



THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MARRIAGE EQUALITY

10 Years After *Obergefell*

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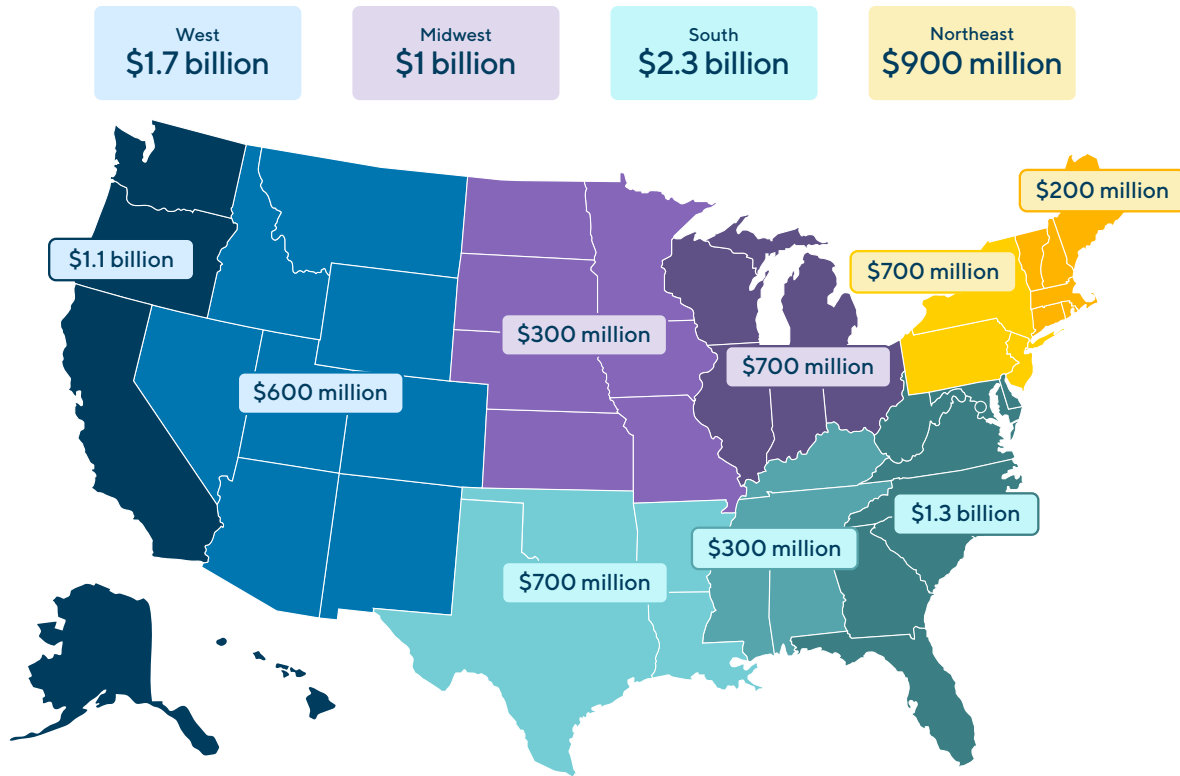
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, the United States is home to an estimated 823,000 married same-sex couples. Over 591,000 same-sex couples have married since the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which extended marriage equality nationwide in June 2015. As these couples married, their weddings generated an economic boost for state and local economies. An estimated 22.7 million guests attended the weddings of same-sex couples over the past 10 years, including 7.6 million guests who traveled from out of state to attend the celebrations. We estimate that wedding spending by these couples and their out-of-state guests boosted state and local economies by an estimated \$5.9 billion and generated an estimated \$432.2 million in state and local sales tax revenue since the *Obergefell* decision. This spending was enough to support an estimated 41,300 jobs for one year.

The economic boost of wedding spending by same-sex couples and their guests since *Obergefell* has been distributed throughout the U.S. Approximately \$2.3 billion of the spending occurred in the South, \$1.7 billion in the West, \$1 billion in the Midwest, and \$900 million in the Northeast.

