

## SAME-SEX RELATIONS

# Canadians and Britons Are More Open on Same-Sex Relations than Americans

*In the three countries, support for same-sex marriage is more evident among members of the two youngest generations.*

[NEW YORK – Jul. 26, 2010] – A comprehensive three-country survey on attitudes towards homosexuality reveals that Canadians and Britons are more inclined to support the legal recognition of same-sex couples than Americans.

The online survey of representative national samples of 1,003 Canadian adults, 1,002 American adults, and 1,980 British adults shows that younger generations are clearly more accepting of same-sex relations. However, the poll also confirms that younger Americans—born between 1980 and 1995—are more conservative than their Canadian and British counterparts in all matters related to homosexuality.

### Same-Sex Marriage

Three-in-five Canadians (61%) want same-sex marriage to remain legal in their country. In Britain, two-in-five respondents (41%) support legalizing same-sex marriage, while just over a third of respondents in the United States (36%) concur.

A quarter of Canadians (23%) would prefer to see same-sex couples establishing civil unions. The same proportion of Americans (23%) agrees with this concept (23%), while in Britain this is the preferred course of action for 37 per cent of respondents.

### KEY FINDINGS

- **61% of Canadians want same-sex marriage to remain legal; 41% of Britons, 36% of Americans would legalize it in their countries**
- **55% in U.S. want the Supreme Court to define marriage as being between man and woman**
- **20% in U.S. say that if their favourite actor came out as gay, their opinion of him would worsen; 10% in Canada and 9% in Britain concur**

*Full topline results are at the end of this release.*

*From July 12 to July 16, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 1,003 Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panellists, 1,002 American adults who are Springboard America panellists, and 1,980 British adults who are Springboard UK panellists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1% for Canada and the United States, and 2.2% for Great Britain. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure samples representative of the entire adult population of Canada, the US and Great Britain. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

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The U.S. holds the highest proportion of respondents who believe that couples of the same sex should not be entitled to any legal recognition (32%). Only 15 per cent of Britons and 13 per cent of Canadians hold this view.

### **Referendums on Definition of Marriage**

The survey asked Americans and Britons to pretend they have to vote in a referendum—such as the many ballots that have been held in several American states already—to establish a definition of marriage. Most Americans (54%) would vote to define marriage as between a man and a woman, and just over a third (36%) would vote to define it as a union between two people. The vote would be tighter in Britain, where 47 per cent choosing the first option, and 42 per cent voting for the latter.

### **Proposition 8**

In California, Proposition 8 restored the definition of marriage as between a man and a woman, and effectively banned same-sex marriages in the state. A U.S. District Court is reviewing the constitutional validity of Proposition 8, but the case is expected to eventually reach the U.S. Supreme Court, which may end up ruling about the validity of same-sex marriage at the federal level.

American respondents were asked about their expectations on an eventual Supreme Court ruling on this matter. Almost half (47%) expect the Supreme Court to define marriages federally as between a man and a woman, while only three-in-ten (31%) think the ruling will define it as a union between two people.

As for their own personal preference on how the Supreme Court should rule, a majority of Americans (55%) would like to see a federal definition of marriage as between a man and a woman.

### **Homosexuality**

In the question of preference versus biology, a majority of Canadians (59%) and Britons (56%) think that homosexuality is something people are born with. Conversely, 44 per cent of Americans say people choose to be homosexuals, while a smaller proportion (37%) thinks people are born this way.

### **Gay and Lesbian Celebrities**

One fifth of American respondents (20%) say that if their favourite actor announced he is gay, their opinion of him would worsen. This compares to just 10 per cent of Canadians and nine per cent of Britons who would feel the same way.

Americans (18%) are also more likely than Canadians and Britons (both at 9%) to say that their opinion of their favourite actress would change for the worse if she came out as a lesbian.

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A quarter of Americans (25%) admit that, if their favourite male sports figure came out as gay, their opinion of him would worsen—along with 14 per cent of Canadians and 11 per cent of Britons.

The impact on a female sports figure's popularity would be milder if she were to announce she is a lesbian, with 18 per cent of Americans, nine per cent of Canadians and eight per cent of Britons saying that they would think less of her.

