

# Does Context Matter?

## Examining Californians' Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Marriage

Sonja Petek

*2010 Annual PAPOR Conference*



# PPIC Statewide Survey

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- Provide timely, nonpartisan public opinion data
- Inform and improve state policymaking
- Provide a voice for all Californians
  - 238,000+ Californians since 1998
- RDD telephone surveys
  - At least 2,000 California adults per survey
  - About 10 to 12 surveys per year
  - Cell phones: starting spring 2008; in all surveys since fall 2009
  - Multiple languages



# Outline

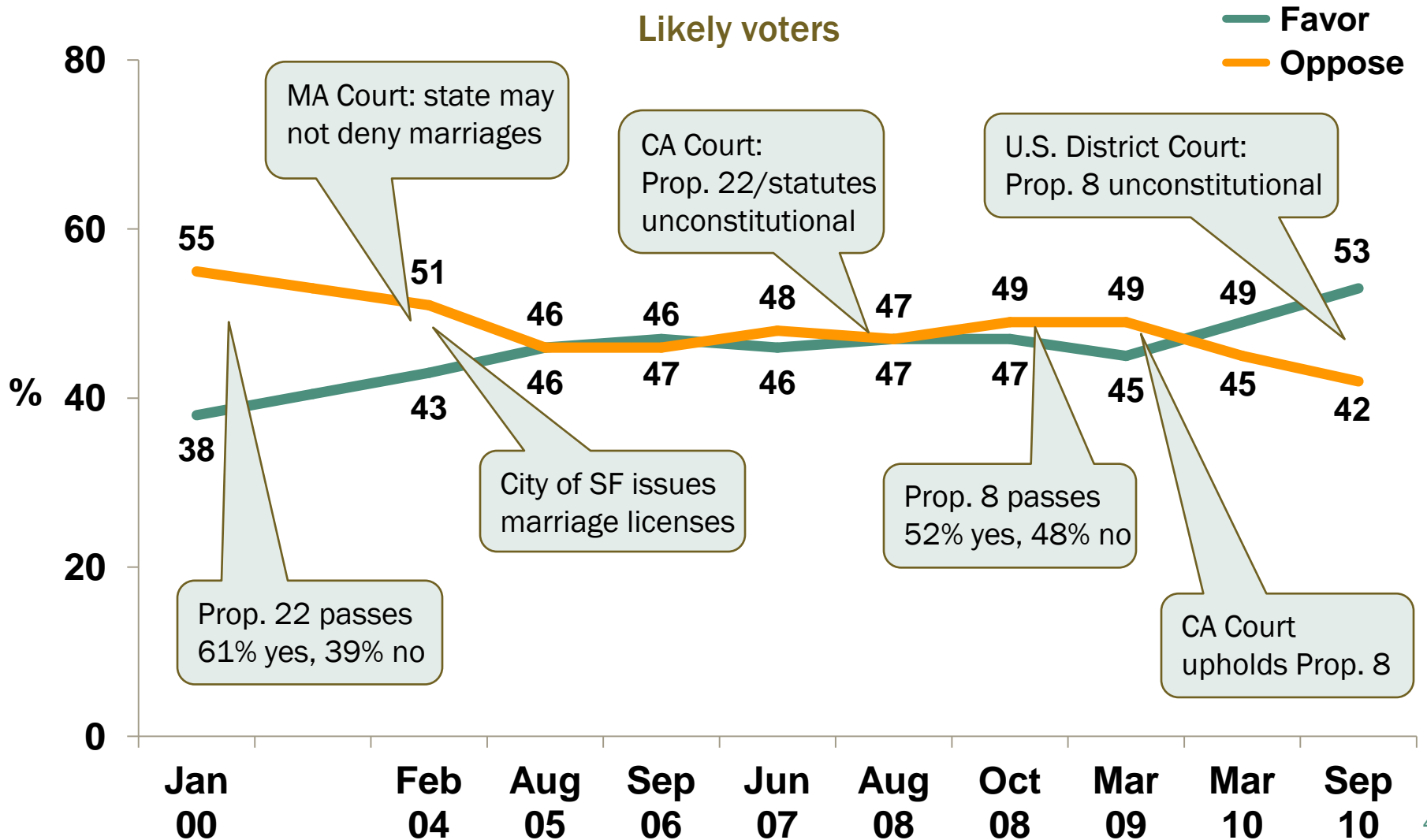
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- How do general attitudes differ from voting intentions and outcomes?
- How does item non-response compare to other issues?
- How does question order affect findings?