Figure 1. Wedding spending by same-sex couples by region, 2015-2025

Table 1. Economic impact of marriage equality since *Obergefell*

COUPLES AND GUESTS	TOTAL
Marriages by same-sex couples	591,000
Number of guests who have attended a wedding of a same-sex couple	22,700,000
Number of guests who have traveled from out of state to attend a same-sex wedding	7,600,000
SPENDING	
Wedding spending by same-sex couples	\$4,947,600,000
Out-of-state guest spending for weddings of same-sex couples	\$947,500,000
Total combined spending	\$5,895,100,000
Total sales tax revenue	\$432,200,000

Note: All dollar amounts and number of guests have been rounded to the nearest hundred thousand. The number of marriages by same-sex couples has been rounded to the nearest thousand.

BACKGROUND

In June 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell v. Hodges*¹ that the Constitution guarantees all same-sex couples the right to marry, extending marriage to same-sex couples throughout the United States.

This study estimates the economic impact of same-sex couples' weddings that have taken place in the 10 years since the *Obergefell* decision. The methodology used in this study is similar to what was used in previous Williams Institute studies estimating the economic impact of marriage for same-sex couples at the state level.²

FINDINGS

Number of Couples Who Have Married Since *Obergefell*

In June 2015, when the Supreme Court issued its decision in *Obergefell*, there were an estimated 380,000 same-sex married couples in the U.S.³ The number of married same-sex couples has more than doubled since then. There are an estimated 823,000 married same-sex couples as of June 2025, a net gain of 443,000 married couples.⁴ However, the net change in the number of married same-sex couples alone undercounts the number of new marriages from year to year. This is because the year-on-year change in the number of married couples is a result of both those who have gotten married and those whose marriage has ended. Consequently, the number of same-sex couples who have married since *Obergefell* is greater than the 443,000 increase in the number of married same-sex couples from June 2015 to June 2025. Accordingly, our final estimate of the number of marriages since the *Obergefell* decision adds an adjustment for couples whose marriages ended. (See Methodology for a discussion of our adjustment methods.)

Based on our calculation of the net increase in married couples and the number of marriages that ended since June 2015, we estimate that 591,000 same-sex couples have married in the decade since the *Obergefell* decision.

Same-Sex Weddings After *Obergefell*

In 2023 and 2024, the Williams Institute conducted an original survey of married same-sex couples nationwide.⁵ The survey asked respondents how they celebrated their marriages, how much time they spent planning their weddings, whether out-of-state guests attended the weddings, and how much they spent on celebrations.

Among survey respondents who married after *Obergefell*, 80% had a wedding or a similar celebration to recognize their marriage. The overwhelming majority (92%) of these respondents had a wedding ceremony. In addition, 72% had a reception, 27% had a rehearsal dinner, 27% provided a meal for their guests the day after their ceremony, and 19% hosted other activities for their guests. Respondents spent seven months on average planning their weddings, with some planning for up to two years.

¹ 135 S. Ct. 2584 (2015).

² All Williams Institute reports estimating the state-level economic impact of marriage are available at <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/economic-impact-reports-by-state/>.

³ BRAD SEARS, NATHAN CISNEROS & CHRISTY MALLORY, WILLIAMS INST., MARRIED SAME-SEX COUPLES IN THE UNITED STATES ON THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF OBERGEFELL V. HODGES (2025).

⁴ Id.

⁵ For additional analyses of data collected through this survey, see ABBIE E. GOLDBERG, WILLIAMS INST., PERSPECTIVES ON MARRIAGE EQUALITY IN 2024 (2024), <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Perspectives-Marriage-Equality-Jun-2024.pdf>.

Just under half (47%) of respondents who had a wedding or other celebration hosted the event in the place where they lived. About one-third (35%) had their celebration in another city in their state, 17% had their wedding in another state, and 2% had their wedding in another country.

Couples who had weddings or other celebrations had an average of 48 guests at their celebration, including 16 out-of-state guests, with some having as many as 250 guests in total and 180 out-of-state guests. Most couples (80%) invited some or all of their immediate family to their wedding. Together, these data mean that 22.7 million guests attended a same-sex couple's wedding in the past decade, including 7.6 million guests who traveled from out of state.

