



The Associated Press-NORC
Center for Public Affairs Research

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE AND GAY RIGHTS: A SHIFT IN AMERICANS' ATTITUDES

Americans' attitudes toward gays have become increasingly favorable since the early 1990s, and these changes have accelerated in recent years, according to an analysis of the General Social Survey conducted by the AP-NORC Center and GSS. In 2010, for the first time, more people supported same-sex marriage than opposed it. Support has continued to grow, and in 2014, more people than ever agree that same-sex



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couples should have the right to get married. Fifty-six percent of Americans agree or strongly agree that gay couples should have the right to get married while just 32 percent disagree or strongly disagree. Support is up 8 percentage points since 2012 and 45 percentage points since the question was first asked in 1988.¹

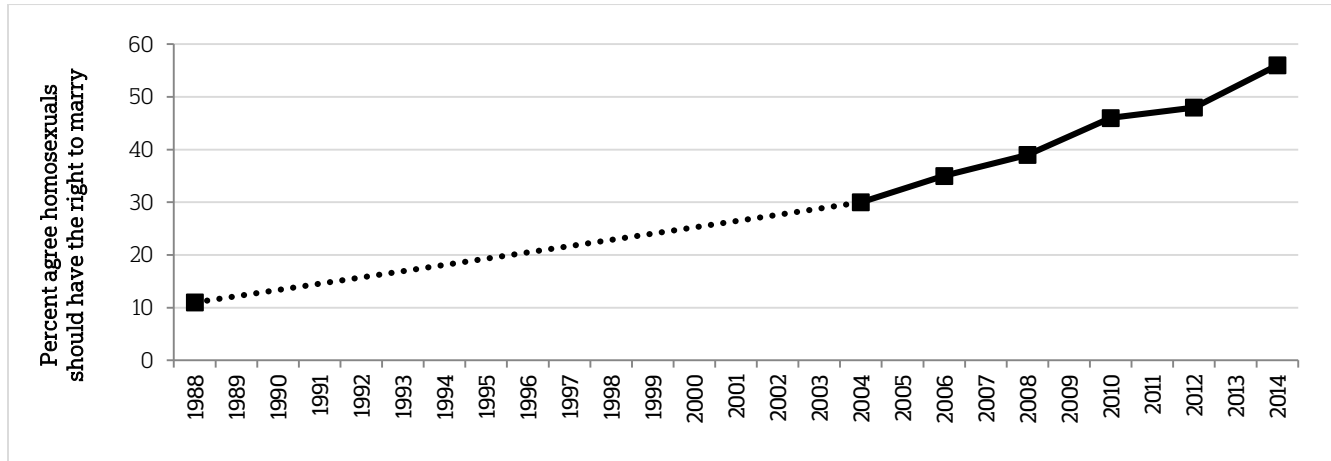
Three Things You Should Know

From the 2014 GSS Questions on Same-Sex Marriage and Gay Rights:

- 1) For the first time, a majority of Americans (56 percent) support same-sex couples' right to marry, up from 48 percent in 2012.
- 2) Support for same-sex marriage among Republicans increased from 31 percent in 2012 to 45 percent in 2014. This increase is larger than the increase among Democrats and independents, although Republican support still lags behind those groups.
- 3) Nearly three-quarters of Americans ages 18-34 support same-sex marriage, an increase of 10 points since 2012.

¹ The question about same-sex marriage was not asked on the GSS from 1990 to 2002.

Americans' support for same-sex marriage reaches its highest level in 2014.

