

DECISION RESEARCH

CALIFORNIA ■ WASHINGTON D.C.

MEMORANDUM

To: Freedom to Marry Coalition of Massachusetts
From: Bob Meadow and Steven Van Tassell
Date: October 29, 2003
Subject: Summary

We have completed our research and wanted to provide you with a summary of key findings. The research is based on 600 completed interviews with a random sample of registered voters in Massachusetts. Interviews were conducted from October 16-22, 2003. Sampling error is +/- 4.0%.

Summary Conclusions:

Recognizing marriage is about a shared commitment, responsibilities and protection, voters in Massachusetts indicate that civil marriage for gay or lesbian couples should be legal. This support extends across the state, and across virtually all key demographic groups including both men and women, Catholic voters and voters in all age categories under 65. Moreover, voters strongly oppose efforts to change the Massachusetts Constitution to prohibit civil marriage for gay and lesbian couples.

Key Survey Findings:

- By a 59% to 35% margin, Massachusetts voters say gay or lesbian couples should have the right to enter into civil marriage. Support levels include 55% of Catholic voters, 62% of women, 57% of men, and at least 56% in every region of the state. Voters see a ban on gay marriage as discrimination.
- If civil marriage between gay or lesbian couples were legal, 77% of Massachusetts voters would find it acceptable, and only 22% would not.
- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of voters would agree, and only 34% would disagree with a court ruling by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts if the court ruled that couples of the same sex have a constitutional right to marry.

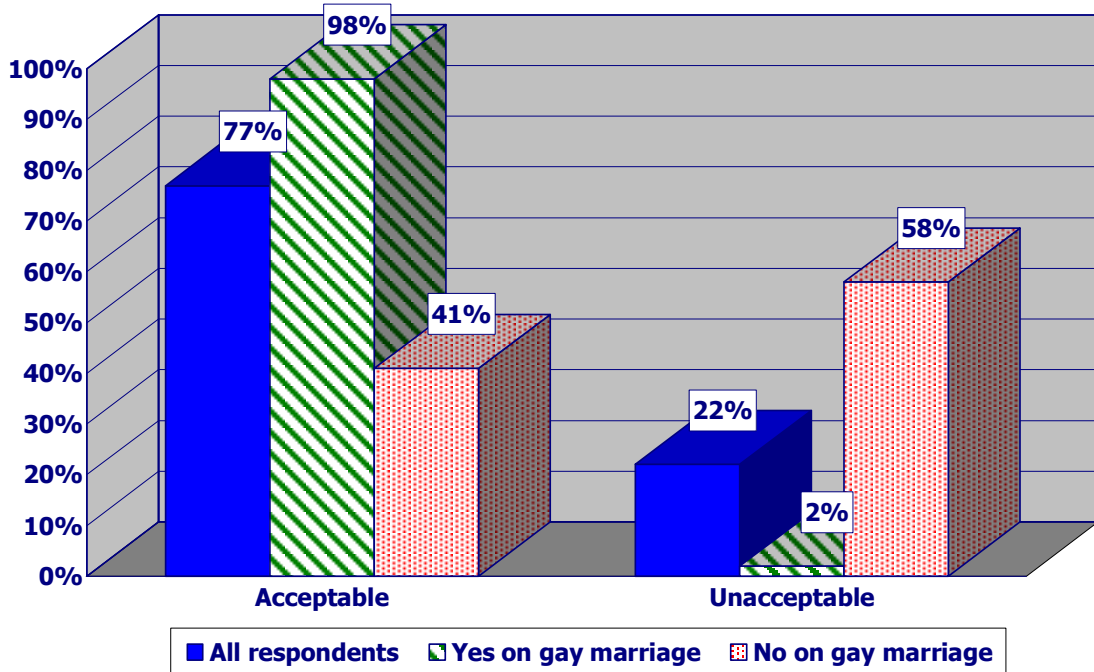
- By an overwhelming 3-to-1 margin, voters would oppose passing an amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution prohibiting civil marriage for gay and lesbian couples, viewing it as undesirable and unnecessary. Voters agree by a margin of 58% to 38% that civil rights, such as the right to marry, should not be dependent on the approval of voters. Clearly voters do not want their government spending time fighting the right to marry; by a margin of 79% to 20%, voters say there are more important priorities for government to focus on than passing a Constitutional Amendment to ban gay marriage. Fully 83% of the voters expect civil marriage between two gay or lesbian people to become legal in their lifetime.
- Massachusetts voters, whether married or single, do not see expanding marriage rights as threatening their marriages, agreeing by a margin of 62% to 35% that allowing gay or lesbian couples to marry just opens up marriage to more people, rather than redefining marriage in our society.
- There is a clear recognition that legal contracts and agreements are no substitute for marriage for either heterosexual or gay and lesbian people.
- Voters are of their own minds on the issue of civil marriage for gay and lesbian couples. They do not agree, by a wide margin that the position of their church on gay marriage is important to them. Among Catholic voters, fully 62% do not agree that the position of their church on gay marriage is important to them.