### **Generational Gap**

Older respondents in all three countries are clearly more resistant to accept same-sex relations than those in younger generations. In Canada, 43 per cent of respondents born before 1946 support the continuous legality of same-sex marriages. At the other end of the spectrum, 81 per cent of Canadians born after 1980 feel the same way.

In the U.S., there is little difference in opinions between respondents born between 1965 and 1979 and those born after 1980: 42 per cent in the first group and 48 per cent in the latter support same-sex marriage.

In Britain, the two youngest generations are not too far apart: 52 per cent of those born from 1965 to 1979 and 56 per cent of the youngest respondents support same-sex marriage. However, only 35 per cent of people born from 1946 to 1964 concur.

### **Friends and Relatives**

Throughout the survey, it is clear that respondents in all three countries who have a friend or relative who is gay or lesbian are more inclined than others to come out in favour of legal rights for same-sex couples.

Support for same-sex marriage among respondents with gay or lesbian friends or relatives stands at 67 per cent in Canada, 54 per cent in Britain, and 49 per cent in the United States. However, respondents who do not have any gay or lesbian friends or relatives are not as supportive (50% in Canada, 29% in Britain and 20% in the U.S.).

*For all our polls, go to our [website](#) / Follow us on [Twitter](#)*

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## Same-Sex Relations

Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view on the legal recognition of same-sex couples in Canada?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Same-sex couples should continue to be allowed to legally marry	61%	43%	53%	66%	81%	67%	50%
Same-sex couples should be allowed to form civil unions, but not marry	23%	38%	27%	16%	14%	20%	28%
Same-sex couples should not have any kind of legal recognition	13%	17%	15%	14%	3%	9%	20%
Not sure	3%	2%	5%	3%	2%	4%	2%

## Same-Sex Relations

Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view on the legal recognition of same-sex couples in the US?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Same-sex couples should be allowed to legally marry	36%	29%	29%	42%	48%	49%	20%
Same-sex couples should be allowed to form civil unions, but not marry	23%	26%	24%	25%	14%	24%	21%
Same-sex couples should not have any kind of legal recognition	32%	38%	38%	25%	26%	20%	49%
Not sure	9%	7%	9%	9%	12%	7%	11%

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## Same-Sex Relations

Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view on the legal recognition of same-sex couples in the UK?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Same-sex couples should be allowed to legally marry	41%	19%	35%	52%	56%	54%	29%
Same-sex couples should be allowed to form civil partnerships, but not marry	37%	52%	42%	30%	25%	35%	39%
Same-sex couples should not have any kind of legal recognition	15%	21%	18%	10%	12%	7%	24%
Not sure	7%	7%	5%	8%	7%	5%	8%

## Same-Sex Relations

Several states have held referendums on the definition of marriage. If a referendum took place in your state tomorrow, and you only had these two choices in the ballot, how would you vote?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
To define marriage as between a man and a woman	54%	65%	60%	47%	45%	41%	71%
To define marriage as between two people	36%	29%	31%	44%	42%	51%	18%
Not sure	9%	6%	9%	9%	13%	9%	10%

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## Same-Sex Relations

Several U.S. states have held referendums on the definition of marriage. If a referendum took place in the UK tomorrow, and you only had these two choices in the ballot, how would you vote?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
To define marriage as between a man and a woman	47%	69%	54%	39%	31%	37%	59%
To define marriage as between two people	42%	20%	37%	50%	57%	54%	30%
Not sure	11%	11%	10%	11%	12%	9%	12%

## Same-Sex Relations

As you may know, a U.S. District Court is reviewing the constitutional validity of California's Proposition 8, which restored the definition of marriage in California as being between a man and a woman. It is expected that the case will eventually reach the U.S. Supreme Court, which may end up ruling about the validity of same-sex marriage at the federal level. If this case reaches the U.S. Supreme Court, what do you expect the outcome to be?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
A ruling that defines marriage federally as between a man and a woman	47%	53%	47%	44%	45%	39%	59%
A ruling that defines marriage federally as between two people	31%	24%	34%	30%	33%	41%	20%
Not sure	22%	23%	19%	25%	23%	21%	21%

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## Same-Sex Relations

And, if this case reaches the U.S. Supreme Court, what would you prefer the outcome to be?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
A ruling that defines marriage federally as between a man and a woman	55%	65%	62%	50%	38%	42%	71%
A ruling that defines marriage federally as between two people	37%	29%	31%	41%	50%	51%	20%
Not sure	8%	6%	7%	9%	12%	7%	9%

## Same-Sex Relations

Do you think being homosexual is...

