

# American government research paper

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



American government Research Paper On gay marriage 10/2/12 In the United States, marriage has always played a crucial role in the lives of its citizens. Known to some as a lifetime commitment of devotion, to others a promise to reside with a stranger, or even a matter arranged by parents, marriage is widely practiced and celebrated all over the world. Marriage can be said to be the ultimate act of love, supported with benefits and privileges from the government. The right to marry and love whoever you want has been an corner stone in culture for centuries. It has naturally left such an impact on the development of our country that it has been integrated into the parameters of the law. However, out-dated traditions dictate that marriage must be between a man and a woman, a notion that has sparked much debate in a society where the battle for equal opportunity and freedom of expression run rampant. The institution of marriage is only as strong as those who are in it, and it is weakened, by definition, when it arbitrarily excludes any class of couples. Moreover, to outlaw same-sex marriage is to deny equal-individual's rights and freedoms under the first amendment, and a clear discrimination against one of our founding principles that is held dear by many. There has been a notable decline in the opposition of gay marriage. In 1996, three years after Bill Clinton's " Don't ask don't tell" policy took effect, 68% of American's opposed gay marriage. In 2012, after Obama publicly stated that he supported gay marriage, the disapproval drops down to 48% of opposition.[1] The ideal of gay liberty is a dividing factor among our political parties. 65% of Democrats and 24% of republican's advocate the issue. Although only 3. 5% of Americans accounts for the " outted" LGB community[2], it's support has gain mainstream

attention through pop-culture and mass media, and has become a keystone in the debates of many religious and political figures. Like other issues that has drawn into question the confines of the first amendment (such as slavery and immigration) the effort to win equal marriage rights and benefits for same-sex couples has seen a tremendous increase of attention in recent years. Throughout early American history, homosexuality was considered taboo and criminal, which were punishable even by death; a clear violation and disregard for " life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" as stated in the declaration. Prior to 1962, it was considered a felony in every state to perform any form of sodomy. In June of that year, Illinois become the first state to decriminalize homosexual sodomy between two adults in consensual acts in private. This set the profound benchmark for several other states to follow, initiating the drawn-out legal processes which eventually led the Supreme Court's findings in Lawrence v. Texas to deem all sodomy laws to be unconditional, abolishing the laws in remaining states (Which contradicts a previous verdict in Bowers v. Hardwick). Thus, the frame work is set for the debate of equality in marriage for homosexuals. The first formal organization to advocate homosexuality was in 1951 when the Mattachine Society was formed by Harry Hay, which fought against issues of forced assimilation of gays . Police offices regally enforced laws against homosexuality in public . One of the most notorious events leading to their equal rights started with the stonewall riots in 1969. While police were conducting a regular raid of a gay bar, a argument broke out that infuriated those in attendance. In response to the brutality, they preformed random acts of violence against the police, which sent repercussions across the nation, bringing

homosexuality into the realm of political discussion. In 1993 Bill Clinton enacted the "don't ask don't tell" policy, which forbids the sexual preference of soldiers in the military to be questioned, while still maintaining the right to ban same-sex relationships and sexual acts. Much debate has arisen between the federal government and the states over a national ban on homosexuality. In 1996, Bill Clinton signed into law The Defense of Marriage Act, which defines marriage as the union between a man and a woman. Under this law, no state is required to recognize a same-sex marriage from another state. However, an amendment to the constitution is required for the federal government to ban same-sex marriages throughout America, leaving room for state-to-state interpretation of their own constitutions. In 2000, Vermont became the first state to permit gay marriage, with several other states following suit. Other states, such as New Jersey, implemented a middle ground known as civil unions, which are a separate but equal approach to gay marriage. They allow for the same benefits of marriage, but have certain limitations. Many LGB advocates argue that such laws are discrimination, and point to the separate but equal Jim Crow laws which mandated segregation of blacks and whites. Mitt Romney has stood firm on his belief regarding gay marriage. He has stated on many occasions that "marriage itself is a relationship between a man and a woman" and that his personal belief in God and preference of his own sexuality has played a crucial role in his political stance on the issue, displaying the quintessential Christian value in his justifications of heterosexual-only marriage. However, in his campaign against Ted Kennedy, he insists to the gay-rights community that even though his opponent, Ted Kennedy, was an ardent supporter of

gay rights, he would be more effective in moving the issue into the main stream of American concern, interjecting that he supported the Federal Employee Nondiscrimination Act and Clinton's " don't ask, don't tell" policy. [3] He also asserts that civil unions are an acceptable alternative in the battle for equal rights and has also openly stated that he supports laws established in regards to equality for homosexuals in the workplace, while rejecting the notion of marriage status for homosexual couples, right is a core belief of the majority of the conservative republicans. Obama has recently flip-flopped on the issue of gay marriage. During his run for the Illinois senate in 1996, he endorsed gay marriage, only to retract his opinion on the matter when running for the U. S senate and for president. While in office, Obama made a statement that he, in fact, does support gay marriage and all the freedoms that come along with heterosexual marriage, and that homosexuals have the same right to love whomever they chose just as straight couples do. [4] The Catholic Church has played a major role in the fight against gay-marriage rights. Its remains firm on Homosexual relationships as an intrinsic evil, which tares at the moral fiber of the sanctity of marriage. Using the bible as a reference, the church states that marriage's purpose is to procreate a family in the eyes of god. Pope Benedict XVI strongly reasserts this age old passion in the opposition of gay marriage by saying " These values are non-negotiable and consequently, catholic politicians and legislators, conscious of their grave responsibilities before society, must feel particularly bound, on the basis of properly formed conscience, to introduce laws inspired by values grounded in human nature"[5] He has also warned American Catholic's against voting outside

the whelm of faith, and urges that the U. S. votes in favor of faith and morality.[6] PFLAG, an interest group lobbying for the reform of marriage laws, holds bold beliefs that the fight for gay marriage won't stop at laws being passed. The LGB movement greatly strives for acceptance and equal opportunities in every aspect of day to day life. They continue an active roll in lobbying for gay-marriage, and openly endorse Obama in the up-coming election. As we look forward to tomorrow, what can we predict for the gay marriage movement? Surely, if we were to look to the past through the eyes of the present, we could shed some knowledge to how we, as American's, have found it to be held true, that we are enabled by our creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. As we treated the rights of African Americans before us, as well as to protect personal liberties under the constitution, should we not also protect any and all men, equally? Should that not also, extend to our person beliefs, and rights to love and marriage, regardless of gender? Marriage has and always will be, one of the most fundamental principles in our nation. Without marriage, we have no sense of love towards ourselves, without love towards ourselves, we have no sense of patriotism. And without patriotism, we have no basis in this country. As The Roman thinker once said " To not know the history of the world before you were born, causes you to forever remain, a child. " Bibliography (1) Crary, David , " Gay marriage backed by 65 percent of Democrats in poll", Associated Press 07/31/2011 [http://www.twincities.com/news/ci\\_21201372/gay-marriage-backed-by-65-percent-democrats-poll?source=rss](http://www.twincities.com/news/ci_21201372/gay-marriage-backed-by-65-percent-democrats-poll?source=rss) (2) Stark, Caitlin, " By the numbers: Same-sex marriage", CNN Library, 5/12/12 <http://www.cnn.com/2012/05/11/politics/btn-same-sex->

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