Direct Wedding Spending

An estimated 591,000 same-sex couples have married in the 10 years since the *Obergefell* decision. Of these, 80%, or 473,000 couples, celebrated their marriage with a wedding or other similar celebration.

On average, couples who married after *Obergefell* spent \$8,546 on their weddings or celebrations, with some couples spending as much as \$65,000. Money spent on weddings came primarily from the couples themselves, with some reporting that their families also contributed to their celebrations.

Applying the average spent per wedding (\$8,546) to the number of same-sex couples who have had weddings or similar celebrations since June 2015 and adjusting spending to 2025 dollars using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI inflation calculator,⁶ we estimate that direct wedding spending by same-sex couples and their families has generated an economic boost of \$4.9 billion nationwide since *Obergefell*.

Spending by Out-of-State Guests

Same-sex couples who celebrated their marriage with a wedding or similar celebration since *Obergefell* have had an average of 16 out-of-state guests at their celebrations. In previous Williams Institute reports estimating the economic impact of marriage,⁷ we calculated average out-of-state guest spending using the per diem rates for food and lodging set by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) or guest spending estimates published by state tourism bureaus, depending on the type of data available in the state. In these studies, we assumed that each out-of-state wedding guest would purchase food and lodging for one day and one night and share a hotel room with another guest.

To estimate the amount of money spent per out-of-state guest traveling to and attending same-sex marriage events for this report, we again rely on per diem rates for food and lodging from the GSA over the past 10 years. The GSA's relevant standard per diem rates for the continental United States (CONUS) have ranged from \$129 in 2015 (\$83 for lodging and \$46 for meals and incidental expenses) to \$178 in 2025 (\$110 lodging and \$68 for meals and incidental expenses).⁸

To estimate the amount that out-of-state guests spent on lodging while traveling for same-sex couples' wedding celebrations, we calculated the number of out-of-state guests traveling per year, divided that number in half (assuming guests would share a room with one other person), and multiplied that number by the GSA's annual

⁶ CPI Inflation Calc., U.S. BUREAU OF LAB. STATS., https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm (last visited June 12, 2025).

⁷ See state reports, *supra* note 2.

⁸ GSA per diem rates for the past ten years are available at *Per Diem Files*, U.S. GEN. SERVS. ADMIN. (June 2, 2025), <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-a-trip/per-diem-rates/per-diem-files#Per-diem-rates>.

CONUS per diem rates for lodging. To estimate the amount that out-of-state guests spent on meals and incidentals while traveling for same-sex couples' weddings, we multiplied the number of guests traveling each year by the GSA's annual CONUS per diem rates for meals and incidental expenses. This method likely results in conservative estimates of the economic boost associated with out-of-state travel, given that many jurisdictions in the U.S. have per diem rates higher than the standard CONUS rates, according to the GSA. For example, in fiscal year 2025, 296 areas had higher per diem rates than the CONUS rate.⁹ Finally, we adjusted all spending to 2025 dollars, using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI inflation calculator.¹⁰

Based on these calculations, we estimate that 7.6 million out-of-state guests have attended weddings of same-sex couples since the *Obergefell* decision, generating a total economic boost of nearly \$1 billion (\$947.5 million).

National and Regional Spending

We combine our estimates for spending by same-sex couples and their guests to estimate the total economic activity generated by weddings of same-sex couples since *Obergefell* to be \$5.9 billion.

We created estimates for U.S. Census Bureau regions and divisions by distributing the national spending estimate in proportion to the national increase in the number of married same-sex couples in the region and division between 2014 and 2023. These years are a period of time during which we could directly rely on state-level estimates for the increase in married same-sex couples from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS).¹¹

Table 2. Wedding spending by same-sex couples and their guests by US Census Bureau region and division

	DIVISION	REGION
New England	\$245,700,000	
Middle Atlantic	\$691,800,000	
NORTHEAST		\$937,500,000
South Atlantic	\$1,345,200,000	
East South Central	\$265,600,000	
West South Central	\$680,100,000	
SOUTH		\$2,290,900,000
East North Central	\$699,000,000	
West North Central	\$297,800,000	
MIDWEST		\$996,800,000
Mountain	\$593,600,000	
Pacific	\$1,076,300,000	
WEST		\$1,669,900,000
NATIONAL		\$5,895,100,000

⁹ *FY 2025 Per Diem Highlights*, U.S. GEN. SERVS. ADMIN. (Oct. 15, 2024), <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-a-trip/per-diem-rates/fy-2025-per-diem-highlights>.

