



**Marist  
Poll**



## **Knights of Columbus**

Religious Liberty Protection  
and Same Sex Marriage  
Connecticut Voters April 2009



- The Knights of Columbus, in partnership with the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion, surveyed registered voters in Connecticut about the proposed changes to state legislation in light of last fall's court ruling to legalize same sex marriage in the state.
- 760 registered voters who live in Connecticut were interviewed April 13<sup>th</sup> through April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009 by telephone. Results have a margin of error of +/- 4%.
- The results of the survey illustrate the concern voters express about the potential impact legislative changes may have on the protection of religious liberties for public officials and religious institutions in Connecticut.

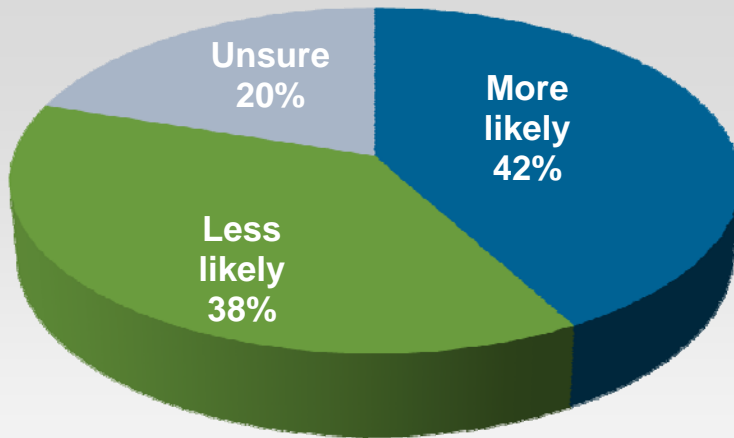
Please note that some totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.



Same sex marriage legislation is a polarizing issue on which a majority of Connecticut voters either are less likely or unsure how they would vote for a lawmaker who supports the legislation.

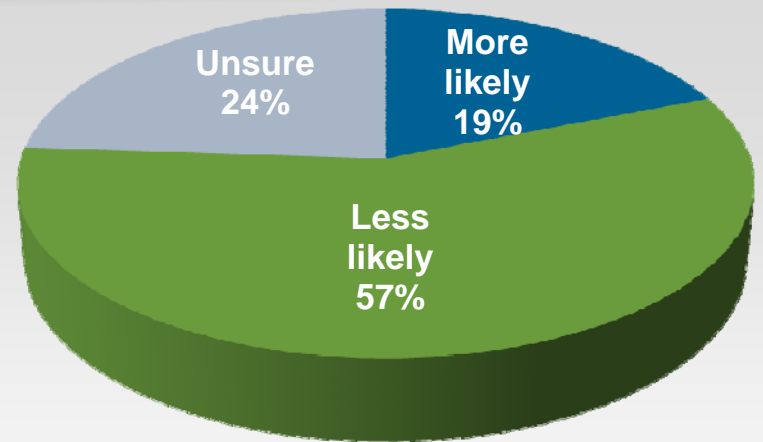
However, a divided electorate becomes a decisive one when asked about religious liberty protection. By a margin of three to one, voters are less likely to support a lawmaker who votes for same sex marriage legislation without including First Amendment religious liberty protection. Barely one in five voters are more likely to support a lawmaker who hasn't taken such protections into account.

Support a state lawmaker who votes in favor of same sex marriage legislation



Question Wording: Are you more or less likely to support a state lawmaker who votes in favor of same sex marriage legislation?

Support a state lawmaker who votes in favor of same sex marriage legislation that does not include religious liberty protection

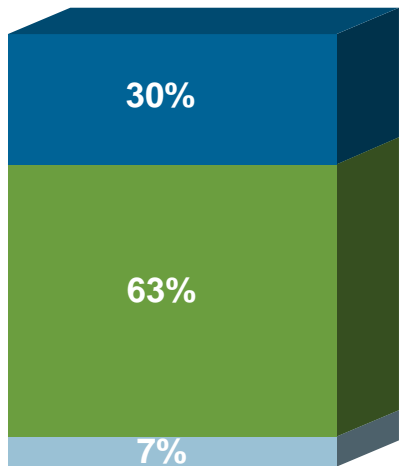


Question Wording: How about if the same sex marriage legislation does not include first amendment religious liberty protection for faith based organizations, are you more or less likely to support a state lawmaker who votes in favor of same sex marriage legislation that does not include first amendment religious liberty protection for faith based organizations?

