting as opposite-sex couples; they deserve the same respect and recognition for their relationships."

- 67% agree (47% strongly) “Same-sex marriage strengthens the institution of marriage by reinforcing the idea that marriage is based on love, mutual respect, and commitment.”
- 57% agree (38% strongly) “Marriage between same-sex partners is a good thing for society because it strengthens family units.”

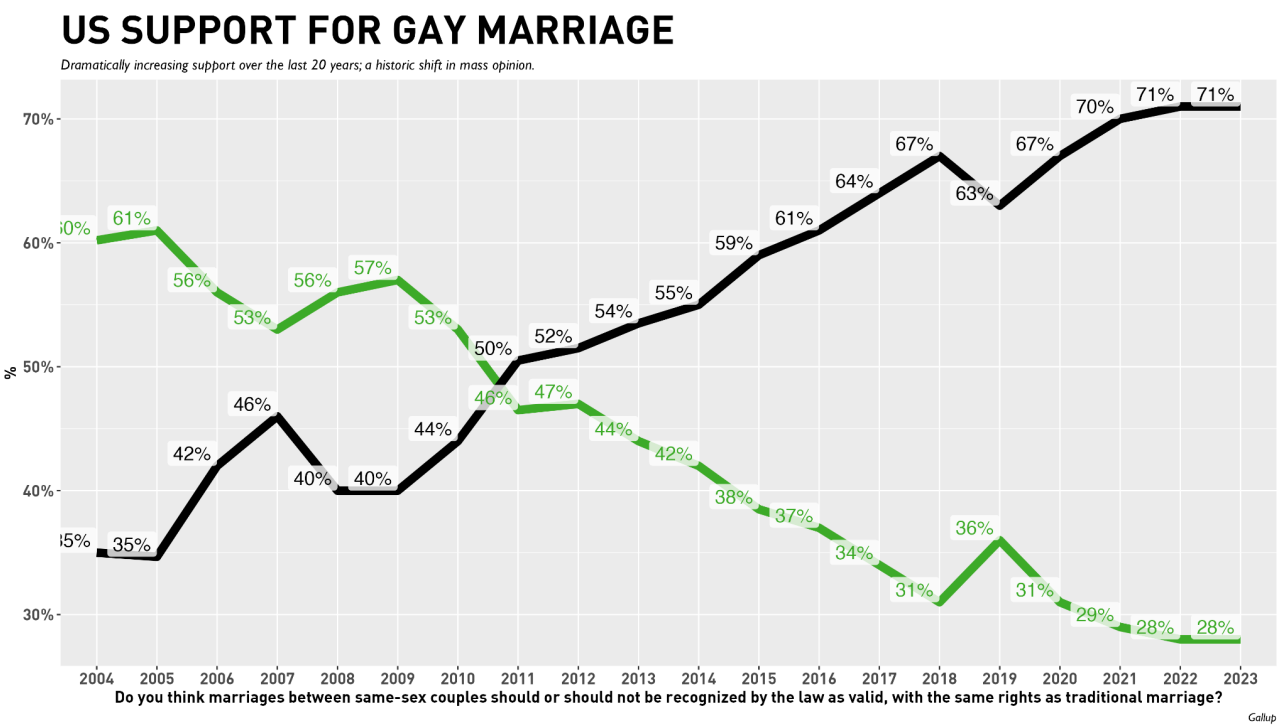
The most interesting of these statements is the last one focusing on strengthening family units. While it is the least popular message we tested, it allows us to zero in on the massive change in American attitudes on this issue over the last twenty years. This identical survey question was asked in 2004 by the *Los Angeles Times,* and the results were VERY different. Back then, 52% of Americans disagreed STRONGLY with this statement. In total 67% disagreed and only 25% agreed. Today a distinct majority agree with this statement. It’s this turnaround that we focus on next.

HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED

Overall Change

The last 20 years have seen the most dramatic shift of mass opinion in the history of American polling. Support for legal same-sex marriage has grown nearly 30 percentage points over the last 20 years since the nation’s first legal gay marriage - a shift of nearly 1.5% points every year. This pattern has reproduced itself across each of our most reputable polling organizations: Gallup, Pew Research, the General Social Survey, and the American National Elections Study.

