

Five Fast Facts: Same Sex Marriage



1. The rates at which opposite sex couples marry in each state is unaffected by state same-sex marriage laws. This may seem obvious, but opponents of same-sex marriage, including sitting justices on relevant court cases, elected representatives and policy analysts have sometimes argued that opposite sex couple would be less likely to marry if same-sex marriage were made legal. There is no evidence that such claims are true of state marriage rates for opposite sex couples.

2. Currently 13 states plus the District of Columbia legally recognize same-sex marriages (or will by August 1st), covering 30.2% of the US population (not including Puerto Rico and other US Territories and Possessions). In order by date same-sex marriages first were enacted, these are: Massachusetts (7/15/04), California (6/16/08), Connecticut (11/12/08), Iowa (4/27/09), Vermont (9/1/09),

New Hampshire (1/1/10), District of Columbia (3/3/10), New York (7/24/11), Washington (12/6/12), Maine (12/29/12), Maryland (1/1/13), Delaware (7/1/13), Rhode Island (currently recognizes same-sex marriages from other states, but does not begin to license same-sex marriages until 8/1/13), and Minnesota (8/1/13). Five native tribes also recognize same-sex marriages.

3. Fifteen nations currently recognize and license same-sex marriages (or will by August 2013). In order by date of enactment, these are: Netherlands (4/1/01), Belgium (6/1/03), Canada (6/20/05), Spain (7/3/05), South Africa (11/30/06), Norway (1/1/09), Sweden (5/1/09), Portugal (6/5/10), Iceland (6/27/10), Argentina (7/22/10), Denmark (6/15/12), Brazil (5/14/13), France (5/18/13), Uruguay (8/1/13), and New Zealand (8/19/13). Mexico, like the United States, has same-sex marriage laws which vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Currently, same-sex marriages are licensed in Mexico City and in the state of Quintana Roo, with federal recognition extended to same-sex couples married there.

4. We cannot yet say what effect same-sex marriage laws have on opposite sex divorce rates by state because of the increasing trend of states not reporting aggregate divorce data. If individuals with same-sex desire marry opposite sex partners solely in order to maintain public face, and if the legalization of same-sex marriage makes public same-sex arrangements more acceptable, then we might expect a short term increase in opposite sex divorce rates but a long term decrease in opposite sex divorce rates.

5. The state of Oregon does not currently recognize same-sex marriages. In 2004 state voters passed Measure 36 amending the constitution to limit marriage to a legal relationship between a man and a woman. The Freedom to Marry and Religious Protection Initiative—a ballot measure design to repeal the 2004 amendment, to guarantee legal recognition of marriage for all couples regardless of gender, and to protect the rights of religious institution to choose or refuse to participate in such unions according to their own doctrines—will be voted on during

Oregon's 2014 elections.

For more information on the study:

[PLOS One](#)

[Huffington Post](#)

[Popular Science](#)



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