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Four in Five Illinois Voters Support Medicinal Marijuana; Split on Recreational Use

Voters in Illinois show overwhelming support for medicinal marijuana use, but less than half of them support legalization for recreational use, according to a new poll conducted by the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

The sample of 1,000 registered voters was taken Feb. 15 – 20 and has a margin of error of 3.1 percentage points.

When asked whether they favor or oppose legalized medicinal marijuana in Illinois, 82 percent express support for the policy. Only 16 percent oppose and 3 percent did not know or answered otherwise.

Currently there is a four-year pilot program in Illinois for the use of medical marijuana. That program is due to expire in 2018.

Overall support for medical marijuana has increased dramatically - by 19 percentage points - and opposition has been cut in half since a 2013 Institute poll asked a similar question. The 2013 poll showed 63 percent support and 32 percent opposition. The 2013 poll was taken before the current medicinal marijuana pilot program was in effect.

Support is less strong on the question of recreational marijuana. There are 51 percent who oppose legalization of recreational marijuana while 45 percent said it should be legal.

“We see clear support for medicinal marijuana, but recreational use is a mixed bag,” said David Yepsen, director of the Institute. “Medical use, recreational use, and decriminalization are all related but are still distinct public policy issues in the minds of many voters. They are likely to be issues in the debate over criminal justice reform, new revenues and public health,” he said.

Support for medicinal marijuana is strongest with younger voters. Among voters younger than 35, 90 percent favor medical use. Only 8 percent of those under 35 oppose medicinal use and 2 percent answered otherwise. On average, older voters were also supportive but not as strongly.

Younger voters are also much more supportive of legal recreational use than older voters. Among those younger than age 35, 72 percent support and 24 percent oppose. Support significantly decreases among people over 65 years old - with only 29 percent in support.

“These data show that substantial support for medical cannabis can be found in every demographic, and that support has substantially increased in the last few years. Another result to pay attention to is the heavily skewed support for recreational marijuana among millennials,” said Delio Calzolari, associate director of the Institute and one of the designers of the poll.

The poll also gauged attitudes toward gay marriage and abortion.

- * On the issue of marriage equality, 53 percent stated that gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to legally marry and 25 percent said same-sex couples should be allowed to form civil unions, but not marry. There were 16 percent who said there should be no legal recognition of same-sex relationships.

The U.S. Supreme Court declared that same-sex couples have the right to marry in a 5-4 decision. Illinois began recognizing same-sex marriage in 2014 and civil unions in 2011.

- * On the question of abortion rights, 44 percent of Illinoisans said that abortion should be legal in certain circumstances and 36 percent said that abortion should be legal in all circumstances. There were 15 percent who stated that abortion should be illegal in all circumstances.

The poll has tracked public opinion on those two social issues since 2009. The attached charts plot the shifts in Illinois public opinion over that time.

Note: On Tuesday, March 8, 2016 the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute will present results and analysis, of these and other survey questions from the latest Simon Poll of Illinois voters. Topics include the Illinois presidential primary; public opinion on the direction of the nation and state; the state budget and taxes; government reform; treatment of veterans; and other social issues. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the program begins at 7 p.m. at the Varsity Center for the Arts, 418 S. Illinois Ave., Carbondale, IL. The event is free and open to the public, but registration is required to Carol at 618-453-4078.

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The margin of error for the entire sample of 1,000 voters is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. This means that if we conducted the survey 100 times, in 95 of those instances, the result would be within plus or minus the reported margin for error for each subsample.

Live telephone interviews were conducted by Customer Research International of San Marcos, Texas using the random digit dialing method. Potential interviewees were screened based on whether they were registered voters, and quotas based on area code and sex (<60% female). Interviewers asked to speak to the youngest registered voter at home at the time of the call. Cell phone interviews accounted for 40 percent of the sample. A Spanish language version of the questionnaire and a Spanish-speaking interviewer were made available.

