

Perspectives on a Same Sex Marriage Amendment in Alabama:

- **Strong Support for State Constitutional Ban on Recognizing Gay and Lesbian Marriages, Particularly Among *Conservatives* and Republicans**
- **A State Constitutional Amendment Prohibiting Gay and Lesbian Marriage is an Important Issue for 3 out of 4 Alabamians**
- **Republicans are Much More United in Support of a Constitutional Ban Than are the Democrats.**
- **Fewer Than One Quarter of Alabamians Believe that State Officials Have Given Too Much Attention to This Issue**

(Auburn, February 9) The Center for Governmental Services at Auburn University announces the results of a statewide public opinion survey on the attitudes of Alabamians regarding a State Constitutional prohibition of gay/lesbian marriages¹. The *Ask-Alabama* poll indicates that Alabamians strongly favor such an amendment and that they consider this to be a very important issue. Conservatives and republicans are more than twice as likely to *Strongly Support* the amendment than are liberals or democrats; and conservatives are twice as likely to consider this an important issue than are liberals.

The *Ask-Alabama* poll also points out that few Alabamians believe that this issue has received excessive attention by State officials. Public support for a State constitutional prohibition against gay/lesbian marriages has strengthened somewhat since the summer of 2004. Also, the percentage of those who believe that too much attention has been paid to this issue has declined during this time period.

Public Support for a State Constitutional Ban on Same Sex Marriage

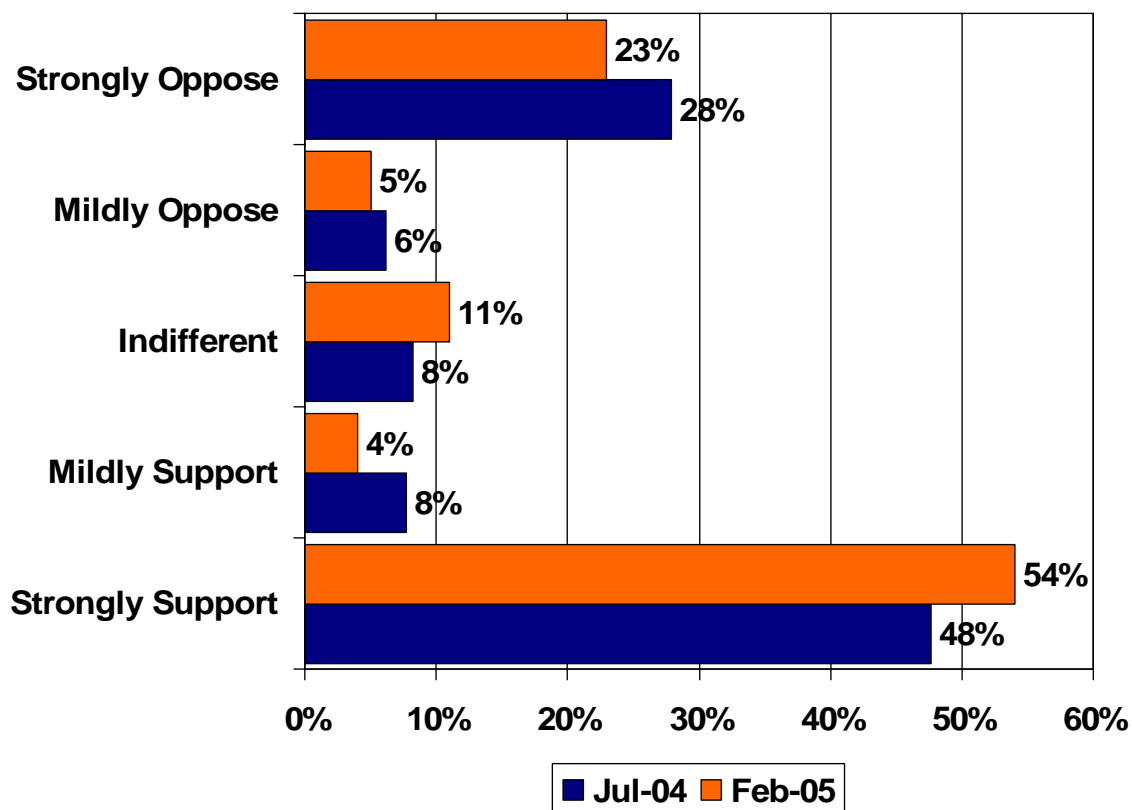
The issue of a state constitutional amendment banning gay and lesbian marriage brings out intense feelings for three quarters of the population. A majority of Alabamians (54%) *Strongly Support* an Alabama state constitutional amendment banning marriages

¹ The survey of a random telephone sample of 624 Alabamians was conducted January 24 – February 3 of 2005. The estimated margin of error is +/- 4%.

between gay or lesbian couples. On the other side of the issue, 23% of the public *Strongly Oppose* such an amendment.

