



Opinion Poll

Small Business Owners Oppose Denying Services to LGBT Customers Based on Religious Beliefs

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Executive Summary

The topic of religious liberty and how it relates to business practices has been front and center in the media. And once again, small businesses are in the middle of the debate. New scientific polling shows entrepreneurs strongly believe small business owners should not be able to refuse goods or services to lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) individuals, or to deny services related to the wedding of a same-sex couple, based on an owner's religious beliefs.

A national scientific opinion poll conducted April 16-24, 2015 for Small Business Majority by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research found two-thirds of small businesses say business owners shouldn't be able to deny goods or services to someone who is LGBT based on that owner's religious beliefs. Even when asked about wedding-related services, 55% say they do not believe a business owner should be allowed to deny services to a same-sex couple based on the owner's religious beliefs. What's more, six in 10 small business owners oppose firing or refusing to hire someone who is LGBT based on the owner's religious beliefs.

As such, it should come as no surprise that nearly six in 10 (59%) say they would "oppose a law that allows any individual, association or business to legally refuse service to anyone based on religious belief."

In fact, the majority of small business owners support enacting additional protections for LGBT people that would ensure everyone receives equal access to public accommodations and employment, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Eight in 10 entrepreneurs support a federal law to protect LGBT individuals against discrimination in public accommodations, such as restaurants, hotels and other businesses that are open to the public. Nearly half (47%) *strongly favor* a federal law banning this type of discrimination. What's more, the majority of small employers support federal and state laws that would protect against employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

As these results make clear, our nation's biggest job creators support policies that are fair and inclusive to all employees and customers. It's important to note that respondents are largely made up of mom-and-pop type businesses, with 81% of respondents reporting that they have fewer than 10 employees and a quarter are in retail, retail services or the service industry.

Lastly, these outcomes cross ideological and religious divides, and in fact had a Republican plurality: 47% of small business owners identified as Republican or independent-lean Republican, 33% as Democratic or independent-lean Democratic and 19% as pure independent. Additionally, survey participants reported varied faith traditions: 27% regularly attend religious services. Out of those who identify as Christians, 25% identify as born-again or Evangelical Christian.

Main Findings

- **Majority of small businesses believe business owners should not be able to deny goods or services to someone based on their religious beliefs:** Two-thirds (66%) of small businesses say business owners shouldn't be able to deny goods or services to someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender based on the owner's religious beliefs. Forty-five percent strongly believe this. Additionally, 55% of Republican small businesses and 62% of Christian small business owners oppose denying goods or services based on an owner's religious beliefs.
- **Entrepreneurs agree business owners should not be able to deny services related to a wedding for same-sex couples based on the owner's religious beliefs:** Fifty-five percent of small business owners say they do not believe a business owner should be allowed to deny wedding-related services to a same-sex couple based on the owner's religious beliefs.
- **Small employers oppose firing or refusing to hire someone who is LGBT based on the owner's religious beliefs:** Six in 10 entrepreneurs say they do not believe a small business owner should be able to fire or refuse to hire someone who is LGBT based on the owner's religious beliefs.
- **Majority of entrepreneurs are against implementing laws that allow individuals, associations or businesses to legally refuse service to anyone based on religious beliefs:** Fifty-nine percent of small business owners say they would "oppose a law that allows any individual, association or business to legally refuse service to anyone based on religious belief." Nearly half of Republican respondents (45%) and 54% of Christian small business owners oppose these types of laws.
- **Vast majority of small business owners support laws banning discrimination against LGBT people in public accommodations and employment:** Eight in 10 entrepreneurs support a federal law to protect LGBT individuals against discrimination in public accommodations, such as restaurants, hotels and other businesses that are open to the public. Nearly half (47%) *strongly favor* a federal law banning this type of discrimination.
- **Respondents reflect a Republican plurality and cross religious divides:** 47% identified as Republican or independent-leaning Republican, 33% as Democrat or independent-leaning Democrat and 19% as pure independent; 27% of respondents regularly attend religious services and 25% of Christian small business owners identify as born-again or Evangelical Christian.