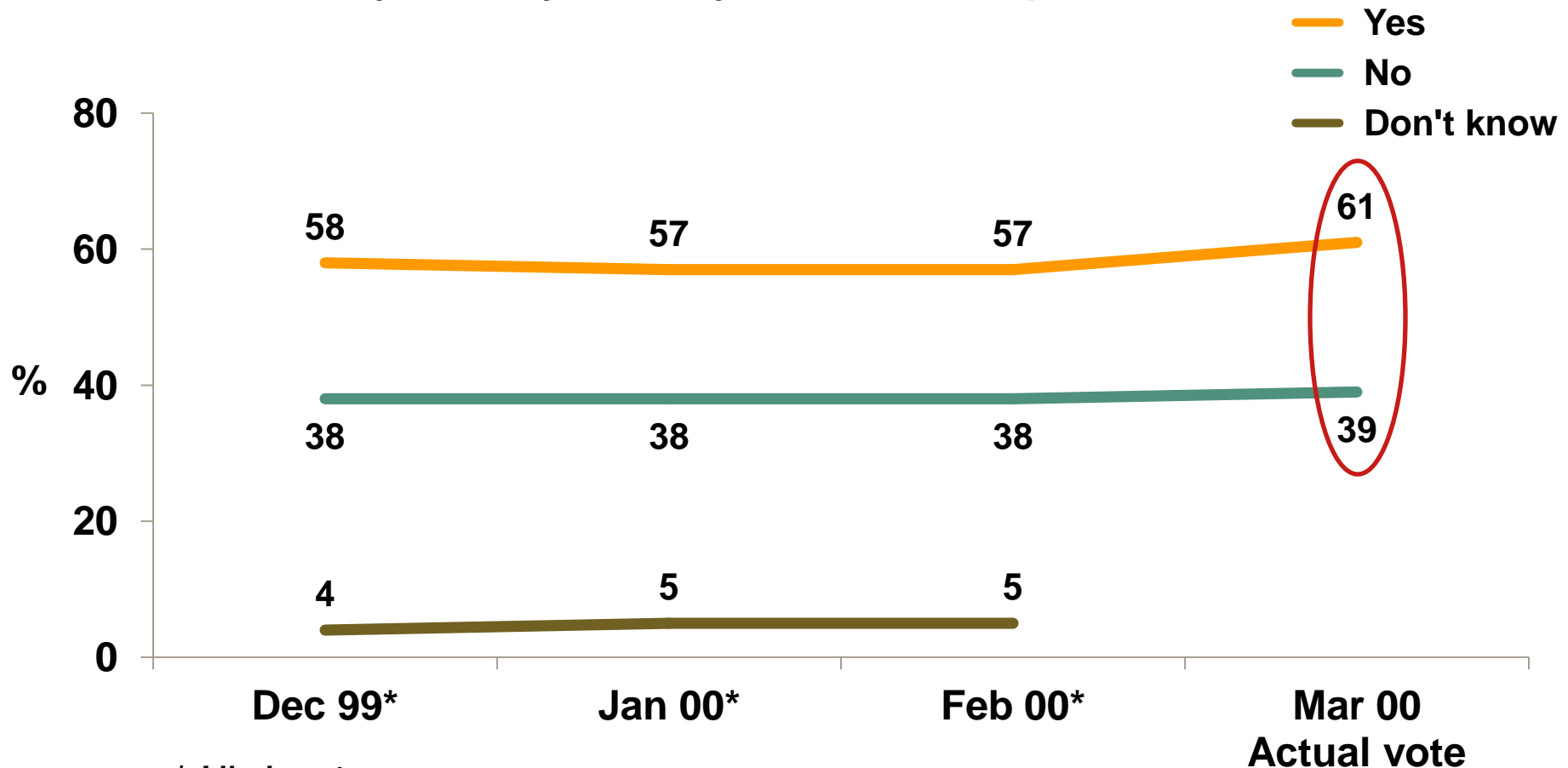
# General Attitudes Over Time

Do you favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to be legally married?

