

*Moral Issues and Catholic Values:
The California Vote in 2008
Proposition 8*



October 2008

*How the Survey
Was Conducted*

- *Moral Issues and Catholic Values: The California Vote in 2008 Proposition 8* reports the results of a survey of California voters by the Knights of Columbus.
- The survey was conducted by the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion.
- 1,008 adults eighteen years of age or older who live in California and are registered to vote were interviewed from September 28th through October 5th, 2008.
- Registered voters were interviewed by telephone in proportion to the voter registration in each county in California and adjusted for turnout in statewide elections. Results for all registered voters are statistically significant at $\pm 3.1\%$. There are 772 likely voters. The results for this sub-sample are statistically significant at $\pm 3.5\%$. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.

Executive Summary

✦ *Proposition 8: The Definition of Marriage*

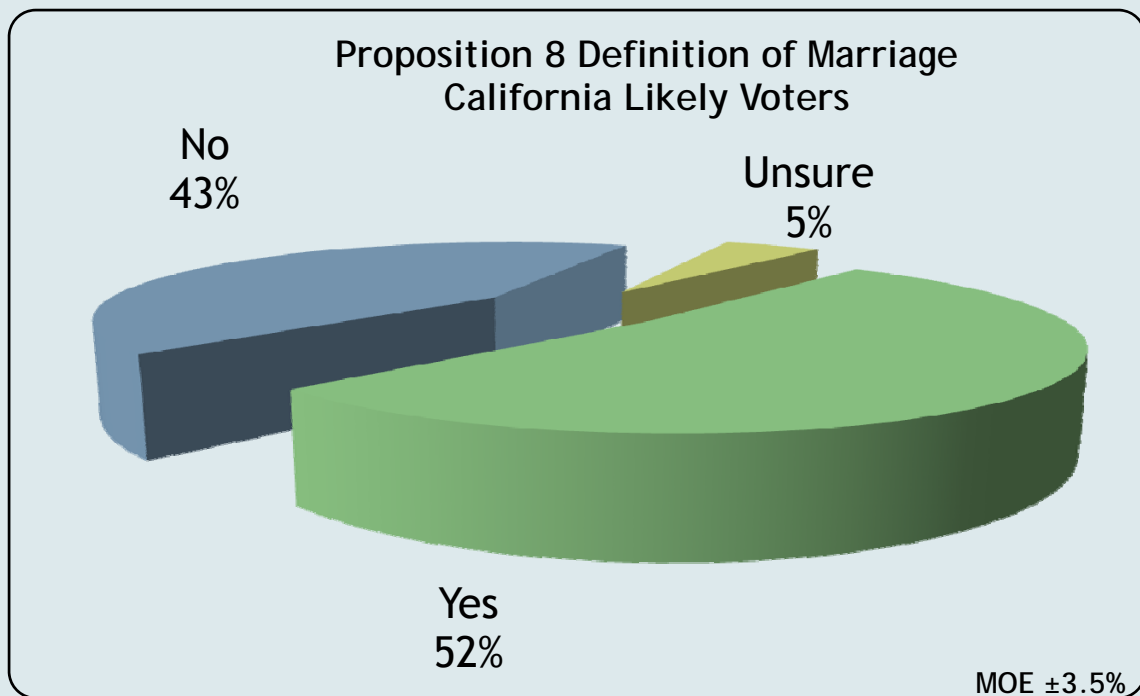
- Proposition 8 is the initiative on the California ballot to amend the state's constitution to provide that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. The Yes side leads by 9 percentage points with the support of a majority of likely voters, 52%. 43% oppose the proposition, and 5% are undecided.
- 83% of Republican voters support the initiative as do majorities of likely Catholic voters and Latinos. Proposition 8 is also supported by 50% or more of the likely voters in each region of the state except for the Bay area.
- A majority of likely voters do not believe same-sex couples should have a legal right to marry. Among this group, 92% of likely voters who oppose same-sex marriage and 79% of those who support civil unions but not marriage intend to vote Yes on Proposition 8.
- 63% of Democrats and a majority of Independent voters plan to vote No. 54% of likely voters under 45 years of age and the same proportion of those who are not married oppose the initiative.

✦ *Proposition 8: The Definition of Marriage (continued)*

- More than 61% of California's electorate originally approved the definition of marriage as stated in Proposition 8 back in 2000. The courts subsequently overturned the vote. 52% of voters in California currently say the courts made the wrong move. 72% of likely voters agree the definition of marriage in the state should be determined by initiative.
- Voters in the survey were asked to react to several potential effects of Proposition 8. The issue that resonates most with voters is what will not happen with the passage of Proposition 8. When likely voters learn passage of the initiative will not change the ability of same-sex couples to form civil unions, majorities of No side voters and those who are undecided about their vote are both more likely to support Proposition 8.
- Nearly half of California's electorate who are likely to vote on Election Day does not think same-sex marriage should be law if it places clergy at risk for lawsuits. Moreover, about eight in ten California voters believe the clergy should not be legally required to perform marriages that conflict with their religious convictions.

*Proposition 8:
The Definition of Marriage*

Proposition 8: 52% Say Yes... Marriage Only Between a Man and a Woman



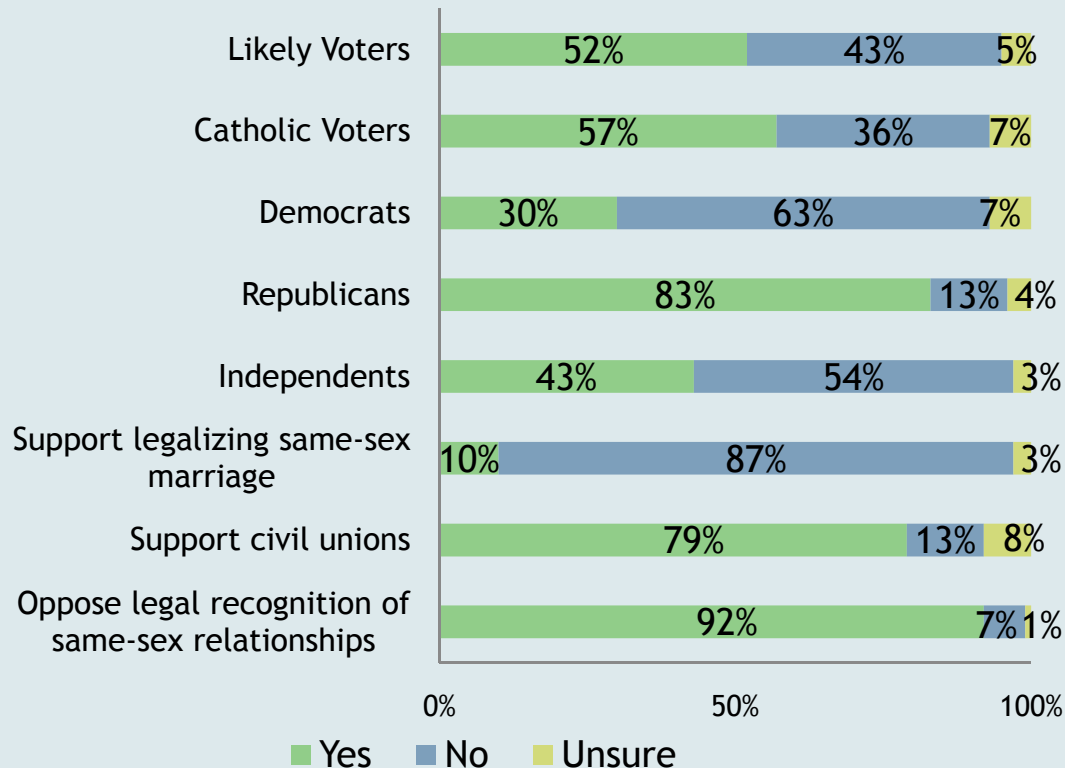
Proposition 8 is the initiative to amend the California State Constitution to provide that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California.

Question wording: Proposition 8 is the “Limit on Marriage Constitutional Amendment.” It amends the California constitution to say that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. If the election were being held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 8?

