

The Big Shift: Why Marriage Won at the Ballot Box



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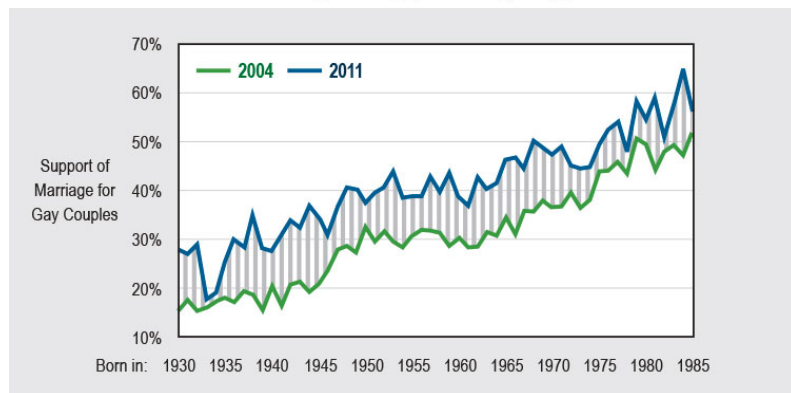


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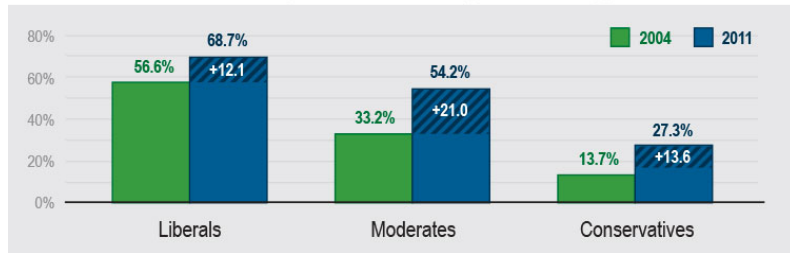
This week, Americans in four states voted in favor of marriage for gay couples—making 2012 the first time in history that marriage has won at the ballot box. This incredible outcome relegates the past record of 32 losses to the dustbin of history, and it illustrates the rapid journey our country has taken on this issue since 2004. In our report, *The Big Shift*, we tracked this evolution using 128,000 responses from 98 national surveys, and our data shows that these victories were the result of one thing: Americans across every age, race, religion, party, ideology, and region reconsidered and decided to support allowing committed gay and lesbian couples to marry.

Marriage Support by Age



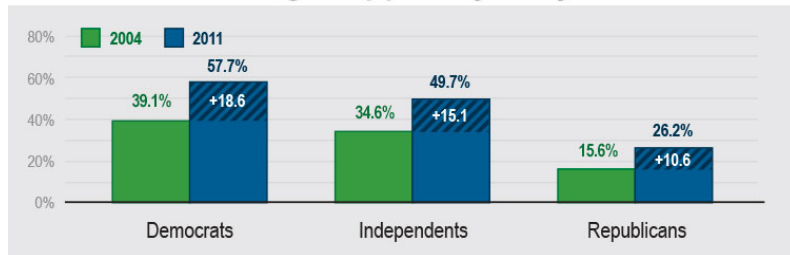
Support for marriage rose 16 points between 2004 and 2011 (when our data ends), and 75% of that shift was due to Americans of all ages changing their minds. Only a quarter was caused by younger, more accepting voters replacing older ones in the population.

Marriage Support by Ideology



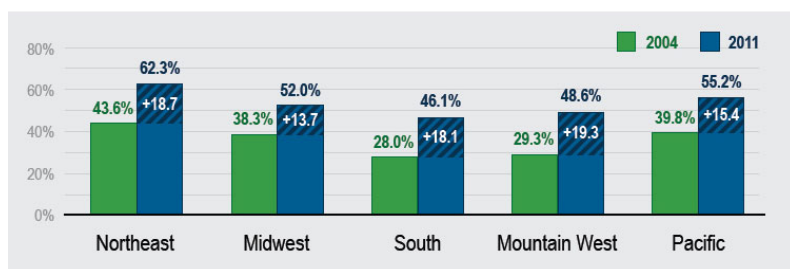
It wasn't just liberal voters reconsidering—**moderates** moved faster than any other group, gaining 21 points of support for marriage between 2004 and 2011. And the number of **conservatives** who favor marriage doubled during that timeframe.