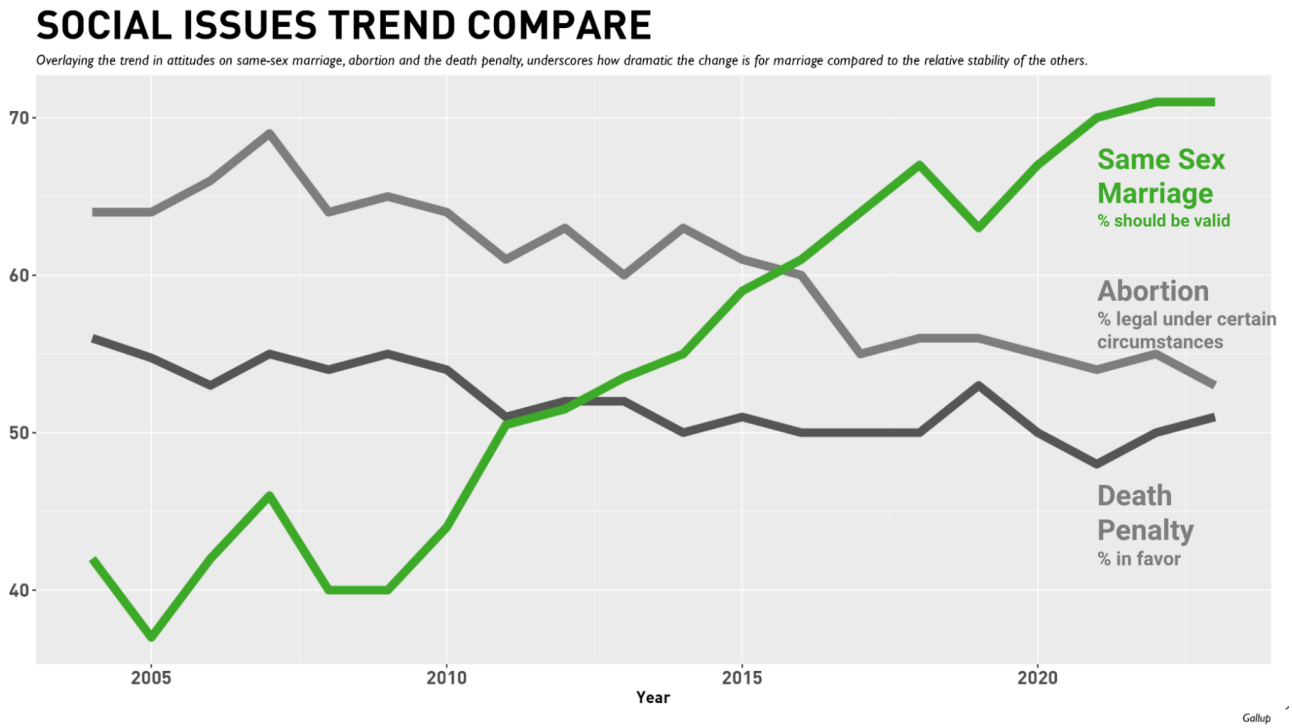
- In the General Social Survey (GSS), support for marriage for same-sex couples was only 30% in 2004, but by 2022 it had more than doubled to 67% support.
- Similarly, Gallup polling put support at 42% in 2004, growing to 71% in 2023.
- Pew Research had support at only 26% in 2004, but by 2023 it was 63%.
- Regardless of the survey organization, this is roughly an average annual increase in support of nearly 1.5 percentage points over the last 20 years.



Change Compared to Other Issues

The growth in support is all the more incredible when we compare it with other social issues.