- Among those likely to vote on Election Day, supporters of Proposition 8 outnumber opponents by 9 percentage points. 52% of likely voters plan to vote Yes to amend the state’s constitution to define marriage as *only* between a man and a woman. 43% say No to legally characterizing marriage in this way and eliminating the right of same-sex couples to marry. 5% are unsure.

Proposition 8: Supporters and Opponents

Proposition 8 Definition of Marriage
California Likely Voters



Vote Yes:

- 52% Likely Voters
- 57% Likely Catholic Voters
- 83% Republicans
- 79% Support civil unions
- 92% Oppose same-sex marriage

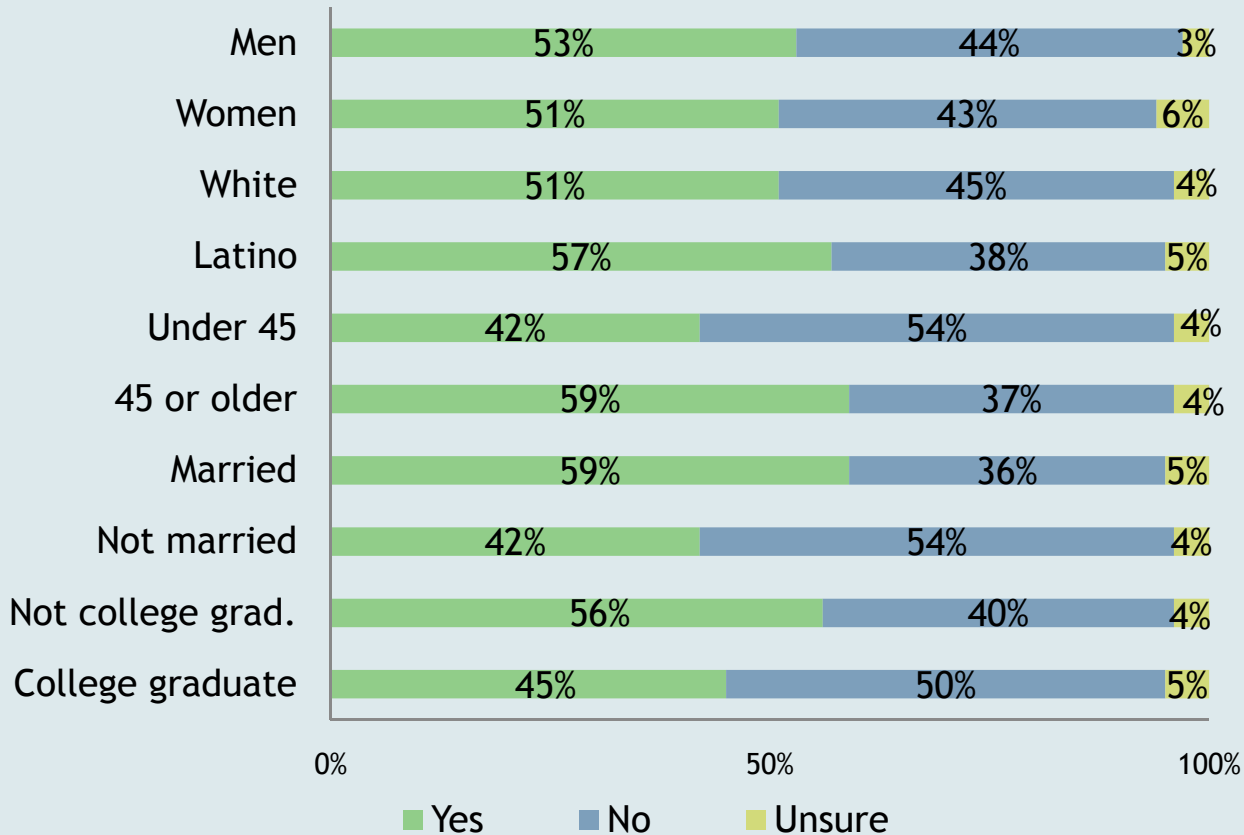
Vote No:

- 63% Democrats
- 54% Independents
- 87% Support same-sex marriage

Question wording: Proposition 8 is the “Limit on Marriage Constitutional Amendment.” It amends the California constitution to say that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. If the election were being held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 8?

Proposition 8: Supporters and Opponents

Proposition 8 Definition of Marriage
California Likely Voters



Vote Yes:

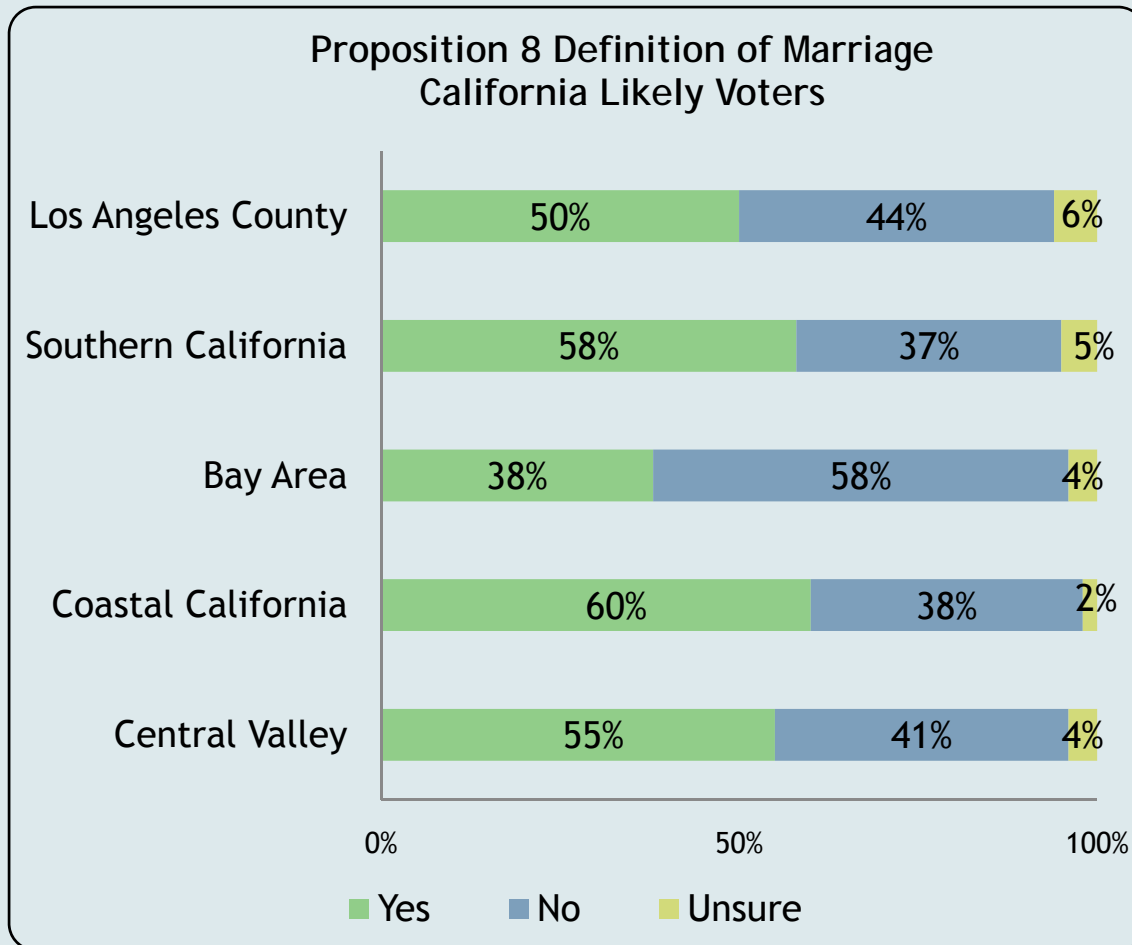
- 53% Men
- 51% Women
- 51% White
- 57% Latino
- 59% Age 45 or older
- 59% Married
- 56% Not college grad.

Vote No:

- 54% Age under 45
- 54% Not married
- 50% College graduate

Question wording: Proposition 8 is the “Limit on Marriage Constitutional Amendment.” It amends the California Constitution to say that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. If the election were being held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 8?