	CANADA 	UNITED STATES 	GREAT BRITAIN 
Something people choose to be	23%	44%	25%
Something people are born with	59%	37%	56%
Not sure	18%	19%	19%

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## Same-Sex Relations

Do you think being homosexual is...

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Something people choose to be	23%	17%	25%	26%	17%	20%	29%
Something people are born with	59%	62%	56%	60%	61%	67%	45%
Not sure	18%	21%	19%	14%	22%	13%	26%

## Same-Sex Relations

Do you think being homosexual is...

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Something people choose to be	44%	47%	44%	37%	50%	35%	57%
Something people are born with	37%	33%	39%	39%	30%	48%	22%
Not sure	19%	19%	17%	24%	19%	18%	21%

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## Same-Sex Relations

Do you think a homosexual is...

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Something people choose to be	25%	21%	21%	27%	33%	20%	30%
Something people are born with	56%	56%	61%	56%	48%	64%	48%
Not sure	19%	23%	19%	17%	19%	16%	22%

## Same-Sex Relations

Suppose that your favourite actor announced that he is gay. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	CANADA 	UNITED STATES 	GREAT BRITAIN 
Improve	3%	3%	3%
Stay the same	82%	69%	84%
Worsen	10%	20%	9%
Not sure	5%	8%	4%

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## Same-Sex Relations

Suppose that your favourite actor announced that he is gay. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
<b>Improve</b>	3%	2%	2%	2%	6%	4%	1%
<b>Stay the same</b>	82%	77%	82%	84%	85%	87%	75%
<b>Worsen</b>	10%	17%	11%	9%	5%	6%	18%
<b>Not sure</b>	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%	3%	6%

## Same-Sex Relations

Suppose that your favorite actor announced that he is gay. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
<b>Improve</b>	3%	2%	3%	4%	5%	5%	2%
<b>Stay the same</b>	69%	71%	68%	75%	60%	80%	55%
<b>Worsen</b>	20%	20%	21%	15%	22%	11%	32%
<b>Not sure</b>	8%	8%	8%	6%	12%	5%	11%

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**Same-Sex Relations** 

Suppose that your favourite actor announced that he is gay. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Improve	3%	1%	2%	4%	5%	5%	1%
Stay the same	84%	81%	86%	84%	81%	90%	78%
Worsen	9%	15%	10%	7%	8%	4%	15%
Not sure	4%	3%	3%	4%	7%	2%	6%

**Same-Sex Relations**

Now suppose that your favourite actress announced that she is a lesbian. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	CANADA 	UNITED STATES 	GREAT BRITAIN 
Improve	5%	6%	5%
Stay the same	83%	70%	82%
Worsen	9%	18%	9%
Not sure	4%	6%	4%

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## Same-Sex Relations

Now suppose that your favourite actress announced that she is a lesbian. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Improve	5%	2%	4%	4%	11%	5%	5%
Stay the same	83%	77%	85%	82%	83%	87%	75%
Worsen	9%	17%	8%	9%	3%	4%	15%
Not sure	4%	4%	3%	5%	3%	3%	4%

## Same-Sex Relations

Now suppose that your favorite actress announced that she is a lesbian. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Improve	6%	2%	3%	5%	14%	6%	5%
Stay the same	70%	71%	71%	77%	61%	81%	57%
Worsen	18%	22%	21%	14%	13%	10%	28%
Not sure	6%	6%	5%	5%	12%	3%	9%

