

Obama to Blame? Minority Surge Voters and the Ban on Same-Sex Marriage in Florida

Stephanie Slade

Daniel A. Smith

University of Florida

Obama to Blame? Minority Surge Voters and the Ban on Same-Sex Marriage in Florida

Among the many compelling “educative effects” of direct democracy (Smith and Tolbert 2004), perhaps the strongest empirical finding is that ballot measures in the American states can mobilize and turn out voters as well as prime candidate vote choice. But is the inverse possible? Might newly registered voters—not politically engaged or mobilized by a ballot measure, but rather turned on to vote because of a candidate running for office—affect the outcome of a ballot proposition? Specifically, were gay rights proponents jilted at the altar by African Americans who voted for Barack Obama and to ban same-sex marriage? If one looks at reporting in the mainstream media, punditry in the blogosphere, and self-reflection within the gay community itself, there is ample reason to believe that such a causal relationship existed in 2008 with respect to the anti-gay marriage measures.¹

Less than two months before the November 2008 election, a prominent op-ed appeared in the *New York Times* suggesting that Obama’s “popularity among black voters” could “hurt gay couples” (McKinley 2008). According to the account, an unusually high turnout among Obama-inspired minority voters could contribute to the passage of same-sex marriage bans on the ballots in three states, Arizona, California, and Florida.² The theory—that minorities with infrequent vote histories would “surge” to the polls in support of Obama, but, due to their traditional social values, would vote for a ban on same-sex marriage—gained immediate credence. Although as a

¹ Blogs with headlines like “Obama Voter Turnout Killed Gay Marriage in California” (2008) began to surface overnight after the election. The San Jose *Mercury News* reported just one day after the election that anti-gay marriage advocates were aided by high minority turnout for Obama (Swift and Webby 2008). Numerous anecdotal explanations for supposed black support for the anti-gay marriage measures surfaced. Black voters, like Florida state Senator Chris Smith’s Aunt Bertha, “played into one of the great ironies” of the election, as “she was one of numerous civil rights-minded black voters who cast their ballots for Obama at the same time that they chose to deny gays and lesbians the right to marry.” Driven mostly by religious conviction, black voters like Aunt Bertha consistently—and paradoxically—vote in ways that make them “the most unfriendly demographic toward gays, arguably the second-most-discriminated-against group” behind blacks (Norman 2008).

² On November 4, 2008, California’s Proposition 8 passed with 52 percent of the vote. In Florida, Amendment 2 garnered 62 percent in a state in which a 60-percent super-majority is necessary. Arizona’s Proposition 102, a ban similar to California’s, passed with 56 percent of the vote.

U.S. Senator Obama advocated for the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act and opposed a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, he remained personally opposed same-sex marriage on religious grounds. Obama did refer to the statewide ballot measures as “unnecessary” (Harris 2008), and his acceptance speech at the Democratic convention in Denver included a statement of support for the gay community (Eleveld and Kennedy 2008), but his campaign assiduously tried to avoid the issue and the Democratic Party sent only muted cues in opposition to the ballot initiatives. Pre-election polling also lent legitimacy to the theory, with a Public Policy Institute of California survey finding that “a big turnout for the top-of-the-ticket presidential race could have a significant impact on the rest of the ballot” (Grew 2008), and an October *St. Petersburg Times* story reporting that “whether Florida bans gay marriage in its state Constitution could be decided by how much presidential candidate Barack Obama drives turnout among African Americans” (Farley 2008).³ Exit polls only seemed to verify the narrative: Obama’s newly-mobilized minority backers—given permission slips by Obama and the Democratic Party to vote for the initiatives—turned out to vote and helped pass the same-sex marriage bans.

With a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, we reassess the claim that newly registered Obama surge voters were responsible for the narrow passage of Amendment 2 in Florida. Amendment 2 codified in the state’s Constitution a law already on the books prohibiting same-sex marriage and civil unions among gays and lesbians. But did minority voters—who turned out in droves for Obama in the Sunshine State—really put Amendment 2 over the top? We begin by taking a critical look at the qualification of the initiative for the ballot and the campaign to defeat it. We then situate the theory in the broader literature on ballot measures,

³ The *St. Pete Times* story was based on a survey conducted for the paper that found 69 percent of black voters supporting Amendment 2, compared to 59 percent of all registered voters in the state and just 48 percent of Democrats. Because of the small sample size, the margin of error for blacks was greater than 10 points.

candidate races, and voter turnout. Finally, drawing on individual- and aggregate-level data from Florida we put the theory to rigorous empirical tests.

The Battle to Ban Gay Marriage in Florida

The battle over Amendment 2 began in 2005 when the Florida Coalition to Protect Marriage announced its intent to qualify a constitutional anti-gay marriage measure, the Florida Marriage Protection Amendment, in time for the 2006 election. Its goal was to collect the 611,009 valid signatures needed to allow voters to decide whether to add a ban on gay marriage to the state's Constitution. Leading the charge was John Stemberger, an Orlando attorney and President of the Florida Family Policy Council (FFPC), who claimed an amendment was needed to prevent the courts from overturning a 1997 law prohibiting same-sex marriage. The petition proceeded slowly, and the campaign relied on two \$150,000 contributions from the Republican Party of Florida to keep its "stalled" signature drive alive (McMullen 2005). After failing to collect enough signatures to qualify for the 2006 ballot, state officials announced in November 2007 that Stemberger's organization (renamed Florida4Marriage) had qualified its measure for the November 2008 ballot. The group would eventually raise over \$1.5 million for its campaign, including more than \$700,000 in in-kind contributions from FFPC (Kaczor 2008).

Parallel anti-Amendment 2 campaigns soon emerged, one launched by Nadine Smith, the executive director of Equality Florida, the other led by Derek Newton, a Democratic political consultant who ran the *ad hoc* Florida Red and Blue Coalition. Just as quickly, a rift between the two organizations appeared, stemming from the groups' differing political ideologies and a disagreement over strategy—namely, whether or not to target minorities.⁴ Prior to the election, Florida Red and Blue's internal polling revealed that African Americans overwhelmingly

⁴ Smith maintains that the major reason the two campaigns stayed separate was that her organization was perceived as "too gay and too progressive" (Rodriguez 2008). Members of Florida Red and Blue, which sought to put "a bipartisan face on the fight against discrimination," reportedly found Smith to be too "militant" (Garcia 2008).

