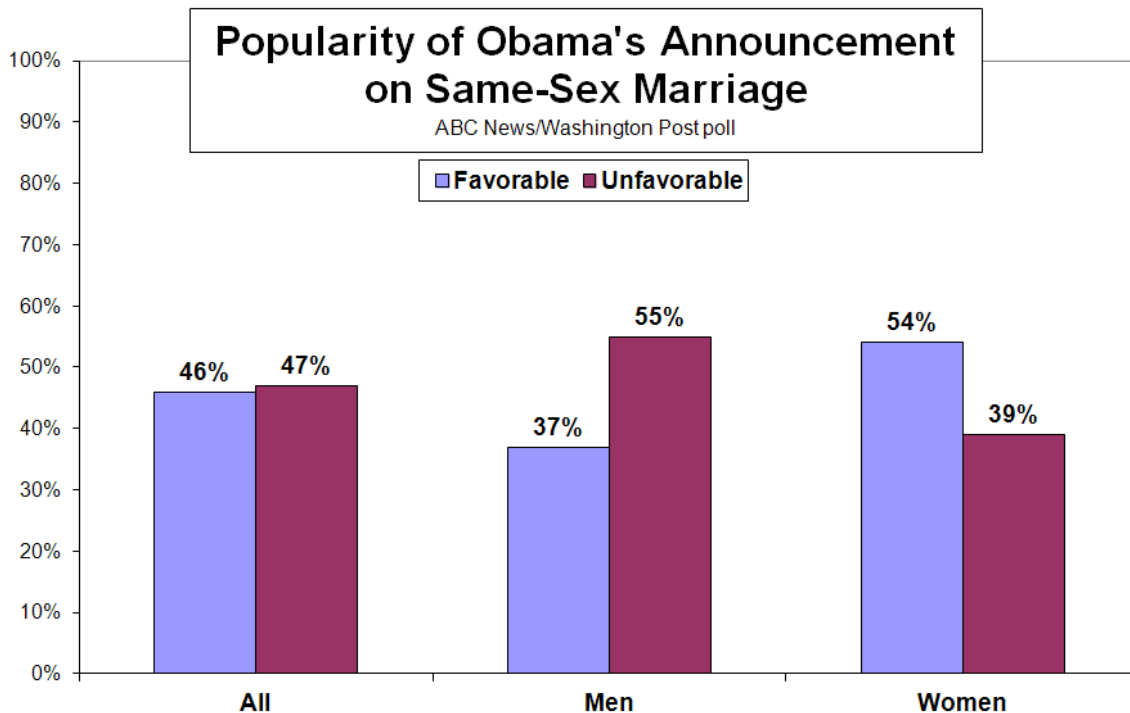


## **Obama and Gay Marriage: Opinions Divide, and Sharply**

Americans divide essentially evenly in their responses to President Obama's new position on gay marriage, with views more strongly negative than positive and stark divisions across political, ideological and other groups – including a broad gender gap.

All told, 46 percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll express a favorable impression of Obama's statement in an interview with ABC's Robin Roberts last week that he personally has come to support gay marriage, while 47 percent respond unfavorably. That includes a 10-point tilt toward "strongly" negative rather than strongly positive views, 38 percent vs. 28 percent.

Mirroring a wide gender gap in Obama's support more generally, 54 percent of women respond favorably to his backing of gay marriage, compared with 37 percent of men. There's an even broader gap by age – 63 percent of young adults favor the president's position, vs. 34 percent of seniors.



While it's unclear how the issue may play out in the fall, this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds striking intensity of sentiment in some groups. Unusually large numbers of conservatives, Republicans and conservative Republicans respond not just

unfavorably, but strongly so – 61, 65 and 71 percent, respectively, peaking at 80 percent of very conservatives.

For their part, most liberals, Democrats and liberal Democrats respond strongly favorably, albeit not always at commensurate levels. Notably, at 52 percent, strongly positive views of Obama’s position among Democrats are 13 points lower than strongly negative views among Republicans.

There’s an intensity gap between the sexes as well: While women, as noted, are much more apt to express overall favorable views of the president’s announcement, more men respond strongly negatively, 45 percent, than women see it strongly favorably, 35 percent.

**POLITICS** – Some elements of the political equation are clear. Seventy percent of Democrats view Obama’s declaration favorably; 76 percent of Republicans respond negatively. But swing-voting independents tell a more mixed story: On one hand, they tilt slightly more favorably than unfavorably overall, 49-43 percent. On the other, somewhat more independents respond strongly negatively, 35 percent, than strongly positively, 26 percent – and strong sentiment can better predict voter turnout and vote preferences.

	Views on Obama/gay marriage Favorable-unfavorable
All	46-47%
Democrats	70-23
Republicans	18-76
Independents	49-43
Liberals	78-17
Moderates	59-35
Conservatives (net)	22-73
Somewhat conservatives	31-62
Very conservatives	9-88
Liberal Democrats	87- 7
Conservative Republicans	13-83
Men	37-55
Women	54-39
18-29	63-27
65+	34-59
College grad	54-40
Non-grad	42-49
Northeast	58-39
Other regions	43-48
Whites	45-48
Blacks	54-37
Hispanics	47-51

An ABC/Post poll in March found majority support for legalizing gay marriage, 52-43 percent, a level first reached in early 2011, reflecting a sharp rise in recent years. Of course, views on Obama's new position on the issue add a political dimension to the measurement. Still the divisions among groups in this poll are similar to those on gay marriage more generally.

GROUPS – One notable difference is by race. Just 41 percent of African-Americans supported gay marriage in ABC/Post polls in mid-2011 and early 2012. Yet 54 percent express a favorable view of his position on the issue in this poll – suggesting that, for some, allegiance to Obama may have prompted a rethink on the issue itself.

At the same time, among whites, support for gay marriage was 9 points higher in March than are positive responses to Obama's position now, 54 percent vs. 45 percent, apparently indicating the opposite effect.

Among other groups, Obama's announcement is more popular among college graduates (54 percent favorable, vs. 42 percent among non-grads) and in the Northeast (58 percent, vs. 41, 44 and 46 percent, respectively, in the South, Midwest and West).

There's one more group that may be worth watching: Eight percent of Americans have no opinion of Obama's decision to support gay marriage – a small slice of the population, but, given the public's essentially even division on the issue, one that could tip the balance either way.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cell phone May 9-13, 2012, among a random national sample of 1,008 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points. The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by SSRS/Social Science Research Solutions of Media, Pa.

Analysis by Damla Ergun.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

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Full results follow.

1a-b held for release.

1. Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of (ITEM)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat? (ITEMS SCRAMBLED)

c. President Obama's statement this week that he supports allowing gays and lesbians to get married

	----- Favorable -----			----- Unfavorable -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
5/13/12	46	28	17	47	9	38	8

\*\*\* END \*\*\*