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## Same-Sex Relations

Now suppose that your favourite actress announced that she is a lesbian. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Improve	5%	2%	4%	6%	9%	6%	4%
Stay the same	82%	78%	84%	83%	79%	88%	77%
Worsen	9%	17%	9%	7%	7%	4%	14%
Not sure	4%	3%	4%	5%	5%	2%	5%

## Same-Sex Relations

Now suppose that your favourite male sports figure announced that he is gay. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	CANADA 	UNITED STATES 	GREAT BRITAIN 
Improve	5%	4%	4%
Stay the same	78%	64%	81%
Worsen	14%	25%	11%
Not sure	3%	8%	5%

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## Same-Sex Relations

Now suppose that your favourite male sports figure announced that he is gay. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Improve	5%	2%	3%	4%	13%	7%	2%
Stay the same	78%	76%	80%	80%	70%	82%	71%
Worsen	14%	21%	14%	11%	13%	9%	22%
Not sure	3%	0%	3%	4%	4%	2%	5%

## Same-Sex Relations

Now suppose that your favorite male sports figure announced that he is gay. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Improve	4%	2%	2%	4%	7%	6%	2%
Stay the same	64%	65%	65%	71%	53%	75%	51%
Worsen	25%	28%	28%	18%	24%	15%	37%
Not sure	8%	5%	5%	6%	16%	4%	10%

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## Same-Sex Relations

Now suppose that your favourite male sports figure announced that he is gay. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Improve	4%	3%	3%	5%	6%	7%	1%
Stay the same	81%	78%	83%	81%	77%	87%	75%
Worsen	11%	15%	10%	9%	10%	4%	17%
Not sure	5%	4%	4%	4%	7%	2%	7%

## Same-Sex Relations

Now suppose that your favourite female sports figure announced that she is a lesbian. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	CANADA 	UNITED STATES 	GREAT BRITAIN 
Improve	6%	4%	4%
Stay the same	82%	70%	83%
Worsen	9%	18%	8%
Not sure	3%	8%	4%

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## Same-Sex Relations

Now suppose that your favourite female sports figure announced that she is a lesbian. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Improve	6%	2%	4%	4%	15%	7%	4%
Stay the same	82%	77%	85%	83%	77%	85%	76%
Worsen	9%	20%	9%	9%	4%	6%	16%
Not sure	3%	0%	2%	5%	4%	2%	4%

## Same-Sex Relations

Now suppose that your favorite female sports figure announced that she is a lesbian. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
Improve	4%	3%	3%	4%	7%	6%	2%
Stay the same	70%	68%	70%	76%	64%	79%	58%
Worsen	18%	24%	21%	14%	15%	10%	30%
Not sure	8%	5%	7%	6%	14%	5%	9%

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**Same-Sex Relations** 

Now suppose that your favourite female sports figure announced that she is a lesbian. Do you think your opinion of this person would improve, stay the same or worsen?

	Total	Generation				Has gay or lesbian friends/relatives	
		Born before 1946	Born from 1946 to 1964	Born from 1965 to 1979	Born from 1980 to 1995	Yes	No
<b>Improve</b>	4%	3%	3%	5%	7%	6%	2%
<b>Stay the same</b>	83%	77%	85%	84%	81%	89%	78%
<b>Worsen</b>	8%	16%	8%	6%	7%	4%	13%
<b>Not sure</b>	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	2%	6%

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*Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specializing in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995*

*Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.*

*Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum ([www.angusreidforum.com](http://www.angusreidforum.com)), Springboard America ([www.springboardamerica.com](http://www.springboardamerica.com)) and Springboard UK ([www.springboarduk.com](http://www.springboarduk.com)) online panels, which are recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a high-quality, multi-streamed approach and an in-depth screening procedure.*

*The panels are highly engaged communities with industry leading response rates and are researched with state-of-the-art sampling techniques, combined with deep profiling on demographic, behavioural and attitudinal characteristics. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.*

*Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.*

*Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election. More information on our electoral record can be found at:*

*<http://www.visioncritical.com/record-of-accuracy>*

*More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.visioncritical.com/what-we-do/practices/angus-reid-public-opinion/>*

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**For more information, please contact  
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:  
<http://www.visioncritical.com/category/global-opinions-and-trends>**

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