Small Business Owners Oppose Denying Services to LGBT Based on Religious Beliefs, Including Wedding Services to Same-Sex Couples

Polling found that two-thirds of small business owners say business owners should not be able to deny goods or services to someone who is LGBT based on the owner's religious beliefs. Nearly half (45%) of entrepreneurs *strongly* believe this.

Further analysis of respondents shows that 55% of Republican small businesses oppose denying goods or services based on an owner's religious beliefs. Additionally, 62% of small business owners who describe themselves as Christians, including 43% of born-again/Evangelical business owners, oppose these types of business practices.

■ **Figure 1: Small businesses believe business owners should not be able to deny goods or services to someone who is LGBT based on the owner's religious beliefs**

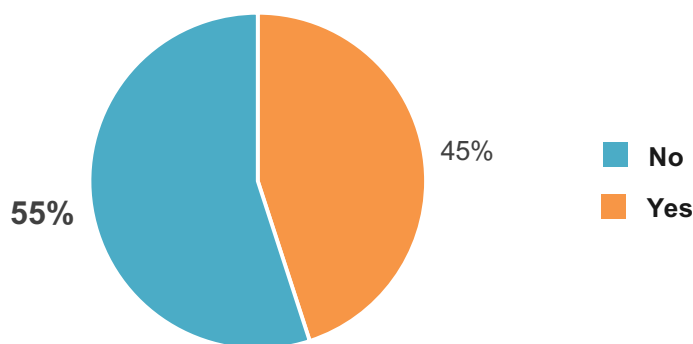
Do you believe that a business owner should be able to deny goods or service to someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender based on the owner's religious beliefs?



Even when asked specifically about wedding-related services, 55% of small businesses say they do not believe a business owner should be allowed to deny services to a same-sex couple based on the owner's religious beliefs.

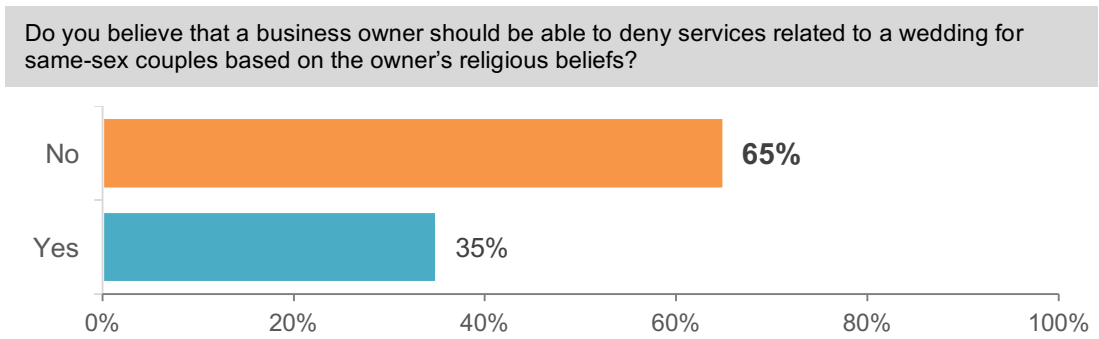
■ **Figure 2: Small businesses agree business owners should not be allowed to deny wedding services to a same-sex couple based on the owner's religious beliefs**

Do you believe that a business owner should be able to deny services related to a wedding for same-sex couples based on the owner's religious beliefs?



It's important to note that nearly one in four poll respondents are in the retail, retail services or service industries—industries that provide goods and services to all Americans, including services for weddings and wedding-related events. More than two-thirds (65%) of owners in these industries oppose denying services to LGBT individuals, including 48% who are strongly against it. And 53% of owners in these industries oppose denying wedding-related services to same-sex couples.

