



**Paul Simon  
Public Policy Institute**

Southern Illinois University Carbondale



**Simon Institute Poll**

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute

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### **ILLINOIS VOTERS DIVIDE ON ABORTION, DEATH PENALTY, GAMBLING, AND GAY MARRIAGE; FAVOR OPEN GAY MILITARY SERVICE**

A majority of Illinois voters believe the moratorium on enforcing the state's death penalty should be lifted, according to a poll released Saturday by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

The survey found 56.4 percent who said the death penalty should be reinstated while 36.3 percent said it should remain suspended. There were 7.3 percent who had no opinion.

The halt to executions was imposed by then-Gov. George Ryan in 2006 after questions were raised about evidence used in death penalty convictions. Governors Rod Blagojevich and Pat Quinn have kept the moratorium in place.

That could change next year if Republican state Sen. Bill Brady defeats Quinn in the race for governor. Brady has said he would lift the moratorium.

The poll of 1000 registered voters was taken Sept. 30 to Oct. 10, has a margin of error of 3 percentage points.

The survey also found differences of opinion in other controversial social issues facing Illinois.

- There were 31.5 percent who said abortions should be legal in all circumstances, 19.1 percent who said they should be illegal in all circumstances and 45 percent who said they should be legal only in certain situations. There were 4.4 percent who said they didn't know.
- There is wide support for extending some form of legal recognition to the relationships between gay and lesbian couples. Two thirds favor legal marriage or civil unions. Specifically, there are 33.6 percent who said gays and lesbians should be allowed to legally marry, 33.9 percent who favor civil unions and 26.5 percent who say there should be no legal recognition of the relationships between gay and lesbian couples. There were 6 percent who didn't know.

- There is also wide support for allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military. 72.6 percent supported allowing them to openly serve. Only 19.3 percent were opposed and 8.1 percent didn't know.
- Registered voters were evenly divided over questions of expanded gambling in the state. Some policy-makers are promoting that idea as a way to help balance the state's budget. There are 49.9 percent who support more gambling and 46.3 percent who oppose it. There are 3.8 percent who don't know.

The mission of the non-partisan Paul Simon Public Policy Institute polling is to provide citizens, policy-makers and academic researchers with objective information about trends and issues facing society.

Telephone interviews were conducted by Issues & Answers Global Media Research of Virginia Beach, VA. It reports no Illinois political clients and was paid with non-tax dollars from the Institute's endowment fund.

Political scientist Dr. Charles Leonard directs the poll for the Institute. He is assisted by Drs. John Jackson and J. Tobin Grant, also political scientists.

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**Poll Results of Likely Voters in Illinois  
Conducted September 30-October 10, 2010  
*Released October 16, 2010***

1. Do you favor or oppose a proposal expanding legalized gambling in the state?

Favor	49.9%
Oppose	46.3%
Other/Don't know	3.8%

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

Legal under any circumstances	31.5%
Legal under certain circumstances	45.0%
Illegal under all circumstances	19.1%
Other/Don't know	4.4%

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

Gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to legally marry	33.6%
Gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to form civil unions, which would give them some legal rights	33.9%
There should be no legal recognition of relationships between gay and lesbian couples	26.5%
Other/Don't know	6.0%

4. All in all, do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military?

Strongly favor	36.8%
Somewhat favor	35.8%
Somewhat oppose	9.0%
Strongly oppose	10.3%
Other/Don't know	8.1%

5. Which is closer to the way you think, that the death penalty...?

Should be reinstated	56.4%
Should remain suspended	36.3%
Other/Don't know	7.3%

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

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