

OCTOBER 18, 2012

## LGBT Americans Skew Democratic, Largely Support Obama

Conservative LGBT individuals tend to be older, white, and more religious

BY GARY J. GATES AND **FRANK NEWPORT**

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PRINCETON, NJ -- Gallup's landmark study of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans finds that 44% identify as Democratic, 43% as independent, and 13% as Republican. That compares to 32% of non-LGBT Americans who identify as Democratic, 39% as independent, and 30% as Republican.

### *Party Identification*

	<b>Republican</b>	<b>Independent</b>	<b>Democrat</b>
	%	%	%
LGBT	13	43	44
Non-LGBT	30	39	32

Gallup Daily tracking  
June 1-Sept. 30, 2012

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These results are based on the largest analysis of the LGBT community in the U.S. on record, consisting of 121,290 Gallup Daily tracking interviews conducted between June 1 and Sept. 30, 2012. Respondents were asked in each survey if they personally identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual,

or transgender. Overall, 3.4% of Americans said "yes."

While these results confirm that many in the LGBT community initially identify their partisanship as independent, many of these independents lean toward Democratic identity. The combined measure, which takes into account leaned party identification, shows that 65% of LGBT Americans identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party, while 21% identify with or lean toward the Republican, leaving 13% as "pure" independents who do not lean one way or the other. Among the overall U.S. population, 44% identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party, while 42% identify with or lean toward the Republican. Twelve percent are pure independents.

### One in Five LGBT Americans Are Conservative

While 45% of LGBT individuals describe their political views as liberal or very liberal, one in five (20%) describe themselves as conservative or very conservative. Among non-LGBT Americans, 23% say they are liberal, and two in five (39%) say they are conservative. LGBT and non-LGBT individuals are almost equally likely to think of themselves as moderate (35% and 38%, respectively).

#### *Political Ideology*

	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Liberal</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
LGBT	20	35	45
Non-LGBT	39	38	23

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### LGBT Supporters Strongly Prefer Obama for President

Because of the relatively small percentage of the population who identify as LGBT, it is not possible to track their voting preferences on a daily or weekly basis. However, the voting preferences of LGBT Americans across the broad June-September sample provide an opportunity to look at the general voting patterns of this group in the 2012 election cycle.

Given the strong Democratic tilt of the LGBT population, it is not surprising that registered voter preferences of LGBT Americans tilt strongly -- but not monolithically -- toward Barack Obama. Specifically, 71% of LGBT Americans who are registered voters support Obama, while 22% support Mitt Romney.

From June to September, non-LGBT registered voters preferred Romney to Obama by one percentage point, 47% to 46%. Overall, among all registered voters, Obama was slightly ahead of Romney (47% to 45%) during the same period, supporting the argument that in such a close election, the highly Democratic vote of the LGBT population -- although a small percentage of the overall electorate -- could be enough to swing the election toward Obama.

*Presidential Candidate Preferences*

	<b>Obama/ Lean Obama</b>	<b>Romney/ Lean Romney</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Neither</b>
	%	%	%	%
LGBT	71	22	1	3
Non-LGBT	46	47	1	3

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These basic results are generally consistent with exit polls suggesting LGBT individuals historically support Democratic presidential candidates. [Exit polling](#) from the 2008 presidential election, for example, showed that 70% of LGBT individuals voted for Obama, while 27% supported Sen. John McCain. [In 2004](#), exit polls showed that Democratic Sen. John Kerry received 77% of the LGBT vote, compared with 23% for President George. W. Bush. Democratic candidate Al Gore received 71% of the LGBT vote in [2000](#). Democrat Bill Clinton garnered 72% of the LGBT vote in [1992](#) and 66% in [1996](#). Gallup's data show that the 2012 voting patterns of LGBT Americans are likely to reflect the same general tendencies evident in previous elections.

**LGBT Americans Slightly Less Likely to Be Registered to Vote**

LGBT Americans are slightly less likely than their non-LGBT counterparts to say that they are registered and that they intend to vote. About three-fourths of LGBT individuals (74%) say they are registered or plan to register to vote, compared with 80% of non-LGBT men and women.

