

March 15, 2011

Voters Find Republican Defense of DOMA Unfair and Unnecessary

Findings from a national survey

To: Interested Parties

From: Greenberg Quinlan Rosner

Speaker Boehner and the House Republicans' decision to defend the Defense of Marriage Act violates their campaign promises of focusing on the economy and defies the will of a majority of American voters.

A new, national survey conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and sponsored by the Human Rights Campaign shows that a majority of voters oppose the Defense of Marriage Act and are highly critical of the new Republican majority, particularly when it comes to "focusing on issues important to the American people."

The following memo is based on a national survey of 800 registered voters¹ nationwide conducted between March 8 and March 10, 2011. It carries a margin of error of +/- 3.46 points.

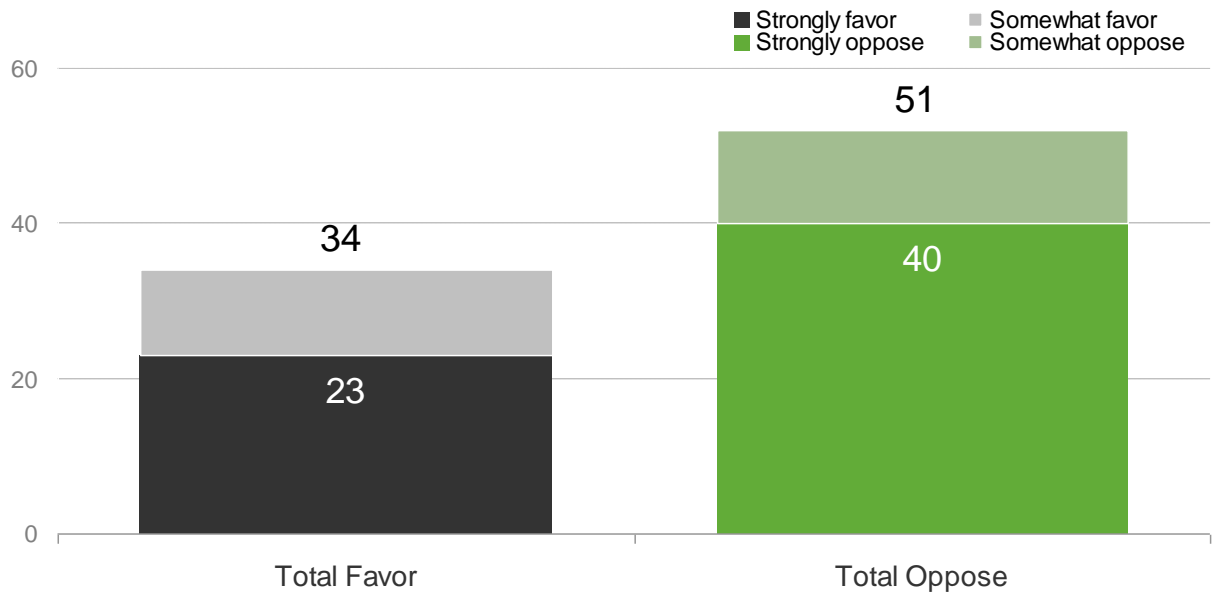
Voters Oppose DOMA and Republican Decision to Defend It

Overall, 51 percent oppose a Defense of Marriage Law that prohibits federal recognition of legally performed marriages. Just 34 percent favor. Independent voters, who were so instrumental in delivering the House to the Republicans in the 2010 elections, oppose this law by a 52 to 34 margin. Republicans divide nearly evenly (45 percent favor, 44 percent oppose), with nearly half disagreeing with their House leadership.

¹ This includes 100 cell phone interviews and 700 interviews conducted on a landline.

Figure 1: Majority Oppose Defense of Marriage Act

As you may know, the Defense of Marriage Act passed in 1996 and FORBIDS the federal government from recognizing marriages between gay and lesbian couples legally performed in states where such marriages are legally permitted. Generally speaking, do you favor or oppose the law banning federal recognition of legal marriages?