Proposition 8: Supporters and Opponents



Vote Yes, percentage point lead:

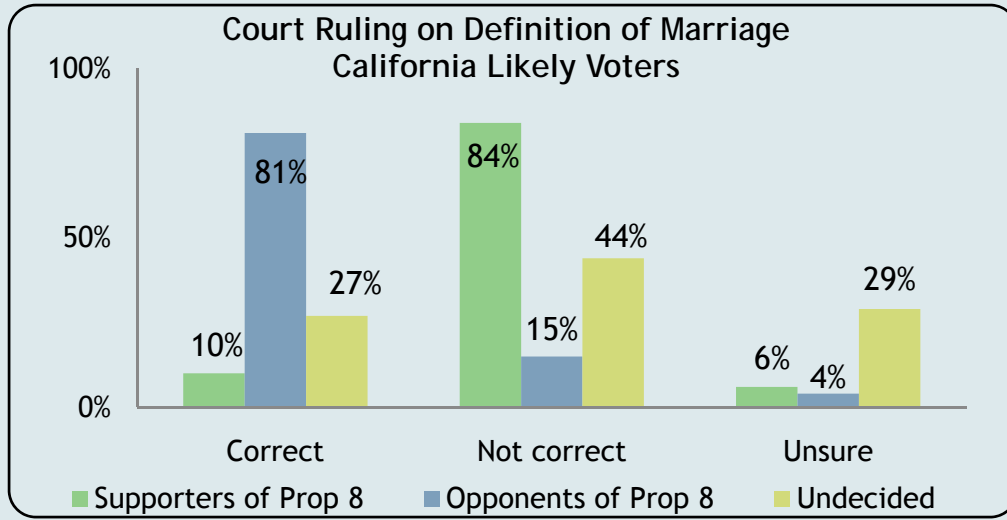
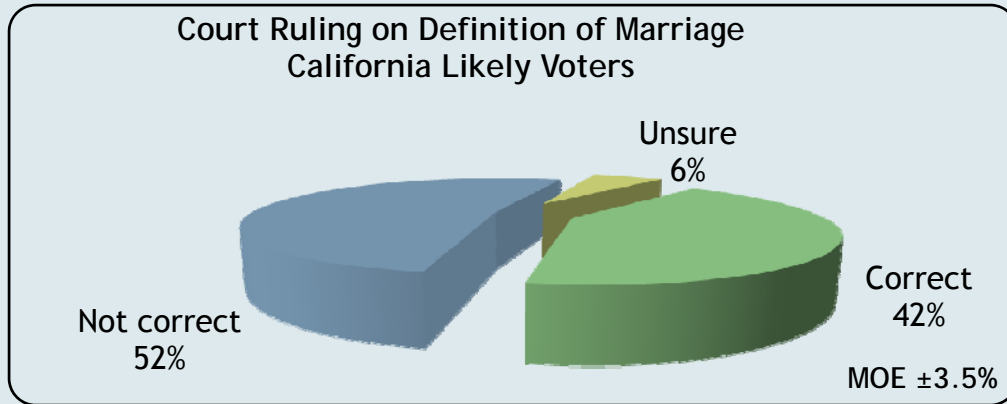
- 6 in Los Angeles County
- 21 in Southern California
- 22 in Coastal California
- 14 in Central Valley

Vote No, percentage point lead:

- 20 in Bay Area

Question wording: Proposition 8 is the “Limit on Marriage Constitutional Amendment.” It amends the California Constitution to say that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. If the election were being held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 8?

California Voters React to Ruling by the Courts

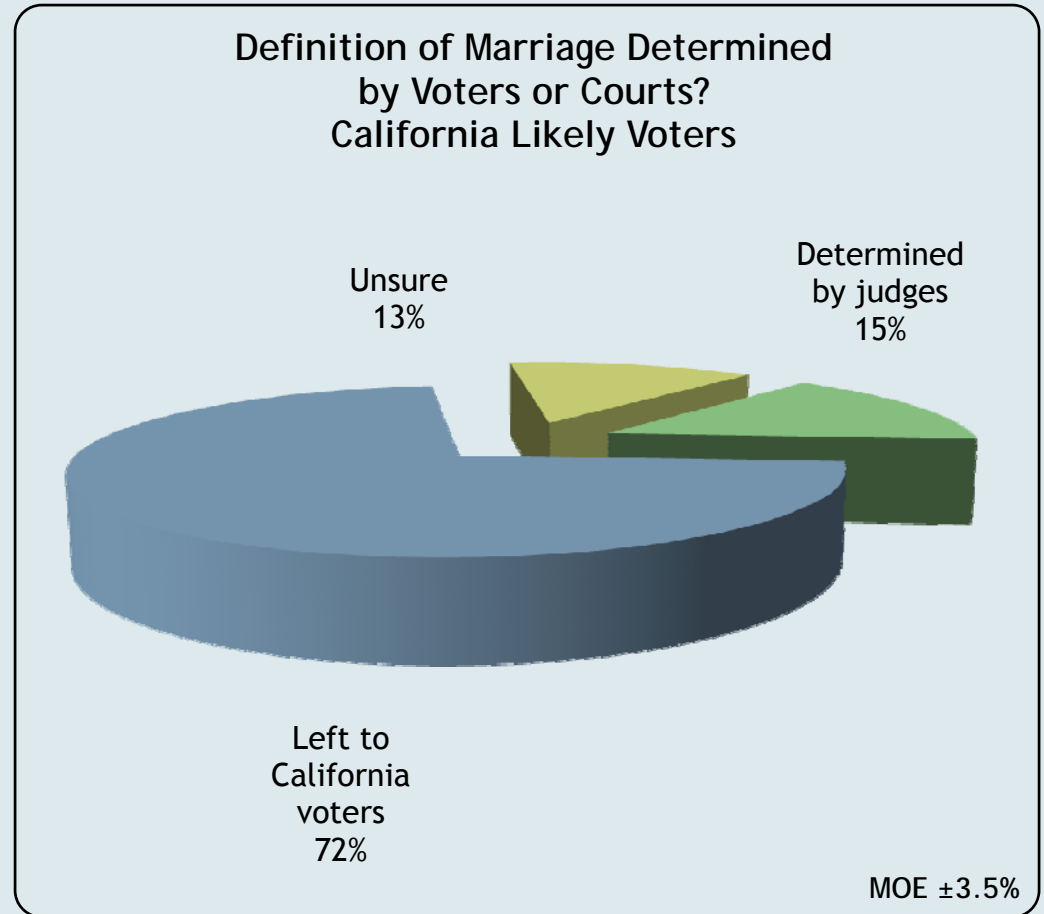


Question wording: The language in Proposition 8 defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman was approved by more than 61% of California voters in 2000. Earlier this year, four judges in San Francisco overturned this vote and declared that gay people have a constitutional right to be married. Do you think the judges were correct in their decision, or not?

- Advocates of Proposition 8 argue the language in the current initiative was passed by the voters of California in 2000 and should not have been overturned by the courts.
- A majority of likely voters, 52%, agree with Proposition 8 advocates that the courts should not have overturned the decision of the voters. 42% disagree.
- Supporters of Proposition 8 generally believe the ruling was not correct and opponents think it was. Likely voters still undecided are more likely to agree with supporters than opponents.

California Voters React to Ruling by the Courts

- Most likely voters agree with advocates of Proposition 8 that the definition of marriage should be left to the voters of California and not determined by the courts.
- 72% agree the definition of marriage should be determined by initiative while 15% believe it should be defined by the courts. 13% are unsure.