*Are you now registered to vote in your precinct or election district, or not?*

	<b>Registered/Plan to register</b>	<b>Not registered</b>
	%	%
LGBT	74	24
Non-LGBT	80	19

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Gallup asks voters to rank their intent to vote on a scale from 1 to 10, with "1" being certainty that they will not vote and "10" being certainty that they will vote. LGBT Americans are slightly less certain that they will definitely vote compared with non-LGBT individuals (75% vs. 81%, respectively).

#### *Intent to Vote*

##### **Definitely will vote**

	%
LGBT	75
Non-LGBT	81

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## Demographics of LGBT Voter Preferences Similar to the Overall Population's

The overall demographic patterns that are associated with the general population's preferences for Obama and Romney are also apparent within the LGBT population. LGBT Americans who support Romney tend to be older, white, more religious, and more likely to be married.

More specifically:

- Romney's LGBT supporters are nearly twice as likely as Obama's LGBT supporters to be seniors aged 65 or older (19% vs. 10%, respectively).
- Nearly nine in 10 LGBT Romney supporters (87%) are white, compared with two-thirds of LGBT Obama supporters (66%).
- Nearly two-thirds of LGBT Romney supporters (63%) say that religion is important to them, and more than 45% say that they attend a church, synagogue, or mosque at least once a month. Among LGBT Obama supporters, 43% say religion is important to them, and 31% go to church at least once a month.
- Nearly half of LGBT Romney supporters (49%) are married or living with a partner, compared with 39% of Obama LGBT supporters.

## LGBT Individuals Tend to Approve of Obama

Sixty-eight percent of LGBT Americans approved of the way Obama was doing his job as president during the June-September survey period, compared with 45% of non-LGBT Americans. Twenty-eight percent of LGBT Americans disapproved of the way Obama was doing

his job, compared with 51% of non-LGBT individuals.

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?*

	<b>Approve</b>	<b>Disapprove</b>	<b>Don't know/Refused</b>
	%	%	%
LGBT	68	28	4
Non-LGBT	45	51	4

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## Implications

While LGBT voting preferences reveal a clear liberal tilt toward Democratic candidates, LGBT voters are not a totally monolithic political group, with 22% indicating support for Republican candidate Romney, 20% identifying as conservative, and 56% identifying as independent (43%) or Republican (13%). Notably, LGBT Americans who express more conservative and Republican political preferences share many of the traits common to other Americans with those political views. They tend to be older, white, and more religious.

Still, the fact that roughly seven in 10 LGBT voters can be expected to vote for Obama on Nov. 6 shows that these voters could be an important factor in helping him win re-election in a close race.

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### SURVEY METHODS

Results are based on telephone interviews conducted as part of the Gallup Daily tracking survey June 1-Sept. 30, 2012, with a random sample of 121,290 adults, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, selected using random-digit-dial sampling.

For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is  $\pm 1$  percentage point.

Interviews are conducted with respondents on landline telephones and cellular phones, with interviews conducted in Spanish for respondents who are primarily Spanish-speaking. Each sample includes a minimum quota of 400 cell phone respondents and 600 landline respondents per 1,000 national adults, with additional

minimum quotas among landline respondents by region. Landline telephone numbers are chosen at random among listed telephone numbers. Cell phone numbers are selected using random-digit-dial methods. Landline respondents are chosen at random within each household on the basis of which member had the most recent birthday.

Samples are weighted by gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education, region, adults in the household, and phone status (cell phone only/landline only/both, cell phone mostly, and having an unlisted landline number). Demographic weighting targets are based on the March 2011 Current Population Survey figures for the aged 18 and older non-institutionalized population living in U.S. telephone households. All reported margins of sampling error include the computed design effects for weighting and sample design.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

For more details on Gallup's polling methodology, visit <http://www.gallup.com/>.

RELEASE DATE: October 18, 2012

SOURCE: Gallup <https://news.gallup.com/poll/158102/lgbt-americans-skew-democratic-largely-support-obama.aspx>

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