believed homosexuality to be a lifestyle choice and therefore undeserving of protection. The belief was “deeply rooted, culturally,” Newton said prior to the election, and “not addressable by any political campaign.” For this reason, his group shied away from the minority community, targeting instead young, unmarried, educated voters (who tend to be more tolerant of gays and lesbians) (Lewis and Gossett 2008) as well as heterosexual senior citizens (whose domestic partnership rights could be disproportionately affected by Amendment 2).⁵ Because the language of Amendment 2 stated not only that “marriage is the legal union of one man and one woman” but also that “no other union that is treated as marriage or the substantial equivalent thereof shall be valid or recognized,” opponents worried that its passage would lead to the revocation of domestic partnership rights throughout the state. Cognizant of the successful defeat of a ban on gay marriage in Arizona in 2006, Florida Red and Blue decided to emphasize the amendment’s potential implications for all unmarried couples, in particular, senior citizens.⁶

In contrast, Smith contended that Newton’s decision not to target African Americans was a mistake. According to Damien Filer, a campaign manager in 2007 for Fairness For All Families (Equality Florida’s campaigning arm), Smith felt strongly that black voters were “not a lost cause.”⁷ Smith began working in 2006 to make inroads in black and Hispanic communities to oppose the anti-gay marriage measure, arranging meetings with various progressive and civil rights organizations, and winning endorsements from a number of prominent local blacks. She felt particularly optimistic that minorities could be persuaded to oppose Amendment 2 as

⁵ Phone interview with Derek Newton, October 29, 2008.

⁶ Some Amendment 2 opponents felt emulating the Arizona strategy—in which the measure’s potential impact on domestic partnerships for senior citizens was put front and center—could be key to defeating Florida’s anti-gay marriage initiative in 2008. The Florida Red and Blue campaign distributed flyers noting opposition to the amendment by the League of Women Voters and the Florida Alliance for Retired Americans while pointing out that the initiative could prevent “Helene and Wayne,” an older, heterosexual couple enjoying domestic partnership benefits, from visiting one another in the hospital (“‘No on 2’ group highlights domestic partners” 2008).

⁷ Personal interview with Damien Filer, February 12, 2009.

discriminatory, tying the campaign to Obama’s civil rights agenda.⁸ “Black voters were written off” by Florida Red and Blue, Smith lamented, but her own efforts were hindered by a lack of resources. As a grassroots movement, Fairness For All Families—in contrast to Florida Red and Blue, which Smith described as “donor-driven” by a small cadre of wealthy gay rights supporters—had difficulties raising money to wage an effective media campaign.

With the November 2008 passage of the Amendment and Obama’s victory in Florida, opponents were left to wonder whether they had done enough to combat what they saw as a codification of bigotry and a threat to families across the state. Newton said the paid media efforts stood no chance of competing with the concurrent presidential election for voters’ attention. “We were like whispering into a fire drill,” he said (Reinhard 2008). Filer offered another explanation: The gay community was demoralized by the knowledge that same-sex marriage would remain illegal in Florida even if the amendment was defeated. The “no” campaign lacked a degree of passion and focus at the grassroots, he said, because “winning isn’t winning.”⁹ Challenging the conventional wisdom, Smith claimed the campaign failed to target minority communities, as black and Hispanic voters “could have been moved more.”¹⁰

Theorizing about Surge Voter Impact on Ballot Measures

Support for the theory—that socially conservative minority surge voters made the difference on Amendment 2—was not limited to proponents of the measure. Derek Newton of Florida Red and Blue Coalition said of the theory, “Yes. It’s true.” Still, his internal polling showed the “no” side picking up the undecided vote and found that there was “no compelling argument” for opponents to switch positions, whereas “the contrary isn’t true.” Newton pointed

⁸ Phone interview with Nadine Smith, February 4, 2009. To capitalize on Obama’s civil rights record, Fairness For All Families distributed flyers featuring the presidential hopeful’s portrait and urging voters to “stand up to discrimination.” In Smith’s words, people in both white and black precincts “gobbled up the Obama card.”

⁹ Personal interview with Damien Filer, February 12, 2009.

¹⁰ Phone interview with Nadine Smith, February 4, 2009.

out that blacks, historically, have the highest rolloff rate—voting for the “top of the ticket” candidate but abstaining in down-ballot races or ballot issues.¹¹ But following the election, Damien Filer, who worked with both opposition campaigns, disagreed with the validity of the theory that a surge of minority voters had led to the passage of Amendment. He said that Florida (unlike Georgia, for example) already tended to experience relatively high turnout among African Americans prior to 2008 due to a concerted effort in previous elections to reach out to minorities. This, he said, created a “ceiling” on the impact Obama’s candidacy could have on Amendment 2, as there were “only so many more” blacks in Florida who would not have otherwise turned out to vote.¹²

Unfortunately, extant scholarship on direct democracy does little to inform the soundness of the theory (for a review of the literature, see Smith and Tolbert 2007). Although scholars have found that ballot measures increase turnout (M. Smith 2001; Tolbert, Grummel, and Smith 2001; Lacey 2005), can increase turnout among “peripheral” or episodic voters (Donovan, Tolbert, and Smith 2009), and can affect candidate elections (Smith, DeSantis, and Kassel 2006; Campbell and Monson 2008; Donovan, Tolbert, and Smith 2009), there is considerable evidence suggesting that the very minority voters who comprised the Obama-inspired surge were likely to have abstained on down-ballot measures like Amendment 2. Using National Election Study data over several elections to examine patterns of ballot rolloff—that is, voters who turn out to vote for candidates but leave one or more down-ballot races blank—Magleby (1984) finds nonwhites to be dramatically underrepresented as a proportion of what he refers to as “proposition electorates” by as much as 25 percentage points. In addition, using a post-election survey, Clubb and Traugott (1972) find that those who voted on ballot propositions in the 1968 presidential

¹¹ Phone interview with Derek Newton, October 29, 2008.

¹² Phone interview with Damien Filer, February 12, 2009.

election tended to be white and much more highly educated compared to those who voted on candidate races, concluding that “statewide referenda constituted an even less effective means to communicate with, and receive communications from, the poor and the poorly educated, blacks, and residents of large cities and rural areas than did other electoral mechanisms.” Such findings of high rolloff rates on ballot initiatives among minority voters cast considerable doubt on the theory we seek to test.

The findings from these studies, however, should not be overstated. In addition to being dated, they also may underestimate the importance of “partisan cues,” on which some voters are particularly reliant in ballot initiative races (Smith and Tolbert 2004). With both major parties’ presidential nominees taking public stances on the proposed gay marriage bans and the Republican Party of Florida providing early funding of the pro-Amendment 2 campaign, cues for party-line voters were not lacking—although it should be noted that the Democratic Party offered its supporters little in the way of direction with respect to statewide gay marriage amendments. Despite Obama’s opposition to the amendments, for example, he stated publicly that he was “not in favor of gay marriage” (Harris 2008). Thus, while some party cues existed, party competition on the gay marriage issue was mostly absent.