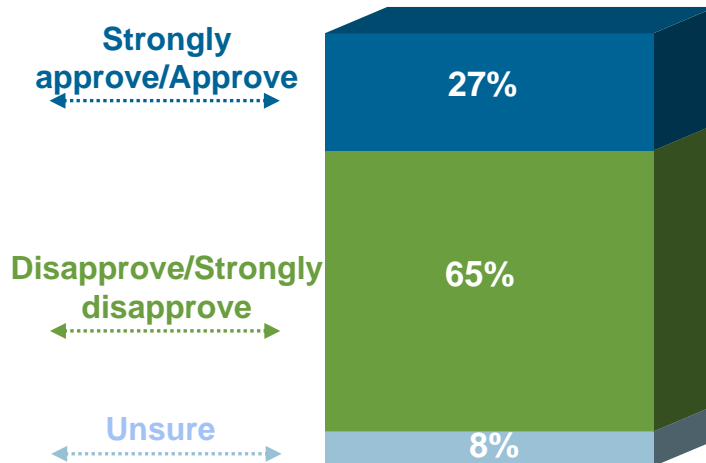


By at least two to one, Connecticut voters disapprove of changes to state law which do not provide First Amendment religious freedom protections for schools, businesses, or public officials who act in accord with their religious beliefs.

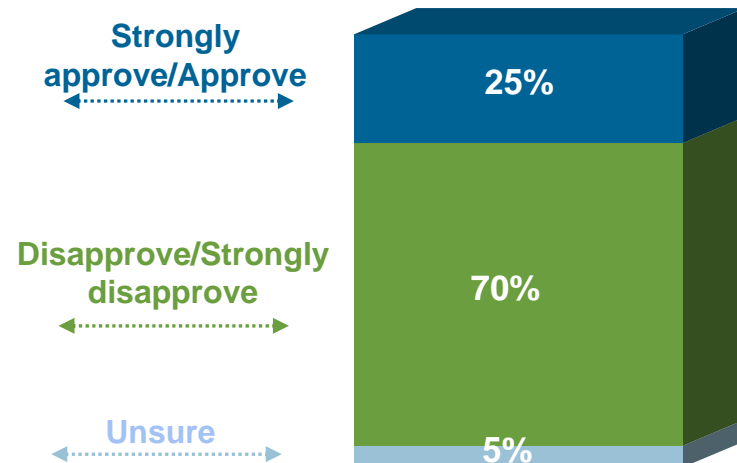
Allow the promotion in school curriculum of a gay or lesbian lifestyle



Allow affirmative action preferences and quotas to be applied based on sexual orientation for gays and lesbians



Impose penalties and fines on public officials who refuse to perform same sex marriages even if their refusal is based on religious beliefs



Question wording: In light of the Connecticut Supreme Court's decision to legalize same sex marriage, the legislature is debating a bill that would change current state law. Please tell me if you strongly approve, approve, disapprove, or strongly disapprove each of the following proposed changes to the current law. The change which would: [statements above]



More than three in four Connecticut voters oppose punishing religious schools that do not promote gay or lesbian lifestyles. Likewise, voters are against forcing churches and other religious organizations to allow same sex events in their facilities.

If religious schools that refuse to promote a gay or lesbian lifestyle curriculum to children lose their tax-exempt status and are forced to close



If churches and religious organizations face lawsuits if – for religious reasons – they don't allow their facilities or halls to be used for same sex events



If churches and religious organizations, despite their religious beliefs, risk lawsuits if they don't change their hiring practices to accommodate gays or lesbians even in key religiously sensitive positions



If religious schools that provide housing for married students face lawsuits or risk losing their tax exempt status when they don't do so for gay or lesbian couples



■ More likely   ■ Less likely   ■ Unsure

**Question wording:** The legislation under consideration does not require clergy to perform same sex marriage if it is against their religious convictions. However, the bill does not exempt religious institutions or organizations. Some legal scholars say the legislation could have unintended effects. Please tell me if each of the following makes you more or less likely to support the law under consideration by the legislature:

# Overwhelming Support for Religious Liberty Protection



More than 8 in 10 Connecticut voters do not support a law requiring businesses to have preferences or quotas based on sexual orientation. Nearly three-quarters do not support penalizing public officials who refuse to perform same sex marriages for religious reasons. More than two-thirds do not want to legalize penalties for adoption agencies that place children only in homes with a mother and father.

