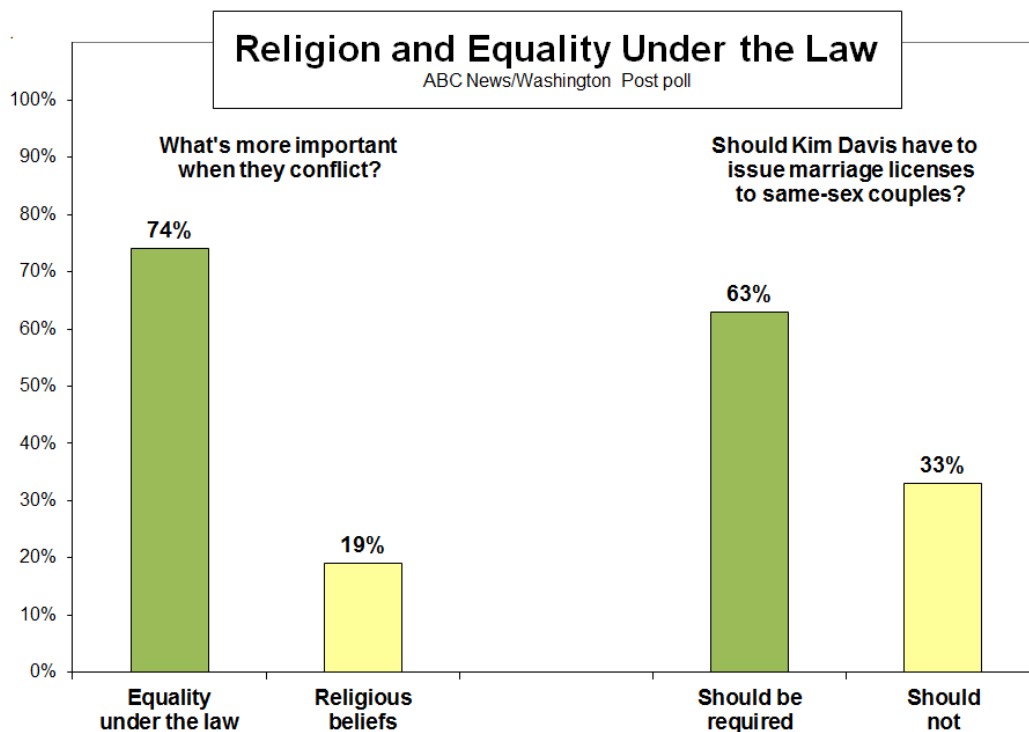


Equal Treatment Prevails in Views on Gay Marriage

Most Americans say equality under the law trumps individual religious beliefs – a view that leads to broad support for requiring recalcitrant County Clerk Kim Davis to issue marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples.

In general, 74 percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll say that when a conflict arises, the need to treat everyone equally under the law is more important than someone’s religious beliefs. In the specific case at hand, 63 percent say Davis, of Rowan County, Kentucky, should be required to issue marriage licenses despite her religious objections.



Davis was jailed briefly by a federal judge for refusing to obey his order to issue marriage license to gays and lesbians, as required by the Supreme Court’s decision on this matter in June. She was released after others in her office began issuing the licenses.

Among those who say Davis should be required to issue the licenses, 72 percent also favor the decision by U.S. District Judge David Bunning to jail her. That’s less than a majority of the public overall, however: Forty-five percent both say she should have to issue the licenses and

support her jailing; 16 percent agree she should have to issue the licenses but oppose her being jailed; and 33 percent oppose her having to issue the licenses in the first place.

Davis was released last week, shortly before this survey, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), was fielded, after spending five days in jail for contempt. Upon her return to work Monday she did not prevent a deputy clerk from issuing a license to a lesbian couple.

Views on the line between religious beliefs and equality under the law are linked to preferences on this issue, but not exclusively. Among those who emphasize legal equality over religious beliefs, 74 percent say Davis should have to issue the licenses. Among those who see religious beliefs as more important, just 28 percent agree.

Majorities of Americans have supported gay marriage in ABC/Post polls consistently since 2011, with six in 10 saying so as recently as April. Opinions on the Supreme Court ruling were more closely divided, 52-44 percent in favor, in an ABC/Post poll in July.

GROUPS – Majorities prioritize legal equality over religious beliefs across many groups, including gender, age, race, education, income and region. Equality also prevails across party and ideological lines, save for “strong” conservatives and evangelical white Protestants, both of whom divide about evenly on the question.

Further, majorities of evangelical white Protestants and strong conservatives (61 and 66 percent, respectively) say Davis should not be required to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. That view also is more prevalent – without reaching majorities – among Republicans, those with less education and lower-income Americans, compared with their counterparts.

Support for the further step of jailing Davis peaks among liberals, those who are financially better off, college graduates, younger adults, Democrats and those who are not religiously affiliated.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Sept. 7-10, 2015, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,003 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points, including the design effect. Partisan divisions are 33-22-35 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y. See details on the survey’s methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Gregory Holyk.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

Media contacts: [Van Scott](#), (212) 456-7243, or [Heather Riley](#), (212) 456-4396.

Full results follow.

* in data columns = less than 0.5 percent

1-6, 9-20 previously released; 7-8, 24-31 held for release.

21. In general, when there's a conflict between (someone's religious beliefs) and (the need to treat everyone equally under the law), which do you think is more important?

	Religious beliefs	Equal under the law	No opinion
9/10/15	19	74	6

22. As you may know, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that gay and lesbian couples have the right to marry. Nonetheless a county clerk in Kentucky has refused to issue marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples, saying she objects on religious grounds. Do you think this county clerk should or should not be required to issue marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples?

	Required to issue	Not required to issue	No opinion
9/10/15	63	33	4

23. (IF REQUIRED) A judge has sent this county clerk to jail for failing to comply with his order to issue these marriage licenses. Do you support or oppose the judge's action in this case?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
9/10/15	72	25	3

22/23 NET:

	NET	----- Required to issue ----- Support jail	Oppose jail	No opinion	Not required to issue	No opinion
9/10/15	63	45	16	2	33	4

*** END ***