Amendment 2’s position as the most salient initiative on the Florida ballot mitigates concerns over ballot rolloff. Bowler and Donovan (1998: 54) show how some voters are dissuaded from voting on down-ballot issues by the exceptionally high cost of making an informed decision and therefore “seek out the more visible contested measures” on which to cast their ballots. When information about an issue is easily accessible via well-financed campaigns, voters are much less likely to abstain or vote no. In Florida, Amendment 2 enjoyed a distinct advantage in terms of issue salience relative to the five other constitutional amendments on the ballot. Each of the five received far less earned and paid media attention than did Amendment 2.

Additionally, the number of anti-gay marriage measures that had appeared on ballots in 2004, combined with the presence of gay marriage bans on ballots in California and Arizona in 2008, further increased the salience of the gay-marriage issue. Thus, Obama-inspired minority surge voters may have been less inclined to roll off on Amendment 2 than previous research suggests.

Finally, it is possible that election-specific environmental factors might have increased voters' awareness of Amendment 2 and decreased the likelihood of rolloff on the measure by minority surge voters. Examining awareness of ballot issues in California, Nicholson (2003) finds that voters are, on average, better than 10 percentage points more likely to be aware of ballot measures dealing with morality issues and civil liberties. Campaign spending—especially negative advertising—corresponds to 6 percentage points more voter awareness, and media coverage corresponds to an almost-17-percentage-point increase in awareness. Because Amendment 2 dealt with morality and civil liberties issues, enjoyed considerable attention in the media, was the subject of two different opposition campaigns that together spent nearly \$4 million to influence voter opinion, and was listed second on the ballot, lower rolloff might be reasonably expected—even within demographic groups notorious for high abstention rates. Although nonwhite voters have been shown to be more likely to roll off on down-ballot initiatives, a wide array of countervailing factors may well have buoyed participation on Amendment 2 among the Obama-inspired surge.

Scholarship providing insight into the validity of the theory here in question is inconclusive. Little evidence exists substantiating the notion that a candidate could single-handedly alter the electoral outcome of a ballot measure. Studies pointing to the historically lower turnout rates of nonwhite voters (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993) and their likelihood to abstain on down-ballot questions (Magleby 1984) cast doubt upon the theory. Other research,

however, reveals that Amendment 2 was a candidate for lower rates of rolloff, suggesting that the theory's expectations are plausible.

Minority Surge Voters and Amendment 2: Individual-Level Analysis

Dozens of post-election news stories drew upon exit polling to frame the argument that that African Americans “surge” voters were responsible for the passage of the gay marriage ban in Florida. According to CNN exit poll numbers, 71 percent of African-American voters in Florida voted for Amendment 2, compared to 60 percent of white voters in the state. Moreover, the exit poll found that even young (18- to 29-year-old) African Americans voted for Amendment 2, with greater than 70 percent reporting support for the measure. To compare, just 49 percent of young whites reported support for the Florida measure, a number substantially lower than the average for white voters of all ages. News organizations proclaimed after the election that the theory had been realized, with newly-mobilized black voters carrying the anti-gay marriage measures to victory.

Data and Methods

Internal survey data from the campaign provides insight into the validity of the theory and the exit polls. According to a pre-election benchmark telephone survey conducted by Lake Research Partners in August 2007 and made available to us by Fairness For All Families,¹³ African Americans did appear to be particularly opposed to gay marriage in Florida. In its memorandum to the campaign, Lake Research Partners reported that black voters supported the amendment by a 32-point margin. Drawing on these data, and controlling for other factors with a logistic regression, we test whether Obama-inspired surge voters were supportive of Amendment 2.

¹³ Phone survey conducted August 14-19, 2007, for Equality Florida. Base sample of 800 likely voters statewide, with oversamples of 100 African Americans (201 African-American total including those from the main sample) and 100 Latinos (202 Latinos, total). The margin of error for the base sample is +/-3.5% for the base sample.

A number of individual-level characteristics have the potential to affect attitudes toward gay rights (Rimmerman, Wald, and Wilcox 2000). Our baseline model includes several control variables: partisanship (with Republicans and Democrats each separately coded 1 and independents coded 0); gender (with women coded 1); age (on an ordinal scale of 1 to 12 where 1 = 18 to 24 years of age, 2 = 25 to 29 years of age, etc.); race (with blacks and Hispanics coded 1); marital status (with those married coded 1); education (on an ordinal scale of 1 to 6 for the last year of schooling a person completed, where 1 = first through eleventh grades, 2 = high school graduate, 3 = post-high school but non-college education, etc.); and religion (with Christians and weekly churchgoers each separately coded 1). In a second model, we control for rolloff (with people who said they always vote on “all” constitutional amendments coded as 0, and those who said they do not vote on all coded 1).

If the theory holds true, our analysis should reveal that those who exhibit “surge voter” characteristics are more likely than the median voter to oppose gay marriage and support Amendment 2. Our binary dependent variable is generated from responses to the question, “Just to be clear, is your vote to ban marriage for gay and lesbian people in the Florida Constitution or not to ban marriage for gay and lesbian people in the Florida Constitution?” Respondents who answered that their votes would be to ban gay marriage are coded 1; all others are coded 0. We expect that respondents who think of themselves as Republicans are more likely to support banning gay marriage while those who think of themselves as Democrats are less likely, with older, married, and church-going Christian respondents more likely as well. Most importantly, the theory predicts blacks and Hispanics to be particularly supportive of a ban.

The conventional wisdom suggest that support for the ban on same-sex marriage was greater among black surge voters who supported Obama and would not have participated in the election if he were not on the ballot. The theory, however, does not differentiate among black

surge voters: are they young or old, partisans (Democrats) or nonpartisans, married or unmarried, poorly or well-educated, etc.? Because the Obama surge voter is ill-defined, we offer alternative specifications, including the median black voter, to test the theory. If the median black respondent serves as a proxy for the Obama minority surge voter, we should expect this “individual” to be more supportive of banning gay marriage than the overall median respondent. Furthermore, if we assume that younger, unmarried, and less-educated black Democrats are truly representative of the Obama-inspired surge voter, we should expect especially high levels of support for banning gay marriage from this demographic group, relative to the overall median respondent. Using simulated predicted probabilities, we examine the hypothetical surge voters, expecting one or both to favor a ban on gay marriage more than the median respondent.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1 reports the individual-level findings. As expected, both models reveal a positive relationship between Republican identification and support for banning gay marriage. Also as expected, there is a negative relationship between being a Democrat and support for a ban. Education is statistically significant and negative as expected, indicating that better-educated respondents are less likely to support a ban. With respect to religion, the “attendance” covariate (defined as whether a person attends church at least once per week) is positive and significant in both models, with Christian respondents, as expected, more likely to support a ban. However, neither model finds age, marital status, or gender to be a good predictor of support for a ban on same-sex marriage. Most important to our study, in neither model is black or Hispanic related to a respondent’s pre-election attitude toward the ban at a statistically significant level. This casts some doubt upon the theory’s expectations.