Field work was conducted from February 15-20. No auto-dial or “robo” polling is included. Customer Research International reports no Illinois political clients. The survey was paid for

with non-tax dollars from the Institute's endowment fund. The data were not weighted in any way. Crosstabs for the referenced questions will be on the Institute's polling web site, simonpoll.org.

Simon Institute polling data are also archived by three academic institutions for use by scholars and the public. The three open source data repositories are: the University of Michigan's Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (<http://openicpsr.org/repoEntity/list>), the University of North Carolina's Odum Institute Dataverse Network (<http://arc.irss.unc.edu/dvn/dv/PSPPI>), and the Simon Institute Collection at OpenSIUC (<http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/ppi/>).

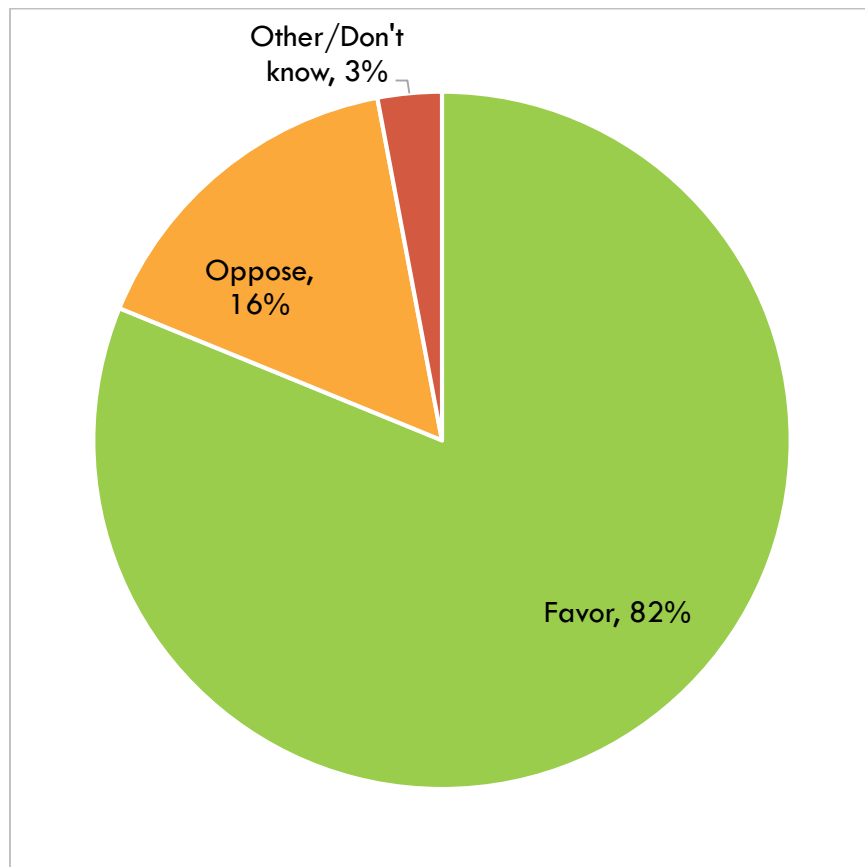
Note: The "Paul Simon Public Policy Institute Poll," the "Simon Poll" and the "Southern Illinois Poll" are the copyrighted trademarks of the Board of Trustees of Southern Illinois University. Use and publication of these polls is encouraged- but only with credit to the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at SIU Carbondale.

Tables and Charts¹

MEDICAL MARIJUANA

As you may know, Illinois law allows doctors to prescribe small amounts of marijuana to treat certain health issues. Do you favor or oppose legalized medical marijuana in Illinois?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Favor	82%
Oppose	16%
Other/Don't know	3%



¹ Some values may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Tables and Charts²

MEDICAL MARIJUANA

As you may know, Illinois law allows doctors to prescribe small amounts of marijuana to treat certain health issues. Do you favor or oppose legalized medical marijuana in Illinois?