¹⁰ U.S. BUREAU OF LAB. STAT., *supra* note 6.

¹¹ SEARS, CISNEROS & MALLORY, *supra* note 3 at Appendix Table B.

Sales Tax Revenue

States and localities that impose sales taxes directly benefit from wedding spending. The national average state and local sales tax rate from June 2015 through June 2025 increased from 6.39% to 7.18%.¹² To estimate sales tax revenue related to wedding spending since *Obergefell*, we calculated a national annual average combined state and local tax rate for each year between 2015 and 2025, weighted by the proportion of the national increase in the number of married same-sex couples that occurred in each state between 2014 to 2023. For these years, we could directly rely on the ACS' state-level estimates for the increase in married same-sex couples.¹³ We then applied this annual national weighted tax rate to the combined spending by same-sex couples and their guests for each year. The annual sales tax revenue amounts were adjusted to 2025 dollars¹⁴ and added together to estimate sales tax revenue related to wedding spending over the 10 years.

Based on these calculations, we estimate that weddings of same-sex couples have generated \$432.2 million in state and local sales tax revenue in the 10 years since the *Obergefell* decision.¹⁵

Job Creation

In previous state-level studies, we used data from state tourism bureaus to estimate the number of direct jobs that could be supported by same-sex couples' wedding spending.¹⁶ To calculate the impact on job creation of wedding spending since *Obergefell*, we considered the findings from several studies that estimated the number of direct jobs created by every \$1 million in tourism spending. These range from seven to 8.7 jobs per \$1 million in spending by the U.S. Travel Association¹⁷ to between seven and 13 jobs per \$1 million by states that have commissioned specific studies for their state.¹⁸ The average number of direct jobs created per \$1 million in tourism spending across these

¹² The national average includes the 46 states that impose state and/or local sales taxes and the four that do not impose either. Average combined state and local sales tax rates by state, by year are available at *Sales Taxes*, TAX FOUND., <https://taxfoundation.org/datamaps/state-and-local-sales-tax-rates/>.

¹³ SEARS, CISNEROS & MALLORY, *supra* note 3 at Appendix Table B.

¹⁴ U.S. BUREAU OF LAB. STAT., *supra* note 6.

¹⁵ We are unable to determine whether the average amount couples reported spending on their weddings included what they spent in taxes. To the extent that couples factored taxes into their reported spending, our estimate of state and local sales taxes generated would overestimate taxes generated by couples' wedding spending.

¹⁶ See state reports, *supra* note 3. All but 11 state-level reports included estimates of job creation. The 13 reports that did not include this estimate are those for California, Connecticut, D.C., Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, and Vermont.

¹⁷ See, e.g., U.S. TRAVEL ASS'N, TRAVEL: AMERICA'S UNSUNG HERO OF JOB CREATION (2017), https://www.ustravel.org/system/files/media_root/document/Research_Reports_Travel-America%27s-Unsung-Hero-of-Job-Creation.pdf; U.S. TRAVEL ASS'N, U.S. TRAVEL AND TOURISM OVERVIEW (2019) (2020), https://www.ustravel.org/system/files/media_root/document/Research_Fact-Sheet_US-Travel-and-Tourism-Overview.pdf.