[Table 1 about here]

It is important to assess the substantive magnitude of the differences in support for a ban on gay marriage between the survey's overall median and the theory's stereotypical surge-voter respondents. The overall median respondent embodies the following traits: An Independent female between the ages of 55 and 59 (an 8 on the ordinal age scale) who is white, married, has attained some college (a 4 on the ordinal education scale), and is Christian, but who does not attend church weekly. As Table 2 shows, this median respondent has a 46 percent probability of supporting a constitutional ban on gay marriage. Table 2 also provides predicted probabilities for several scenarios of simulated Obama surge voters, which can be compared to those of the overall median respondent. We provide several alternative simulations for an Obama surge voter, including race (black), party identification (Democrats), as well as age (younger), education (lower), and marital status (unmarried). Unlike the overall median (female) respondent, Obama surge voters may be male or female, so we provide a column for both male and female simulated voters.

As Table 2 reveals, a female black Democrat who is identical to the median respondent in all other aspects has a 46 percent probability of supporting a ban on gay marriage. A male black Democrat who otherwise is identical to the median respondent is slightly more likely to be supportive (49 percent). Both numbers are close to the median respondent's 46 percent probability of supporting a gay marriage ban. If the minority Obama surge is composed of voters similar to the median respondent, their support for a ban should be substantially higher than the median respondent's. But they are not, which suggests that the theory may be mistaken.

[Table 2 about here]

But what if black Democrats similar in every other way to the median respondent are not characteristic of the voters who make up the minority surge? Perhaps black voters of the median age, marital status, and education level were already highly likely to turn out to vote. In that

case, the surge may be understood as limited to younger, unmarried, and less-educated black Democrats; in theory, this group's likely support for a gay marriage ban should be greater than the median respondent's. We test for this possibility by looking at hypothetical male and female unmarried 18- to 24-year-old black Democratic voters who did not finish high school. As Table 2 reveals, male respondents of this ilk have a 57 percent probability of supporting a gay marriage ban, while the probability for female voters is 55 percent. These numbers are 11 and 9 percentage points higher than the median respondent's, respectively. However, if the education levels are adjusted to reflect the possibility that the average surge voter graduated from high school but went on to no further education, holding all else constant, the numbers drop to 53 and 50 percent, respectively. If the education covariate is changed again to allow for the chance that the average surge voter completed some non-college technical education, the results are virtually indistinguishable from the predicted probabilities of the median respondent.

These data strongly suggest that education level, not race, is a greater factor in determining the likelihood that a person will support a gay marriage ban. It demonstrates as well that the type of people who turned out in increased numbers to support Obama—that is, the political and demographic characteristics of the surge—matters. If these voters were predominantly young and lacking even basic education, our analysis supports the theory that they were likely to support Amendment 2 in the November 2008 election and may even have aided in its passage. If, however, the surge contained a substantial number of voters closer in age, marital status, and education to the poll's median respondent—or even if it simply contained mostly voters who were young and unmarried but had attained some education beyond high school—our findings suggest the surge was likely to be no more supportive of Amendment 2 than were other, non-surge voters in the state.

Why the discrepancy between CNN's exit polls and the results of our analysis of Lake Research pre-election survey data? One potential explanation is that survey response bias was stronger in the former setting than the latter. Response bias, or the tendency of respondents to give socially acceptable answers that fail to accurately reflect their feelings and positions to questions asked in surveys, can make correctly interpreting polling numbers difficult, especially on issues as sensitive as race and homosexuality (Berinsky 2004). If differing social norms or some other factor made non-surge voters inclined to understate their support for Amendment 2 in exit polls, surge voters inclined to overstate their support, or both, the exit polls may not have accurately reflected these groups' relative positions. Such a phenomenon might cause the gap between black and white voters to appear larger than it really is, lending undue credence to the assumption that high turnout by nonwhite surge voters aided the passage of Amendment 2.

A post-election study for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute of votes for and against Proposition 8 uncovered similar results in California (Egan and Sherrill 2009). The authors conclude that party identification, ideology, religiosity, and age had a bigger impact than other voter characteristics, including race, on individuals' propensity to support the measure. In fact, they find that race affected only 5.5 percent of the statewide vote and "that black support for Proposition 8 can largely be explained by African Americans' higher levels of religiosity." The study presents evidence that black support for Proposition 8 was significantly lower than the 70 percent reported by CNN and other agencies. In the process, it points to the usefulness of combining analyses of precinct- or county-wide numbers with individual-level polling data in attempting to create an unbiased depiction of voter behavior.

Minority Surge Voters and Amendment 2: An Aggregate-Level Analysis

Our individual-level analysis suggests that only if the surge is assumed to consist primarily of a narrowly defined segment of the black population does support for a ban differ

substantially from support by the poll's median respondent. Even then, the probability of support among this demographic is dramatically lower than the 70 percent found by exit polling. In this section, we delve deeper into the plausibility of the theory that a minority surge was responsible for the passage of the measure by examining aggregate-level support for Obama and Amendment 2, as well as ballot rolloff on Amendment 2.

Data and Methods

In order to assess the explanatory power of the theory, we compiled a dataset incorporating a number of aggregate-level political, demographic, and socioeconomic characteristics for all 67 counties in Florida. When relying on aggregate-level data, as this study does, it is important that ecological inferences not be drawn about individual behavior where such inferences cannot be substantiated by the evidence (Freedman 1999). The environment in which voting decisions are made, however, can influence electoral outcomes, and the factors included in this dataset were chosen for their relevance to the patterns explored in our three models (Nicholson 2003; Smith, DeSantis, and Kassell 2006).