Medical Marijuana by AREA

	Chicago City	Chicago Suburbs	Downstate
Favor	89%	81%	78%
Oppose	9%	16%	20%
Other/Don't know	3%	3%	3%

Medical Marijuana by AGE

	<35 years	35-50 years	51-65 years	66+ years
Favor	90%	81%	83%	79%
Oppose	8%	17%	14%	18%
Other/Don't know	2%	2%	3%	3%

Medical Marijuana by POLITICAL PARTY

	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Favor	88%	84%	75%
Oppose	10%	15%	22%
Other/Don't know	2%	2%	3%

Medical Marijuana by YEAR

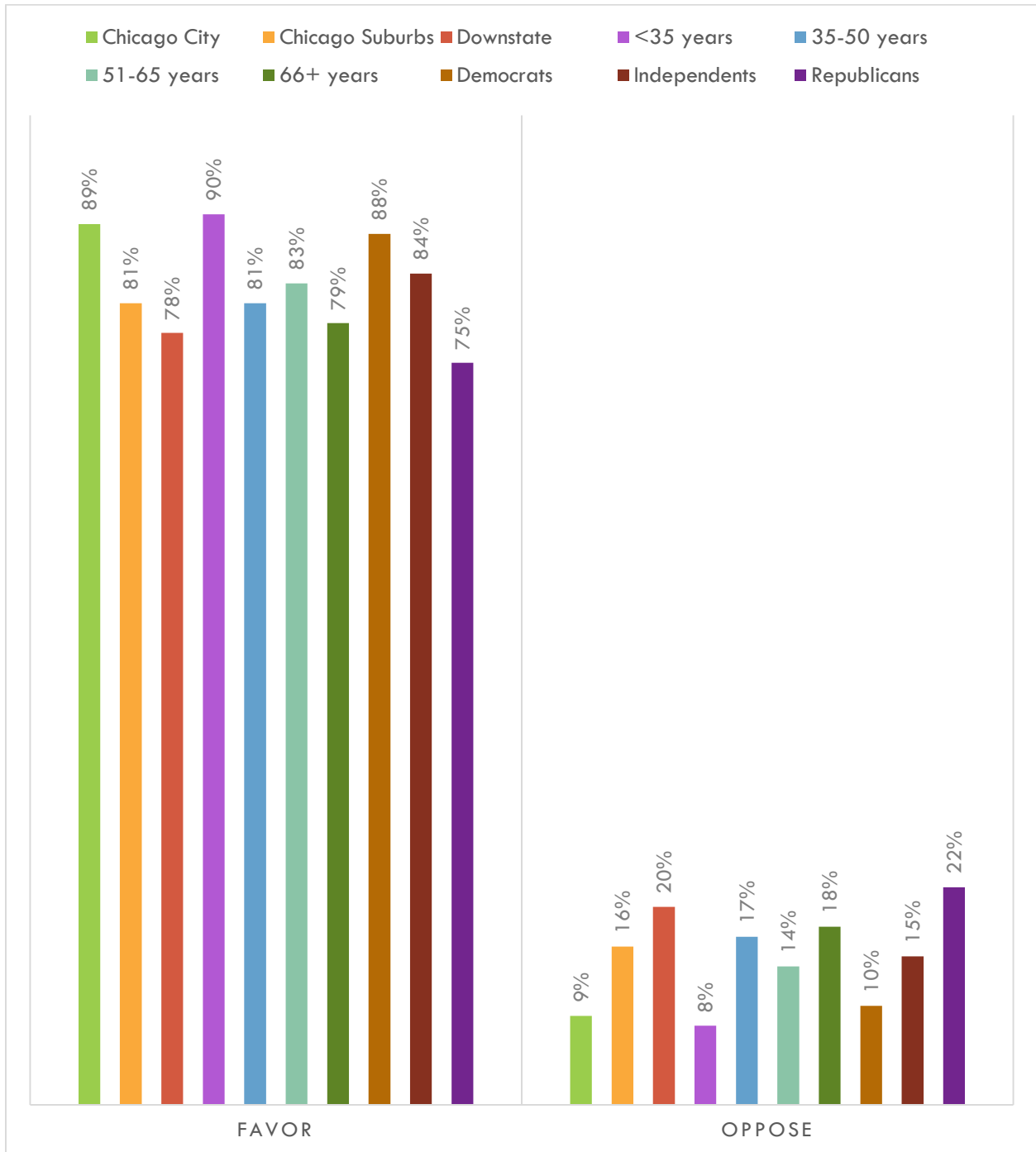
	2013	2016
Favor	63%	82%
Oppose	32%	16%
Other/Don't know	5%	3%