- Attitudes towards abortion have hardly moved since *Roe v Wade:* in 1975 about half of Americans said it should only be legal under certain circumstances, and in 2023 it was still at 51%.
- Support for the death penalty has been steadily falling over the last 20 years, but at a much slower pace; it was about 64% in 2004 and is now at 53%.
- The only other issue that comes close is the shift we've seen on attitudes towards marijuana legalization, which was at only 36% support in 2005 per Gallup and has grown to 70% in 2023.



Most interesting is a comparison to another Supreme Court decision on marriage:

- In 1967, when *Loving v. Virginia* prohibited restrictions on mixed race marriages, only about 20% of Americans approved of mixed race marriages.
- In 2015, when *Obergefell v Hodges* prohibited restrictions on same sex marriages, support for gay marriage was at about 60%.
- Eight years after *Loving*, support of mixed race marriages had only grown to 30% approval.
- But eight years after *Obergefell,* support for gay marriage is now at 71%.

Now, more than 50 years after the *Loving* decision, support for interracial marriage is at 94% per Gallup. Imagine where same-sex marriage will be in 20 more years!

These are not cherry-picked issues to use for favorable comparisons. There are about 150 questions on political and policy preferences that were asked in both the 2004 and 2022 General Social Survey. Across these 20 year measurements of public opinion, attitudes towards gay marriage displayed the most overall change as well as the highest proportional change. This included attitudes towards women in the workplace, acceptance of racial integration, abortion, declining confidence in the US government and much, much more.

Subgroup Shifts

Centerline/PRS's recent survey asked respondents, "Thinking back, are your current views about the legality of same-sex marriage generally more supportive, more opposed, or have they not changed over the course of your lifetime?" More than twice as many said they had become more supportive (34%) than more opposed (14%), with the rest claiming not to have changed (47%). So who are those people that are most and least likely to have changed?

Given the stunning headline numbers, there are some powerful changes across nearly every key demographic. We'll consider some of these groups - like party, age and religion - in quite a lot of detail. But first, let's take a closer look at how every single key demographic category has shifted over the last 20 years.

Between 2004 and 2022, we have been witness to perhaps the most significant mass change in the history of modern public opinion polling. This growth in support has been universal across every demographic group. Across 13 key demographic categories, comprised of 38 different subgroups, the *minimum* shift in net percent support for gay marriage was 47 percentage points (Race = Other Non-White, growing from a net support of +3 in 2004 to +50 in 2022). The maximum shift, on the other hand, was the radical change that occurred within the Black community, going from a resounding net negative support of -49 to +35. The average shift across all subgroups was a stunning 71 percentage points!

This is especially compelling when we consider how many of these groups were at a net negative in their support for marriage in 2004. Only 2 of the 38 subgroups studied here were net positive on marriage, and even then, just barely: those that never attend church were at +2 support in 2004, and "other non-white" race was at +3. By 2022, this had basically flipped. We are now at a point where 37 of these 38 subgroups are net positive in their support for gay marriage. The only remaining negative holdout are those that attend church weekly, and even there, net support has grown 47 percentage points over the last two decades.

CLOSER LOOKS

There are a number of demographic categories that are especially worthy of a deep dive given either the magnitude of the shift and/or the importance of that group to the cultural and political debate around the issue. The next sections look more closely at Age and Generation, Religion and Religiosity, and finally Ideology and Party - especially key Republican subgroups.

Closer Look: Religion & Religiosity

Religion has always played an important part in the debate around same-sex marriages and you can see the remnants of that in some of the numbers over the last 20 years. Catholics as well as both White and Black Protestants were primarily negative on legal same-sex marriages in 2004, though today each of these religious affiliates are distinctly supportive.

On the other hand, it is church attendance, or religiosity, where we still see marriage equity holdouts. Across all the key demographic sub-categories this report has studied, it is only those that attend church weekly that remain majority opposed to same-sex marriage. In 2022, a 59% majority disagreed that "Homosexual couples should have the right to marry one another." However, looked at in a slightly different way: a strong 4 out of 10 devout church-goers are either supportive or neutral on marriages for same-sex couples.

