

Beat: Local

## Survey: Majority of Michigan residents now support gay marriage

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**USPA News** - A majority of residents in the U.S. state of Michigan now support the legalization of same-sex marriage, according to a new survey which reflects similar changes seen in other parts of the United States. Voters in several states recently approved the legalization of gay marriage.

A recent survey led by Charles Ballard, an economics professor and director of the State of the State Survey at Michigan State University (MSU), shows that 56 percent of Michiganians now support the legalization of same-sex marriage while 39 percent oppose it. It is a significant increase from a survey conducted in 2010, when 48 percent of the state's residents said they supported same-sex marriage. "Support for gay marriage has increased in recent years, in Michigan and across the country," Ballard said, commenting on the results of the latest survey. "Although a majority of Michigan residents favored gay marriage in this survey, there remain substantial differences among different groups." The survey comes just weeks after residents in Maine, Maryland and Washington voted to legalize same-sex marriage. It is the first time that states have legalized same-sex marriage by a direct vote of the people, and those three states will soon join Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont and the District of Columbia where same-sex marriage is already legal. Support for same-sex marriage has increased across the United States in recent years. A Gallup poll in 1996 found that only 27 percent of Americans were in favor of same-sex marriage, but the latest survey conducted earlier this year found that 50 percent of Americans are now in favor of same-sex marriage. In April 2011, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community marked the 10th anniversary of the first ever same-sex marriage in the world. The Netherlands was the first country in the world to officially recognize and allow same-sex marriages after Queen Beatrix signed the marriage bill into law on December 21, 2000. It went into law on April 1, 2001. In addition to the Netherlands and parts of the United States, same-sex marriage has also been legalized in Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, and Sweden. In Mexico, same-sex marriage is only performed in Mexico City and the state of Quintana Roo.

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