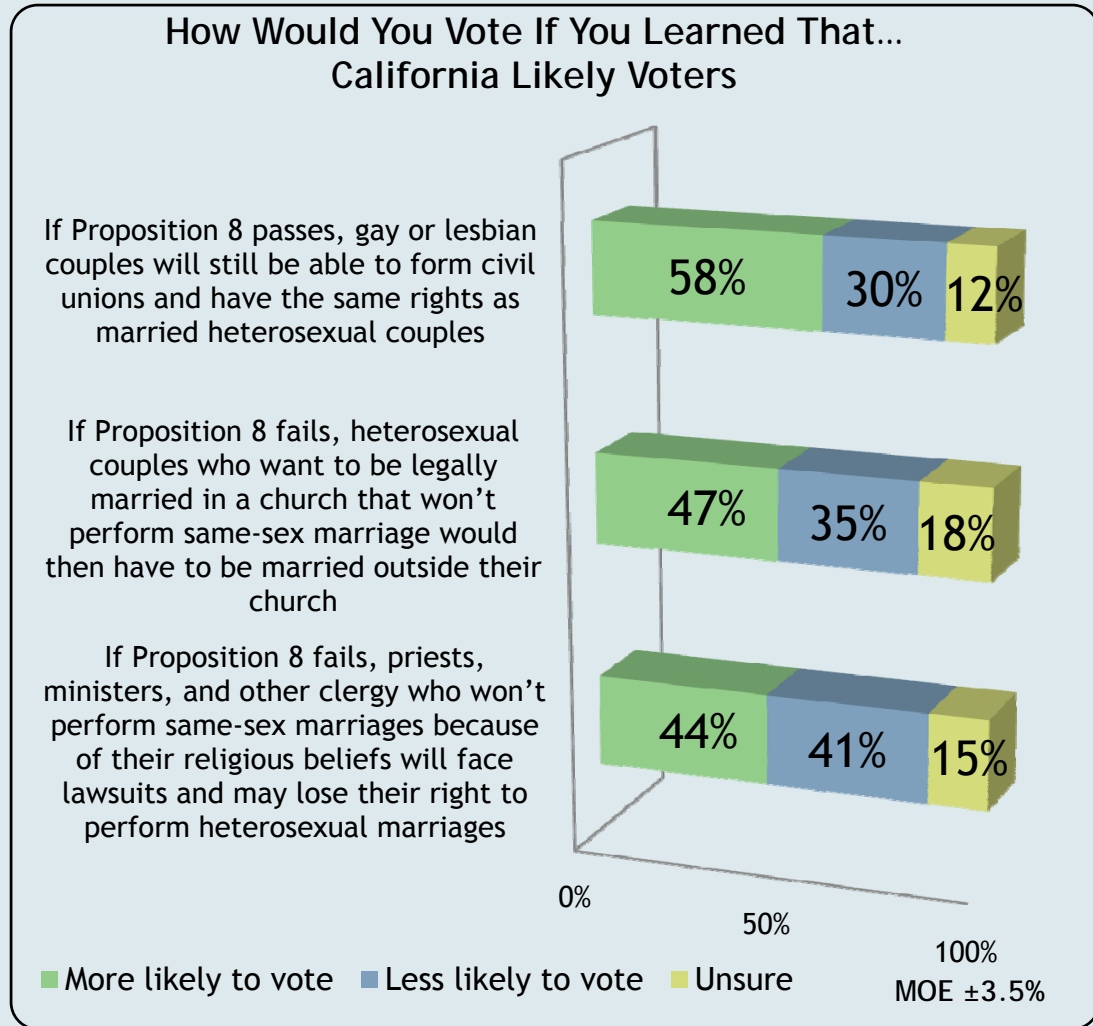
Question wording: Do you think the definition of marriage should be determined by judges or do you think that decision should be left to California voters?

Voters React to Potential Prop 8 Effects: Arguments that Change Minds

- 58% of the likely California electorate is more inclined to vote for Proposition 8 if same-sex couples would still be able to form civil unions and have the same rights as married heterosexual couples.

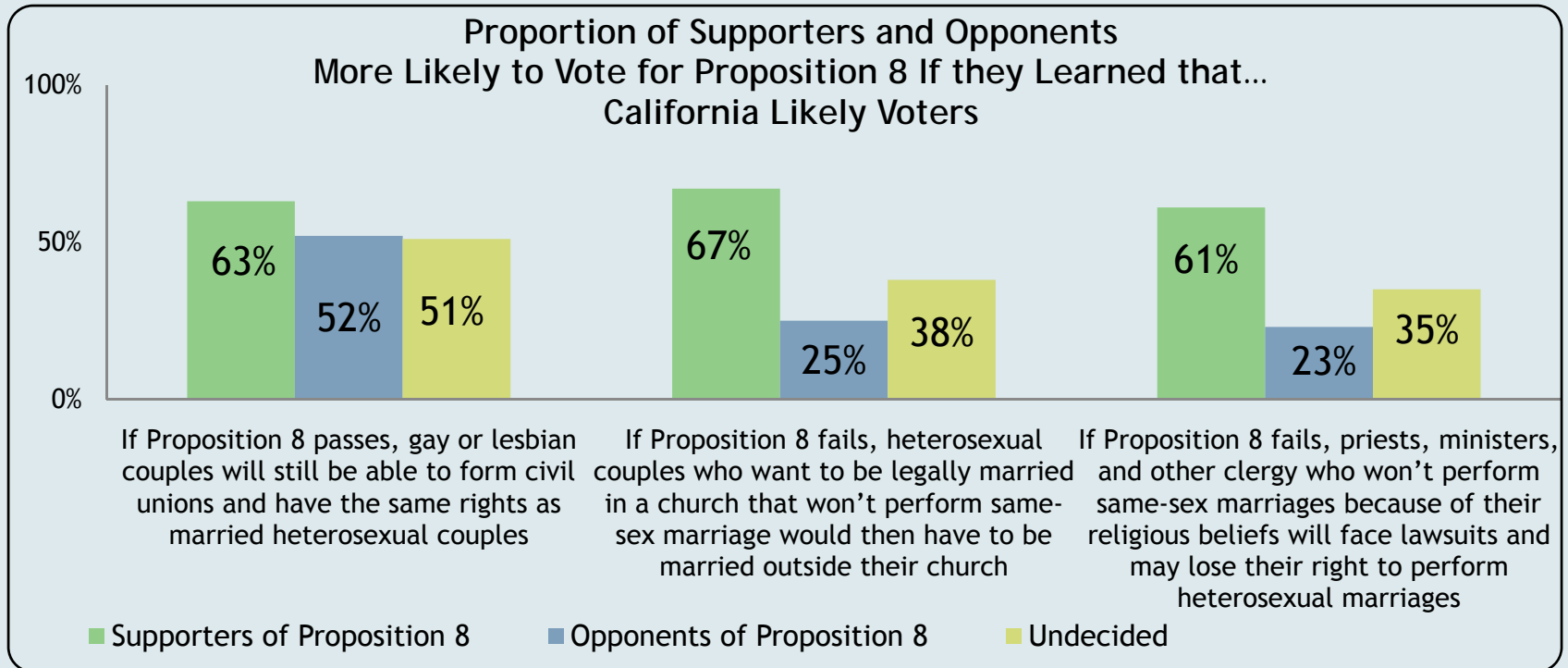
- Learning that heterosexual couples may face a challenge getting married in their own church if Proposition 8 fails makes the difference for 47% of likely voters. Nearly one in five is unsure about their vote given this possibility.

- The likely electorate divides over whether they would be more likely to vote for the initiative if its failure meant lawsuits for the clergy. Again, a significant proportion, 15%, are unsure about how this would affect their vote.