Closer Look: Age & Generation

In 2004, every single age category was at a net negative on marriage for same-sex couples, though the youngest group - 18-34 year olds - were only just negative at -4, growing to majority support by the next GSS survey wave in 2006. Today, all of them have shifted to be distinctly positive on same-sex marriage, though the familiar pattern of older groups being less supportive still stands.

At least some of this growth in support can be attributed to younger generations aging up over the last 20 years, so let's look specifically at where the generations stand on the issue. Each generation has also seen substantial growth in same-sex marriage support, to the point where today, every generational cohort is more positive than negative on the issue, including the Silent Generation, consisting of people born prior to 1946. 58% of Baby Boomers agree that "Homosexual couples should have the right to marry one another" as do 66% of Gen X, 77% of Millennials and 82% of Generation Z. And that youngest cohort only has single digit disagreement with that statement.

It is too simplistic to assign these shifts to an aging electorate. Certainly there is some "generational replacement" occuring, in which younger people enter the electorate with more positive attitudes towards gay marriage, while older generations' mortality means fewer gay marriage opponents. But this cannot explain such a massive shift. Instead, it can only be explained by the fact that many, many people have simply been changing their minds.

We can see this happening when we look at gay marriage preferences by age across the last 20 years of the General Social Survey. Every year we see the same pattern: those born later (younger voters) tend to be more positive towards same sex marriage, while those born earlier (older voters) are more negative. But that overall pattern, though repeated, keeps moving further and further up the chart, with higher and higher support levels across all ages within each new wave of the GSS every two years.

Closer Look: Party & Ideology

Support for marriage equality has always seen distinct partisan patterns, with Democrats tending to be more supportive and Republicans less so. This was the case in 2004, when Democrats were a -1 net support, Independents a -23 and Republicans a -59. Today, in 2024, after massive improvements in attitudes it continues to be the case, with Democrats at +64, Independents at +37 and Republicans a +2. Indeed, when we look at basic agreement with the statement that "Same-sex couples should have the right to marry each other" 50% of Republicans agree and 44% disagree.

The large sample sizes of the General Social Survey mean we can dig deeper into Republican subgroups to see where and how things have changed. Most importantly, every single demographic subgroup of Republicans we studied have experienced a positive shift in their support for same-sex marriage. The *minimum* shift was +15 percentage points, and the average shift was +63 percentage points. Most of these subgroups are now at net positive support, with only a few

notable holdouts such as Republicans 65+, Republicans that attend church weekly, and both Strong Republicans and Conservative Republicans. The rest of the party has moved on.

Most important to the party are its future politicians, activists, volunteers and voters, and that future looks decidedly pro-same-sex marriage. The only generational cohorts of Republicans that are opposed to legal same-sex marriage are the Silent Generation (born pre-1946) and Baby Boomers. But beyond that, Republican generations are distinctly for same-sex unions. Agree/disagree stands at 54-35 among GOP Gen X'ers, 50-48 for Republican Millennials and an incredibly lopsided 62% support, 25% oppose among Republicans in Generation Z.

RELATED ATTITUDES

Attitudes Towards LGBTQ Individuals

Supporting marriage for same-sex couples is intimately tied to the basic attitudes Americans have towards LGBTQ individuals. The American National Election Studies have asked participants to rate a number of groups on a "feeling thermometer" over the years, including "gay men and lesbians." The rating runs from 0, the coldest to 100, the warmest. In 2004 the average rating for gay men and lesbians was 47.5; by 2020, it warmed by almost twenty points to a 64.8 rating. Centerline/PRS polling in 2024 put that rating even higher at 72.

Their rating grew even in the face of other groups' stagnation or falls: "feminists" were relatively steady at a 56 in 2004 and a 58 rating in 2020, "labor unions" stayed at a 58 rating, "big business" dropped from a 56 rating to a 48 rating, while "Christian fundamentalists" fell from 59 to 48.

Societal Impact / Morality

Admittedly, there may be voters that believe same-sex marriages should be legally valid, but are less accepting of them morally or socially. Over the years, the GSS survey has asked respondents whether "sexual relations between two adults of the same sex" are wrong or not wrong at all. In 2004 only 31% said it was "not wrong at all" while 69% classified it as wrong. Like the marriage numbers, these numbers have completely flipped: in 2022 61% say it is not at all wrong and only 39% say it is wrong.