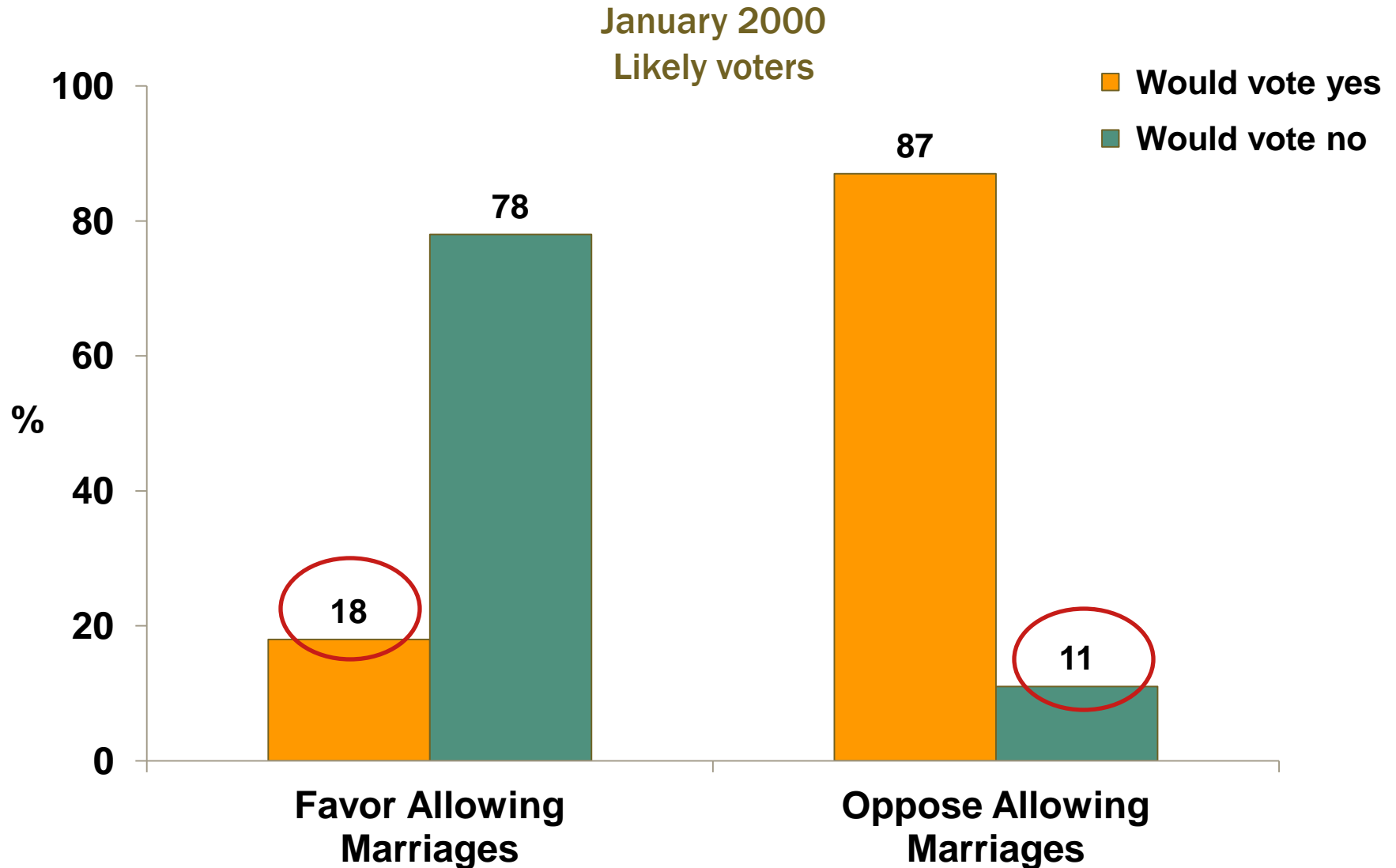


# 2000: Proposition 22

Proposition 22—the “Limit on Marriages” initiative on the March 2000 ballot—adds a provision to the family code providing that only a marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 22?