Because we are most interested in pinning down how—if at all—Obama-inspired minority surge voters influenced the outcome on Florida's Amendment 2, our most important variable is a *per capita* estimate of newly registered black voters in each county.¹⁴ We calculate the increase in black registrants in a county from December 31, 2007 (the Secretary of State Division of Election's book closing date for Florida's Presidential Preference Primary) to October 6, 2008 (the book closing date for the general election), divided by the total registrants in that county at the end of December 2007. We recognize this as an imperfect measure of the

¹⁴ We calculated this variable five different ways: as the increase from July to October 2008 in black registration as a proportion of the county's total black population; the increase from December 2007 to October 2008 as a proportion of the county's total black population; the increase from July to October 2008 as a proportion of black registrants in July; the increase from December 2007 to October 2008 as a proportion of black registrants in December 2007; and finally the increase from December 2007 to October 2008 as a proportion of the county's total registration in December 2007. The results were not substantially different from one calculation to the next.

surge in that it does not include minority voters who were previously registered but whose turnout was unreliable or infrequent.

We provide three regression models. The first two models test whether counties with a large number of newly registered black voters were especially supportive of Obama and Amendment 2.¹⁵ A third model tests whether, in keeping with literature on the subject, counties with a large number of newly registered black voters experienced especially high rolloff on Amendment 2.¹⁶ A positive relationship between counties with a greater proportion of newly registered black voters (in other words, a larger minority surge) and higher rolloff in a county would undermine the theory, which holds not only that minority voters in Florida were driven to the polls in unusually large numbers by the desire to vote for Obama, but also that they voted for Amendment 2—that is, that they did not roll off.

Each model contains eight additional independent variables to control for relevant political and socio-demographic characteristics across Florida's 67 counties. Serving as a proxy for the partisan leanings of a county, we calculate the percentage of a county's registered voters who were, as of October 2008, registered as Republicans. We use 2006 Census Bureau estimates to calculate the percentage of a county's population that is black and the percentage of a county's population that is Hispanic. The models also use Census Bureau estimates to control for the percentage of a county's population with a bachelor's degree, a county's median household income, and a county's median age in 2004. Finally, the models control for the religiosity and

¹⁵ There was considerable range in this variable from county to county. Leon and Orange counties, for example, each experienced a greater than 5 percent increase in new black registrants as a proportion of total registrants from December 2007 to October 2008, while Duval, Gulf, and Calhoun counties experienced overall decreases.

¹⁶ We calculate rolloff on Amendment 2 as total votes cast in a county in the presidential election, minus total votes cast in the county for or against Amendment 2, divided by total votes cast in the county in the presidential election.

rurality of a county, using data from Glenmary Research Center and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's rural-urban continuum codes, respectively.¹⁷

All else being equal, we expect the following. First, counties with higher levels of newly registered black voters should have higher levels of support for Obama. This hypothesis is related to the first premise of the theory, which says that Obama mobilized unusually large numbers of minority voters to the polls. Second, counties with higher levels of newly registered black voters should have higher levels of support for Amendment 2. This is consistent with the second half of the theory, which states that African-American surge voters voted for Amendment 2 after voting for Obama, and in so doing, had a significant impact on the outcome of the gay marriage amendment. Finally, the theory expected that newly registered black voters would not roll off on Amendment 2 at higher rates, *ceteris paribus*. This runs counter to the findings of Magleby (1984) that minority voters are more likely to choose not to vote on down-ballot measures than non-minorities. If counties with higher levels of new black registrants experienced substantially higher rolloff rates, more doubt would be cast on the theory due to concerns that a surge of minority voters, mobilized by support for a presidential candidate, might have had less of an effect on down-ballot measures like Amendment 2.

Expectations

Our first model tests whether counties with different demographic characteristics were more or less likely to support Obama in the 2008 presidential election. The dependent variable is Obama's share of the county-level presidential vote. The key independent variable is newly registered black voters *per capita* by county, which we expect should correspond to greater

¹⁷ Our control for religiosity is a 2000 measure of "adherents" as a percentage of a county's population, compiled for the Glenmary Research Center using data from Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies. Our control for rurality utilizes the U.S. Department of Agriculture's rural-urban continuum codes, which distinguish metropolitan counties by the population size of their metro area(s) and non-metropolitan counties by their degree of urbanization and adjacency to a metro area(s). See 2003 rural-urban continuum codes for Florida's 67 counties: www.ers.usda.gov/data/population/PopList.asp?TheState=FL%2CFlorida.

support for Obama, based on the fundamental assumptions of the theory in question. We also expect Obama, as the first black nominee by either major party for the presidency, to fare well in counties with sizeable African American populations. On the other hand, we expect there to be a negative relationship between a county's vote-share for Obama and Republicanism, religiosity, and rurality.

We include the same slate of political and socio-demographic variables in the second model, which predicts support for Amendment 2 across Florida's 67 counties. Expectations are similar to those of the first, that as the number of newly registered black voters in a county increases, so too should support for Amendment 2. Again, the theory rests on the assumption that minority voters, as social conservatives, should want to uphold the "sanctity of marriage" and deny extending a right to wed to gays and lesbians. Opposition to Florida's Amendment 2, which curtails the rights of non-married couples, is thus expected to be lower in counties with denser populations of blacks and Hispanics. Consistent with literature suggesting openness to other lifestyles increases with education, we also expect counties in which more residents have attained bachelor's degrees to be less supportive of the amendment (Button, Rienzo and Wald 1997; Bowler and Donovan 1998). Drawing on literature that suggests older voters are less tolerant of homosexuality (Lewis and Gossett 2008), we expect a county's average age and support for Amendment 2 to rise together, although this effect may be attenuated by efforts by anti-Amendment 2 advocates to highlight the amendment's negative effects on senior citizens. And we expect more Republican, more Christian, and more rural counties to have greater support for a constitutional ban, as they are likely to be more populated with conservative voters concerned with protecting "traditional family values."

Finally, our third model seeks to explain rolloff on Amendment 2, using the same set of independent variables as in the other models. Expectations here are weaker than in the first two

models, as little is known about how demographic characteristics impact voters' propensity to abstain on down-ballot measures. One might suspect, following the individual-level studies on voter rolloff (Magleby 1984), that counties with older, better-educated, and non-minority voters should have lower rolloff rates, but there is little theory behind these assumptions at the aggregate level. For our purposes, our model need simply explore the question of whether those counties in which, proportionally, more blacks registered to vote in the run-up to the 2008 general election witnessed the highest rolloff rates. This would suggest that many of the Obama-inspired voters did not subsequently vote down-ballot on Amendment 2, casting doubt upon the theory. In contrast, a negative or null relationship would be consistent with expectations.

