



Ipsos Poll Conducted for Reuters

Same-Sex Marriage 6.28.13

These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted for Thomson Reuters from June 26-28, 2013. For the survey, a sample of 410 Americans 18+ were interviewed online. The precision of the Reuters/Ipsos online polls is measured using a [credibility interval](#). In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 5.5 percentage points. For more information about credibility intervals, please see the appendix.

The data were weighted to the U.S. current population data by gender, age, education, and ethnicity. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Figures marked by an asterisk (*) indicate a percentage value of greater than zero but less than one half of one per cent. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding.

SUPREME COURT SAME-SEX MARRIAGE DECISIONS

Q1. The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is a law which states that federal marriage benefits apply only to marriages between a man and a woman, and not same-sex marriages. These benefits include things like filing joint federal income tax returns and receiving Social Security survivors' benefits. DOMA also means that the federal government does not recognize same-sex marriages even in states where same-sex marriage is legal.

As you may know, the Supreme Court has just recently decided to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act. The US federal government will now recognize same-sex marriages. Do you agree or disagree with the Supreme Court's decision?

Strongly agree	32%
Somewhat agree	11%
Neither agree or disagree	15%
Somewhat disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	25%
Don't know	11%
TOTAL AGREE	43%
TOTAL DISAGREE	31%

Q2. Proposition 8 is a California State constitutional amendment which states that "only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California."

As you may also know, the Supreme Court has just recently dismissed Proposition 8, meaning that the State of California will now recognize same-sex marriages. Do you agree or disagree with the Supreme Court's decision?

Strongly agree	33%
Somewhat agree	8%
Neither agree or disagree	17%
Somewhat disagree	7%
Strongly disagree	25%
Don't know	10%
TOTAL AGREE	41%
TOTAL DISAGREE	32%

How to Calculate Bayesian Credibility Intervals

The calculation of credibility intervals assumes that Y has a binomial distribution conditioned on the parameter θ , i.e., $Y|\theta \sim \text{Bin}(n, \theta)$, where n is the size of our sample. In this setting, Y counts the number of “yes”, or “1”, observed in the sample, so that the sample mean (\bar{y}) is a natural estimate of the true population proportion θ . This model is often called the likelihood function, and it is a standard concept in both the Bayesian and the Classical framework. The Bayesian ¹ statistics combines both the prior distribution and the likelihood function to create a posterior distribution. The posterior distribution represents our opinion about which are the plausible values for θ adjusted after observing the sample data. In reality, the posterior distribution is one’s knowledge base updated using the latest survey information. For the prior and likelihood functions specified here, the posterior distribution is also a beta distribution ($\pi(\theta|y) \sim \beta(y+a, n-y+b)$), but with updated hyper-parameters.

Our credibility interval for ϑ is based on this posterior distribution. As mentioned above, these intervals represent our belief about which are the most plausible values for ϑ given our updated knowledge base. There are different ways to calculate these intervals based on . Since we want only one measure of precision for all variables in the survey, analogous to what is done within the Classical framework, we will compute the largest possible credibility interval for any observed sample. The worst case occurs when we assume that $a=1$ and $b=1$ and . Using a simple approximation of the posterior by the normal distribution, the 95% credibility interval is given by, approximately:

$$\bar{y} \pm \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}$$

For this poll, the Bayesian Credibility Interval was adjusted using standard weighting design effect $1+L=1.3$ to account for complex weighting²

Examples of credibility intervals for different base sizes are below. Ipsos does not publish data for base sizes (sample sizes) below 100.

Sample size	Credibility intervals
2,000	2.5
1,500	2.9
1,000	3.5
750	4.1
500	5.0
350	6.0
200	7.9
100	11.2

¹ *Bayesian Data Analysis, Second Edition, Andrew Gelman, John B. Carlin, Hal S. Stern, Donald B. Rubin, Chapman & Hall/CRC | ISBN: 158488388X | 2003*

² *Kish, L. (1992). Weighting for unequal Pi. Journal of Official, Statistics, 8, 2, 183200.*