



Press Release

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Majority of Montanans Support Same-Sex Domestic Partnerships

Approval of partnerships with same rights as marriage outpaces opposition by 13 percent

HELENA, MT — As part of a nationwide trend of more Americans supporting fairness for all families, a newly released poll shows that a majority of voters in Montana support domestic partnerships for same-sex couples. That poll, conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research for the American Civil Liberties Union, found that 53 percent of Montana voters favor allowing gay and lesbian couples to enter into domestic partnerships.

"Support of same-sex domestic partnerships is growing, and now we can quantify what our day-to-day interactions with people are telling us," said ACLU of Montana LGBT Advocacy Coordinator Ninia Baehr. "It's heartening to know that people understand that every loving and committed couple who pays taxes in our state deserves fairness."

The change in attitude mirrors an increase in the number of same-sex couples in Montana reporting their households to the U.S. Census Bureau. Recently released numbers show 2,295 same-sex households in the 2010 Census – a 54 percent jump since 2000.

Key Highlights of 2011 Polling

- Most Montanans favor domestic partnership. By a 13 point margin, voters in Montana favor allowing gay and lesbian couples to enter into domestic partnerships – 53 percent favor, 40 percent oppose. There is more intensity among those who favor; 35 percent strongly favor, while 29 percent strongly oppose.
- Voters recognize discrimination against gays and lesbians. A 47 percent plurality believe gay people in Montana face a lot of discrimination; only 38 percent think that gays and lesbians in the state do not face much discrimination.

People understand that the lack of legal recognition of same-sex relationships leaves couples extremely vulnerable. In Montana examples of unfairness toward same-sex couples include a woman who was denied bereavement leave when her partner's father died, and another woman who lost her home because she was ineligible for worker's compensation death benefits when her partner was killed in an accident.

"Same-sex couples have told us time and again that they are meeting more and more people who sympathize with their plight," said Baehr. "This polling reinforces the growing support those couples have been experiencing."

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