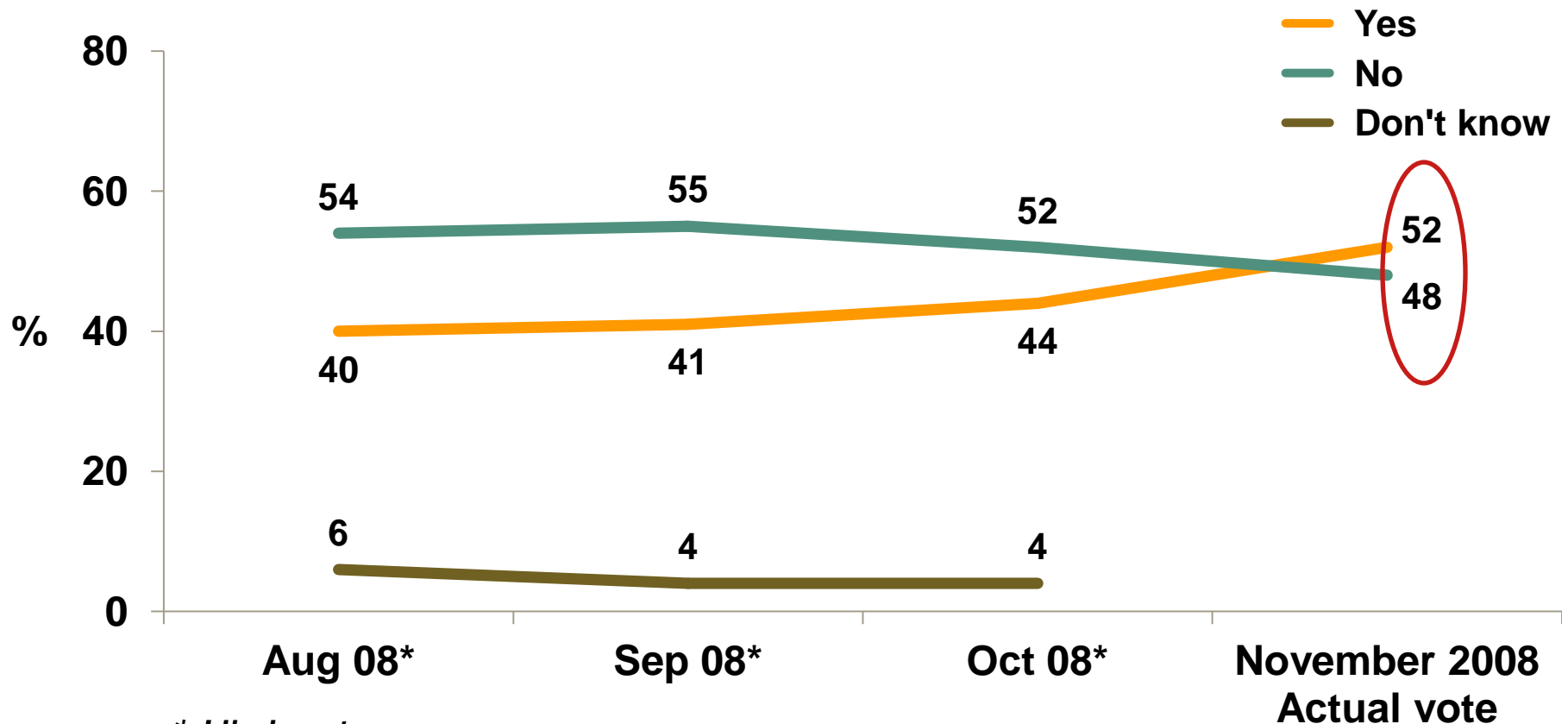


# Vote Intention by Attitudes



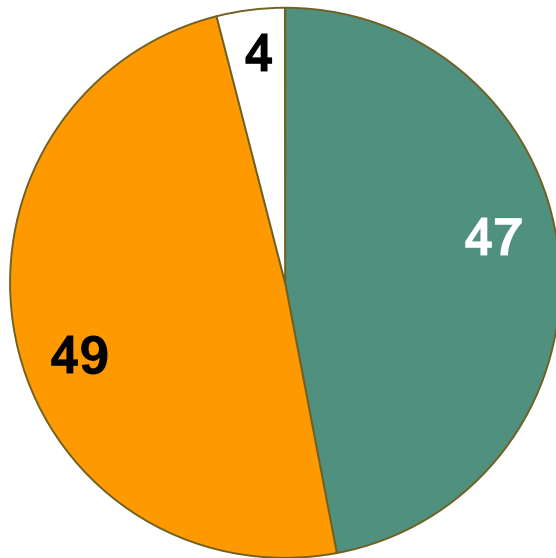
# 2008: Proposition 8

Proposition 8 is called the “Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry Initiative Constitutional Amendment.” It changes the California Constitution to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry. It provides that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California ...  
If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 8?



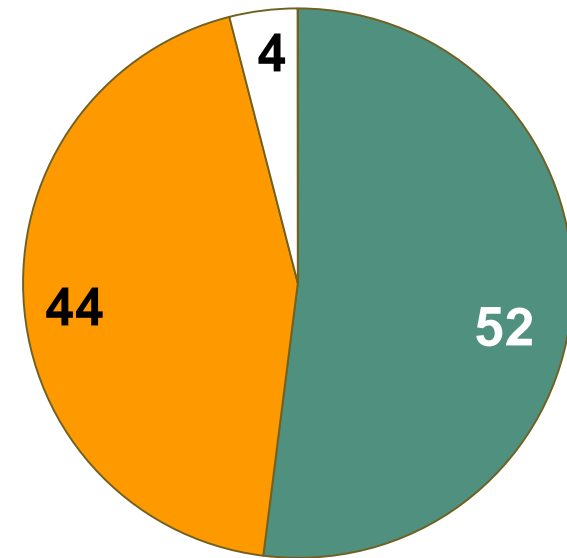
