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GAY AND LESBIAN CIVIL UNIONS SUPPORTED IN ARIZONA; SAME-SEX COUPLES SHOULD BE ALLOWED BENEFITS

A majority of Arizonans support allowing gays and lesbians to form civil unions that would give them many of the same rights and benefits as a married man and woman, according to results from a recent survey. At the same time, more Arizonans oppose rather than support legal marriages for gays and lesbians. In addition to supporting civil unions, Arizonans support allowing same-sex couples to share health insurance coverage from one partner's job and allowing same-sex couples to receive social security benefits when one partner dies. Arizonans also favor recognizing the marriage of same sex partners who are legally married in another state.

The *Grand Canyon State Poll* was conducted by the Social Research Laboratory at Northern Arizona University. Calling took place between October 3 and October 20, 2003. Six hundred and ten randomly-selected Arizonans participated in the survey. Survey results are accurate within a +/- 4 percent margin of error, at a 95 percent confidence level.

CIVIL UNIONS SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED

A majority of Arizonans (53%) support allowing gays and lesbians to form civil unions that would give them many of the same rights and benefits as a married man and woman. Support for civil unions is significant among women (57%), among people who say they personally know someone who is gay (58%), and among people who consider themselves "not very religious" (71%). People who are "somewhat religious" support civil unions (52%) while

people who are “very religious” oppose civil unions (57%). Men are divided on the topic, with 49 percent supporting civil unions and 48 percent opposing them.

Over three-quarters of Arizonans (77%) say they personally know someone who is gay or lesbian. Support for civil unions diminishes among those who do not know someone who is gay or lesbian. Sixty percent of this group opposes civil union.

Arizonans make a distinction between marriage and civil unions for same-sex couples. Although 53% of Arizonans support civil unions for same-sex couples, 54 percent oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally.

Fred Solop, director of the *Grand Canyon State Poll*, commented, “Arizonans support civil unions for gay and lesbian couples. This practice is already in place in Vermont and is supported in recent studies of other states. Arizona legislators opposing civil unions for gays and lesbians hold an opinion that stands outside the mainstream.”

SAME-SEX COUPLES DESERVE MANY RIGHTS

A majority of Arizonans (59%) favor allowing same-sex couples to share health insurance coverage from one partner’s job in the same way that a married man and women can. Women favor this policy by a two-to-one margin (65% in favor versus 31% opposed). Among people who know someone who is gay, twice as many favor this policy as oppose it (64% versus 32% opposed). People who are “somewhat religious” and “not very religious” strongly support this policy (59% and 80% in favor, respectively). Arizonans are more divided over allowing same-sex partners to receive social security benefits when the other partner dies, in the same way that a married man and woman can. Half (50%) support this policy and 45 percent oppose it.

While Arizonan’s may not favor legal marriage for same-sex couples, if a gay or lesbian couple is legally married in another state and later moves to Arizona, the majority of Arizonan’s think their marriage should be legally recognized here (52% favor versus 44% opposed).



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**GRAND CANYON STATE POLL
BACKGROUND MEMO**

Fall 2003

The *Grand Canyon State Poll* was conducted between October 3 and October 20, 2003. A random sample of 610 adult residents of Arizona was asked questions regarding gay marriage, civil unions, and benefits for same-sex partners. Survey question results are subject to a sampling error of +/- 4 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in the population versus a scientific sample taken from the population. Sampling error does not take into account additional sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion. The data referred to in this release are presented below.

Would you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally?

	Favor	Oppose	Count
Total	42%	54%	(594)
Female	48%	48%	(281)
Male	34%	61%	(285)
Knows someone gay	45%	50%	(455)
Does not know someone gay	30%	67%	(126)
Very religious	25%	70%	(163)
Somewhat religious	42%	55%	(270)
Not very religious	60%	34%	(117)

Would you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to form civil unions that would give them many of the same rights and benefits as a married man and woman?

	Favor	Oppose	Count
Total	53%	43%	(596)
Female	57%	38%	(283)
Male	49%	48%	(285)
Knows someone gay	58%	36%	(456)
Does not know someone gay	37%	60%	(126)
Very religious	38%	57%	(163)
Somewhat religious	52%	45%	(271)
Not very religious	71%	24%	(117)

Would you favor or oppose allowing same-sex couples to share the health insurance coverage from one partner's job, in the same way that a married man and woman can?

	Favor	Oppose	Count
Total	59%	36%	(594)
Female	65%	31%	(286)
Male	53%	42%	(281)
Knows someone gay	64%	32%	(458)
Does not know someone gay	42%	52%	(123)
Very religious	42%	51%	(163)
Somewhat religious	59%	37%	(270)
Not very religious	80%	19%	(117)

Would you favor or oppose allowing same-sex couples to get social security benefits when one partner dies, in the same way that a married man and woman can?

	Favor	Oppose	Count
Total	50%	45%	(594)
Female	57%	38%	(284)
Male	42%	53%	(283)
Knows someone gay	55%	41%	(459)
Does not know someone gay	32%	62%	(122)
Very religious	34%	58%	(275)
Somewhat religious	49%	47%	(271)
Not very religious	72%	28%	(117)

If a homosexual couple is legally married in another state and later moves to Arizona, should that marriage be legally recognized here or not?

	Should be recognized	Should not be recognized	Count
Total	52%	44%	(593)
Female	58%	36%	(282)
Male	44%	53%	(284)
Knows someone gay	56%	40%	(457)
Does not know someone gay	37%	59%	(122)
Very religious	37%	58%	(163)
Somewhat religious	50%	47%	(271)
Not very religious	69%	27%	(118)