Marriage Support by Party ID



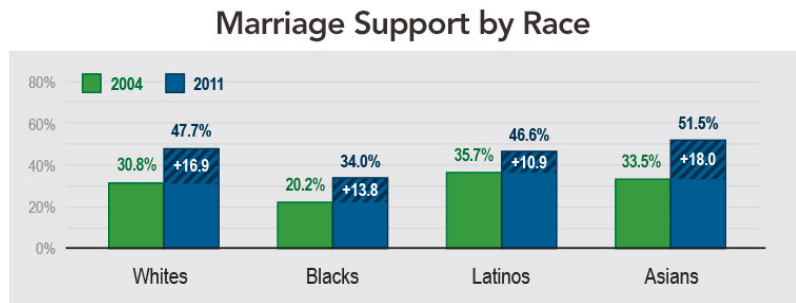
Americans of every political party warmed toward marriage for gay couples, with **Independents** tracking closer to Democrats and more than a quarter of **Republicans** now in the marriage camp—more than the proportion who says they are pro-choice.

Marriage Support by Region

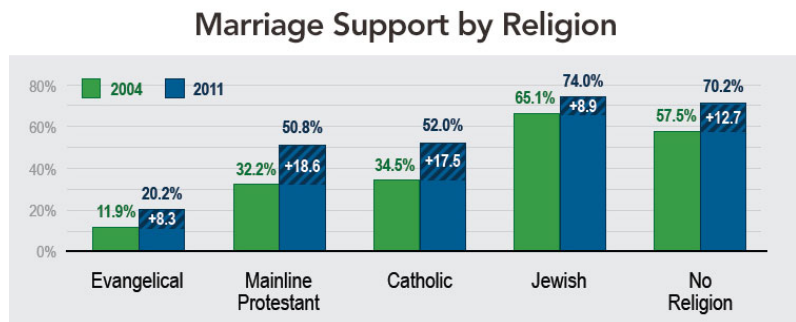


It's not a surprise that the ballot initiative victories spanned the entire country—Americans of **every region** are growing

more supportive of marriage, including in the **South**, where nearly a majority favor allowing gay couples to marry.

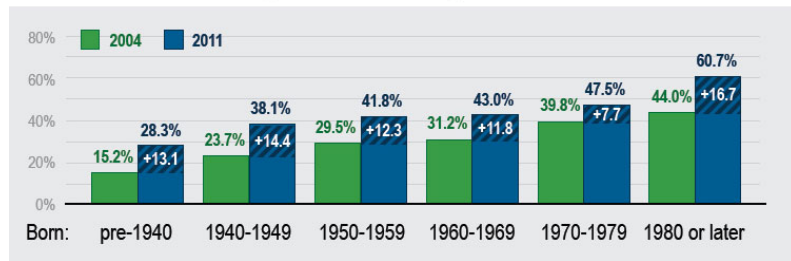


Across racial lines, Americans have been growing more supportive, with **whites, Latinos, and Asians** all nearing or crossing the majority support line by 2011. Views among **African Americans** are evolving rapidly as well, gaining 14 points between 2004 and 2011, and recent data suggests African American support has risen even *more* quickly over the last year.



Even among **Evangelical Christians**, the religious group most resistant to marriage for gay couples, support has increased more than a point a year since 2004. **Catholics** and **Mainline Protestants** now boast majorities for marriage—and those numbers are growing.

Marriage Support by Generation



Young people are more supportive of marriage than their elders across every demographic group. In fact, our data indicates that the likelihood of favoring marriage goes up 0.8 points for each year of birth—meaning a person born in 1981 is 16 points more likely to support marriage than someone born in 1961. But **Americans of every age** are growing more accepting towards marriage for gay couples, with most cohorts gaining 12 points of support or more between 2004 and 2011.