Similarly, a 2023 Gallup survey found that 63% of Americans believe that gay or lesbian relations are morally acceptable, placing it on equal moral footing to premarital sex and gambling, while well above other actions like medical testing on animals and the death penalty. Like Americans' preferences on same-sex marriage, attitudes towards same-sex relations has improved dramatically over the last twenty years: in 2002 only 38% deemed it morally acceptable, growing 26 percentage points. This growth has come across all subgroups, though it's worth pointing out that acceptance among Republicans has grown from 22% in 2001 to 41% in 2023.

But what about perceptions on gay marriage's societal impact? Indeed at the peak of the marriage debate many opponents speculated on the adverse impacts gay marriage might have on the community. A Pew Research survey in 2022 specifically asked Americans if they believe the

legalization of same-sex marriage is good for society. Overall six-in-ten Americans deem it a good thing, with about 4 in 10 believing it to be bad. Of particular note are the breakdowns among young Republicans, where a stunning 64% of 18-29 year old Republicans believe legal same-sex marriage to be a good thing for our society.

What's most interesting though is when we put these numbers together. Are there individuals who are less accepting of homosexuality and/or concerned about its societal impact that still believe these individuals should have the legal right to marry? The simple answer is: yes. Among those that believe same-sex relations to be wrong, fewer than half (47%) are opposed to legal same-sex marriage. The remainder are either neutral (24%) or supporters (29%). Or, looking at it somewhat differently, 16% of same-sex marriage supporters are supporters despite believing that same-sex relations are wrong.

THE SAME SEX MARRIAGE FLYWHEEL

This shift in attitudes towards legal same-sex marriage is ultimately part of a large public-opinion flywheel in which improving attitudes leads to improvements in LGBTQ+ visibility, which in turn leads to improved support for marriage for same-sex couples. We now consider how these other demographic trends in LGBTQ+ visibility have changed as a precursor to, alongside of, and as a result of growing support for same-sex marriage.

Accompanying Trend 1: Identification as LGBTQ

The number of Americans self-identifying as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or something other than Heterosexual has steadily increased over the last decade plus for which we have reliable data. Since 2012 Gallup has aggregated all its yearly polling in which they ask about LGBTQ identity. In that first year of analysis, 3.5% of Americans could be classified as non-heterosexual. For 2022, the most recent year for which we have data, that number had essentially doubled to 7.2% of Americans identifying as LGBTQ. Though the rationale behind this growth is surely quite complex, at least some proportion of that is a function of more individuals feeling secure enough to publicly declare their sexuality.

This can be seen in how these numbers vary by generation. An incredible 20% of Generation Z Americans (1997-2004) consider themselves LGBTQ (much of the growth here comes from an increase in young Americans identifying as bisexual), followed by 11% of Millennials (1981-1996). Meanwhile, only 3% of both Generation X (1965-1980) and Baby Boomers (1946-1964) identify as such. Assuming these generational distinctions hold over time, it's reasonable to anticipate continued growth in LGBTQ identification within the American population.

Accompanying Trend 2: Knowing Someone That Is LGBTQ

As more Americans live publicly as LGBTQ, heterosexual Americans are increasingly likely to personally know someone that is gay. In the 2008 American National Election Study, 49% of registered voters said they knew someone among their immediate family members, relatives,

neighbors, coworkers or close friends that was gay, lesbian or bisexual. Twelve short years later, that number had grown 15 percentage points to 64%.

In each instance, knowing someone that is gay has a significant effect on their support for gay marriage. In 2008, 49% of people that knew someone that is LGBTQ supported legal same-sex marriages versus only 25% among those that did not know anyone that was gay. In 2020, the relationship held, but with significant growth in the overall level of support: 76% of those that knew someone that was LGBTQ supported marriage between same-sex couples, compared to 53% support among those that did not have any close relationships.

