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To: Interested Parties
From: Amy Simon, Goodwin Simon Victoria Research, and David Binder, David Binder Research
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Re: Marriage Equality Ballot Measure

Opinion on marriage for same-sex couples in California is almost evenly divided, with opponents holding a 1% to 2% edge, according to a new voter survey conducted for The Poll4Equality Coalition.¹

Survey findings include:

- When asked, “Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose allowing same-sex couples to be legally married,” 47% say favor and 48% say oppose. Support for any given ballot measure will depend on the specific language of that measure. For example, results show that support increases if the language specifically includes a provision that says no clergy will be required to perform a service that goes against their faith.
- Modeling turnout scenarios for 2010 and 2012 indicate that there is a small advantage to same-sex marriage supporters in a 2012 electorate. This is based on a considerably higher turnout that is expected in 2012 due to the Presidential election. However, the additional voters that will come to the polls in a Presidential election are divided in their view of marriage for same-sex couples. Voters that will only turn out in a 2012 scenario are divided between younger voters who strongly support same-sex marriage and older Anglo, Latino and African American religious voters who are opposed to marriage for same-sex couples. While our modeling does indicate that 2012 will provide an extra 1-2 points of support for a marriage equality ballot measure, this difference may be impacted by many other factors in the larger political landscape at that time.

Other factors that may influence the outcome of a new ballot measure to legalize marriage for same-sex couples:

- Other ballot measures may impact voter turnout. Given that off-year elections such as 2010 have lower voter turnout than presidential years, it is likely that the presence of certain other ballot measures would have more of an impact on the composition of the electorate in 2010 than it would in 2012, when the presidential election tends to be the primary driver of voter turnout.

¹ A total of 1,794 California voters were interviewed during the period of May 8th through May 15th. The survey was completed with 1,000 randomly selected voters who participated in the November 2008 election, or have registered since then. In addition, oversamples were conducted with African American voters, Latino voters, Asian/Pacific Islander voters, and voters who are members of labor unions.

- The potential impact of the top of the ticket. It is likely that the Democratic nominee for Governor in 2010 will be an advocate of marriage equality, which would provide a high level spokesperson for the issue. In 2012, there is more uncertainty about the stance that President Obama may have on a marriage equality ballot measure during his expected re-election campaign.
- Trends in public opinion have shown that support for marriage equality has been increasing over time. While most observers believe that there will be majority support for same-sex marriage in the future, it is uncertain how quickly public opinion will continue to change in the next several years.

Also, the success of a future marriage equality ballot measure will be highly dependent on each side's funding and campaigning. Results from this survey indicate that supporters of marriage for same-sex couples will need to make additional efforts to appeal to religious voters and voters within African American, Latino, and Asian communities. Similarly, success of a marriage equality ballot measure is highly dependent on the ability of supporters to mobilize their base regardless of what year the measure appears on the ballot.