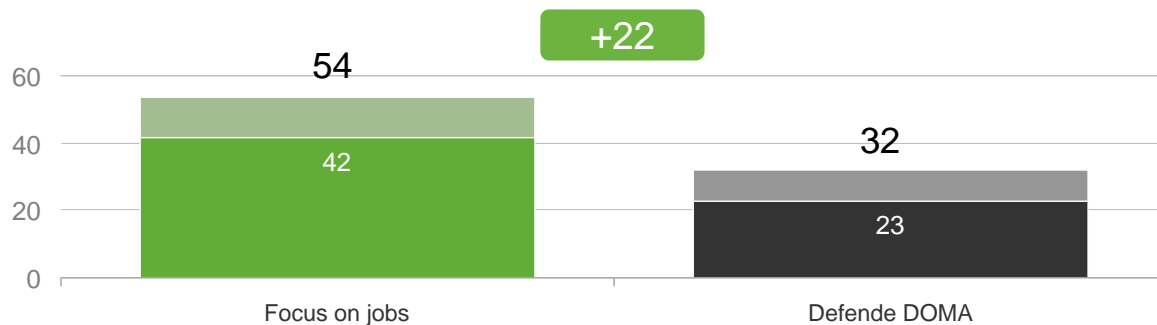
When provided two fair arguments that reflect current statements on both sides, voters oppose the Republican decision to defend the Defense of Marriage Act by a definitive 22-point margin.

Figure 2: Voters Oppose Republican Decision to Defend DOMA

As you may have heard, some courts have declared the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional. The Obama administration agrees and will no longer defend this law in court. However, Republicans in Congress have decided to take over legal responsibilities for defending this law. Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view when it comes to this action.

Statement 1: in the 2010 elections, the Republicans promised to focus on jobs and cutting the deficit. Since coming into office, Republican Leaders have said on numerous occasions that fixing the economy should be their number one priority. Now, instead of focusing on jobs, they will divert taxpayer money and countless hours trying to score political points and divide the country. We need Congress to focus on jobs.

Statement 2: the Obama administration is constitutionally required to defend laws duly passed by the U.S. Congress and signed by previous Presidents. When it failed to do so, Congress was forced to step in. Marriage is between a man and a woman and voters in 31 states have voted to support traditional marriage. Congress should defend the Defense of Marriage Act.



Once again, a significant number of Republican voters disagree with their leadership (43 percent first statement, 41 percent second statement), as do a majority of independents (54 percent first statement, 31 percent second statement), blue collar men (56 percent first statement, 32 percent second statement) and Catholics (51 percent first statement, 36 percent second statement).

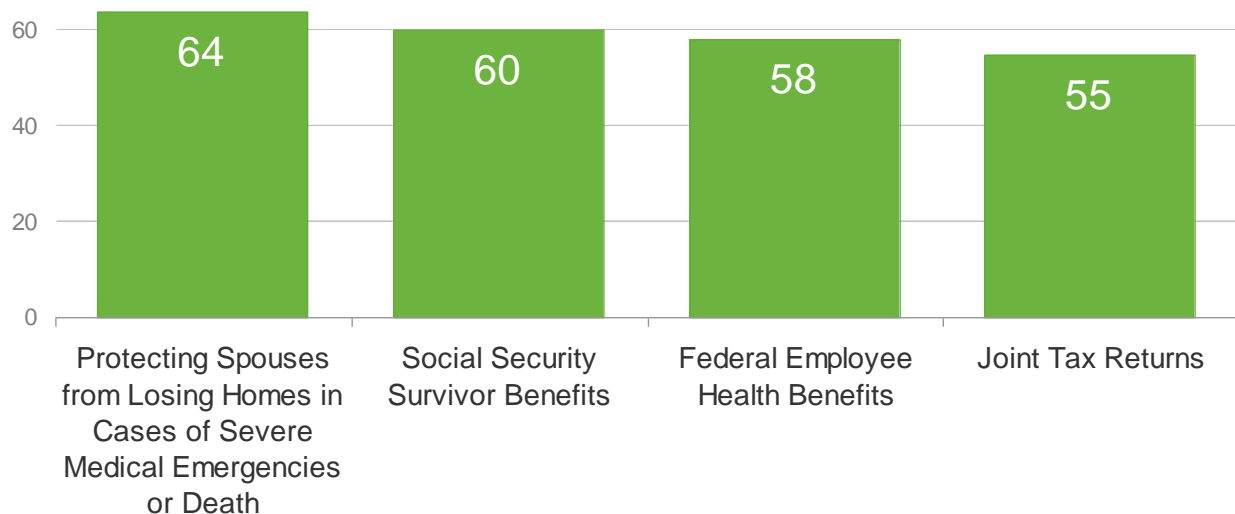
Voters Support Providing Federal Benefits to Gay Married Couples