Figure 3: Small businesses in the retail, retail services or service industries oppose denying services to LGBT individuals, even in wedding-related services



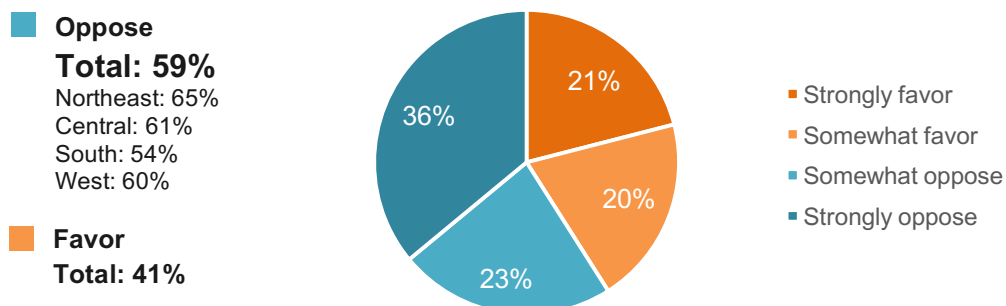
Entrepreneurs Oppose Laws Allowing Businesses to Deny Services Based on Religious Beliefs, Support Protections for LGBT in Public Accommodations

The majority of entrepreneurs oppose implementing laws that allow individuals and businesses to legally refuse service based on their religious beliefs. In fact, nearly six in 10 (59%) believe “it is wrong to allow businesses to discriminate against some groups of people even for religious reasons and businesses open to the public should not discriminate.” Only 41% believe “the religious rights of businesses should be protected and it is wrong to compel business owners to do something against their beliefs.”

Additionally, nearly half of Republican respondents (45%) and 54% of Christian small business owners say they would oppose laws allowing discrimination against some groups of people for religious reasons.

Figure 4: Majority of entrepreneurs oppose laws that would allow individuals, associations or businesses to legally refuse service to anyone based on religious beliefs

Some/other people say that it is wrong to allow businesses to discriminate against some groups of people even for religious reasons and businesses open to the public should not discriminate.
OR
Some/other people say the religious rights of business owners should be protected and it is wrong to compel business owners to do something against their beliefs.
Having read these statements, would you favor or oppose a law that allows any individual, association or business to legally refuse service to anyone based on religious belief?

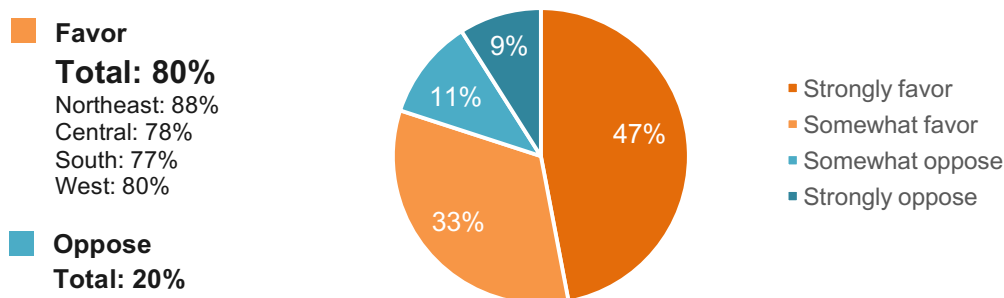


What's more, the majority of small businesses support enacting laws to protect LGBT people against discrimination. Eight in 10 entrepreneurs support a federal law to protect people who are LGBT against discrimination in public accommodations, such as restaurants, hotels and other businesses that are open to the public. Nearly half (47%) *strongly favor* a federal law banning this type of discrimination.

It's important to note that support for a law banning discrimination in public accommodations finds broad support across political ideology and religious beliefs: 72% of Republicans, 92% of Democrats and 79% of independents support such a law. Additionally, 77% of Christians, including 58% of born-again Christians, support a federal law banning discrimination against LGBT in public accommodations.

■ **Figure 5: Small businesses support a federal law to ban discrimination against LGBT people in public accommodations**

As you may know, federal law prohibits discrimination in places of public accommodations, such as restaurants, hotels, and other businesses that are open to the public, on the basis of race, national origin, religion, or disability. However, federal law does NOT explicitly protect someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Would you favor or oppose a federal law protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people from discrimination in places of public accommodations?



