

HAMILTON COLLEGE NATIONAL YOUTH POLLS

HOT BUTTON ISSUES POLL: GUNS, GAYS AND ABORTION

January 2006

THE HAMILTON COLLEGE HOT BUTTON ISSUES POLL
The seventh in a series of national youth opinion polls conducted by Hamilt

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Table 1. Sup

constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage is predictably thin among high school seniors. (*Question wording and more detailed statistics are presented in the Appendix*).

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Members of the class of 2006 wee.(e)Tj12.963 0 0 12.963 299623 657.8 Tm(Tj1

thought the very notion of labeling gays “disgusting” was laughable. Anti-gay seniors are typically observant and born-again Christians, who view homosexuality as a moral or religious issue.

This poll is the second in the Hamilton Youth Poll series to measure the attitudes of high school seniors toward gays and gay issues. The more detailed Hamilton Gay Issues Poll was conducted in 2001. Comparison of the two polls does not suggest significant changes in attitudes.¹

GUN CONTROL ISSUES

The Hamilt

A previous Hamilton survey, the Youth and Guns Poll conducted in 2000, took a more detailed look at high school students' experiences with guns and their opinions about gun control. The earlier study also found near universal support for the most commonly proposed control measures, including several not included in the current poll. Although the majority favoring stricter gun laws in their response to the generic question was about 10 percent higher in the first study, the percentages supporting the registration and

of Catholic students: the typically pro-life seniors who attend mass regularly and those who don't.³

As in previous Hamilton Youth Polls, in the current poll, the South and Central regions appear more conservative. But the distinctly conservative tilt of Southern students evident in the table, especially on the gay marriage issue, reflects the high proportion of born-again Christians in the region. Thirty-seven percent of our Southern respondents described themselves as born again. Without them, 59 percent of Southerners would recognize abortion rights in all/most cases and 54 percent would support gay marriage.

The political geography of opinion on our three issues was mapped by dividing the Class of 2006 into residents of Blue, Gray and Red states. Blue states are those in which the Democratic presidential candidate received more than 55 percent of the major party vote in 2004. Red states are the corresponding Republican strongholds. The more closely contested Gray states will presumably decide future elections. The cleavages separating Blue and Red state seniors on these three issues parallel the gaps between Democrats and Republicans shown at the end of the table. More interesting are the opinions of the 40 percent of high sc

Table 5. Demographic Differences

	<i>Abortion Rights</i>	<i>Gay Marriage</i>	<i>Gun Control</i>
ALL	53	54	54
Males	54	49	46
Females	52	58	61
White	51	54	48
Black	57	39	71
Hispanic	52	61	72
Born Again	32	30	44
Other Protestant	52	46	54
Catholic	51	59	55
Other Religion	70	60	65
No Religion	80	88	61
<i>Attends Church</i>			
0 - 3x / mo.	68	71	55
Over 3x / mo.	38	36	52
Northeast	61	63	58
South	48	43	55
Central	48	53	46
West	58	58	59
Blue State	65	65	62
Gray State	50	50	49
Red State	44	47	52
Democrat	71		
Republican	54		
Other/Not Sure	30		

CONDUCTING THE HAMILTON HOT BUTTON ISSUES POLL

The Hamilton College Hot Button Issues Poll is the seventh in a series of national youth surveys conducted by Hamilton faculty and st

APPENDIX

Q16. PRE

Q27. WRONG Gay lifestyles are morally wrong.

	Freq.	%
1) StrAg	193	19.3
2) Agree	198	19.8
3) Disagr	335	33.5
4) StrDisag	261	26.1
5) NS	13	1.3
TOTAL	999	100.0

Q28. LESBDISG Lesbians are disgusting.

	Freq.	%
1) StrAgr	72	7.2
2) Agree	192	19.2
3) Disagr	409	40.9
4) StrDisag	310	31.0
5) NS	17	1.7
TOTAL	1000	100.0

Q32. OPENGAY Thinking of all the people you know, either well or even only casually, do you know anyone who is gay?

	Freq.	%
1) Yes	850	85.0
2) No	147	14.7
3) NS	3	0.3
TOTAL	1000	100.0

Q33. CLOSEGAY As far as you know, are any of your friends, relatives or close acquaintances gay? (

Q38. GUNLAWS In general, do you feel that laws covering the sale of firearms should be made more strict, less strict or kept as they are now?

	Freq.	%
1) MoreStr	539	53.9
2) LessStr	29	2.9
3) Same	406	40.6
4) NS	27	2.7
TOTAL	1000	100.0

Q39. LAWCOOL Require a 5-day waiting period between the purchase and delivery of a handgun, to keep the buyer from a

Q44. KIDS Ideally, how many children would you like to have? Or, do you not expect to have children?

	Freq.	%
1) 1	70	7.0
2) 2	440	44.0
3) 3	277	27.7
4) 4+	132	13.2
5) None	57	5.7
6) NS	25	2.5
TOTAL	1000	100.0

Q45. REGION

	Freq.	%
1) East	195	19.5
2) South	270	27.0
3) Centr	298	29.8
4) West	237	23.7
TOTAL	1000	100.0

Q46. PLACE Which of the following best describes the place you live?

	Freq.	%
1) Rural	205	20.5
2) Suburb	261	26.1
3) SmCity	202	

Q49 RACE/ETH Which category best describes your ethnic or racial background?

	Freq.	%
1) White	678	67.8
2) Black	100	10.0
3) Hisp	91	9.1
4) Asian	39	3.9
5) Other	89	8.9
6) NS	3	0.3
TOTAL	1000	100.0

Q50 RELIGION Do you consider yourself to be Catholic, some other kind of Christian, Jewish, another religion or no religion at all?

	Freq.	%
1) Catholic	255	25.5
2) OtrChrist	470	47.0
3) Jewish	28	2.8
4) Other	75	7.5
5) None	167	16.7
6) NS	6	0.6
TOTAL	1000	100.0

Q51. BORNAGN

Would you describe yourself as a born again Christian

Q54 PARTY

	Freq.	%
1) Dems	462	46.2
2) Reps	359	35.9
3) NS/RF	179	17.9
TOTAL	1000	100.0

Q55 REDBLUE

	Freq.	%
1) Blue	315	31.5
2) Gray	404	40.4
3) Red	280	28.0