Conclusion:

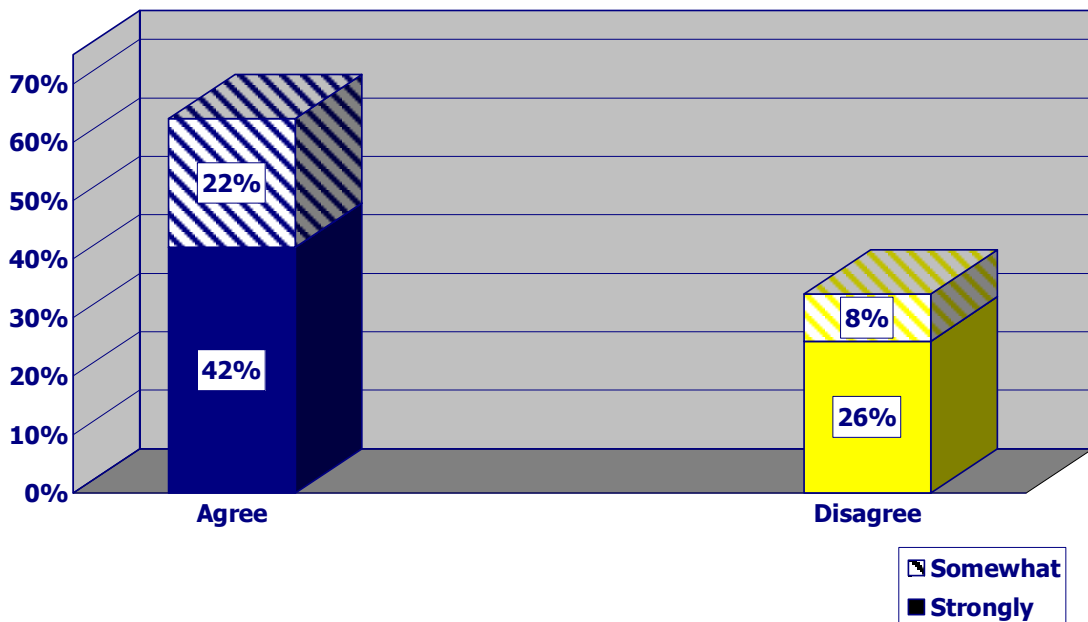
The debate on the issue of civil marriage for gay and lesbian couples is taking place without regard for the public's opinion on the issue. Virtually across the board, voters in Massachusetts recognize marriage is about commitment, protection and responsibility. Voters believe that gay and lesbian couples should have the right to civil marriage and all of its protections, rights and responsibilities. Not only do voters feel that there are far more important priorities on which the government should focus than banning gay marriage, they feel that the issue of civil marriage for gay and lesbian couples is not even an issue appropriate for submission to the voters.

Despite the solid support for gay marriage, we caution that a victory at the ballot box is far from certain. Our experience from around the nation on gay rights ballot measures shows that many factors, including, financial resources, turnout, and especially the language of the measure, will have an impact on an election.