# October 2008: General Attitudes/Prop. 8

Do you favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to be legally married?



- Favor
- Oppose
- Don't know

... If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 8?

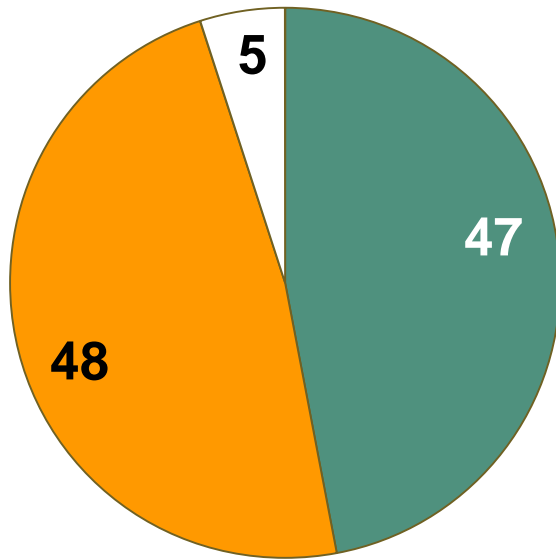


- No
- Yes
- Don't know

Likely voters

# December 2008: General Attitudes/Prop. 8

Do you favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to be legally married?

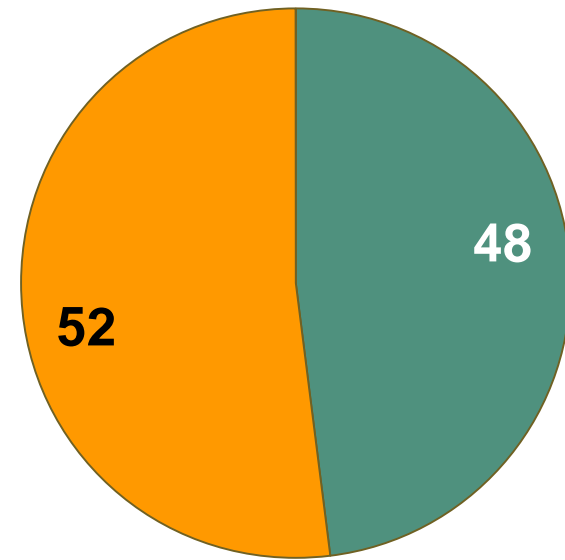


- Favor
- Oppose
- Don't know

... Did you vote yes or no on this measure?

