



**Paul Simon
Public Policy Institute**

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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Southern Illinois' mixed views on abortion, gay rights

Southern Illinois' registered voters are more socially conservative than those in the rest of the state, according to a Southern Illinois Poll finding released Tuesday by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute.

The poll shows 29 percent of southern Illinois voters say abortion should be illegal under all circumstances. Statewide, only 18 percent think that.

It also shows 49 percent think there should be no legal recognition of gay and lesbian unions—whether full marriage or civil unions. Statewide, 31 percent believe that.

“But the numbers show the region may not be as socially conservative as some think,” said David Yepsen, director of the Institute, which is located at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. The poll reveals that 68 percent believe abortion should be legal under all or certain circumstances. Statewide, that figure is 79 percent.

And 45 percent believe gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to legally marry or form civil unions. The statewide figure is 65 percent.

“You can look at it another way and argue southern Illinoisans are somewhat evenly divided on the gay marriage questions,” Yepsen said. “There are 49 percent who want no legal recognition of the relationship and 45 percent who are comfortable with at least some.”

The poll of 401 registered voters in the 18-county area of southernmost Illinois was taken April 5 to 13 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.9 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. The interviews were conducted for the Institute by Customer Research International of San Marcos, Texas. It reports no Illinois political figures as clients and was paid with non-tax dollars from the Institute's endowment fund.

The statewide figures come from the Simon Poll taken by the institute in the fall of last year. It has a margin of error of 3.4 percentage points.

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**Poll Results of Registered Voters in Southern Illinois
Conducted April 5-13, 2010**

Released April 27, 2010

1. Do you think abortions should be legal under all circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances?

	Southern Illinois Poll	Statewide Illinois Poll Fall, 2009
Legal under all circumstances	9.0%	28.3%
Legal under certain circumstances	58.9%	51.0%
Illegal under all circumstances	28.9%	17.8%
Other/Don't know	3.2%	3.0%

2. Which of the following three statements comes closest to your position on the legal rights of gay and lesbian couples in Illinois?

	Southern Illinois Poll	Statewide Illinois Poll Fall, 2009
Gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to legally marry	20.0%	29.3%
Gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to form civil unions but not marry legally	25.2%	35.3%
There should be no legal recognition	48.6%	31.1%
Other/Don't know	6.2%	2.0%

**Some columns do not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding.*

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