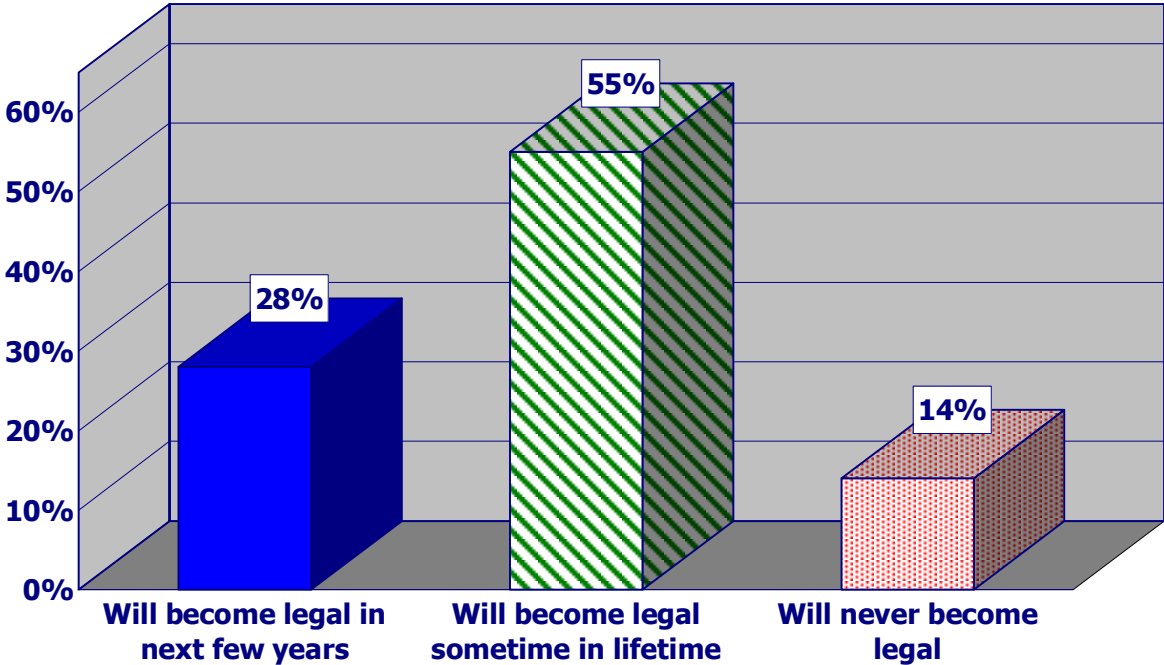
OPINION IF CIVIL MARRIAGE BETWEEN GAY OR LESBIAN COUPLES WERE LEGAL



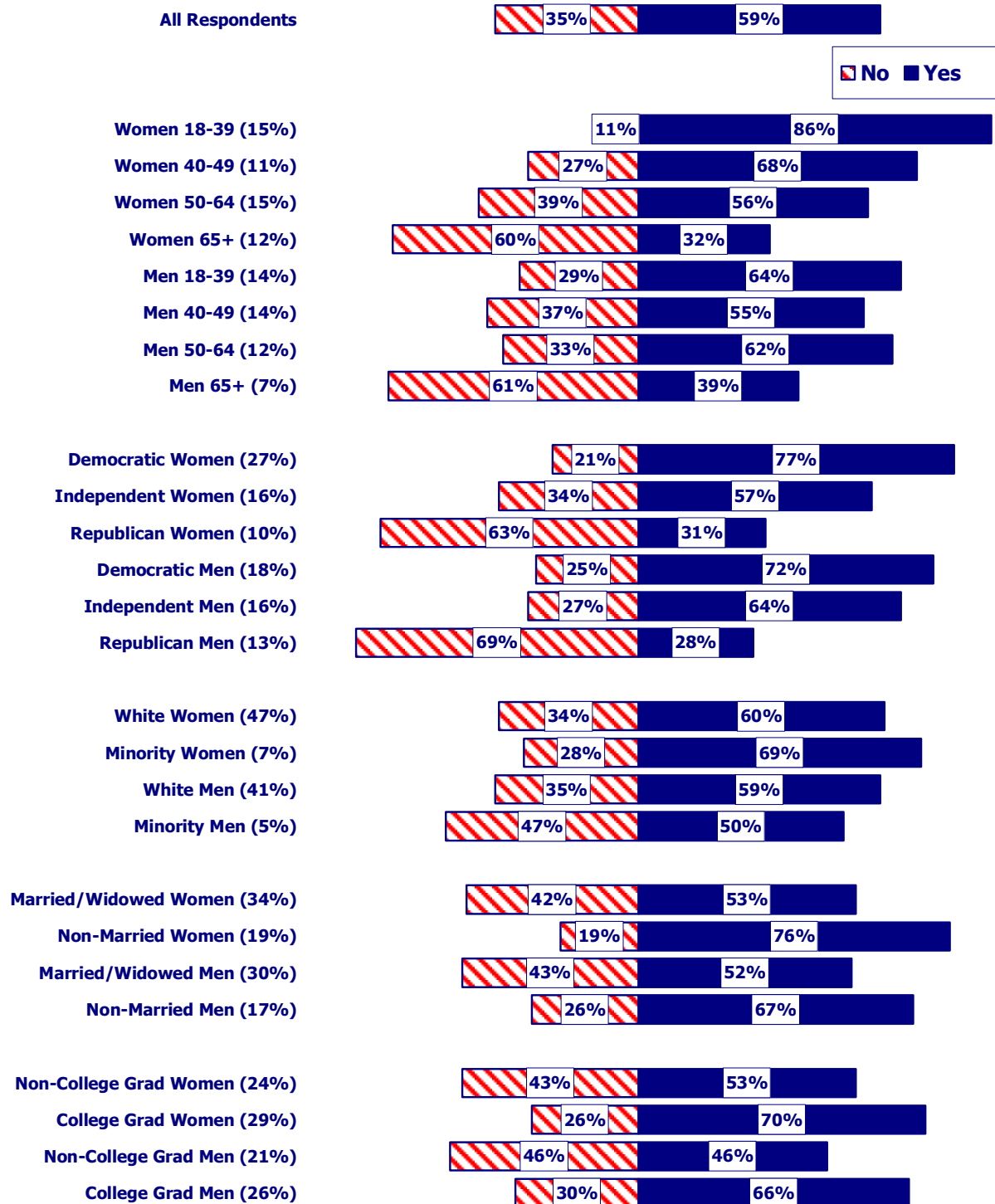
AGREEMENT WITH COURT DECISION IF RULES THAT COUPLES OF THE SAME-SEX HAVE A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO MARRY



**STATEMENT CLOSEST TO OPINION ABOUT RIGHT TO
A CIVIL MARRIAGE BETWEEN TWO GAY OR LESBIAN
PEOPLE**



POSITION ON GAY/LESBIAN CIVIL MARRIAGE DEMOGRAPHICS



POSITION ON GAY/LESBIAN CIVIL MARRIAGE DEMOGRAPHICS (CONTINUED)