Drilling down to specific benefits married couples enjoy under federal law, a majority support providing the same benefits to gay and lesbian couples who are legally married. Some of the benefits tested in this survey include tax benefits, Social Security survivor benefits, federal employee benefits, and protecting spouses from losing their homes in cases of severe medical emergencies of death.²

² Federal law protects married couples from facing insurmountable tax burdens when a spouse faces serious illness or dies. Without those protections, a legally married same-sex couple can lose their home and/or any retirement savings to meet those obligations.

Figure 3: Voters Support Extending the Benefits of Marriage to Same Sex Couples

I am going to read you some benefits married couples enjoy under federal law. Please tell me if you favor or oppose the following benefits for gay and lesbian couples who have been legally married. (PERCENT FAVOR)

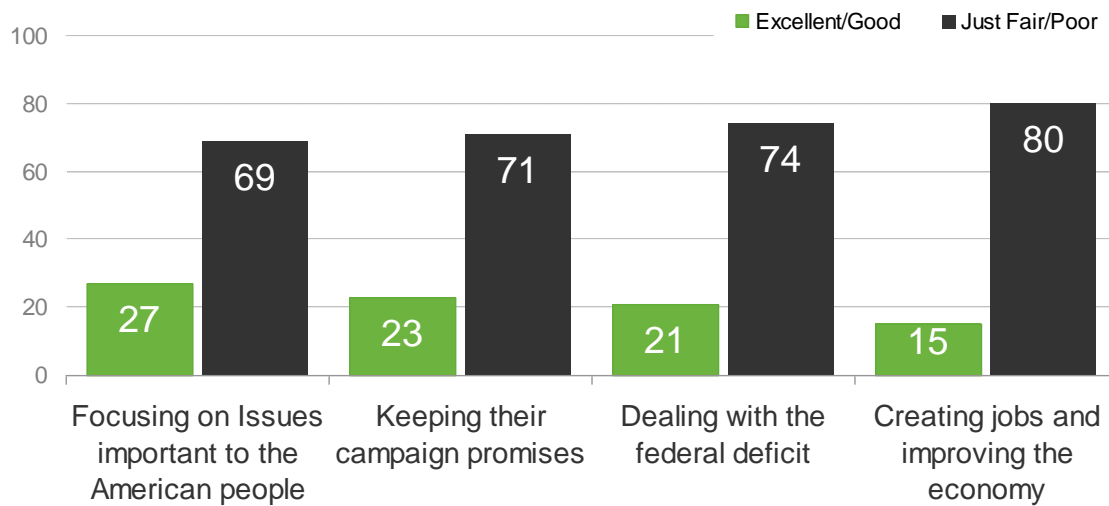


Voters Unimpressed With Republican Majorities Performance or Priorities

A plurality of voters already disapprove of the way the Republicans in Congress are handling their job in charge of the House of Representatives: 42 percent approve, 45 percent disapprove. These results do not improve among independent voters (41 percent approve, 44 percent disapprove), non-college voters (37 percent, 46 percent) or seniors (39 percent, 41 percent), voters largely responsible for their majority. Given the results above, it should not be entirely surprising to see that voters are critical of the new majority on “focusing on issues important to the American people.” The issue now most important to the American people is jobs, where voters give a blistering 80 percent negative, 47 percent “poor” job performance rating to the Republican majority in the House of Representatives.

Figure 4: Republican Job Performance

I am going to read you a series of jobs of the U.S. Congress. For each one I read, please tell me whether you believe the Republican majority in the House of Representatives is doing an excellent job, a good job, a just fair job or a poor job.



Conclusion

For voters, this is not only a matter of priorities, but it is also a matter of fairness. A law that prohibits the federal government from recognizing legal marriages is unnecessary, unfair and un-American.