² Some values may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Tables and Charts³

MEDICAL MARIJUANA

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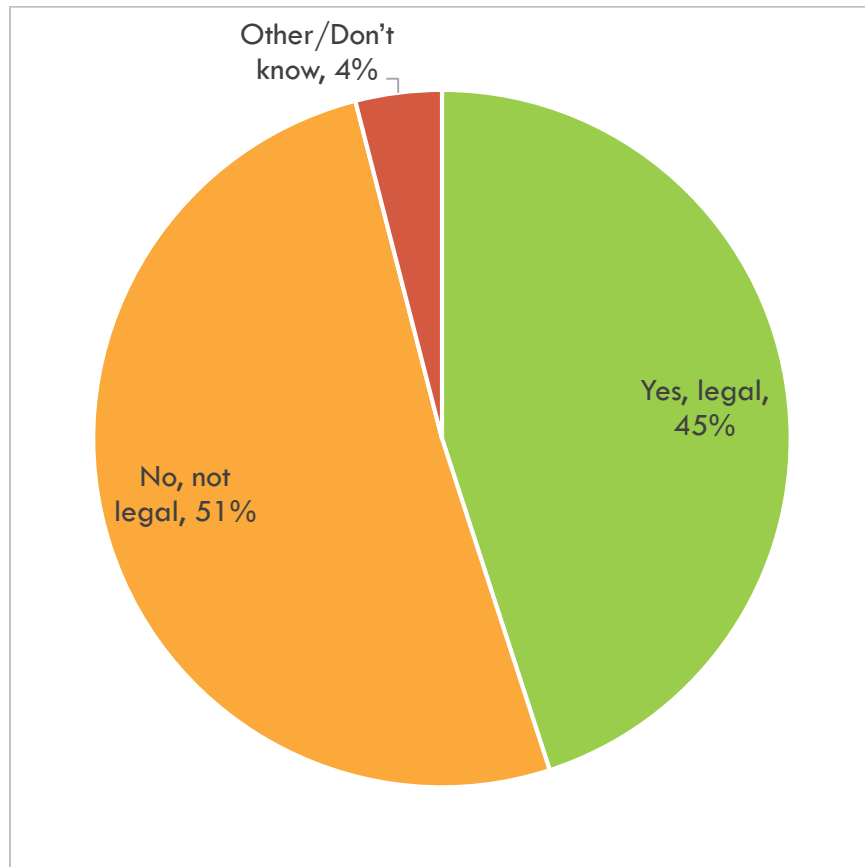
³ Some values may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Tables and Charts⁴

RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA

Do you think the recreational use of marijuana should be made legal, or not?

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Yes, legal	45%
No, not legal	51%
Other/Don't know	4%



⁴ Some values may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Tables and Charts⁵

RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA

Do you think the recreational use of marijuana should be made legal, or not?