¹⁸ See, e.g., DRA, The Economic Impact of Travel: California (May 2025), <https://assets.visitcalifornia.com/media/?viewType=grid&mediald=FEAF6B85-3A6E-47FF-8F3C4DC1AF8CA7E3>; Press Release, Okla. Senate, Tourism is Big Business (May 3, 2017), <https://oksenate.gov/press-releases/tourism-big-business>; Klark Byrd, *Travel Brings Natrona County \$377.8M, Supports 3,400 Jobs in 2024*, OILCITYNEWS, May 20, 2025, Colorado's Tourism Economic Saw Growth in 2021 According to Annual Research Reports, Colo. Office of Ec. Dev. & Int. Trade (July 22, 2022), <https://oedit.colorado.gov/press-release/colorados-tourism-economy-saw-growth-in-2021-according-to-annual-research-reports>; Tourism Economics, The Iowa Visitor Economy 2023 (Oct. 2024), https://industrypartners.traveliowa.com/UserDocs/research/iowa_tourism_economic_impact_-_2023_-_client_preliminary.pdf; Tourism Economics, Economic Impact of Visitors in Louisiana 2023 (May 2024), <https://www.explorelouisiana.com/sites/default/files/2024-07/2023%20Louisiana%20Tourism%20Economic%20Impact%20REV.pdf>; Downs & St. Germain Research, 2024 Maine Office of Tourism Highlights, https://motpartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/ME_1619047592_GovernorsConf_EconomicImpactHighlights_v11.pdf (last visited June 12, 2025); Tourism Economics, 2023 Economic Impact of Tourism in New Mexico, <https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/>

studies is between seven and eight. For our calculation, we used seven direct jobs created per \$1 million in visitor spending to produce a more conservative estimate. Applying this figure to our estimate of total wedding-related spending in the 10 years since *Obergefell* indicates that approximately 41,300 direct jobs were supported for a full year by same-sex couples' weddings during this period.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we have drawn on information from various sources to estimate the economic impact of the marriages of same-sex couples that have taken place since the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*. Our calculations indicate that wedding spending by these couples and their out-of-state guests has boosted state and local economies by an estimated \$5.9 billion and has generated an estimated \$432.2 million in state and local sales tax revenue. This spending supported an estimated 41,300 jobs for one year.

METHODOLOGY

Counting the Number of Marriages Since *Obergefell*

To estimate the number of same-sex couples who have married each year since 2015, we rely on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS).¹⁹ For 2015 to 2019 and 2021 to 2023, we used official counts of married same-sex couples published by the Census Bureau based on ACS data.²⁰ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Census Bureau did not publish an annual summary table of the number of same-sex and different-sex married and unmarried couples for 2020. However, the Census Bureau did release a one-year public use microdata sample (PUMS) file for 2020. We analyzed that data to calculate our 2020 estimate.²¹

Data from the 2024 and 2025 ACS are not yet available. As a result, we estimated the number of same-sex couples who were married between January 2024 and June 2025 based on projections using ACS estimates from 2020 to 2023. Because the *Obergefell* decision was issued at the end of June 2015 and the 10th anniversary falls at the end of June 2025, we further adjust our 2015 and 2025 estimates to take into account only half of the total increase in the annual estimates for married same-sex couples for each of those years.²²

[image/upload/v1/clients/newmexico/Economic_Impact_of_Tourism_in_New_Mexico_2023_7d36f19d-9a9b-4853-b200-6374b6beb6d8.pdf](#) (last visited June 12, 2025); Tourism Economics, Economic Impact of Visitors in New York 2023: New York City Focus (Aug. 2024), <https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/New-York-City-New-York-Tourism-Economic-Impact-2023.pdf>; Tourism Economics, Economic Impact of Visitors in North Carolina (Jan. 2024), <https://partners.visitnc.com/contents/sdownload/74549/file/NC-TSA-2022.pdf>; JENNIFER LEAVER, KEM C. GARDNER POLICY INST., THE STATE OF UTAH'S TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY, 2024 (2024), <https://d36oiwf74r1rap.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/TT-Report-Feb2024.pdf>; Press Release, State of Wash. Tourism, State Tourism Statistics Point to Moderate Growth, Room for More (May 6, 2025), <https://industry.stateofwashington.com/state-tourism-statistics-point-to-moderate-growth-room-for-more/>; Tourism Economics, 2023 Economic Impact of Tourism in West Virginia, <https://wvtourism.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2023-Statewide-Economic-Impact-of-Tourism-in-WV.pdf> (last visited June 13, 2025).