Question wording: Please tell me whether each of the following makes you more or less likely to support Proposition 8. What if you learned that:

Voters React to Potential Prop 8 Effects: Arguments that Change Minds

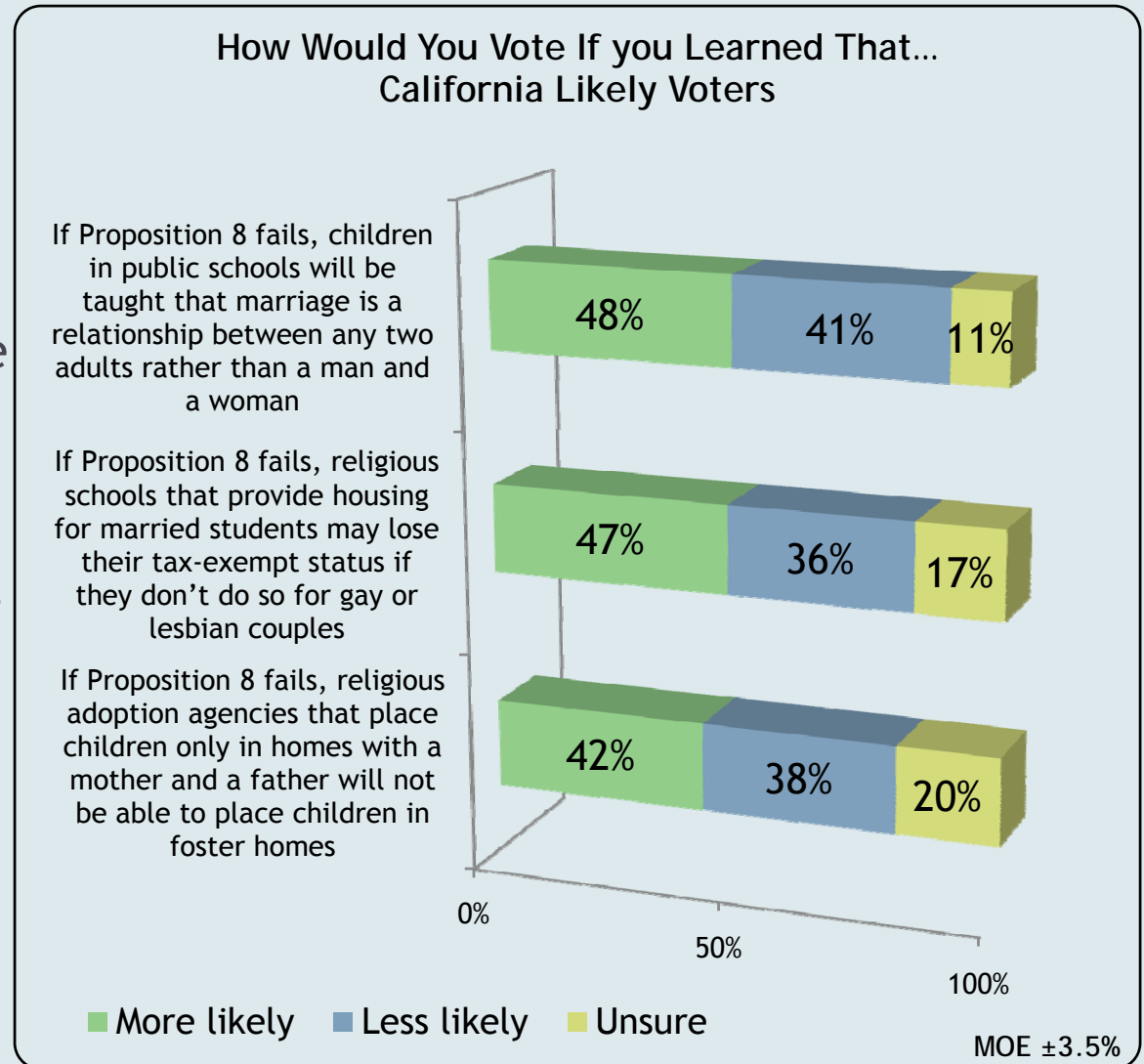


Question wording: Please tell me whether each of the following makes you more or less likely to support Proposition 8. What if you learned that:

- Learning that same-sex couples will still be able to form civil unions even with the passage of Proposition 8 resonates with many voters. 52% of likely No side voters and 51% who are currently undecided about it are more likely to vote Yes when given this information.
- Being informed that heterosexual couples' ability to marry in their own church could be lost with the failure of Proposition 8 is a powerful argument among supporters of the initiative and convinces a quarter of No on 8 voters and 38% who are undecided.
- Similarly, knowing the clergy may be at risk for lawsuits sways 23% of those who oppose the initiative and 35% of likely voters who are undecided about how to vote.

Voters React to Potential Prop 8 Effects: Arguments that Change Minds

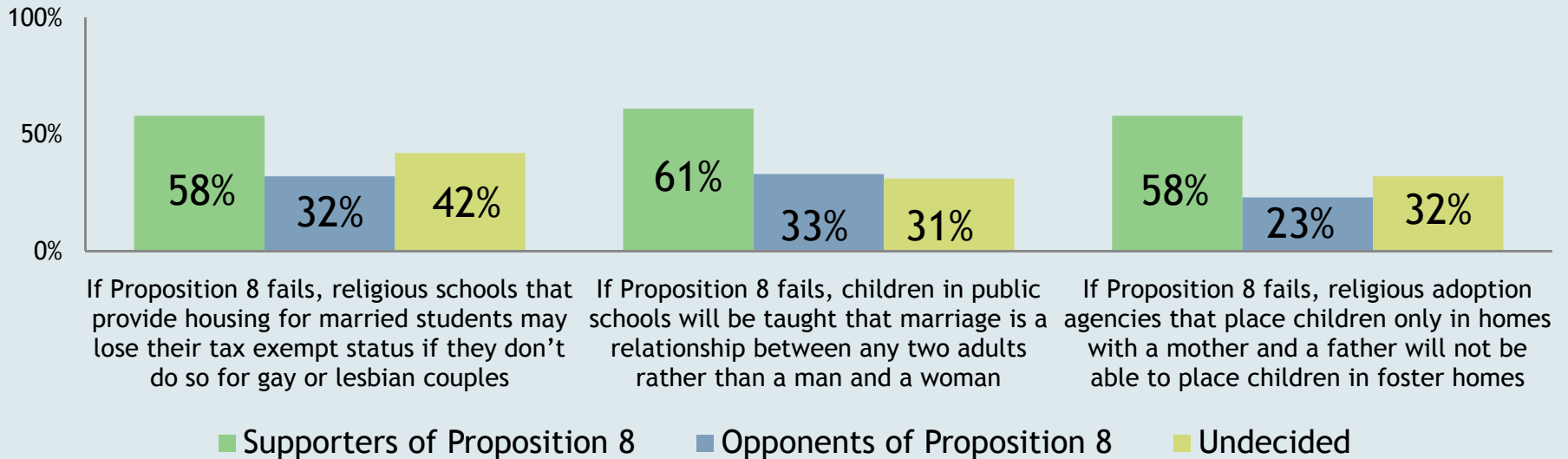
- Nearly half of likely voters would be more inclined to support Proposition 8 if its passage would uphold the traditional definition of marriage taught in the public schools.
- About the same proportion would be more likely to vote for the proposal if its failure would negatively affect the tax-exempt status of religious schools.
- 42% would support the proposition if its failure compromises the mission of religious adoption agencies.



Question wording: Please tell me whether each of the following makes you more or less likely to support Proposition 8. What if you learned that:

Voters React to Potential Prop 8 Effects: Arguments that Change Minds

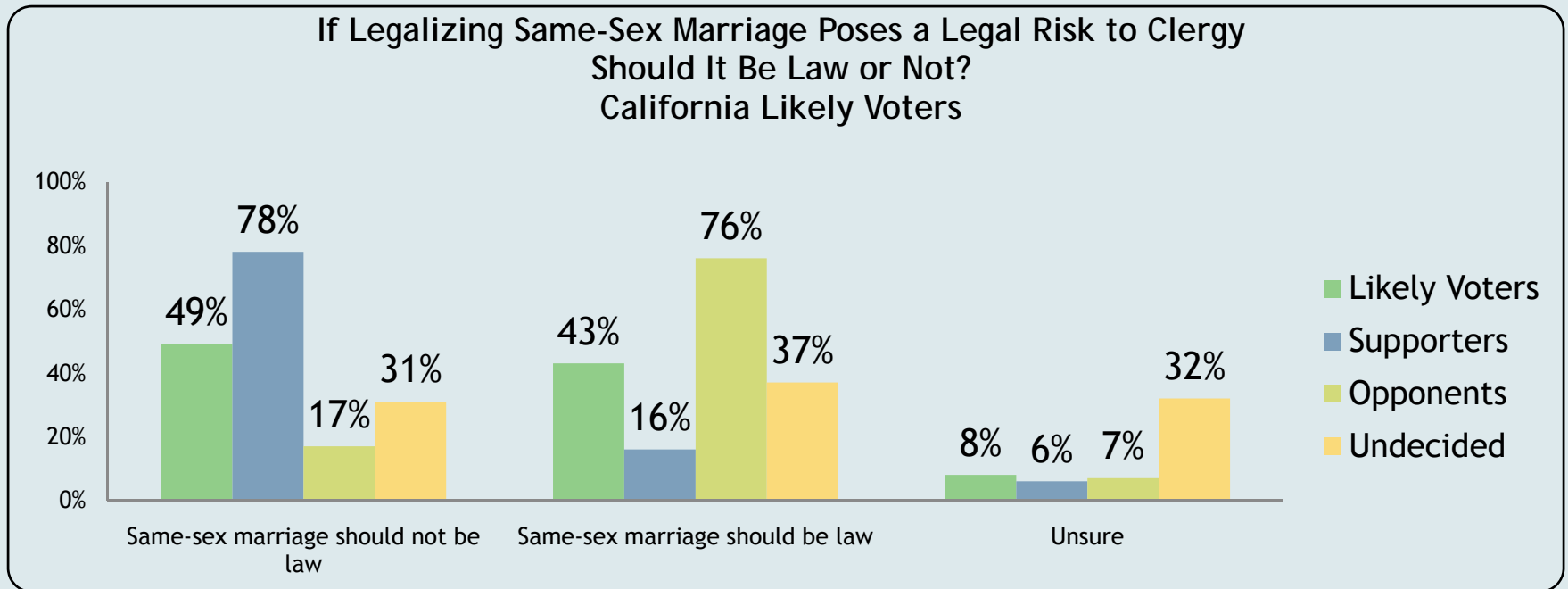
Proportion of Supporters and Opponents
More Likely to Vote for Proposition 8 If they Learned that...
California Likely Voters



Question wording: Please tell me whether each of the following makes you more or less likely to support Proposition 8. What if you learned that:

- 32% of No on 8 voters and 42% of likely voters who are undecided would be more likely to support Proposition 8 if religious schools could lose their tax-exempt status for denying same-sex couples accommodations comparable to those granted to heterosexual couples.
- One-third of Proposition 8 opponents and 31% of undecided likely voters are swayed if the failure of the initiative means the traditional definition of marriage taught in schools would not be protected.
- 23% of opponents to Proposition 8 are more likely to vote for the initiative if clergy face lawsuits without its passage, and about a third of undecided voters would be convinced to support Proposition 8 given this information.

Voters React to Potential Prop 8 Effects: Arguments that Change Minds

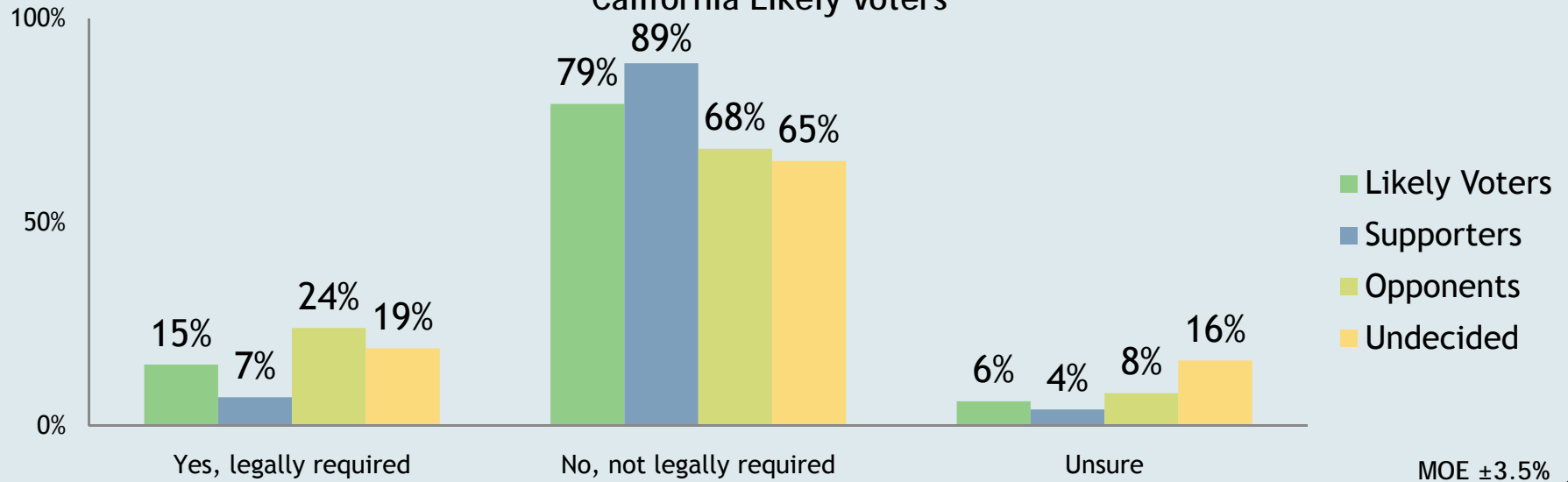


Question wording: Please listen to the following views about same-sex marriage. (A) Same sex marriage should NOT be law if priests, ministers, and other clergy who believe the Bible allows for marriage only between a man and a woman will not be able to legally marry these couples in their place of worship without risk of lawsuits or loss of their tax-exempt status. (B) Same sex marriage SHOULD become law, so gay and lesbian couples may have the same rights as other couples through marriage. Do you believe same sex marriage should not be law or should be law?

- Nearly half of likely voters think same-sex marriage should not be law if legalizing it places the clergy at risk for lawsuits or threatens the tax-exempt status of religious institutions.
- The potential risk resonates with 78% of supporters of Proposition 8, 17% of opponents, and 31% of undecided voters.

Voters React to Potential Prop 8 Effects: Arguments that Change Minds

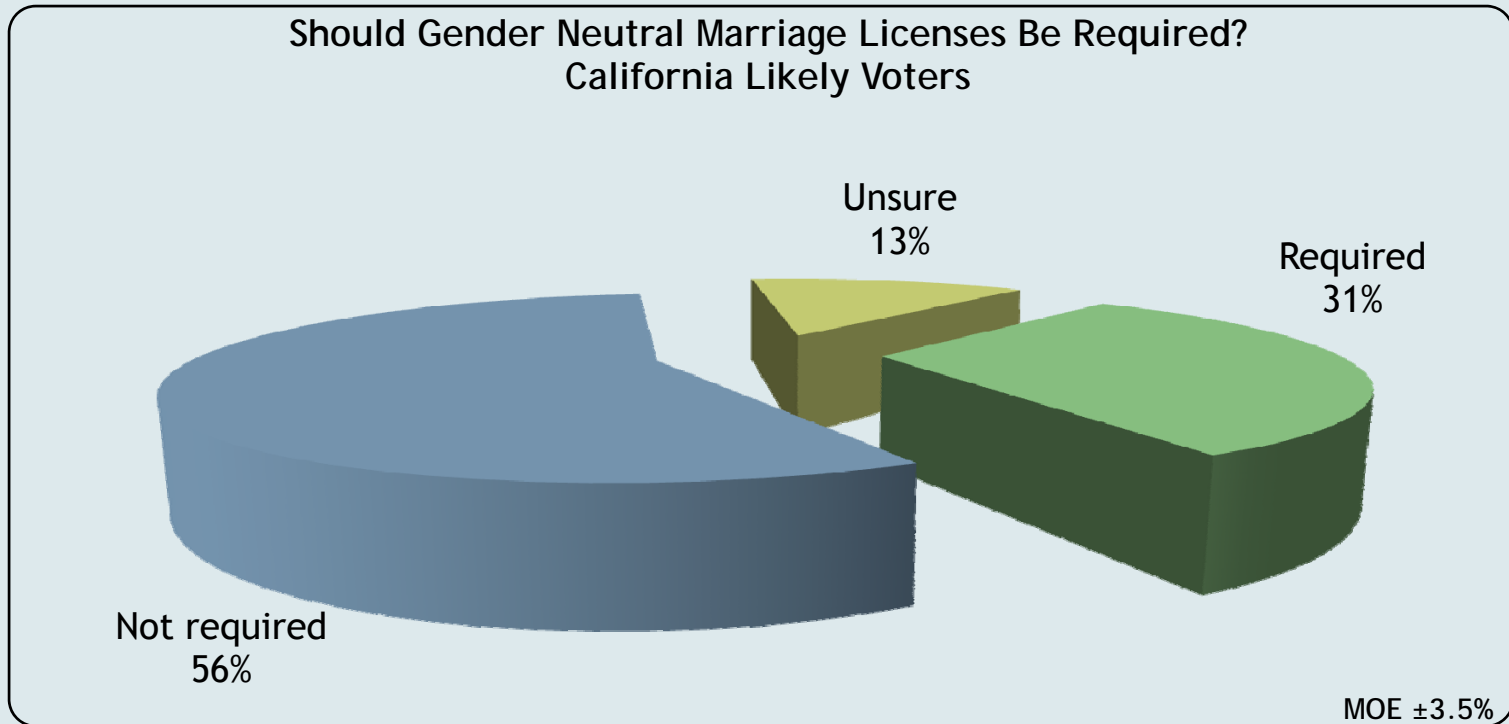
Should Clergy Be Legally Required to Perform Same-Sex Marriages
If It Is Against Their Religious Convictions?
California Likely Voters