Recreational Marijuana by AREA

	Chicago City	Chicago Suburbs	Downstate
Yes, legal	60%	44%	37%
No, not legal	36%	51%	62%
Other/Don't know	5%	5%	2%

Recreational Marijuana by AGE

	<35 years	35-50 years	51-65 years	66+ years
Yes, legal	72%	52%	49%	29%
No, not legal	24%	44%	49%	68%
Other/Don't know	5%	3%	2%	4%

Recreational Marijuana by POLITICAL PARTY

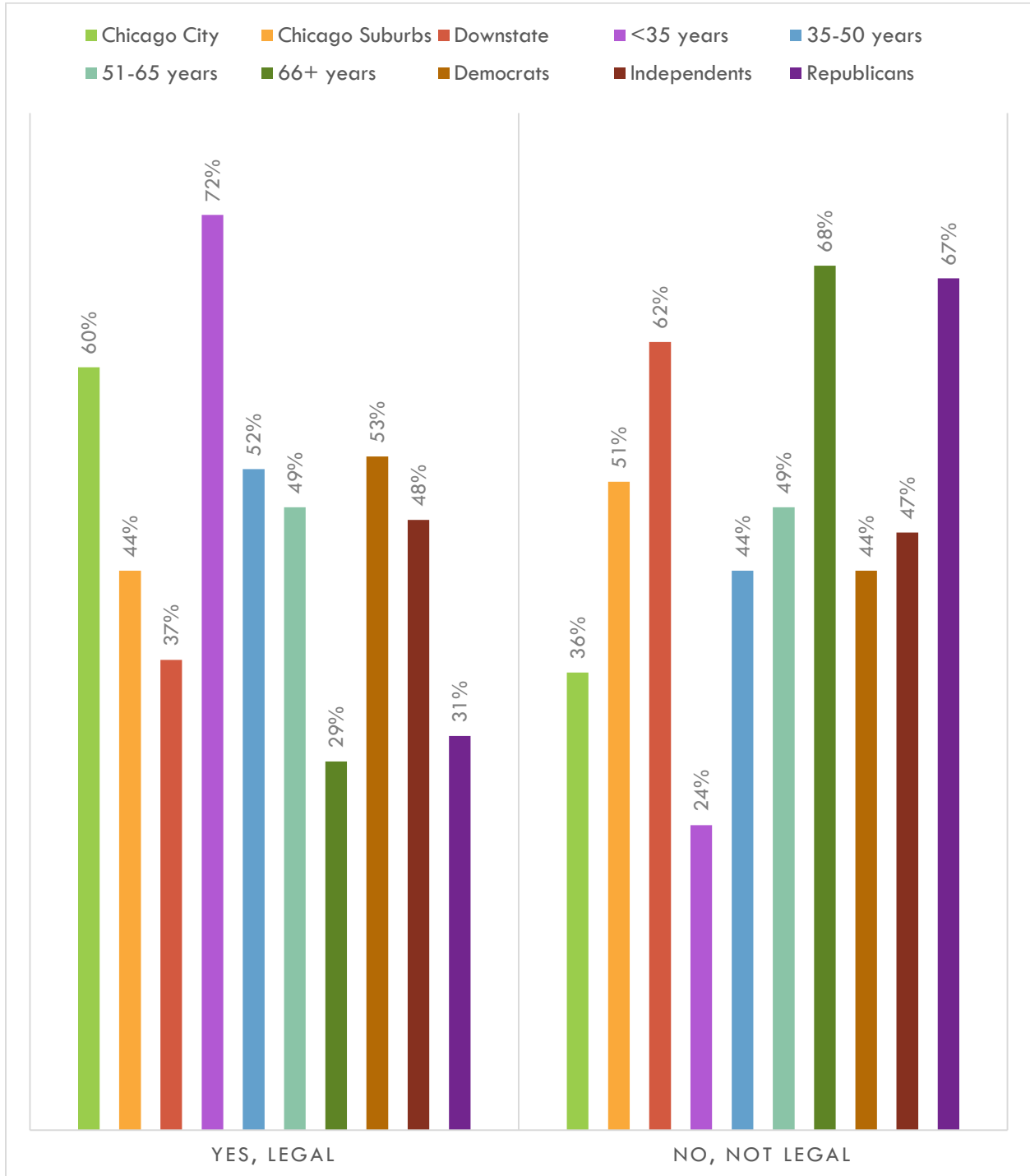
	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Yes, legal	53%	48%	31%
No, not legal	44%	47%	67%
Other/Don't know	4%	4%	2%

⁵ Some values may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Tables and Charts⁶

RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA

Do you think the recreational use of marijuana should be made legal, or not?