¹⁹ See U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, UNDERSTANDING AND USING AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY DATA: WHAT ALL DATA USERS NEED TO KNOW (2020), https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/acs/acs_general_handbook_2020.pdf. The data were retrieved from IPUMS USA. See Steven Ruggles et al., IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 [dataset], IPUMS USA, <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0> (last accessed June 8, 2025).

²⁰ U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, *Characteristics of Same-Sex Couple Households: 2005 to Present*, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/same-sex-couples/ssc-house-characteristics.html> (Download 2023 Detailed Table) (last accessed June 4, 2025).

²¹ Data retrieved from Steven Ruggles et al., IPUMS USA: Version 16.0 [dataset], IPUMS USA, <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0> (last accessed June 8, 2025).

²² We make a similar adjustment to the 2015 year estimate. For a discussion of our estimation method see SEARS, CISNEROS & MALLORY, *supra* note 3.

To arrive at the total number of same-sex marriages over the 10-year period, we also account for same-sex couples who have divorced or where one spouse has been widowed, which would otherwise reduce the count of new marriages each year.²³ Prior research by the Williams Institute and others indicates that the divorce rates for same-sex couples overall and different-sex couples are similar.²⁴ A comprehensive review of research related to marriage published in the past two decades concluded, “Dissolution rates for married same-sex couples are indistinguishable from those for different-sex couples.”²⁵ We, therefore, use the dissolution rates through divorce of different-sex marriages to adjust our estimate of the annual number of same-sex marriages.

To estimate the number of same-sex couples that divorced each year, we applied the “refined divorce rate” for the U.S. for each year between 2015 and 2023²⁶ to the number of same-sex couples who were married as of the prior year. The refined divorce rate, calculated by the National Center for Family & Marriage Research,²⁷ is defined as the number of women who divorced in the prior 12 months per 1,000 married women aged 15 years and older.²⁸ For 2024 and 2025, we used the average of the refined divorce rates for 2021, 2022, and 2023, the three years for which we have ACS data on divorce after the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. We used data from the three years after 2020 because research indicates that divorces in 2020 were suppressed due to the pandemic.²⁹ We then applied the annual refined divorce rate for each year to the number of married same-sex couples in the prior year to estimate the number of married same-sex couples who divorced within the past year. Each of those divorces offsets a new marriage that otherwise would be reflected in the total count of married same-sex couples.

²³ While the ACS does include a question of whether the householder has been divorced or widowed in the past year, we cannot use data from that question for our analysis. First, the ACS does not collect information about sexual orientation (only same-sex couples), so we would be unable to use this data to determine how many LGB people were divorced or widowed in the prior year. Moreover, the ACS does not ask about the sex of the spouse who was divorced or passed away, so we are also unable to use those questions to determine how many same-sex relationships ended in one of those ways.

²⁴ See, e.g. BENJAMIN R. KARNEY ET AL., RAND, TWENTY YEARS OF LEGAL MARRIAGE FOR SAME-SEX COUPLES IN THE UNITED STATES (2024), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA2912-1.html (“As a group, same-sex couples with any legal status dissolve their relationships at the same rate as married different-sex couples, but couples consisting of two women are more likely to dissolve than couples consisting of two men.”) A study published in 2019 that included a review of relevant research, concluded that while there were no differences in the dissolution rate of same-sex and different sex couples overall, including between those in formal unions (marriages, civil unions, and domestic partnerships), there was some indication that female same-sex couples had a slightly higher dissolution rate as married same-sex couples. Eric Ketcham & Neil G. Bennett, *Comparative Couple Stability: Same-Sex and Male-Female Unions in the United States*, 5 SOCIUS 1 (2019). Williams Institute research suggests that same-sex couples dissolve their relationships at the rate of 1.1% per year, slightly lower than the dissolution rate for different-sex couples. M.V. LEE BADGETT & CHRISTY MALLORY, WILLIAMS INST., PATTERNS OF RELATIONSHIP RECOGNITION FOR SAME-SEX COUPLES: DIVORCE AND TERMINATIONS 1 (2014), <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Relationship-Recognition-Divorce-Dec-2014.pdf>; M.V. LEE BADGETT & JODY L. HERMAN, WILLIAMS INST., PATTERNS OF RELATIONSHIP RECOGNITION BY SAME-SEX COUPLES 1 (2011), <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Relationship-Recog-SS-Couples-US-Nov-2011.pdf>.