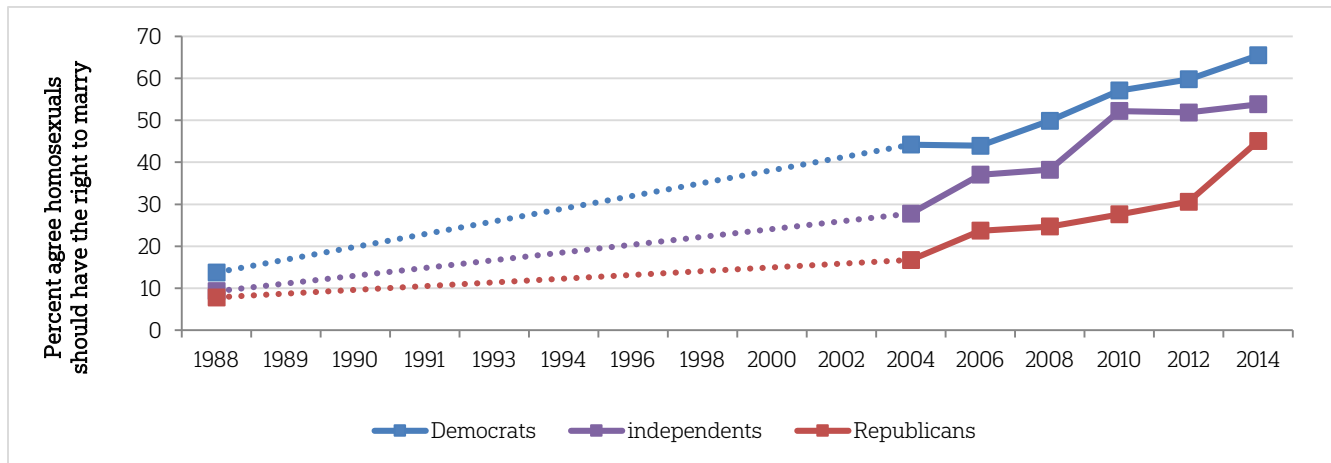


Question: Do you agree or disagree? Homosexual couples should have the right to marry one another.

PARTISAN DIVIDE OVER SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IS NARROWING.

Support for same-sex marriage still differs across political parties, although the gap in support between Democrats and Republicans narrowed considerably in 2014. Sixty-five percent of Democrats agree that same-sex couples should have the right to marry, compared to 54 percent of independents and 45 percent of Republicans. Republican support rose 14 points between 2012 and 2014, and all three groups have shown a dramatic increase in support compared to 1988, when support hovered around 10 percent within each group.

Two-thirds of Democrats support same-sex marriage, and Republicans show a sharp increase in support in 2014.



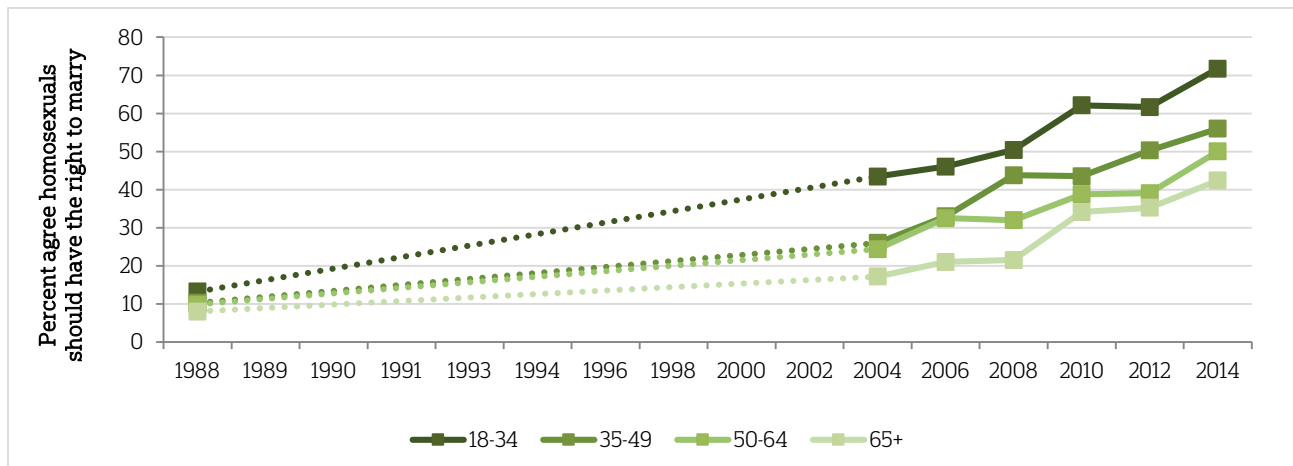
VIEWS ABOUT SAME-SEX MARRIAGE VARY BASED ON RACE/ETHNICITY, AGE, AND EDUCATION.

Support for same-sex marriage has trended upward across demographic groups, but sizeable differences exist based on race/ethnicity and age. Whites (58 percent) are more supportive than either Hispanics (50 percent) or blacks (46 percent).