Indeed, advanced statistical analysis of the recent Centerline/PRS polling reveals that across a majority of the key polling questions, knowing someone that is LGBTQ+ has a statistically significant positive impact on one's favorability towards same-sex marriage and related attitudes.

Accompanying Trend 3: LGBTQ Representation

Not only are heterosexual Americans more likely to now know someone that is gay, they are also much more likely to encounter LGBTQ Americans in positions of profound cultural power such as pop culture and politics. Since 2005 the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) has tracked broadcast television's primetime shows, determining the percentage of series regulars that are portrayed as LGBTQ characters. In 2005 only 1.4% of characters on broadcast primetime were LGBTQ; their most recent report on the 2023 season put it at 8.6%. The high was 11.9% in the 2021 television season.

Out for America has tracked LGBTQ representation in American elected offices since 2017, when they first tallied 448 out public officials. That number has grown steadily year-over-year (between 6 and 25% each year), ultimately more than doubling to 1,185 publicly out politicians across the country. Seeing LGBTQ individuals in influential cultural positions is yet another motivational force in our public opinion flywheel.

Accompanying Trend 4: Same-Sex Families

Most directly, nationally legal same-sex marriage has naturally meant an increase in the number of same sex marriages. The US Census Bureau began formally counting the total number of same-sex households in 2008 through its American Community Survey. At that point, there were roughly 550,000 same-sex households in the US (about 0.5% of all households). In 2021, the most recent year available, that number has basically doubled to about 1.2 million same-sex households, or about 1%. About 700,000 of those households are in legal marriages, while the remaining 500,000 are unmarried partner couples.

These numbers can also be estimated at the state level. Proportionally, the states with the highest percentage of same-sex households are Vermont (1.8%) and Massachusetts (1.5%), some of the first states to legalize gay unions.

Similarly, the ACS has begun enumerating the presence of children by the type of household and found that in 2022 about 18% of same-sex households had a child under the age of 18 in them. More same-sex couples are building families – families that are in turn part of the community, increasing the likelihood that people know someone that is LGBTQ and ultimately that they support their full legal equality. The flywheel continues to turn.

IMPACT OF DOBBS DECISION

The 2022 Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v, Jackson Women's Health Organization* has made some experts concerned about what might happen to the Obergefell precedent prohibiting restrictions on same-sex marriage. The Centerline/PRS poll addressed this directly and found many Americans share this concern.

Attitudes Toward SCOTUS

Without any mention of any particular case or issue, more than half of the country (52%) disapproves of how well the Supreme Court is doing its job right now, in line with other polling that shows its approval at or near record lows over the last three years. This is reflected in how trust in the Court to handle the issue of same-sex marriage has shifted since the *Obergefell* era. In 2015, nearly half of Americans had a great deal of trust or a moderate amount of trust in the Court to handle same-sex marriage issues, but in our most recent polling - post Dobbs - only 41% feel similarly. Indeed, now a majority of 53% say they only have "just some trust" or "no trust at all" in the Court on this issue. And trust on this issue compares poorly to the trust Americans have in the Court on issues of free speech, which has 57% great deal/moderate trust.

DOBBS Fallout

These attitudes are intimately tied up with awareness of the Dobbs decision. A majority of Americans - 52% - have heard or read "a lot about the Supreme Court decision on abortion that overturned the 1973 *Roe v Wade* decision." That number is 62% among those that disapprove of the Supreme Court and only 46% among those that approve. Only 7% say they have not heard about it. And interestingly, people that know a gay person are significantly more likely to say they have heard a lot about it.

61% are concerned about the impact of overturning *Roe v Wade* on same-sex marriage protections, while a 56% majority believe that it is very or somewhat likely that the Supreme Court will also overturn their decision allowing same-sex marriage. Interestingly those saying they believe it likely to be overturned is a mix of strong Republicans being optimistic and strong Democrats being pessimistic.

Regardless of its perceived likelihood a super-majority of 66% believe that same-sex marriage should remain legal and only 27% would like it repealed. Indeed, a full 49% of Americans strongly feel that it should remain legal. This includes 60% of Independents and 49% of Republicans.

