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Pennsylvanians favor civil unions for gay couples

Raleigh, N.C. – A bare plurality of Pennsylvania voters (35%) think there should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship, but nearly as many (33%) think gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions, and another 30% favor full marriage equality. So an overwhelming 63% think gay couples should have all the legal rights that married heterosexual couples do. Pluralities of 40% of Democrats and 37% of independents prefer full marriage rather than just civil unions, and even a combined 51% of Republicans and the same proportion of voters over age 65 want some form of domestic partnership.

Republicans flipped five of Pennsylvania's Democratic-held U.S. House seats last fall as well as Arlen Specter's Senate seat, turning what was Democrats' 14-7 advantage in the state's congressional delegation into a 13-8 edge for the GOP. But if voters could head to the polls now, they would select the Democratic candidate for Congress on their ballot over the Republican by a 42-36 margin. Independents still prefer the GOP, 29-20, but 52% of them are not sure, and they make up only 11% of the electorate. The main change is in turnout. In PPP's final poll of the state before last November's election, Democrats held a slim 46-44 edge over Republican voters, but Democrats are awaking from their slumber after a dismal cycle.

Voters' opinions of their long-serving and recently retired governor and senator have not much improved since before they left office. Ed Rendell left the governor's mansion with a 34-43 approval-disapproval mark, and now fares even worse. A similar 33% have a favorable opinion, but 55% an unfavorable one. Arlen Specter has barely inched up, from a 29-60 approval margin last fall to a 32-53 favorability rating now.

Voters are pretty ambivalent about last fall's Democratic nominee for Specter's seat, Joe Sestak. 32% see him favorably, 31% unfavorably, and most (37%) are not sure.

PPP surveyed 593 Pennsylvania voters from April 7th to 10th. The survey's margin of error is +/-4.0%. This poll was not paid for or authorized by any campaign or political organization. PPP surveys are conducted through automated telephone interviews. PPP is a Democratic polling company but polling expert Nate Silver of the *New York Times* found that its surveys in 2010 actually exhibited a slight bias toward Republican candidates.



Pennsylvania Survey Results

- Q1** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Ed Rendell?
- Favorable*..... 33%
 - Unfavorable* 55%
 - Not sure* 12%
- Q2** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Joe Sestak?
- Favorable*..... 32%
 - Unfavorable* 31%
 - Not sure* 37%
- Q3** Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Arlen Specter?
- Favorable*..... 32%
 - Unfavorable* 53%
 - Not sure* 15%
- Q4** If there was an election today do you think you would vote for the Democratic or Republican candidate for Congress from your district, or are you not sure?
- Democrat* 42%
 - Republican*..... 36%
 - Not sure* 22%
- Q5** Which of the following best describes your opinion on gay marriage: gay couples should be allowed to legally marry, or gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not legally marry, or there should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship?
- Gay couples should be allowed to legally marry* 30%
 - Gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not marry* 33%
 - There should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship* 35%
 - Not sure* 3%
- Q6** Who did you vote for President in 2008?
- John McCain*..... 44%
 - Barack Obama*..... 48%
 - Someone Else/Don't Remember*..... 7%
- Q7** Would you describe yourself as very liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative, or very conservative?
- Very liberal*..... 8%
 - Somewhat liberal* 19%
 - Moderate*..... 33%
 - Somewhat conservative*..... 23%
 - Very conservative* 17%
- Q8** If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.
- Woman* 53%
 - Man*..... 47%
- Q9** If you are a Democrat, press 1. If a Republican, press 2. If you are an independent or identify with another party, press 3.
- Democrat* 51%
 - Republican*..... 38%
 - Independent/Other*..... 11%
- Q10** If you are white, press 1. If African American, press 2. If other, press 3.
- White* 85%
 - African American*..... 11%
 - Other*..... 4%
- Q11** If you are 18 to 29 years old, press 1. If 30 to 45, press 2. If 46 to 65, press 3. If you are older than 65, press 4.
- 18 to 29*..... 8%
 - 30 to 45*..... 31%
 - 46 to 65*..... 40%
 - Older than 65*..... 22%





Crosstabs

	Base	2008 Pres. Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone Else/Don't Remember
Rendell Favorability				
Favorable	33%	14%	52%	24%
Unfavorable	55%	75%	35%	60%
Not sure	12%	11%	13%	16%

	Base	2008 Pres. Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone Else/Don't Remember
Sestak Favorability				
Favorable	32%	13%	52%	19%
Unfavorable	31%	43%	17%	42%
Not sure	37%	43%	31%	39%

	Base	2008 Pres. Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone Else/Don't Remember
Specter Favorability				
Favorable	32%	11%	51%	27%
Unfavorable	53%	77%	31%	53%
Not sure	15%	12%	17%	20%

	Base	2008 Pres. Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone Else/Don't Remember
Generic Cong. Ballot				
Democrat	42%	10%	75%	21%
Republican	36%	68%	7%	29%
Not sure	22%	22%	19%	50%