Question wording: If Proposition 8 fails, do you believe that priests, ministers, and other clergy should be legally required to perform same-sex marriages even if it is against their religious convictions?

- Nearly 8 out of 10 Californians likely to vote on Election Day do not believe priests, ministers, and other clergy should be legally required to perform same-sex marriages if it is against their religious convictions.
- Even 68% of No on 8 voters do not think this ought to happen.
- 65% of likely voters who are undecided about whether they will support or oppose the initiative are also against such a requirement.¹⁹

56% Say No to Gender Neutral Marriage Licenses

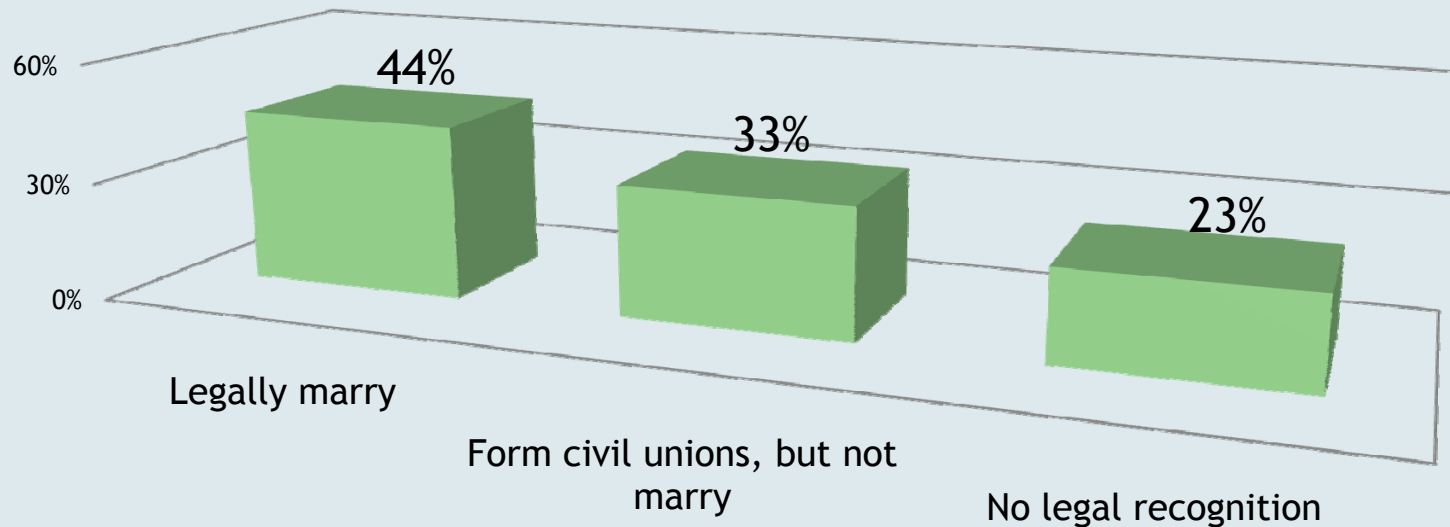


Question wording: In order to accommodate same sex marriages the State of California now requires gender neutral marriage certificates. The use of bride and groom on marriage certificates is illegal and non-binding and has been replaced by the words Party A and Party B. Do you think this gender neutral wording should be required or not required on every couple's marriage certificate?

- When it comes to marriage licenses, a majority of California voters feel gender neutral wording should not be required on the document.

56% Oppose Legalizing Same-Sex Marriage

Views on Same-Sex Marriage
California Likely Voters

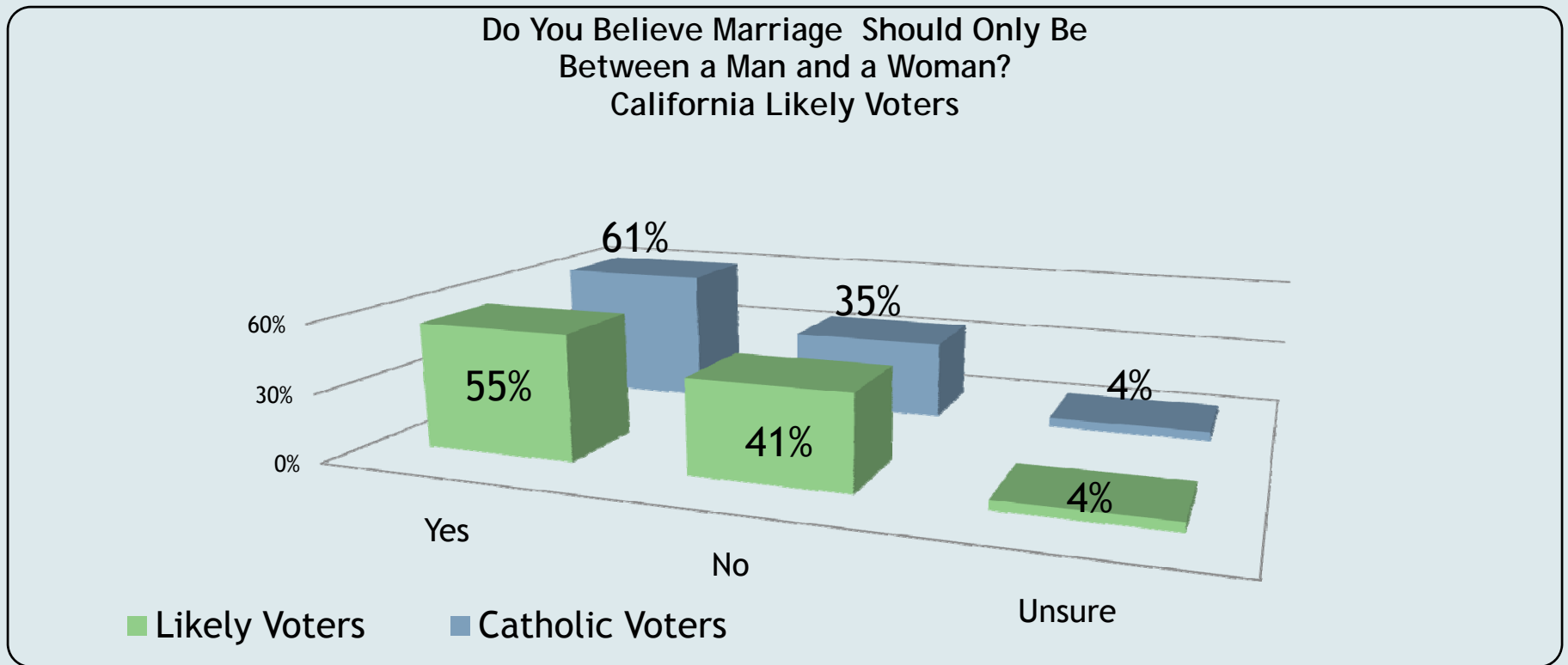


MOE \pm 3.5%

Question wording: Which comes closest to your view: gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to legally marry, gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to legally form civil unions, but not marry, or there should be no legal recognition of the relationship between gay and lesbian couples?