²⁵ KARNEY ET AL., *supra* note 24.

²⁶ KRISTA K. WESTRICK-PAYNE, NAT’L CTR. FOR FAM. & MARRIAGE RSCH., CHARTING MARRIAGE & DIVORCE IN THE U.S.: THE ADJUSTED DIVORCE RATE, 2008-2022 (2023), <https://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/college-of-arts-and-sciences/NCFMR/documents/RBT/charting-us-divorce-2008-2022.pdf>.

²⁷ KRISTA K. WESTRICK-PAYNE, *Refined Divorce Rate in the U.S.: Geographic Variation, 2023*, NAT’L CTR. FOR FAM. & MARRIAGE RSCH. (2024), <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-24-26>. A body of research supports that men report divorce at lower levels than women, but women’s report tend to be more reliable, including that they are in better alignment with vital statistics records. *Id.*

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ KRISTA WESTRICK-PAYNE & WENDY D. MANNING, *Marriage, Divorce, and the COVID-19 Pandemic in the U.S.*, NAT’L CTR. FOR FAM. & MARRIAGE RSCH. (2022), <https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-22-12>.

To account for the fact some married partners lost a spouse through death—referred to here as a widow regardless of gender—we take a similar approach. First, we assumed that the rate of a same-sex spouse being widowed is similar to the rate of a different-sex spouse being widowed.³⁰ Accordingly, using ACS data, we calculated an annual refined rate³¹ of being widowed in the prior year for both men and women overall for 2015 to 2023. For 2015 to 2018, we used the published five-year 2018 ACS table.³² For 2019 to 2023, we used the 2023 five-year published table.³³ We used the same rate for 2024 and 2025 that we used for 2019 to 2023. In each time period, we took the percentage of men and women who were widowed in the prior year and created a weighted average for all married same-sex couples, taking into account that married same-sex couples are slightly more likely to be women than men (approximately 53% vs. 47%).³⁴ We then applied our annual refined rates for each year to the number of same-sex couples who were married as of the prior year to estimate the number of married same-sex couples who were widowed each year.

Finally, to estimate the total number of couples who are married each year, we first subtracted the number of married same-sex couples reported in ACS data for a given year from the number reported in the subsequent year. We then added our estimates of the number of marriages that ended in divorce or widowhood for that year.

³⁰ Same-sex couples are younger, and in particular are less likely to have one or both spouses over the age of 65, so they might be less likely to be widowed in the past year than spouses in married different-sex couples. Sears, Cisneros & Mallory, *supra* note 3. However, a large body of research documents that LGBTQ people have higher rates of a number of mental and physical health conditions, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, HIV, and other chronic conditions. David J. Lick et al., *Minority Stress and Physical Health Among Sexual Minorities*, 8 PERSPS. ON PSYCH. SCI. 521 (2013). While a 2024 review of all research related to marriage equality from the past two decades showed that marriage reduced health disparities for same-sex spouses compared to unmarried same-sex couples, the studies suggested a more significant positive impact for men in married same-sex couples than for women. Further, while disparities between some conditions, such as substance abuse, have improved when comparing people in married same-sex couples to people married different-sex couples, those disparities have not been eliminated. KARNEY ET AL., *supra* note 24.

³¹ We use “refined rate” here to indicate that we are mirroring the “refined divorce rate. In other words, the rate is not out of all adult men and women, but just out of those who are married.

³² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey: Table S1201, Marital Status, 2018 5-year estimates, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2018.S1201?q=Widow> (last visited June 12, 2025).

³³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey: Table S1201, Marital Status, 2013 5-year estimates, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1201?q=Widow> (last visited June 12, 2025).

³⁴ ACS asks respondents to identify their “sex” and the sex of their partner. The choice is binary and the options are “male” and “female.”

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