Young people are also much more supportive of same-sex marriage than older Americans, though support is increasing across all age groups. As of 2014, 72 percent of adults ages 18-34 favor same-sex marriage. Fewer,

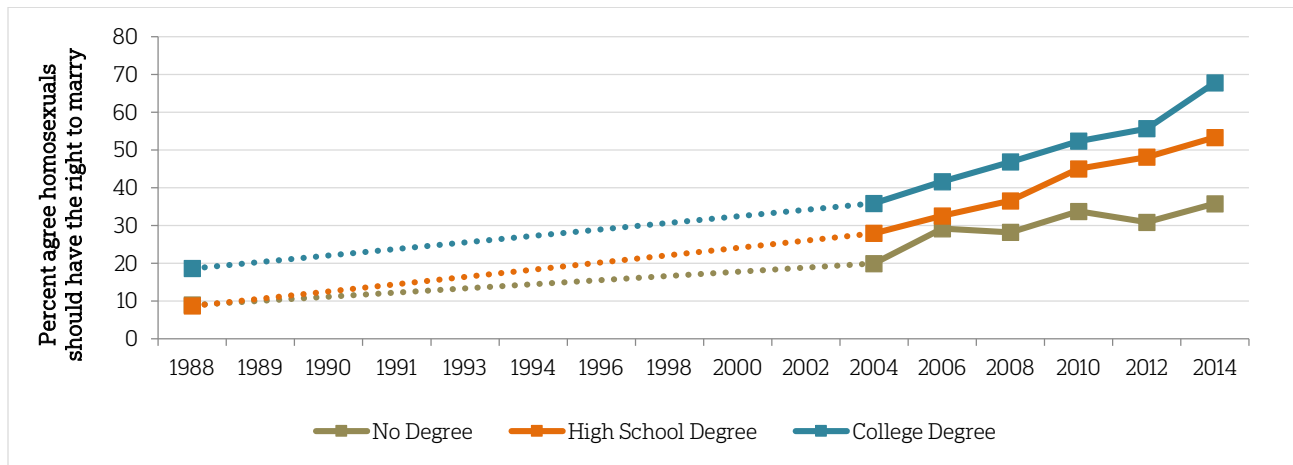
but still a majority of 35-49 year olds (56 percent) and 50-64 year olds (50 percent) express support for the right of same-sex couples to marry. Forty-two percent of people age 65 or older favor same-sex marriage.

Almost three-quarters of people ages 18 to 34 support same-sex marriage.



Large differences in support also exist between people with different education levels. Nearly 7 in 10 Americans with a college degree support same-sex marriage, compared with just over half of those with a high school degree and less than 4 in 10 of those without a high school degree. The differences between these groups have grown substantially over the past decade.

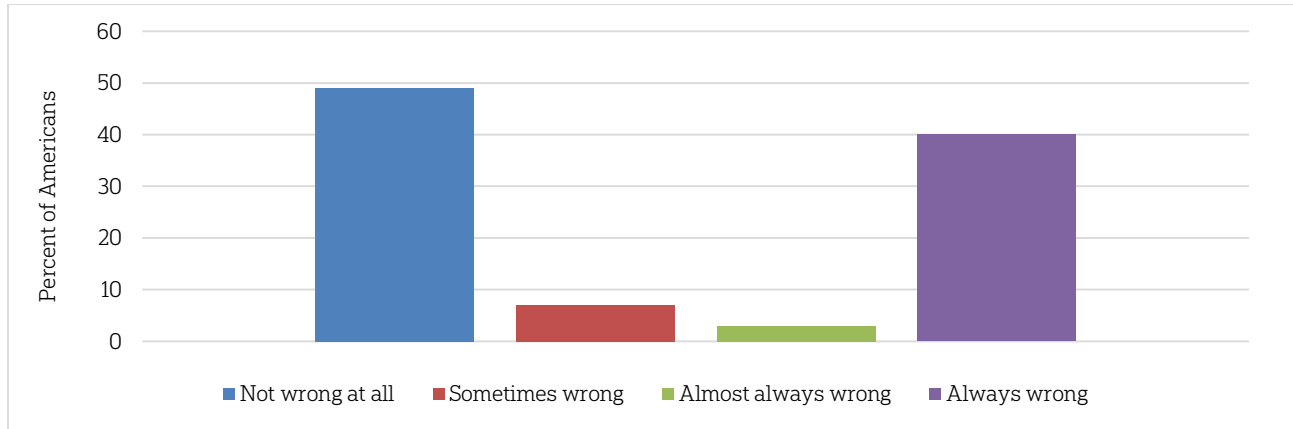
Higher education is associated with greater support for same-sex marriage, and those differences are increasing.



AMERICANS ARE GROWING MORE TOLERANT OF SEXUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE SAME SEX AND MORE SUPPORTIVE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES FOR GAYS.

