

North Carolina voters approve anti-marriage equality amendment, until they learn what it does

Written by Meteor Blades | Daily Kos
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Every state but one in the South has banned marriage equality by outlawing unions between two people of the same sex. In fact, they all had an amendment to their state constitutions barring such marriages by 2008. The [hold-out](#) is North Carolina.

The reason for that, people on both sides of the issue agree, is because Democrats controlled the state legislature until 2010. They simply refused to let an amendment make it to the ballot.

But Amendment One is on the May 8 ballot. And every indication has been that it would pass with a comfortable margin and North Carolina would become the 30th state whose constitution makes marriage solely a matter for opposite-sex couples. But a new [survey](#) from Public Policy Polling shows there's a catch to Amendment One's majority backing. When voters actually learn how far the proposal reaches, they no longer support it.

Not only would Amendment One ban marriage *and* civil unions between partners of the same sex, it would also end legal recognition of domestic partnerships between unmarried couples of the opposite sex. [There are 233,000](#) North Carolinians in that category, according to the 2010 census:

58% of likely primary voters say right now that they would vote “yes,” while 38% plan to vote “no.” But at the same time, 51% of these voters support some form of legal recognition for gay couples’ relationships, either full marriage or civil unions. 34% of those folks are planning to vote for the amendment. Because of that, if informed that the amendment would ban both marriage and civil unions for gay couples, support goes down 17 points to 41%, and opposition rises 4% to 42%.

Part of the problem is that voters are not well informed about what the amendment does. A 34% plurality say they are not sure on that question. Almost as many (31%) do know that it would ban both gay marriage and civil unions, but then not many fewer (28%) think it would only ban marriage. 7% actually think it would legalize gay marriage. Those who think it bans solely marriage rights are voting 67-30 for it, so 8% of North Carolinians, while misinformed,

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are voting against the measure simply because they think it bans same-sex marriage alone. Of course, those who think a “yes” vote actually legalizes these unions are voting by the same margin for it.

With less than six weeks to go before the election, that news offers some modest hope for the forces in opposition to Amendment One. Against the odds, they might be able to defeat it if they can get the message out. Stepped-up efforts this past weekend raised \$50,000 in 24 hours for the anti-amendment group Protect All N.C. Families. The *Raleigh News & Observer* [has said](#) the opposition campaign may be the second most expensive ever, only outspent by the campaign in Florida in 2008.

The organizers favoring Amendment One are also geared up. Former state Sen. Jim Jacumin said to crowd of supporters on Wednesday that May 8 is “the most important election of anyone in this room” and called for contributions “so we can confront the devils against us on the other side.”

Devils there may be, but the rancid memo that surfaced this week from the anti-equality group National Organization for Marriage shows which side they are actually on. The memo, [analyzed here](#) by Scott Woledge, showed a concerted effort to drive a wedge between gays and African Americans on marriage equality.

The North Carolina amendment is the first of half a dozen marriage-related laws that will be voted on in 2012.

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