Findings and Discussion

We present the results of all three models in Table 3. Consistent with our first hypothesis, Model 1 shows that a high level of newly registered black voters in a county (our primary independent variable) is a strong predictor of county-level support for Obama in the 2008 election, holding other factors constant. This finding demonstrates that the measure, which was created to capture the "Obama-inspired surge voter" phenomenon at the county level, did indeed accomplish its goal. Our second hypothesis, though, is not confirmed. As Model 2 reveals, a county's proportion of newly registered black voters has no statistically significant impact on a county's support for Amendment 2. Interestingly, as Model 3 reveals, a county's proportion of newly registered black voters is also not a significant predictor of county-level rolloff, suggesting that other factors may have been responsible for the null findings in Model 2. Although Florida's Obama-inspired surge voters had no effect on the county-wide vote on Amendment 2, it does not appear to be due to these voters rolling off on the ballot measure at an especially high rate.

[Table 3 about here]

More specifically, our model predicting support for Obama (Table 3, Model 1) finds all but one of the independent variables to be significantly related to Obama's vote-share for a county. Only median household income has no statistically significant relationship. The strongest relationship is geographic; for every one unit increase in a county's rurality, Obama's vote-share decreases by nearly two percentage points. Obama's vote-share also decreases as a county's religiosity increases, but at a very slow rate. As expected, Obama's vote-share declines as the percentage of a county's registered Republicans increases. One percentage point increase in a county's registered Republicans corresponds to nearly one-half of one percentage point fewer votes for Obama. As expected, we find that more-educated counties were likewise more supportive of Obama. These findings are wholly consistent with our expectations.

We also find that age is positively related to Obama's vote-share, with a single-year increase in a county's median age leading to about one percentage point more support for Obama.¹⁸ More importantly, Model 1 shows that a greater percentage of blacks or Hispanics had a positive effect on support for Obama, as a one percentage-point increase in either corresponds to greater than a one-third of one percentage-point increase in Obama's vote-share. Finally, and most importantly, Model 1 shows a significant and positive relationship between our measure of newly registered black voters and support for Obama. Counties that experienced a high proportion of newly registered blacks were far more supportive of Obama. This is meaningful in that it lends external validity to the variable. Support for Obama increases by 1.4 percentage points for every one percentage-point increase in a county's new black registration. In substantive terms, the effect is sizeable. In Leon County, which had the greatest increase in newly registered blacks (6.71 points), support for Obama increased by 9.54 percentage points.

¹⁸ The addition of an age-squared variable to the model to test for the possibility that the oldest and youngest counties were both more supportive of Obama was not significant but did not change the results.

Orange County's 5.05-point increase—the second-highest overall—similarly accounts for 7.18 percentage points of increased support for Obama. Thus, Model 1 seems to confirm the theory's initial premise that minority voters were especially supportive of Obama's candidacy.

Model 2, examining county-level support for Amendment 2, also reveals a number of statistically significant relationships. Most noteworthy, however, is the null finding with regard to newly registered black voters and support for Amendment 2. The model shows that counties experiencing a high number of new black registrants were no more supportive of Florida's anti-gay marriage amendment than other counties. This finding runs contrary to the theory's expectations. Of the eight remaining control variables, seven are significantly related to support for Amendment 2. As was expected, percent Republican, percent black, religiosity, and rurality all have a positive impact on the vote for Amendment 2. These four characteristics are historically associated with social conservatism, which is itself associated with opposition to gay marriage. The positive coefficients demonstrate that individuals in counties where these four political and socio-demographic traits were strong were more likely to vote to deny marriage rights to gays and lesbians. Consistent with expectations based on research that has found that better-educated individuals are generally more tolerant, we find that Florida counties with a greater percentage of college graduates were much less supportive of Amendment 2. Support drops by close to one percentage point for every one percentage-point increase in the county's population with a bachelor's degree, revealing a strong and highly significant relationship between the two. Contrary to our expectations, on the other hand, Model 2 reveals that older and more Hispanic counties were actually less likely to support Amendment 2.¹⁹

¹⁹ These results were virtually unaffected by the addition of an age-squared variable to account for the possibility of a non-linear relationship between age and voting behavior in which older and younger voters both were less supportive of Amendment 2 than voters of the median age.

Our third model (Table 3, Model 3) explains county-level rolloff on Amendment 2. Given the absence of a statistically significant relationship between newly registered black voters and support for Amendment 2 in a county, could unusually high rolloff among the surge voters account for why they failed to impact a county's vote? Did these newly registered African Americans turn out to cast their ballots for Obama and then head home, skipping down-ballot races? The model suggests this was not the case, as there is no statistically significant relationship between new black registrants and Amendment 2 rolloff at the county level. The only variable having even marginal success as a predictor of rolloff is percent Hispanic, as counties with greater percentages of Hispanic voters experienced slightly higher rolloff. This finding could be symptomatic of a language barrier that increases the probability that people in primarily Spanish-speaking communities will choose not to vote on propositions.

In sum, then, the proportion of newly registered black voters does appear to capture support for Obama, but not an Obama-inspired minority surge in support for Amendment 2. Furthermore, keeping in mind the ecological fallacy, counties with greater proportions of newly registered African Americans did not experience significantly higher rolloff on Amendment 2. Our analysis seeks to answer the question of whether the outcome on Amendment 2 was any different, given the participation of as many as 230,000 surge voters across the state,²⁰ than it would have been if these voters had not turned out and cast ballots in that race. We cannot answer this question affirmatively. As Model 2 shows, we find no relationship between newly registered black voters in a county and support for the amendment. Had we found a positive effect, we would have had evidence backing the theory that a surge of Obama-inspired, socially conservative, minority voters aided the passage of the anti-gay marriage measure. Instead, the

²⁰ This number represents the total new black registrants in all 67 of Florida's counties between Jan. 1, 2008 and Oct. 6, 2008. Amendment 2 passed by a margin of roughly 151,000 votes more than the needed 60 percent.

numbers demonstrate that, while the surge helped Obama, it failed to affect Amendment 2.

Counties that experienced the largest percentages of minority surge voters were no more likely to vote for Amendment 2 than counties that experienced the smallest surges. Model 3 seems to rule rolloff out as the culprit.

Conclusion

Our research challenges the assumption that the black voters who turned out in unusually large numbers in support of Obama were also in favor of banning gay marriage. As it turned out, opponents of the ban in Florida found themselves facing an uphill battle they would ultimately lose—irrespective of any Obama-inspired minority surge. As the election result confirmed, a clear majority of Floridians were uneasy with the concept of gay marriage. Whether the results would have been different had the opponents of Amendment 2 been able to work together more closely in forging a campaign strategy remains an unanswered question, but clearly Florida Red and Blue took the surge-voter theory at face value in opting not to target nonwhite voters.