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Tables and Charts⁷

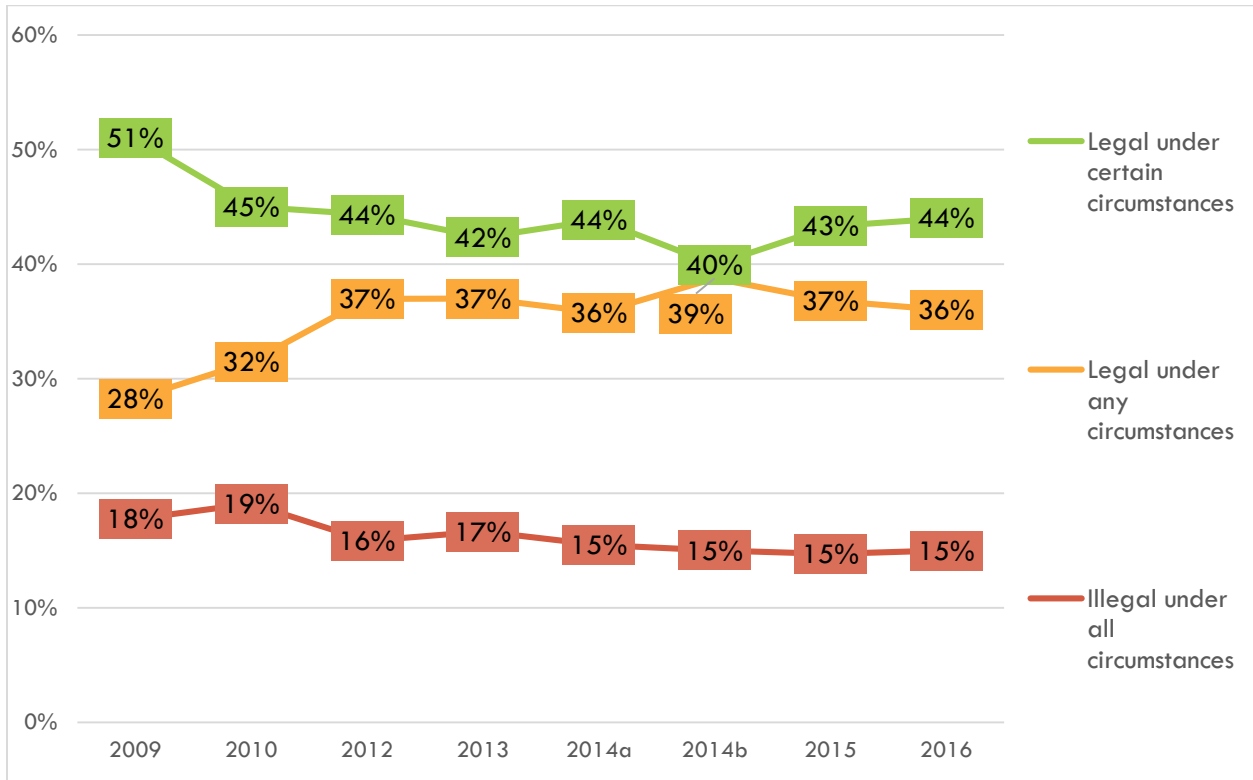
ABORTION

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

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Legal in all circumstances	36%
Legal in certain circumstances	44%
Illegal in all circumstances	15%
Don't know/refused (not read)	5%

ABORTION by YEAR

	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
Legal under certain circumstances	51%	45%	44%	42%	44%	40%	43%	44%
Legal under any circumstances	28%	32%	37%	37%	36%	39%	37%	36%
Illegal under all circumstances	18%	19%	16%	17%	15%	15%	15%	15%