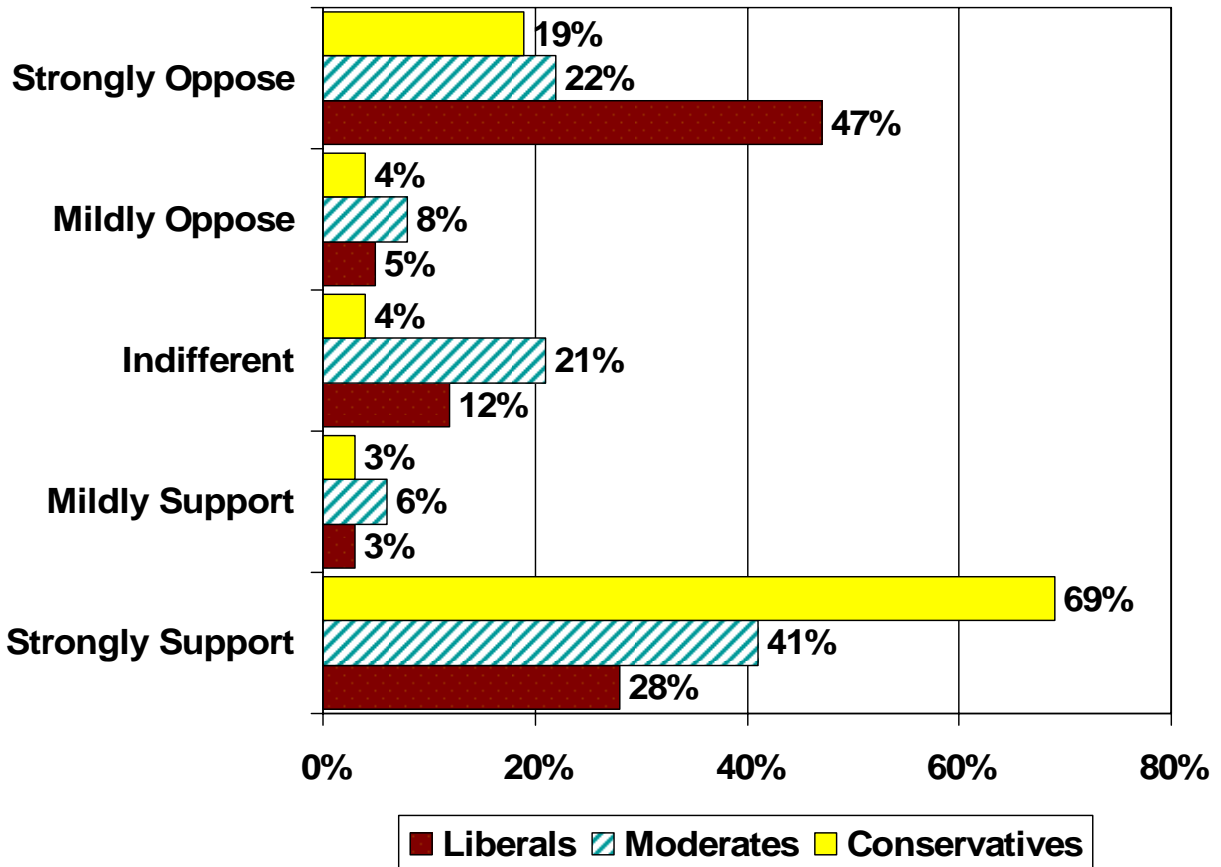
Relatively few Alabamians are not deeply engaged on this issue. Only 3% of Alabamians have *No Opinion* on this matter; 4% *Mildly Support* such an amendment; 5% are *Mildly Opposed*; and 11% are *Indifferent*. Since the summer of 2004, the level of strong support for the amendment has strengthened, while the level of strong opposition has declined. In the summer of 2004, the level of *Strong Support* was 48% and *Strong Opposition* 28%. This compares to 54% (*Strong Support*) and 23% (*Strong Opposition*) in the winter of 2005.