If businesses are forced to set preferences and quotas based on sexual orientation for gays and lesbians



If public officials who refuse to perform same sex marriages based on their religious beliefs face fines and penalties



If religious adoption agencies that place children only in homes with a mother and a father are sued for discrimination and are forced to stop providing adoption services



If gays and lesbians are given protected status under the law allowing them greater opportunity to file legal actions



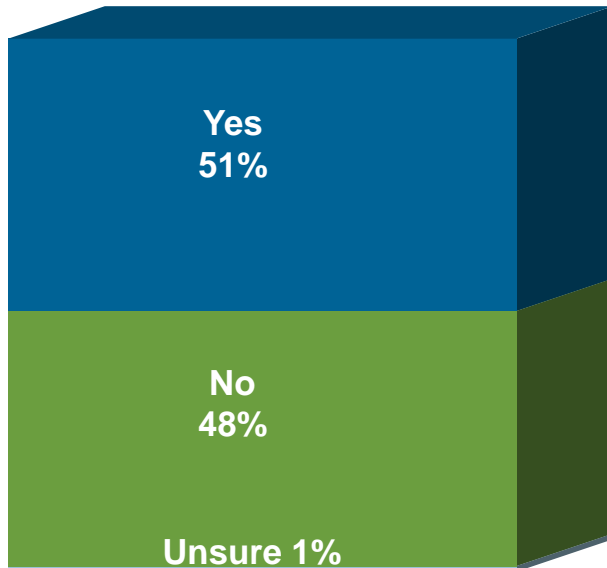
■ More likely ■ Less likely ■ Unsure

Question wording: The legislation under consideration does not require clergy to perform same sex marriage if it is against their religious convictions. However, the bill does not exempt religious institutions or organizations. Some legal scholars say the legislation could have unintended effects. Please tell me if each of the following makes you more or less likely to support the law under consideration by the legislature:

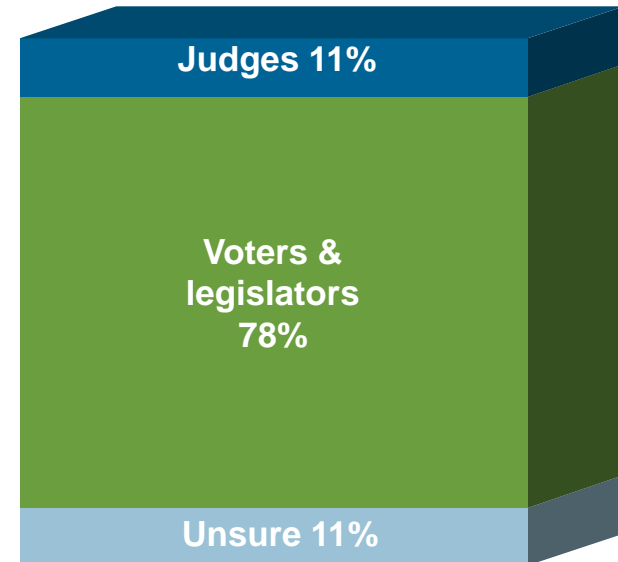


51% of Connecticut voters believe marriage should only be between a man and a woman. Most voters agree the definition should be determined by voters and legislators not judges.

Belief that marriage should only be between a man and a woman



The definition of marriage determined by judges or by voters and legislators



Question Wording: Do you believe that marriage should only be between a man and a woman?

Question Wording: Do you think the definition of marriage should be determined by judges or do you think that it should be determined by voters and their legislators?



## Knights of Columbus Headquarters

Mr. Carl Anderson, Supreme Knight

Mr. Andrew Walther, Director of Media Relations

1 Columbus Plaza  
New Haven, CT 06510  
(203) 752-4253

The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic men's fraternal benefit society that was formed to render financial aid to members and their families. Mutual aid and assistance are offered to sick, disabled and needy members and their families. Social and intellectual fellowship is promoted among members and their families through educational, charitable, religious, social welfare, war relief and public relief works. The Knights of Columbus has grown from several members in one council to more than 13,000 councils and 1.7 million members.



## Marist College Institute for Public Opinion

Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director,  
Marist Institute for Public Opinion

Dr. Barbara L. Carvalho, Director,  
Marist Poll

Marist College  
3399 North Road  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601  
(845) 575-5050

Founded in 1978, the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion (MIPO) is a survey research center at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. The Marist Poll has conducted independent research on public priorities, elections, and a wide variety of social issues. Through the regular public release of surveys, MIPO has built a legacy of independence, reliability, and accuracy. Its results are featured in print and electronic media throughout the world.