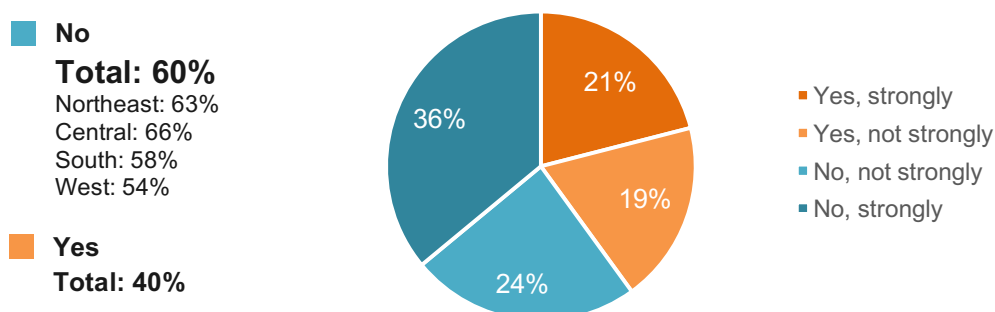
Small Businesses Oppose Firing LGBT Employees Based on Owner's Religious Beliefs

Small business owners are bottom line-oriented, and they know inclusive employment laws can help them attract and retain talented employees.¹ As such, the majority of small business owners in the poll oppose firing or refusing to hire LGBT employees based on an owner's religious beliefs.

In fact, six in 10 entrepreneurs agree this should not be permitted to occur, whether or not working with a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender employee conflicts with an employer's religious beliefs.

■ **Figure 6: Small employers oppose firing or refusing to hire someone who is LGBT based on the business owner's religious beliefs**

Do you believe that a small business owner should be able to fire or refuse to hire someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender based on the owner's religious beliefs?



Additionally, 55% of Christian small business owners oppose this, including one in three born-again/Evangelical Christian business owners, and half (47%) of small business owners who identify as Republican oppose firing or refusing to hire LGBT employees based on religious beliefs.

Small Business Owners Support Workplace Nondiscrimination Laws

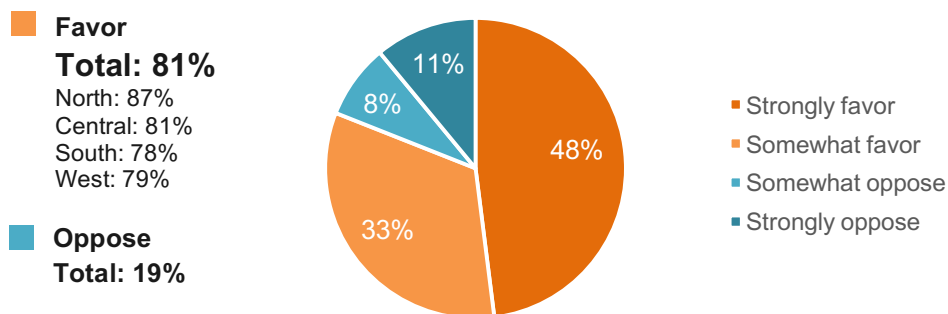
Small business owners believe in evaluating employees based on their skills and talent, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.² It should come as no surprise then that the overwhelming majority of small business owners say they would favor a federal law protecting LGBT individuals from discrimination when it comes to employment. In fact, more than eight in 10 (81%) say they would favor a federal law banning this type of discrimination in the workplace.

A federal nondiscrimination law finds broad support across party lines: 74% of Republicans, 93% of Democrats and 75% of independents support a federal law banning discrimination in the workplace against LGBT employees. Additionally, 77% of Christian small business owners, including six in 10 (61%) born-again/Evangelical business owners show support for this law.

Figure 7: Entrepreneurs support a federal law to ban discrimination against LGBT employees in the workplace

As you may know, federal law prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of gender, age, race, religion or disability. However, federal law does NOT explicitly protect someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