Crosstabs

	Base	2008 Pres. Vote		
		John McCain	Barack Obama	Someone Else/Don't Remember
Gay Marriage				
Gay couples should be allowed to legally marry	30%	13%	47%	16%
Gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not marry	33%	36%	30%	33%
There should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship	35%	48%	21%	44%
Not sure	3%	3%	2%	7%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Rendell Favorability						
Favorable	33%	73%	55%	34%	20%	4%
Unfavorable	55%	17%	32%	51%	67%	88%
Not sure	12%	10%	13%	14%	13%	9%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Sestak Favorability						
Favorable	32%	61%	48%	35%	21%	10%
Unfavorable	31%	8%	22%	21%	42%	55%
Not sure	37%	30%	30%	44%	36%	35%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Specter Favorability						
Favorable	32%	50%	41%	44%	18%	7%
Unfavorable	53%	28%	40%	37%	73%	84%
Not sure	15%	22%	20%	19%	9%	9%





Crosstabs

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Generic Cong. Ballot						
Democrat	42%	83%	72%	51%	19%	4%
Republican	36%	6%	7%	20%	58%	82%
Not sure	22%	10%	21%	29%	23%	14%

	Base	Ideology				
		Very liberal	Somewhat liberal	Moderate	Somewhat conservative	Very conservative
Gay Marriage						
Gay couples should be allowed to legally marry	30%	67%	56%	31%	13%	2%
Gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not marry	33%	15%	26%	38%	38%	32%
There should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship	35%	16%	18%	27%	45%	64%
Not sure	3%	2%	-	4%	4%	2%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Rendell Favorability			
Favorable	33%	34%	32%
Unfavorable	55%	51%	59%
Not sure	12%	15%	9%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Sestak Favorability			
Favorable	32%	33%	31%
Unfavorable	31%	23%	39%
Not sure	37%	43%	30%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Specter Favorability			
Favorable	32%	33%	30%
Unfavorable	53%	48%	59%
Not sure	15%	19%	11%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Generic Cong. Ballot			
Democrat	42%	44%	40%
Republican	36%	31%	41%
Not sure	22%	24%	20%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Gay Marriage			
Gay couples should be allowed to legally marry	30%	31%	28%
Gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not marry	33%	30%	36%
There should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship	35%	36%	33%
Not sure	3%	3%	3%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Rendell Favorability				
Favorable	33%	50%	11%	26%
Unfavorable	55%	35%	81%	58%
Not sure	12%	15%	8%	16%





Crosstabs

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Sestak Favorability				
Favorable	32%	47%	14%	28%
Unfavorable	31%	20%	44%	33%
Not sure	37%	33%	42%	39%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Specter Favorability				
Favorable	32%	46%	14%	24%
Unfavorable	53%	35%	77%	57%
Not sure	15%	19%	9%	19%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Generic Cong. Ballot				
Democrat	42%	73%	7%	20%
Republican	36%	6%	78%	29%
Not sure	22%	21%	15%	52%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Gay Marriage				
Gay couples should be allowed to legally marry	30%	40%	14%	37%
Gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not marry	33%	30%	37%	31%
There should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship	35%	27%	47%	30%
Not sure	3%	4%	2%	2%





Crosstabs

	Base	Race		
		White	African American	Other
Rendell Favorability				
Favorable	33%	30%	53%	32%
Unfavorable	55%	57%	34%	55%
Not sure	12%	12%	13%	14%

	Base	Race		
		White	African American	Other
Sestak Favorability				
Favorable	32%	30%	39%	55%
Unfavorable	31%	31%	32%	27%
Not sure	37%	39%	29%	18%

	Base	Race		
		White	African American	Other
Specter Favorability				
Favorable	32%	28%	58%	45%
Unfavorable	53%	56%	32%	45%
Not sure	15%	16%	11%	9%

	Base	Race		
		White	African American	Other
Generic Cong. Ballot				
Democrat	42%	38%	71%	45%
Republican	36%	39%	11%	32%
Not sure	22%	23%	18%	23%





Crosstabs

	Base	Race		
		White	African American	Other
Gay Marriage				
Gay couples should be allowed to legally marry	30%	29%	29%	45%
Gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not marry	33%	33%	29%	32%
There should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship	35%	35%	42%	14%
Not sure	3%	3%	-	9%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Rendell Favorability					
Favorable	33%	33%	25%	37%	37%
Unfavorable	55%	40%	65%	53%	50%
Not sure	12%	28%	10%	11%	13%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Sestak Favorability					
Favorable	32%	40%	26%	35%	34%
Unfavorable	31%	37%	34%	29%	26%
Not sure	37%	23%	39%	36%	40%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Specter Favorability					
Favorable	32%	30%	26%	34%	36%
Unfavorable	53%	49%	53%	54%	51%
Not sure	15%	21%	21%	12%	12%





Crosstabs

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Generic Cong. Ballot					
Democrat	42%	50%	38%	44%	41%
Republican	36%	31%	41%	32%	36%
Not sure	22%	19%	21%	24%	23%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Gay Marriage					
Gay couples should be allowed to legally marry	30%	36%	33%	31%	20%
Gay couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not marry	33%	33%	36%	31%	31%
There should be no legal recognition of a gay couple's relationship	35%	31%	29%	34%	46%
Not sure	3%	-	2%	4%	3%