The puissance of the theory initially struck some observers as odd, considering Obama himself did not support the three statewide constitutional bans on gay marriage in 2008. But the theory nonetheless gained traction among pundits and campaigners thanks in part to the profuse media attention it received. After the election, a firestorm erupted when some opponents of the bans blamed African Americans for the measures' passage. Indeed, there is reason to be skeptical about the underlying assumption that a candidate election could impact a ballot-measure race. A surge of newly mobilized minority voters could not have been responsible for Amendment 2's passage unless the people who comprised that surge voted "yes" in substantially higher numbers than did the people who would have turned out to vote if Obama had not been on the ballot. Yet, our individual-level analysis finds no statistically significant relationship between race (or age, marital status, or gender) and support for Florida's Amendment 2.

Furthermore, we find that black Democrats who are otherwise similar to the median voter were no more likely to support Florida's gay marriage ban. Only if a hypothetical surge voter is assumed to be young (between the ages of 18 and 24), unmarried, and lacking even basic education is the difference in likely support worth noting. Thus, unless the Obama-inspired surge was composed almost exclusively of individuals who fit into the narrowly defined category of young, black, unmarried Democrats with little education, there is little evidence suggesting that the theory's expectations were valid. Gay marriage proponents in Florida appear not to have been undone by African Americans.

At the aggregate level, our models examine support for Obama, support for Amendment 2, and rolloff on Amendment 2 at the county level. Our key independent variable, which acts as a proxy for the size of the surge in a particular county, is the number of "newly registered black voters" as a proportion of the county's total registrants. In keeping with the theory, we expected counties with sizeable proportions of newly registered African Americans to have greater support for Obama and Amendment 2, but not higher rolloff on Amendment 2, than other counties. Our findings suggest that counties with greater percentages of new black registrants were in fact more supportive of Obama and did not experience higher rates of rolloff on Amendment 2. However, we also found that support for Amendment 2 was no higher in these counties than in other counties, suggesting the theory was errant in predicting that a surge of minority voters would lead to increased support for the gay marriage ban in Florida. While true that counties with greater percentages of black voters were more supportive of the amendment, those experiencing the greatest increases in newly registered black voters in the ten months prior to the election—the counties, in other words, that experienced the largest Obama-inspired minority surges—were no more supportive of Amendment 2.

Finally, although there is evidence that African Americans residing in Florida were more likely than not to oppose same-sex marriage in 2008, our analysis suggests that these public opinion polls may have overstated the extent to which black and white voters differed on the issue of same-sex marriage. We find no relationship between race and support for a gay marriage ban; rather, party identification, education, and religiosity are much stronger predictors of a respondent's attitude toward gay marriage. The purpose of this study, then, is not to determine the precise cause of the passage of anti-gay marriage measures, but to test the theory that black voters mobilized by excitement over the Obama candidacy were to blame, as has been so widely contended. To that end, we have determined that a surge of minorities turned out to vote in 2008 in Florida, that these individuals were overwhelmingly supportive of Obama, that the rolloff on Amendment 2 experienced by counties where they voted in the largest numbers was no higher than in other places, and most importantly, that this surge of Obama supporters almost certainly was not responsible for the success of Florida's gay marriage ban. Support by Obama-inspired surge voters simply was not great enough to ensure the measure's passage; the measure just as likely would have succeeded in their absence. To attribute the success of Florida's Amendment 2 to African-American opposition to gay marriage, we argue, is thus highly suspect.

Table 1: Individual-Level Support for Ban on Gay Marriage

Covariate	Model 1	Model 2
Republican	.992 (.199)	.995 (.198)
Democrat	-.491 (.232)	-.489 (.229)
Female	-.102 (.221)	-.102 (.223)
Age (1-12)	-.002 (.021)	-.002 (.022)
Black	.491 (.371)	.494 (.373)
Hispanic	-.076 (.177)	-.073 (.177)
Married	.199 (.107)	.202 (.106)
Education (1-6)	-.176 (.034)	-.172 (.034)
Christian	.692 (.034)	.688 (.175)
Weekly Church Attendance	.359 (.089)	.360 (.085)
Rolloff	-	.088 (.265)
N	952	952
Pseudo R ²	.102	.102

Notes: Each model reports unstandardized logistic regression coefficients; robust standard errors are in parentheses. Standard errors adjusted by clustering cases by media market. Bold coefficients indicate observed statistical reliability at 95 percent confidence intervals. For details on our ordinal age and education scales, see Appendices B and C. Christian includes self-reported Catholics, Protestants, and Mormons. Attendance is a dummy variable coded 1 if the person attends church at least once per week and 0 if the person does not.

Source: Equality Florida, "A Survey of 800 Likely Voters Statewide with Oversamples of 100 African American and 100 Latino Likely Voters," 14-19 Aug. 2007.

Table 2: Individual-Level Predicted Probabilities for Support for Ban on Gay Marriage

Characterization	Male	Female
Overall Median Respondent		.46
Black Democrat otherwise similar to Median Respondent	.49	.46
Unmarried Black Democrat, Age 18-24, High School Dropout, otherwise similar to Median Respondent	.57	.55
Unmarried Black Democrat, Age 18-24, High School Graduate, otherwise similar to Median Respondent	.53	.50
Unmarried Black Democrat, Age 18-24, Some post-H.S. education, otherwise similar to Median Respondent	.48	.46

Notes: Predicted probabilities with all characteristics held at their median values unless otherwise specified. Bold coefficients indicate observed statistical reliability at 95 percent confidence intervals. The dependent variable is whether the respondent would vote to ban marriage (1 for yes, 0 for no).

Source: Equality Florida, "A Survey of 800 Likely Voters Statewide with Oversamples of 100 African American and 100 Latino Likely Voters," 14-19 Aug. 2007.

Table 3: Aggregate-level (County) Support for Obama, Amendment 2, and Ballot Rolloff

County-Level Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Obama's Vote-Share	Yes Votes on Amendment 2	Rolloff on Amendment 2
Newly registered black voters	1.422 (.661)	-.630 (.538)	.264 (.526)
Percent of registered voters Republican	-.451 (.087)	.328 (.071)	-.027 (.069)
Percent of population black	.357 (.095)	.178 (.077)	.099 (.076)
Percent of population Hispanic	.390 (.055)	-.166 (.045)	.083 (.044)
Percent of population with bachelor's	.650 (.115)	-.978 (.093)	.013 (.091)
Median household income	-.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)
Median age	1.042 (.128)	-.680 (.104)	.099 (.102)
Religiosity	-.163 (.072)	.139 (.059)	.059 (.057)
Rurality	-1.943 (.408)	1.17 (.333)	-.389 (.325)
Adjusted R ²	0.854	.888	.093
N	67	67	67

Notes: Each model reports unstandardized least-squares regression coefficients; standard errors are in parentheses.