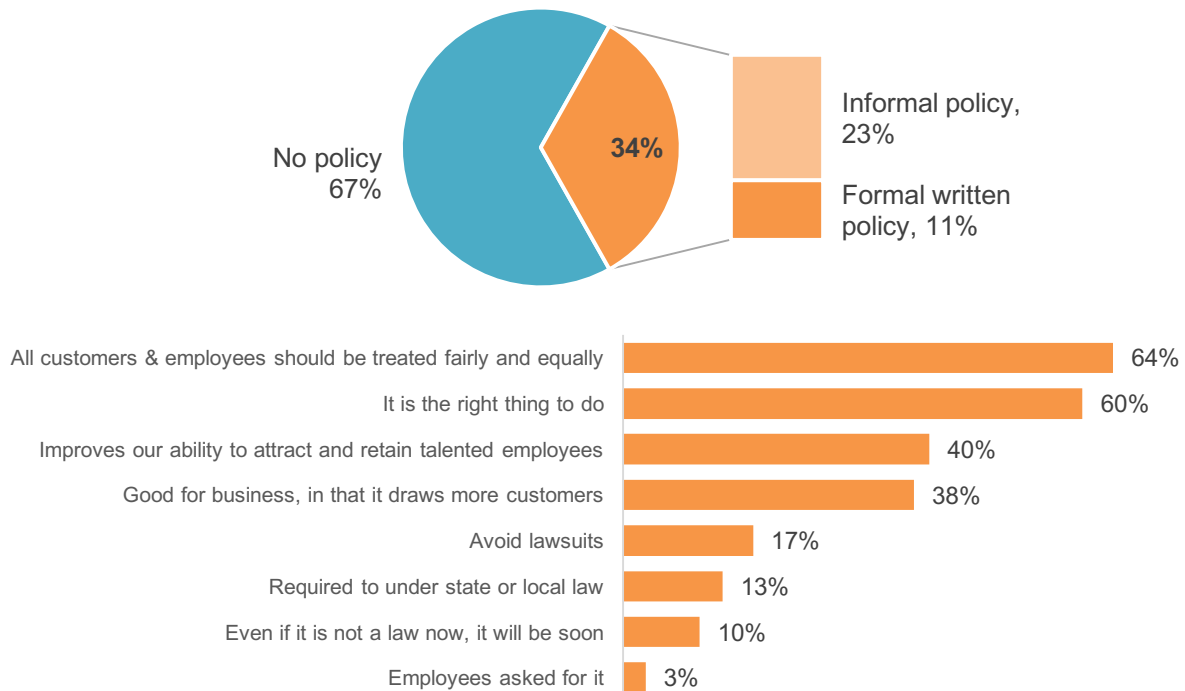
Would you favor or oppose a federal law protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people from discrimination when it comes to employment?



Additionally, many small business owners already have a workplace nondiscrimination policy in place because it helps them attract and retain talent and it's the right thing to do. In fact, one in three small business owners have a formal or informal policy protecting LGBT employees from discrimination in the workplace. Among the reasons employers with nondiscrimination policies have them, four in 10 report bottom line-oriented reasons including it improves their ability to attract and retain talented employees (40%) and it's good for business and helps draw in more customers (38%). Additionally, nearly two-thirds (64%) say they offer it because all employees and customers should be treated fairly and equally, and 60% say they believe it's the right thing to do for their employees.

Figure 8: Many entrepreneurs have a workplace nondiscrimination policy in place

Does your business have a policy, formal or informal, protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees from discrimination? If yes, which of the following best describes the reasons your company adopted a policy protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender employees from discrimination?



Conclusion

Small business owners believe employees and customers alike deserve to be treated fairly and equally, regardless of a business owner’s religious beliefs. These data show that small business owners don’t think it’s right for LGBT people to be turned away from a business for religious reasons, including wedding-related services. Additionally, small business owners in this poll recognize the importance of protecting their employees, and they know workplace nondiscrimination policies that protect LGBT employees make smart business sense, help attract and retain talent, and that they’re the right thing to do.

As a result, it should come as no surprise that the majority of small business owners in this poll, like the majority of Americans, oppose laws that would allow individuals or businesses to discriminate against any person based on someone’s religious beliefs, and they resoundingly favor laws protecting lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender people from discrimination in employment and public accommodations.³

Methodology

This poll reflects an Internet survey of 500 small business owners from around the country. The poll was conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner for Small Business Majority with a margin of error of +/-4.38%. The survey was conducted from April 16-24, 2015.