Level of Public Support for a State Constitutional Ban on Gay and Lesbian Marriages (July 2004 – February 2005)



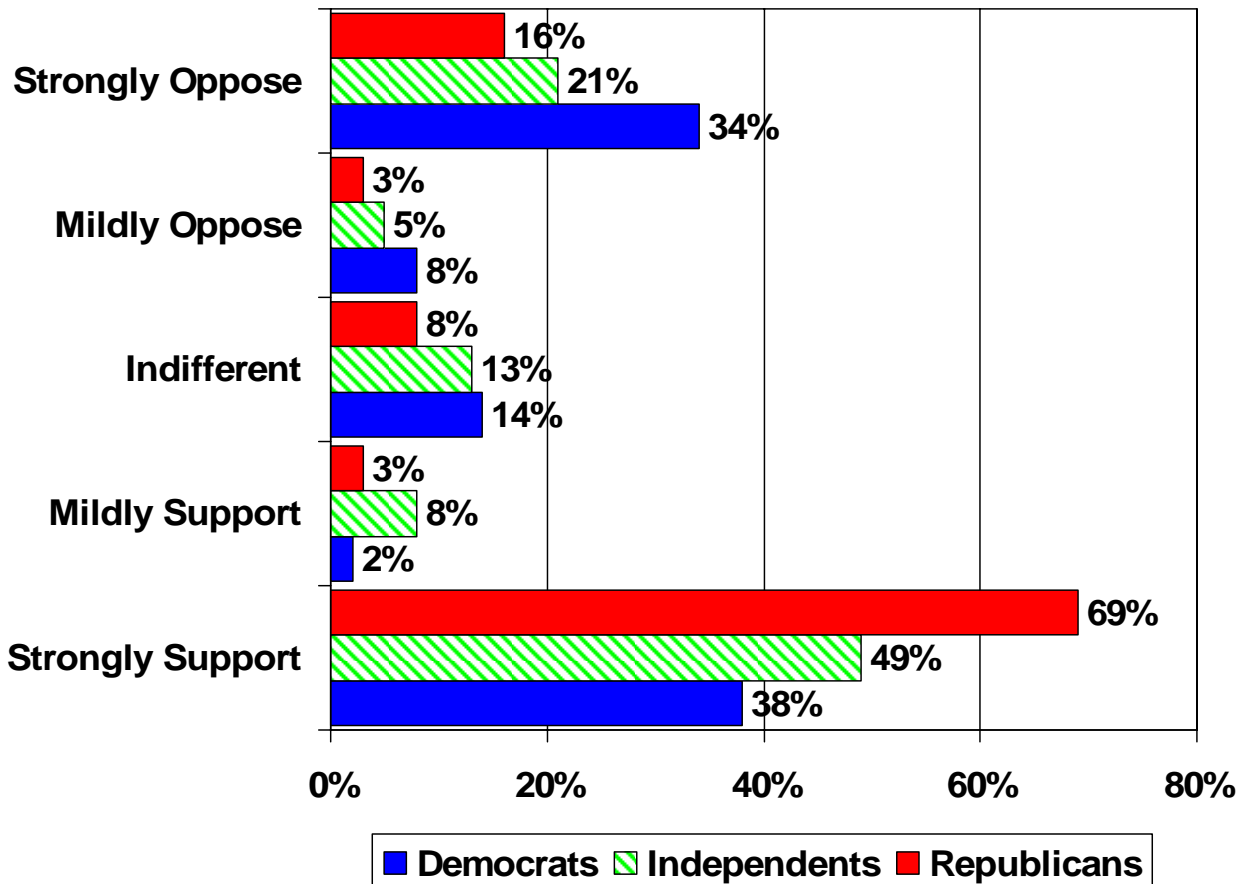
Conservatives are more than twice as likely to *Strongly Support* the amendment than are liberals, and the level of strong opposition is more than twice as high among liberals than among conservatives. Sixty-nine percent of self-described conservatives *Strongly Support* the amendment, compared to 28% of self-described liberals. Only 19% of conservatives *Strongly Oppose* the amendment, compared to 47% of liberals.

Level of Public Support for a State Constitutional Ban on Gay and Lesbian Marriages by Political Philosophy



Political party affiliation makes a difference in the level of support or opposition to a proposed amendment banning gay and lesbian marriage. Republicans are twice as likely to *Strongly Support* a proposed amendment than are Democrats. Sixty-nine percent of Republicans are in *Strong Support* of the proposed amendment, but only 38% of Democrats strongly back the measure. Democrats are much more divided on this issue than are the Republicans. Approximately one third (38%) of those who identify as Democrats *Strongly Support* an amendment, and one third (34%) *Strongly Oppose* an amendment.

