

Almost Half in US Think Christian Wedding Businesses Should Be 'Required' to Service Gay Weddings

Should wedding-shop owners, bakeries, flower shops, photographers, bed-and-breakfasts and other businesses that serve consumers be forced to cater to same-sex couples who are getting married? This is one more area in which Americans are clearly divided.

According to a new Pew study, 49 percent say that wedding-related businesses should be "required" to offer services to **same-sex couples** the same as they would any other customer. That's just more than the 47 percent who say these businesses should be allowed to refuse services to same-sex couples for religious reasons.

Drilling down into the data, Pew reports that more men than women say that businesses should be allowed to refuse services for same-sex weddings for religious reasons (52 percent vs. 42 percent), and whites (52 percent) are more likely than either blacks (36 percent) or Hispanics (35 percent) to say the same.

Not surprisingly, Pew also notes a large generation gap on this issue. Sixty percent of Americans ages 65 and older say that wedding-related businesses should be able to decline to provide services for same-sex weddings, while 62 percent of adults under the age of 30 say that businesses should be required to provide services for same-sex weddings. Those between the ages of 30 and 64 are evenly divided on this question.

"Among religious groups, white evangelical Protestants express the strongest support for allowing businesses to refuse to

provide services for same-sex weddings (71 percent)," Pew reports. "At the other end of the spectrum, majorities of Hispanic Catholics (64 percent) and the religiously unaffiliated (61 percent) say businesses should be required to provide wedding services for same-sex couples, as do 59 percent of black Protestants. White Catholics and white mainline Protestants are more evenly split on this question."

Interestingly, the Pew survey makes a close connection between views of whether homosexual behavior is a sin and requiring businesses to provide services for **same-sex weddings**.

According to the report, among those who say homosexual behavior is a sin, 60 percent say that businesses should not be required to provide services for same-sex weddings. But among those who say homosexual behavior is not a sin, two-thirds say businesses should be required to service same-sex weddings.

"The view that homosexual behavior is sinful is most common among white evangelical Protestants (82 percent) and black Protestants (77 percent). By contrast, nearly three-quarters of religious 'nones' (72 percent) say that homosexual behavior is not sinful," the report reads. "White mainline Protestants and Catholics are more evenly divided about whether homosexual behavior is sinful."