¹ The Williams Institute (May 2013). *The Business Impact of LGBT-Supportive Workplace Policies*. <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/workplace/business-impact-of-lgbt-policies-may-2013/>

² Small Business Majority (June 4, 2013). *Small Businesses Support Workplace Nondiscrimination Policies*. <http://www.smallbusinessmajority.org/small-business-research/workforce/workplace-nondiscrimination/index.php>

³ Reuters/Ipsos (April 9, 2015). Poll: Businesses should not be allowed to discriminate (by refusing services or a job) because of their religious beliefs. http://polling.reuters.com/#!response/TM535Y15_3/type/smallest/dates/20150401-20150409/collapsed/false

Poll Toplines

Small Business Majority - Employment and Public Accommodations for LGBT Poll
500 Small Business Owners Nationwide

Q.1 Do you own or co-own your own business?

	Total
Yes.....	100
No	-
Not sure	-

Q.2 How many people are directly employed by your business or company, including yourself?

	Total
1.....	21
2-5.....	45
6-10.....	15
11-25.....	11
26-50	6
51-100	2
More than 100	-

Q.3 Which ONE of the following categories best describes your business?

	Total
Retail.....	13
Service industry.....	9
Real estate	7
Construction	6
Administrative support and accounting	5
Finance and insurance	5
Whole sale trade.....	5
Retail services.....	4
Arts, entertainment and recreation	3
Information technology	3
Manufacturing.....	3
Restaurant	3
Scientific and technical services	3
Transportation	3
Agriculture.....	2
Legal	1
Medical or dental	0
Other.....	26
Prefer not to say	-

Q.4 As you may know, federal law prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of gender, age, race, religion, or disability. However, federal law does NOT explicitly protect someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Would you favor or oppose a federal law protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people from discrimination when it comes to employment?

	Total
Strongly favor	48
Somewhat favor.....	33
Somewhat oppose	8
Strongly oppose.....	11
Not sure	-
Total Favor.....	81
Total Oppose	19
Favor - Oppose	61

Q.5 As you may also know, federal law prohibits discrimination in places of public accommodations, such as restaurants, hotels, and other businesses that are open to the public, on the basis of race, national origin, religion, or disability. However, federal law does NOT explicitly protect someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Would you favor or oppose a federal law protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people from discrimination in places of public accommodations?

	Total
Strongly favor	47
Somewhat favor.....	33
Somewhat oppose	11
Strongly oppose.....	9
Not sure	-
Total Favor.....	80
Total Oppose	20
Favor - Oppose	60

Q.6 Do you believe that a small business owner should be able to fire or refuse to hire someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender based on the owner's religious beliefs?

	Total
Yes, strongly	21
Yes, not strongly.....	19
No, not strongly.....	24
No, strongly	36
Not sure	-
Total Yes	40
Total No	60
Yes - No	-19

Q.7 Do you believe that a business owner should be able to deny goods or service to someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender based on the owner's religious beliefs?

	Total
Yes, strongly	17
Yes, not strongly.....	17
No, not strongly.....	21
No, strongly	45
Not sure	0
Total Yes	34
Total No	66
Yes - No	-32

Q.8 Do you believe that a business owner should be able to deny services related to a WEDDING for same-sex couples based on the owner's religious beliefs?

	Total
Yes, strongly	25
Yes, not strongly.....	20
No, not strongly.....	19
No, strongly	37
Not sure	-
Total Yes	45
Total No	55
Yes - No	-11

Q.9 Now, please read some more information about this issue.

SOME/OTHER people say that it is wrong to allow businesses to discriminate against some groups of people even for religious reasons and businesses open to the public should not discriminate.

OR

SOME/OTHER people say the religious rights of business owners should be protected and it is wrong to compel business owners to do something against their beliefs.

Having read these statements, would you favor or oppose a law that allows any individual, association or business to legally refuse service to anyone based on religious belief?

	Total
Strongly Favor	21
Somewhat Favor.....	20
Somewhat Oppose.....	23
Strongly Oppose	36
Not sure	-
Total Favor.....	41
Total Oppose	59
Favor - Oppose	-18

Q.10 Does your business have a policy, formal or informal, protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees from discrimination?

	Total
Yes, a formal written policy	11
Yes, an informal policy.....	23
No, no policy.....	67
Not sure	-
Total Yes	33

Q.11 (IF YES ON POLICY1) Which of the following best describes the reasons your company adopted a policy protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender employees from discrimination? You may mark as many responses as you want. [166 Respondents]

	Total
All customers and employees should be treated fairly and equally	64
It is the right thing to do	60
Improves our ability to attract and retain talented employees.....	40
Good for business, in that it draws more customers.....	38
Avoid lawsuits	17
Required to under state or local law	13
Even if it is not a law now, it will be soon.....	10
Employees asked for it	3
Not sure	1

Q.12 In what year were you born?