Bold coefficients indicate observed statistical reliability (p-value) at 95 percent confidence intervals.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2006; Florida Secretary of State, 2007-2008; Glenmary Research Center, 2003 (Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States 2000); Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, 2002; U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2000-2008.

References

- Berinsky, Adam J. "Can We Talk? Self-Presentation and the Survey Response." Political Psychology 25.4 (2004): 643-659.
- Bowler, Shaun, and Todd Donovan. Demanding Choices: Opinion, Voting, and Direct Democracy. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).
- Button, James W., Barbara A. Rienzo and Kenneth D. Wald. Private Lives, Public Conflicts: Battles Over Gay Rights in American Communities. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1997.
- Campbell, David, and J. Quinn Monson. "The Religion Card: Gay Marriage and the 2004 Presidential Election," Public Opinion Quarterly 72 (2008): 399-419.
- Clubb, Jerome M, and Traugott, Michael W. "National Patterns of Referenda Voting: The 1968 Election," in People and Politics in Urban Society, Harlan Hahn, ed. Sage, Beverly Hills: 1972.
- Donovan, Todd, Caroline J. Tolbert and Daniel A. Smith. "Priming Presidential Votes By Direct Democracy." Journal of Politics 7.4 (2008): 1217-1231
- Donovan, Todd, Caroline J. Tolbert and Daniel A. Smith. "Political Engagement, Mobilization, and Direct Democracy." Public Opinion Quarterly (2009): 1-21.
- Egan, Patrick J. and Kenneth Sherrill. "California's Proposition 8: What Happened, and What Does the Future Hold?" Report commissioned by Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, San Francisco (2009).
- Eleveld, Kerry and Sean Kennedy. "Obama Makes Gay History." Advocate 29 Aug. 2008, www.advocate.com/exclusive_detail_ektid60227.asp.
- Farley, Robert. "Amendment 2 fate lies with black voter turnout." St. Petersburg Times 24 Oct. 2008, www.tampabay.com/news/politics/state/article868615.ece.
- Freedman, David. A. "Ecological Inference and the Ecological Fallacy." International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Technical Report No. 549 (1999).
- Garcia, Wayne. "Two against Amendment 2." Creative Loafing [Tampa] 25 June 2008, tampa.creative loafing.com/gyrobase/two_against_amendment_2/Content?oid=467703.
- Grew, Tony. "Obama turnout may save gay marriage in California." PinkNews 23 Oct. 2008, www.pinknews.co.uk/news/articles/2005-9379.html.
- Harris, Chris. "Barack Obama Answers Your Questions About Gay Marriage, Paying For

- College, More.” MTV.com 1 Nov. 2008,
www.mtv.com/news/articles/1598407/20081101/story.jhtml.
- Kaczor, Bill. “Initiative On Gay Marriage On Ballot.” The Associated Press 2 Feb. 2008,
www2.tbo.com/content/2008/feb/02/me-initiative-on-gay-marriage-on-ballot/.
- Lacey, Robert. “The Electoral Allure of Direct Democracy: The Effect of Initiative Salience on Voting, 1990-96.” State Politics and Policy Quarterly 5 (2005): 168-81.
- Lewis, Gregory B. and Charles W. Gossett. “Changing Public Opinion on Same-Sex Marriage: The Case of California.” Politics & Policy 36 (2008): 4-30.
- Magleby, David B. Direct Legislation: Voting on Ballot Propositions in the United States. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984.
- McKinley, Jesse. “Same-Sex Marriage Ban Is Tied to Obama Factor.” New York Times 20 Sept. 2008, www.nytimes.com/2008/09/21/us/politics/21gay.html?_r=1&adxnml=1&oref=slogin&adxnmlx=1222261750-vKKweaL/XNZy/g66t8XK6g.
- McMullen, Cary. “Marriage Petition Seems Stalled.” The Ledger 30 Oct. 2005,
www.theledger.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20051030/NEWS/510300372/1134
- Nicholson, Stephen P. “The Political Environment and Ballot Proposition Awareness,” American Journal of Political Science 47 (2003): 403-410.
- Nicholson, Stephen P. Voting the Agenda. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- “‘No on 2’ group highlights domestic partners.” The Buzz: Florida Politics 27 Oct. 2008,
blogs.tampabay.com/buzz/2008/10/anti-amendment.html
- Norman, Bob. “Fear of the Queer: Blacks in Florida vote to oppress gays.” Broward-Palm Beach New Times 11 Nov. 2008, www.browardpalmbeach.com/2008-11-13/news/fear-of-the-queer-blacks-in-florida-vote-to-oppress-gays/.
- “Obama Voter Turnout Killed Gay Marriage in California.” Yid With Lid 6 Nov. 2008,
yidwithlid.blogspot.com/2008/11/obamba-voter-turnout-killed-gay.html.
- Reinhard, Beth. “Gay rights activists ready to fight threat to benefits.” Miami Herald 21 Nov. 2008, miamiherald.typepad.com/gaysouthflorida/2008/11/gay-rights-acti.html.
- Rimmerman, Craig A., Kenneth D. Wald and Clyde Wilcox, eds. The Politics of Gay Rights. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Rodriguez, Juan Carlos. “Amendment 2 blame game: Ego, turf wars hindered progress on

marriage amendment battle.” South Florida Blade 13 Nov. 2008, www.southfloridablade.com/2008/11-13/news/localnews/5255.cfm.

Rosenstone, Steven J. and Mark Hansen. Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993.

Smith, Daniel A. and Caroline Tolbert. Educated by Initiative: The Effects of Direct Democracy on Citizens and Political Organizations in the American States. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004.

Smith, Daniel A and Caroline Tolbert. “The Instrumental and Educative Effects of Ballot Measures: Research on Direct Democracy in the American States.” State Politics and Policy Quarterly 7 (2007): 417-446.

Smith, Daniel A., Matthew DeSantis and Jason Kassel. “Same-Sex Marriage Ballot Measures and the 2004 Presidential Election.” State and Local Government Review 38 (2006): 78-91.

Swift, Mike and Sean Webby. “Black and Latino voters critical to same-sex marriage ban’s success.” Mercury News [San Jose] 5 Nov. 2008, www.mercurynews.com/ci_10909847.

Tolbert, Caroline J., John Grummel, and Daniel A. Smith. 2001. “The Effect of Ballot Initiatives on Voter Turnout in the American States,” American Politics Research 29 (6): 625-48.