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TEL: 212-851-8418 X6, MOBILE: 917-617-8660

PRESS CONTACT
SAMIYA BASHIR
EMAIL: SAMIYA@FREEDOMTOMARRY.ORG

PEW POLL SHOWS PROGRESS ON FREEDOM TO MARRY; notes "'Strong' opposition to gay marriage, which surged in 2004, has ebbed to a new low"

Although a slight majority of Americans, only 51% which is far less than expected, continue to oppose equal marriage rights for committed lesbian and gay couples and their kids, opposition has so far “declined significantly from 63% in February 2004, when opposition spiked following the Massachusetts Supreme Court decision and remained high throughout the 2004 election season.”

Opposition to ending discrimination in marriage has fallen significantly among most demographic groups, with **“substantial declines even among Republicans,”** said the latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The polling was conducted among 1,405 adults from March 8-12, 2006.

“This poll confirms that if you give people the information and time they need to understand the harm discrimination in marriage causes real American families, the majority will continue to move toward fairness,” said **Evan Wolfson**, executive director of Freedom to Marry and author of *Why Marriage Matters: America, Equality and Gay People’s Right to Marry* (Simon & Schuster).

“If anything, survey results show that **we’ve been under-optimistic,**” Wolfson continued. “Not only is the middle moving, but those who have traditionally been against us are also beginning to embrace the need for equality in marriage.”

Groups who have long opposed equal marriage, including **seniors, Catholics and non-evangelical Protestants** showed a return to the general trend toward acceptance. “Among people age 65 and over, for example,” said the report, “strong opposition to gay marriage jumped from 36% in 2003 to 58% in 2004, but has fallen to 33% today. **White evangelical Protestants are the only major group in which a majority still strongly opposes gay marriage, but even here the intensity of feeling has receded somewhat.**”

Read the results online at: <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=273>

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116 West 23rd Street, Suite 500, New York, New York 10023
Tel: 212-851-8418 Fax: 646-375-2069 Web: www.freedomtomarry.org