	Total
18 - 24	2
25 - 29.....	2
30 - 34.....	5
35 - 39.....	8
40 - 44	10
45 - 49.....	11
50 - 54.....	13
55 - 59	16
60 - 64	15
65 and over	16
(No answer)	2

Q.13 Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

	Total
Strong Democrat	13
Weak Democrat	8
Independent-lean Democrat.....	12
Independent	19
Independent-lean Republican	18
Weak Republican	14
Strong Republican.....	15
(Don't know/Refused).....	-

Q.14 For statistical purposes only, which of these categories best describes the gross revenue of your business in 2014?

	Total
Less than \$100,000	27
\$100,000 to under \$250,000	20
\$250,000 to under \$500,000	14
\$500,000 to under \$1 million	11
\$1 million to under \$2 million	8
\$2 million or under \$5 million	6
\$5 million or more	3
Don't know	1
Prefer not to say	10

Q.15 For statistical purposes only, which of these categories best describes your family's personal income including any pass through income from your business in 2014?

	Total
Less than \$50,000	19
\$50,000 to under \$100,000	34
\$100,000 to under \$250,000	27
\$250,000 to under \$1 million.....	4
\$1 million or more.....	2
Don't know	1
Prefer not to say	13

Q.16 Do you currently have or have you had anyone in the past working for you that you know to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender?

	Total
Yes.....	31
No	46
Not sure	23

Q.17 Do you think of yourself as...

	Total
Straight or heterosexual.....	94
Gay or lesbian.....	2
Bisexual.....	2
Transgender.....	0
Not listed above.....	0
Prefer not to say.....	2

Q.18 Do you consider yourself to be...

	Total
Protestant.....	21
Catholic.....	21
Jewish.....	8
Muslim/Islam.....	2
Mormon.....	2
Other Christian.....	21
Other non-Christian religion.....	2
Not affiliated or nothing in particular.....	10
Hindu.....	1
Atheist/agnostic.....	6
Unitarian/Universalist.....	1
Buddhist.....	2
Something else.....	4
Not sure.....	-

Q.19 (IF 1,2,5,6 OR 8 IN RELIG1A) Would you describe yourself as a born-again or Evangelical Christian, or not? [374 Respondents]

	Total
Yes.....	25
No.....	75
Not sure.....	-

Q.20 Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend church or other religious services?

	Total
More than once a week.....	9
Once a week.....	18
Once or twice a month.....	9
A few times a year.....	18
Seldom.....	27
Never.....	18
Not sure.....	-
Regular.....	27
Irregular.....	54

Q.21 Do issues of religion or faith-based principles play a major role in how you run your business, a minor role, not much of a role or no role at all?

	Total
Major role.....	18
Minor role.....	17
Not much of a role.....	19
No role at all.....	45
Not sure.....	-

Q.22 What is your race?

	Total
White	78
African American or Black	7
Hispanic or Latino.....	6
Asian or Pacific Islander	6
American Indian or Native American.....	1
Other.....	0
Biracial or multiracial	2
Prefer not to say	-

Q.23 What is your gender?

	Total
Male	60
Female	40

Q.24 In what state do you currently live?

AL.....	1	MT	-
AK	0	NE.....	0
AZ.....	4	NV.....	2
AR	1	NH	0
CA.....	12	NJ	2
CO	1	NM.....	-
CT.....	1	NY.....	6
DE	0	NC.....	3
DC	-	ND.....	0
FL.....	8	OH	3
GA	5	OK.....	2
HI.....	1	OR.....	2
ID	0	PA	5
IL.....	4	RI	-
IN	1	SC.....	1
IA.....	0	SD	-
KS.....	1	TN	2
KY.....	0	TX	7
LA.....	1	UT	1
ME.....	1	VT	0
MD	1	VA	1
MA.....	3	WA.....	3
MI.....	4	WV	1
MN	1	WI.....	2
MS.....	1	WY	-
MO	3		