Level of Public Support for a State Constitutional Ban on Gay and Lesbian Marriages by Political Party

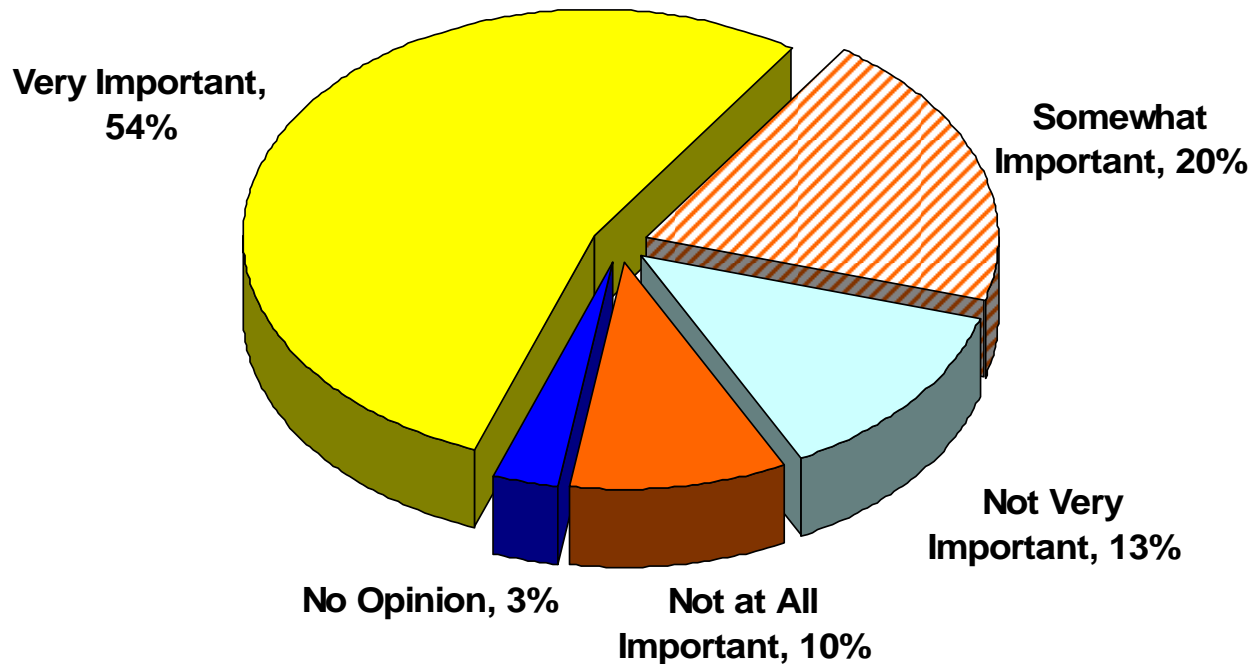


Importance of a Constitutional Prohibition of Gay/Lesbian Marriage

The debate over the desirability of adopting a constitutional amendment to ban gay or lesbian marriages has engaged the interest of nearly all Alabamians. Fifty-four percent of survey respondents state that the issue of a constitutional ban on gay/lesbian marriage is a *Very Important* issue to them. An additional 20% characterize this proposed constitutional amendment as *Somewhat Important*, 10% of respondents believe that the issue is *Not At All Important*, and less than 3% have *No Opinion* on this issue.

The amendment is a very important issue among those who describe themselves as *conservatives*. While 37% of liberals and 39% of self-described moderates characterized this issue as *Very Important*, 69% of conservatives identified this issue as *Very Important*.

Most Alabamians Believe that the Issue of a Constitutional Amendment Banning Same Sex Marriage is Very Important



Attention Given to a Gay/Lesbian Marriage Constitutional Prohibition by State Officials

In both July 2004 and February 2005, Alabamians were asked to assess how much attention state officials were giving to the issue of a State constitutional amendment banning gay and lesbian marriage. During this period, there was little change in the proportion of those who felt that the issue was not treated seriously enough by our State leadership. Nearly half of the respondents felt that the leadership in the State needed to give this issue more attention. In February, 43% of respondents stated that our officials did not give this issue enough attention, compared to 41% in July.

Conversely, the proportion of Alabamians who thought the issue was receiving too much attention dropped sharply. In July 2004, 33% thought that State officials were giving the issue too much attention and in February, 2005 that percentage dropped to 24%.

Assessment of Level of Attention Given by State Officials to a Ban on Same Sex Marriage (July 2004 and February 2005)