- A majority of California likely voters are against legalizing same-sex marriage including one-third who support the formation of civil unions but not marriage, and 23% who believe there should be no legal recognition of same-sex relationships.
- 44% of likely voters think same-sex couples should be allowed to marry.

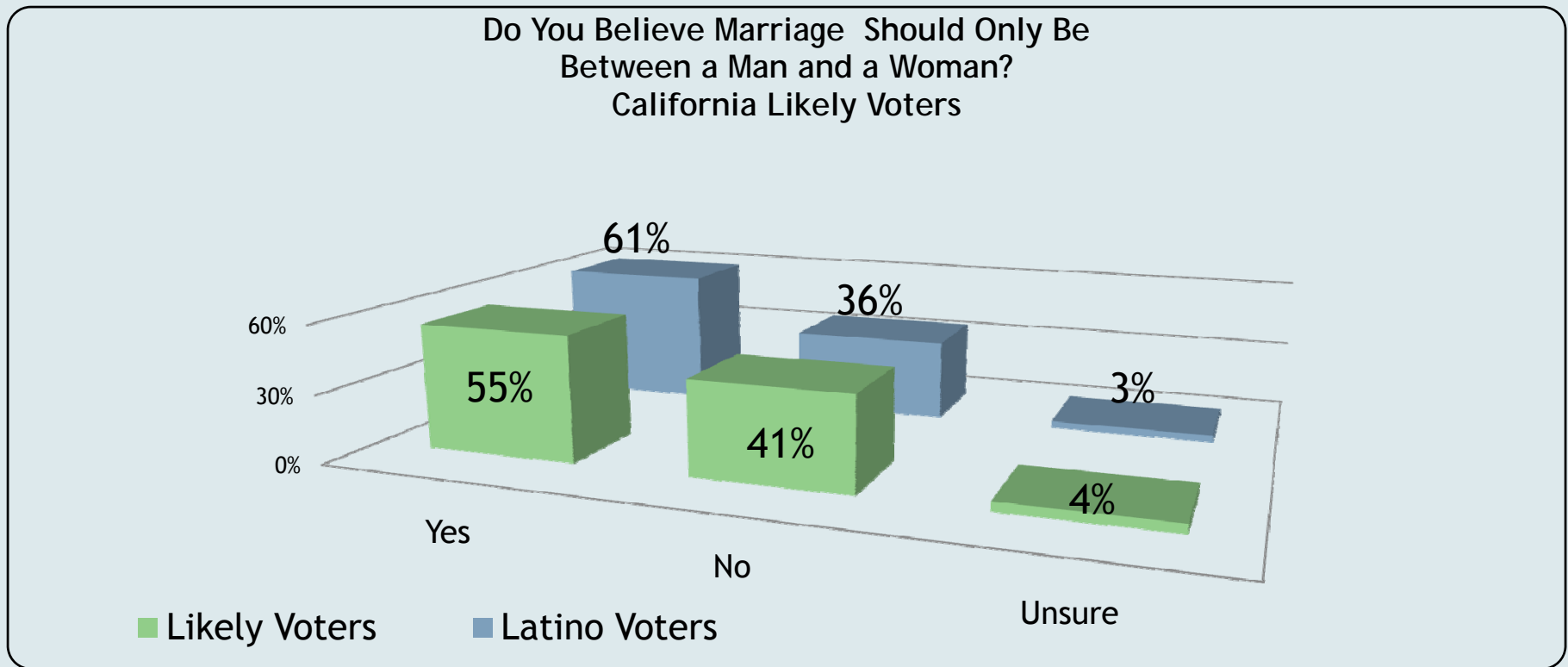
Majority of Likely Voters Accept Traditional Definition of Marriage



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

- A majority of California likely voters believe marriage should be defined as between only a man and a woman.
- 61% of Catholic voters share this view.

Many Latino Voters Believe in a Traditional Definition of Marriage

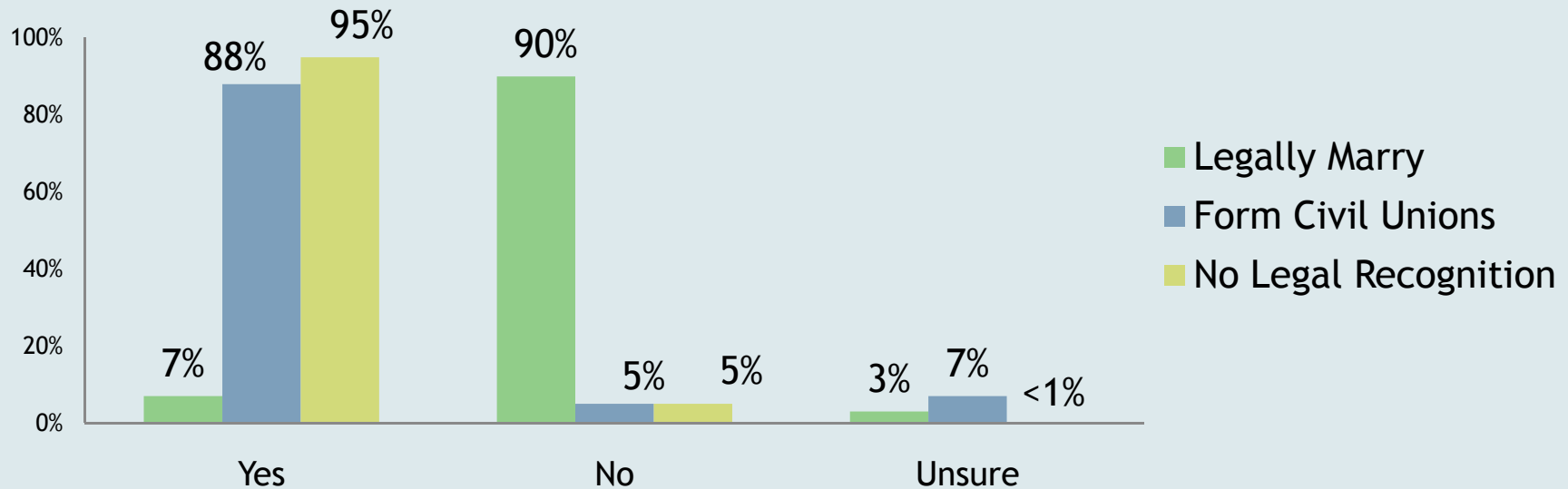


Question wording: Do you believe marriage should only be between a man and a woman?

- 61% of likely voters who are Latino believe marriage should be defined as between only a man and a woman compared with 55% of likely California voters as a whole.

View of Same-Sex Marriage and the Definition of Marriage

Do You Believe Marriage Should Only Be Between a Man and a Woman?
California Likely Voters and Their View of Same-Sex Marriage



Question wording: Which comes closest to your view: Gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to legally marry, gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to legally form civil unions, but not marry, or there should be no legal recognition of the relationship between gay and lesbian couples?

- ✦ 88% of likely voters who support civil unions but not same-sex marriage and 95% of voters who believe there should be no legal recognition of same-sex relationships believe in a traditional definition of marriage between a man and a woman.
- ✦ Only 7% of likely voters who support same-sex marriage hold this view.



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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 public issues.

Through the regular public release of surveys, MIPO has built a legacy of independence, reliability, and accuracy. Frequently cited by journalists, public officials, and policy experts, the Marist Poll has been recognized for fairness, accuracy, and timeliness. Its results are featured in print and electronic media throughout the world.



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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 throughout the United States, Canada, the Philippines, Mexico, Poland, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Panama, the Bahamas, the Virgin Islands, Guatemala, Guam and Saipan.