



**Paul Simon
Public Policy Institute**

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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Illinois Voters Weigh in On Abortion and Gay Marriage

Carbondale, IL - A substantial majority of registered voters in Illinois believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases, according to a poll being released by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

The survey also found most registered voters in the state believe gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to marry or form civil unions.

“These social issues are some of the most controversial and emotional questions in our nation today,” said David Yepsen, the director of the institute. “Very few people are undecided about them.”

The poll of 800 registered voters was taken Sept. 8 – Oct. 8 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.4 percentage points. The institute does its polling to provide policy-makers and scholars with research on leading public policy questions.

*There are 28.3 percent of registered voters who say abortions should be legal under all circumstances. Another 51 percent say it should be legal under certain circumstances. Only 17.8 percent believe it should be illegal in all cases.

“Almost 80 percent of the state’s registered voters fall somewhere on the pro-choice side of this question,” Yepsen said. “That’s a pretty substantial part of the electorate.”

*On questions of gay and lesbian marriage, 29.3 percent said it should be legal; 35.3 percent said they should be allowed to form civil unions with fewer rights than marriage and 31.3 percent said there should be no legal recognition of the relationship.

“About a third of the electorate is on one side of this debate, another third is at the opposite end and a plurality is somewhere in the middle,” Yepsen said.

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute created, directed and financed this telephone survey of 800 registered voters across the state of Illinois. Interviews were conducted between September 9, 2009, and October 8, 2009, by the Survey Research Center at the University of North Texas. Respondents were chosen at random, and each interview lasted approximately 15 minutes. Results from the entire sample have a statistical margin for error of ± 3.4 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that if we were to conduct the survey 100 times, in 95 of those instances the results would vary by no more than plus or minus 3.4 points from the results obtained here. The margin for error will be larger for demographic, geographic, and response subgroups.

The non-partisan survey is paid for by the Simon Institute and is done to help Illinois policymakers, leaders and academic researchers better understand public opinion on key questions. This is the second year the institute has done the survey.

**Paul Simon Public Policy Institute
Southern Illinois University Carbondale**

**Poll Results of Registered Voters in Illinois
Conducted September 8-October 9**

Released October 28, 2009

We are interested in your opinion on some social issues.

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

Legal under	28.3%
Legal under certain	51.0%
Illegal under all	17.8%
Other/No response	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?

Gay/Lesbian couples should be allowed to legally marry	29.3%
Gay/Lesbian couples should be allowed to form civil unions that would have fewer legal rights than marriage	35.3%
There should be no legal recognition of relationships between gay and lesbian couples	31.3%
Other/No response	4.4%

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

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