

National	States ▾	Articles	Truth-O-Meter® ▾	Promises ▾	People ▾	Pundits	2012 Presidential ▾	
<b>New Jersey Edition</b>	<b>The New Jersey Truth-O-Meter ▾</b>	<b>Promises</b>	<b>Articles</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Elections</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	

## The Truth-O-Meter Says:



**"Opinion polls show that the majority of Americans, and the majority of New Jerseyans, favor marriage equality for same sex couples."**

[Reed Gusciora](#) on Monday, January 9th, 2012 in a news release

### Gay marriage supported by majority of Americans and majority of New Jersey residents, assemblyman says

Gov. Chris Christie will need some convincing, but Democratic legislators claim they have public opinion on their side as they attempt to legalize same-sex marriage in New Jersey.



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"We also must recognize that society is changing for the better, making (Assembly bill) A-1 timely," state Assemblyman Reed Gusciora (D-Mercer) said in a Jan. 9 news release. "Opinion polls show that the majority of Americans, and the majority of New Jerseyans, favor marriage equality for same sex couples."

Between four national polls and two Rutgers University polls, PolitiFact New Jersey found that Gusciora has the numbers to back up his argument. But two other national polls have indicated there are slightly more opponents than supporters.

"It's not a solid majority yet, but many polls are showing a majority," said Patrick Murray, director of Monmouth University's Polling Institute. "(Gusciora is) probably on safe ground with that claim, certainly here in the state of New Jersey."

First, let's talk about the state polls.

In each of two polls conducted last year by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, 52 percent of New Jersey residents said same-sex marriage should be legal in the Garden State. The most recent poll, which was done in October, found that 39 percent oppose legalizing same-sex marriage.

For the most recent poll, the margin of error attributed to those percentages was 4.7 percent.

"I think it is a fair statement," said David Redlawsk, a political science professor and director of the Rutgers-Eagleton poll, referring to Gusciora's claim. "Nationally, we're seeing the same general trend."

Now, let's turn to how Americans across the nation view same-sex marriage.

Tom Hester Jr., a spokesman for the Assembly Democrats, pointed to a Gallup poll conducted in May, when 53 percent of respondents said same-sex marriage should be legal. That figure marked a nine percent increase over a 2010 poll asking the same question. The margin of error for the May poll was 4 percent.

We also found three other national polls that demonstrate similar support for same-sex marriage.

Two ABC News/Washington Post polls conducted last year put the level of support at slightly more than 50 percent. A CNN poll done in April also found that 51 percent of respondents support legalizing same-sex marriage. The margins of error for those polls was 3.5 percent.

However, when you factor in the margins of error, a majority of Americans might only support same-sex marriage based on one of those four national polls.

Also, two other national polls conducted last year suggest that opposition to same-sex marriage remains strong.

A Pew Research Center poll done in late February and early March found that 45 percent of respondents support same-sex marriage and 46 percent oppose it. That poll had a margin of error of 3 percent.

In July, a Quinnipiac University poll determined that 48 percent of registered voters would oppose a state law legalizing same-sex marriage and 46 percent would support one. The margin of error was 2 percent.

Still, both of those polls demonstrate that public support for same-sex marriage has increased. Compared to a Quinnipiac University poll conducted in April 2009, the percentage of respondents who support a state law allowing same-sex marriage has increased by 8 percent.

Hester defended Gusciora's claim in an email: "Polls have shown support for marriage equality. Assemblyman Gusciora accurately and responsibly cited those polls. His statement was true."

### **Our ruling**

Gusciora claimed, "Opinion polls show that the majority of Americans, and the majority of New Jerseyans, favor marriage equality for same sex couples."

Two state polls and four national polls show that slightly more than 50 percent of respondents support legalizing same-sex marriage. But the margins of error among those national polls could mean greater support than opposition in only one of those polls.

Two other national polls also suggest a closely divided electorate, but still show that public support for same-sex marriage has increased in recent years.

We rate the statement Mostly True.

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