*Actual vote*

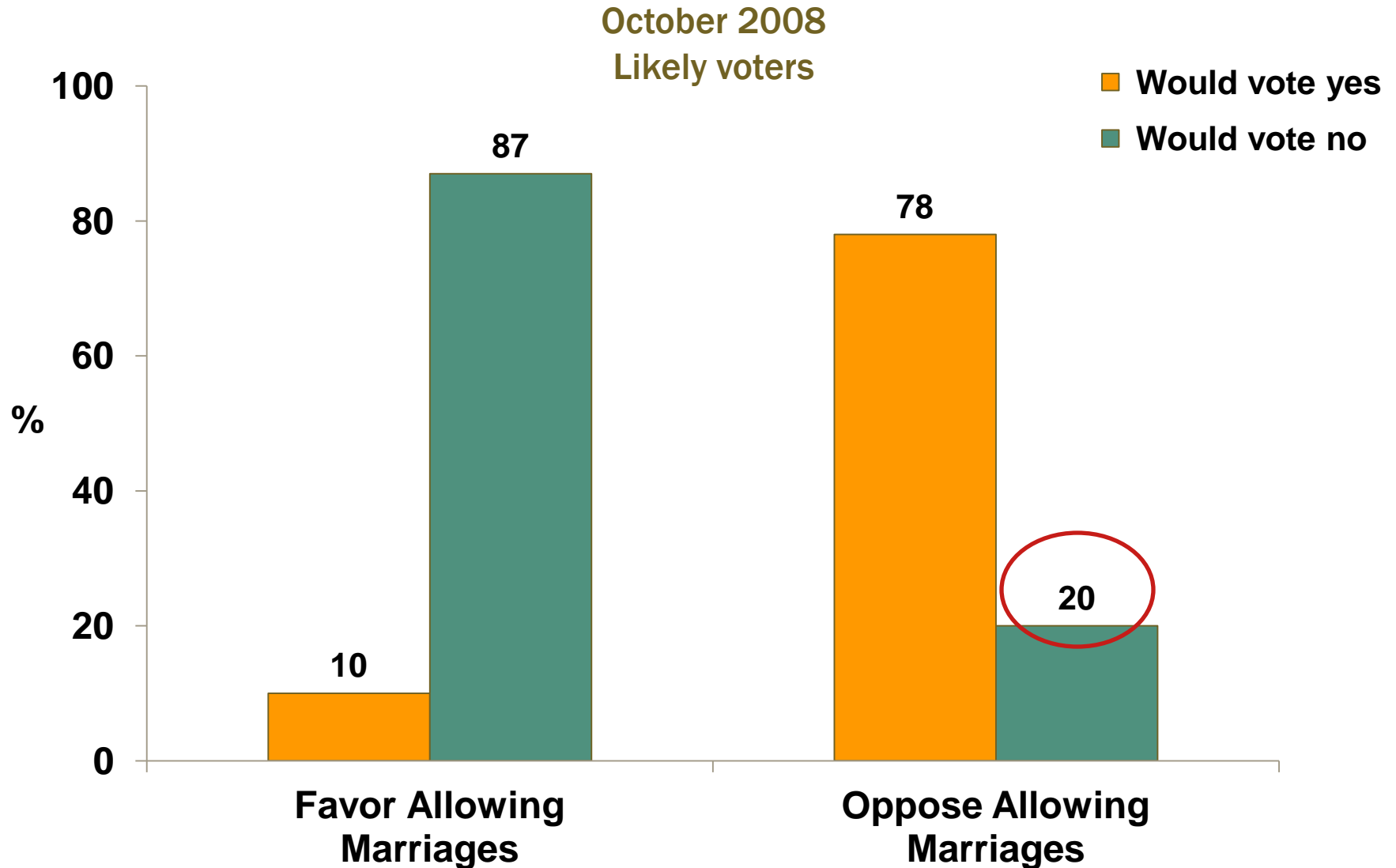
