

By more than 2-to-1, Americans Favor Legislation to Prohibit Job Discrimination against Gays and Lesbians

National study reveals many people wrongly believe that federal laws already exist

Rochester, NY, June 13, 2001 – By more than 2-to-1 most adults favor a federal law to prohibit job discrimination against gays or lesbians. The number in favor varies somewhat (from 61%-20% to 58%-29%) depending on the specific questions asked. And, interestingly, many people (42% of all adults) believe that such a federal law prohibiting job discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation already exists.

These are the results of *The Harris Poll*, a nationwide study of 2,692 adults surveyed online between May 3 and 16, using the same methodology used by Harris Interactive to forecast the 2000 elections with great accuracy.

The survey, designed jointly by Harris Interactive (Nasdaq: HPOL), a worldwide market research and consulting firm, and Witeck-Combs Communications, a marketing and communications firm with special expertise in the LGBT market, found, unsurprisingly, that adults who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) are overwhelmingly supportive of anti-discrimination legislation. They also are more likely to know that it does not exist now. The study also found that those people who have a close friend or family member who is gay or lesbian (30% of all adults asked) are somewhat more supportive (varying from 73% to 59% in favor, depending on the question).

Some findings say:

- 42% of adults when asked said that they thought that a federal law banning job discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation already exists. Many people (33%) admitted they did not know. Only 25% gave the correct answer that no such law exists. The LGBT population is better informed; 47% - but only 47% - gave the correct answer.
- The majorities who favor federal legislation to ban job discrimination against gays and lesbians closely vary from 58% to 29%, in reply to one question, to 61% to 24% for another and 61% to 20% for a third question.

Because support for a proposal or policy can often vary widely depending on precise question wording, we asked three variations of the question, with one-third of the sample (approximately 900 people) answering each question. One version of the question was very straightforward, asking respondents simply about support or opposition to a federal law that prohibits job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation; the second version introduced a potential consequence to not having such a law; and the third described the law in more detail.

One notable finding was that matter how the question was expressed – whether individuals were informed that a federal law exists, or not – respondents answered favorably and nearly uniformly. In all three categories, roughly 6 out of 10 responded affirmatively in support of federal legislation to ban employment discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

It is also noteworthy that the question that generates the strongest opposition to anti-discrimination legislation also refers to "gays and lesbians" and not just "sexual orientation." However, even in this case, a 58% to 29% majority supports anti-discrimination legislation.

It's also not surprising, that in the case where the least information was provided in the question wording, respondents were more likely to say they were "not sure" about the proposed legislation, and less likely to say they oppose it.

Humphrey Taylor is the Chairman of The Harris Poll, Harris Interactive.

TABLE 1
DOES FEDERAL LAW ALREADY EXIST?
 Base: All Respondents

"Do you think there is currently a federal law prohibiting job discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, or not?"

	All Adults %	Heterosexual %	Close friend/ family member is gay/lesbian %	LGBT*
Yes, a federal law exists	42	43	36	29
No, a federal law does not exist	25	24	25	47
Not sure	33	33	38	25

*LGBT: People who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

TABLE 2-A
FAVOR/OPOSE FEDERAL LAW (ONE VERSION)
 Base: One-third of sample

"Would you favor or oppose a federal law to prohibit job discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation?"

	All Adults %	Heterosexual %	Close friend/ family member is gay/lesbian %	LGBT*
Favor	61	59	73	95
Oppose	20	21	16	1
Not sure	19	19	11	4

*LGBT: People who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

TABLE 2-B
FAVOR/OPOSE FEDERAL LAW (ANOTHER VERSION)
 Base: One-third of sample

"In most jurisdictions in the United States, a person can be fired from their job for being gay or lesbian. Would you favor or oppose a federal law to prohibit job discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation?"

	All Adults %	Heterosexual %	Close friend/ family member is gay/lesbian %	LGBT*
Favor	58	57	59	88
Oppose	29	31	27	11
Not sure	14	12	14	1

*LGBT: People who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

TABLE 2-C
FAVOR/OPPOSE FEDERAL LAW (ANOTHER VERSION)
 Base: One-third of sample

"In mid-June, a federal law called the Employment Non-Discrimination Act will be considered that will prohibit job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. A law of this type currently does not exist. Do you favor or oppose this law?"

	All Adults %	Heterosexual %	Close friend/ family member is gay/lesbian %	LGBT* %
Favor	61	58	71	99
Oppose	24	27	14	1
Not sure	15	16	15	-

*LGBT: People who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

METHODOLOGY

The Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States between May 3 – 16, 2001, among a nationwide cross section of 2,692 adults, of which 128 are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) and 729 have a family member or close friend who is LGBT.

Figures for age, sex, race, education, number of adults and number of voice/telephone lines in the household were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. "Propensity score" weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

ABOUT HARRIS INTERACTIVE

Harris Interactive (Nasdaq: HPOL), is a worldwide market research, polling and consulting firm. It is best known for *The Harris Poll* and its pioneering use of the Internet to conduct scientifically accurate market research. The Harris Interactive Internet-based forecasts for the 2000 election were the most accurate in the history of the polling industry. With expertise in pharmaceutical, health care, automotive, finance, eCommerce, technology, consumer packaged goods and other markets, the firm has spent 45 years providing its clients with custom, multi-client and service bureau research. In February 2001, the Company acquired the custom research group of Yankelovich Partners, a leading consultative marketing and opinion research firm. Through its U.S. and Global Network offices, Harris Interactive conducts international research in multiple, localized languages. Harris Interactive currently maintains a database of more than 7 million online panelists – the largest of its kind. For more information about Harris Interactive, please visit the Company's website at www.harrisinteractive.com. EOE M/F/D/V

About WITECK • COMBS COMMUNICATIONS, Inc.

WITECK • COMBS COMMUNICATIONS, Inc. (www.witeckcombs.com) is the nation's premier strategic marketing communications firm specializing in reaching the gay and lesbian consumer market. With over seven years experience in this unique niche market, WITECK • COMBS COMMUNICATIONS has developed respected relationships throughout the community and serves as a bridge between corporate America and gay and lesbian consumers. The Gay Financial Network (gfn.com) has twice identified Bob Witeck and Wes Combs as two of the nation's twenty-five most influential openly gay business executives.

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