Americans' attitudes about sexual relations between members of the same sex are shifting, but remain highly polarized. Fewer people than ever say that sexual relations between members of the same sex are always wrong (40 percent), and more people than ever say such relations are not wrong at all (49 percent). This represents a nearly 40-point shift in attitudes since 1987 when 79 percent of Americans said same-sex relations are always wrong, and just 12 percent said they are not wrong at all.

Nearly half of Americans in 2014 say sexual relations between members of the same sex are not wrong at all.

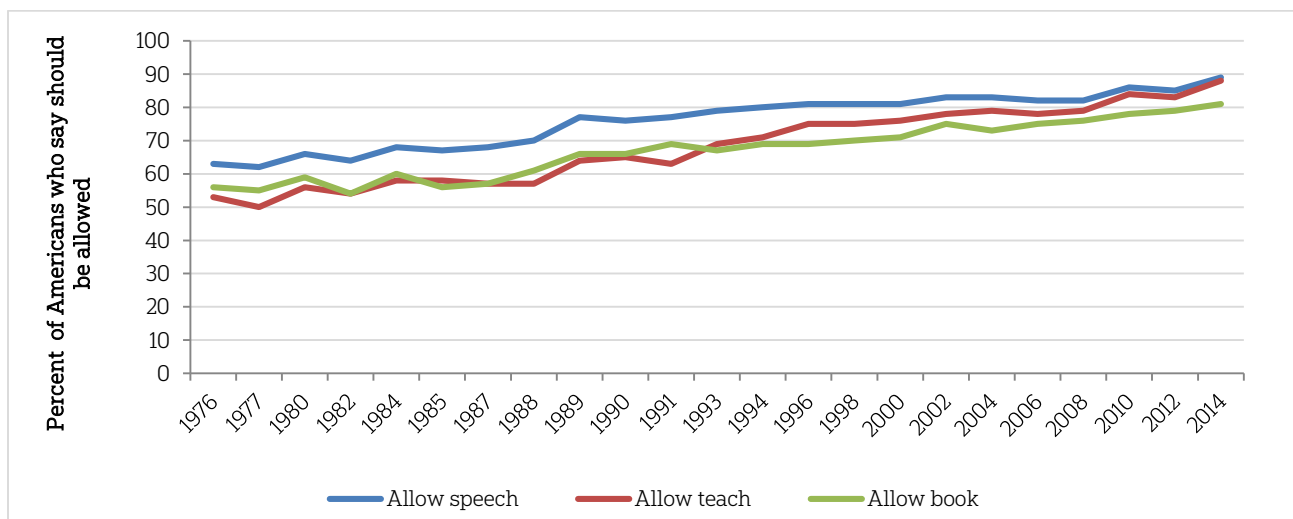


Question: What about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex—do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?

Likewise, support for free speech for gays has increased since 2012 and has climbed steadily and significantly since 1976. In 2014, 89 percent of Americans say a gay person should be allowed to give a speech in their community, up slightly from 85 percent in 2012 and significantly from just 63 percent four decades ago. Eighty-eight percent say a gay person should be allowed to teach in a college or university, a slight increase from 83 percent in 2012 and a sizeable increase from 53 percent in 1976. And 81 percent support keeping a book written by a gay person on homosexual issues in the library, compared with 79 percent in 2012 and 56 percent in 1976.

While support for free speech for many groups has increased over the last several decades, the overall increase in supportive attitudes toward gay people is greater than for anti-religionists, Communists, militarists, or Muslim extremists.

Support for civil rights for gays has increased steadily.



Questions: Suppose this admitted homosexual wanted to make a speech in your community. Should he be allowed to speak, or not? Should such a person be allowed to teach in a college or university, or not? If some people in your community suggested that a book he wrote in favor of homosexuality should be taken out of your public library, would you favor removing this book, or not?

ABOUT THIS STUDY

The GSS is administered by NORC at the University of Chicago, primarily using in-person interviewing. The GSS started in 1972 and completed its 30th round in 2014. For the last 40 years, the GSS has been monitoring societal change and the growing complexity of American society. The GSS is the largest project funded by the Sociology Program of the National Science Foundation. The typical sample size was 1,500 prior to 1994, but increased to 2,700-3,000 until 2008 and decreased to 2,000-2,500 for the most recent surveys. Resulting margins of error are between +/- 3.1 for the smaller sample sizes and +/- 2.2 percentage points for the larger sample sizes at the 95 percent confidence level. The GSS 1972-2014 Cumulative File was utilized to produce the statistics presented.