THE POLITICS OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Support for legal same-sex marriage isn't the only thing that's changed in the last twenty years; the politics of the issue have also shifted remarkably. What used to be a singularly motivating issue to each party has now morphed into an important issue, but far less defining and dominant today than things like immigration and attitudes towards Donald Trump.

Here we consider specifically how stances on marriage between same-sex couples are perceived within the party most associated with its opposition to it: Republicans. First, we must remind ourselves of the important context here that support for same-sex marriage is actually positive among Republicans and has been for about six years. Yes, there is a sizable minority of GOP'ers that are opponents, but most support the issue.

With that in mind, the Centerline/PRS survey asked, "can someone who supports same-sex marriage be considered a good Republican or not?" 61% of the country and 56% of Republicans said, "Yes" they can be considered a good Republican. Only 1 out 4 Republicans definitively said "No," while another 19% couldn't say either way. This, by the way, is an improvement from 54% when this same question was asked just two years ago. Moreover, 64% of Trump voters and 66% of GOP Congressional voters said they can be a good Republican as well. This reflects what we've seen legislatively, with thirty-nine House Republicans and 12 Senate Republicans voting for the Respect For Marriage Act. The party has spoken, and supporters of same-sex marriage are welcome.

So how is the party perceived on this issue? A strong 43% plurality of Americans believe the Republican Party's position on same-sex marriage is too conservative; much higher than it was eleven years ago when only 30% said it was too conservative. (25% say it is about right and only 16% say it is not conservative enough). Two out of every ten Republicans believe that the party is too conservative on this issue, along with 42% of Independents: risky political numbers in a tight electoral environment.

Asked directly about the electoral consequences, we see evidence that while the issue is not as defining as it used to be, it can still pack a punch at the ballot box. More than a third of Americans refuse to support a same-sex marriage opponent for President (34%) or Congress (35%), meaningfully higher than those that would definitely vote for them (23% and 22% respectively).

Looking at this by each voter's presidential preferences indicates that while legal same-sex marriage is more motivating to Biden voters than Trump voters, it also potentially more harmful to Trump. Among undecided voters that are leaning towards Trump, 17% say they would definitely vote *against* a candidate opposed to legal same-sex marriage. Compare that with only 7% of undecided lean-Biden voters that would definitely vote *for* a same-sex marriage opponent. Further, among undecided voters for both President and Congress, there are more people that would definitely vote against a marriage equality opponent than vote for them.

CONCLUSION

Over the past two decades, the transformation in American attitudes toward same-sex marriage has been nothing short of revolutionary. The shift from marginal support in 2004 to overwhelming acceptance in 2024 reflects the most significant and rapid change in public opinion in modern history. This broad-based support, crossing demographic and political lines, underscores a profound and enduring commitment to equality and inclusivity.

The data clearly indicate that support for marriage between same-sex couples is not just a trend among younger generations or liberal voters; it is a pervasive sentiment that has penetrated traditionally resistant groups, including Republicans, conservatives, and regular churchgoers. The generational shift and changing minds across all age groups highlight a society increasingly embracing the rights and recognition of same-sex couples.

The analysis reveals that the acceptance of marriage equality is deeply intertwined with broader positive attitudes toward LGBTQ+ individuals, visibility, and representation. As more Americans identify as LGBTQ+ and as societal visibility increases through media and politics, support for same-sex marriage continues to grow.

Despite the political turbulence and the potential implications of Supreme Court decisions like *Dobbs*, a substantial majority of Americans remain committed to preserving the legality and recognition of same-sex marriages. This commitment is reflected in the fact that a significant portion of Americans, including a majority of Republicans, believe that support for legal same-sex marriage is compatible with their political and moral values.

In essence, the shift in attitudes toward marriage between same-sex couples represents a remarkable societal evolution that reinforces the principles of equality and human dignity at the heart of American democracy. Looking forward, this trajectory suggests continued growth in support and further integration of legal same-sex marriage as a fundamental and accepted aspect of American life.