⁷ Some values may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Tables and Charts⁸

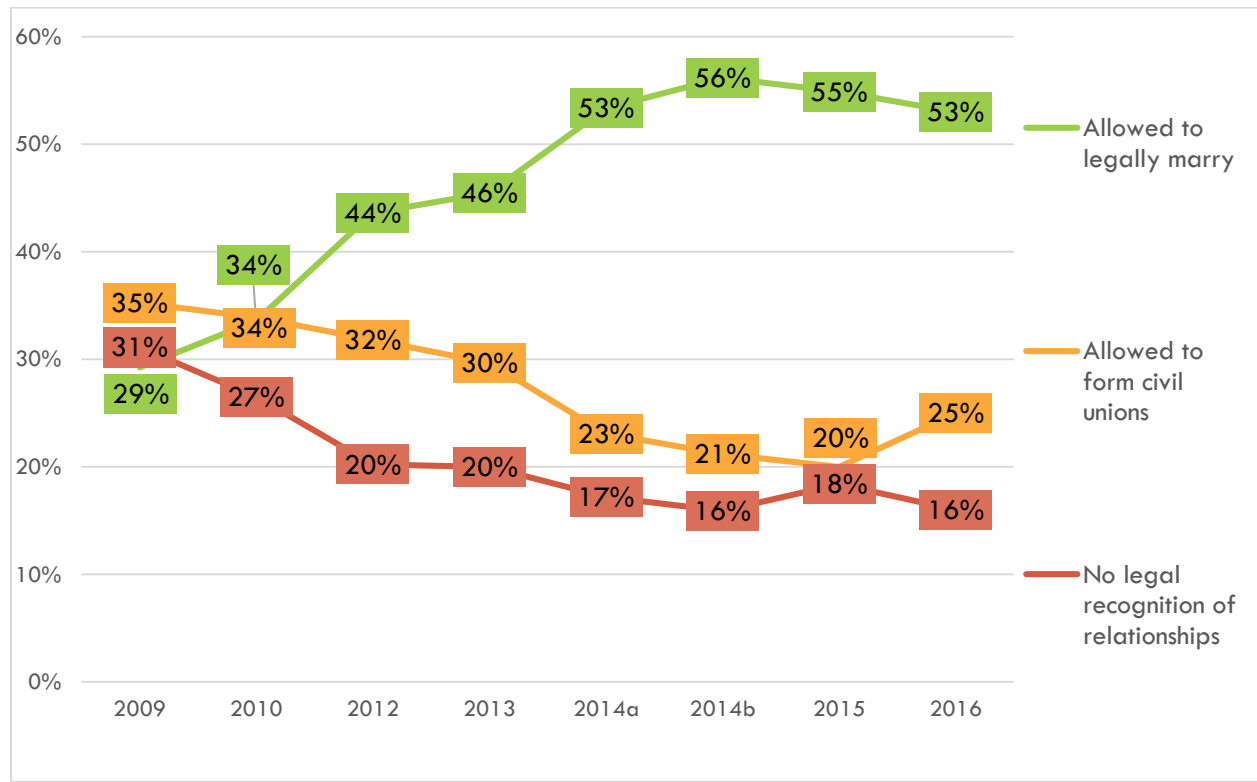
MARRIAGE EQUALITY

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

Response	Percent (n=1000)
Gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to legally marry	53%
Gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to form civil unions, but not to legally marry	25%
There should be no legal recognition of relationship between gay and lesbian couples	16%
Don't know/refused (not read)	6%

MARRIAGE EQUALITY by YEAR

	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014a	2014b	2015	2016
Allowed to legally marry	29%	34%	44%	46%	53%	56%	55%	53%
Allowed to form civil unions	35%	34%	32%	30%	23%	21%	20%	25%
No legal recognition of relationships	31%	27%	20%	20%	17%	16%	18%	16%



⁸ Some values may not add up to 100% because of rounding.