Election voters



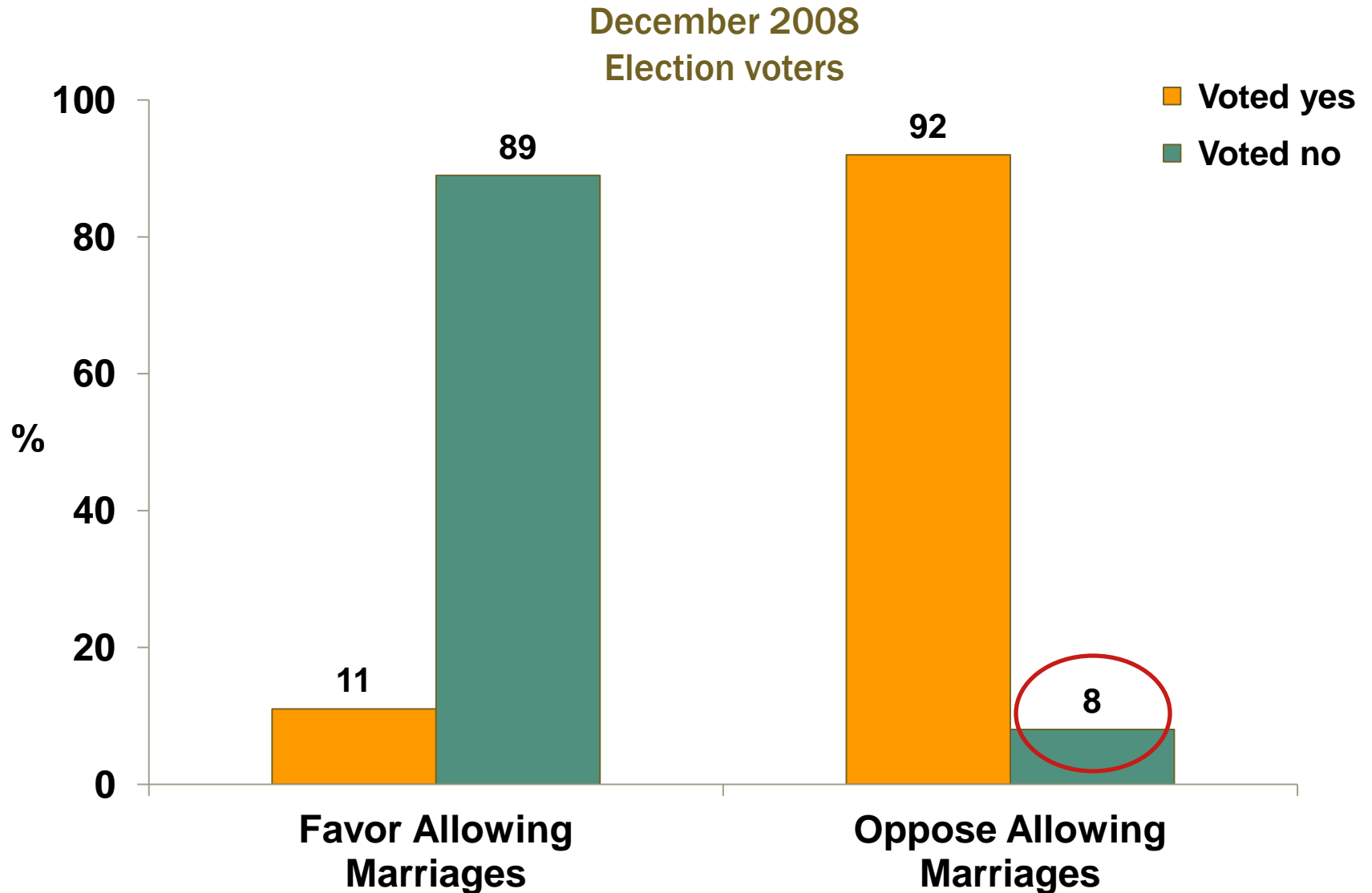
- No
- Yes



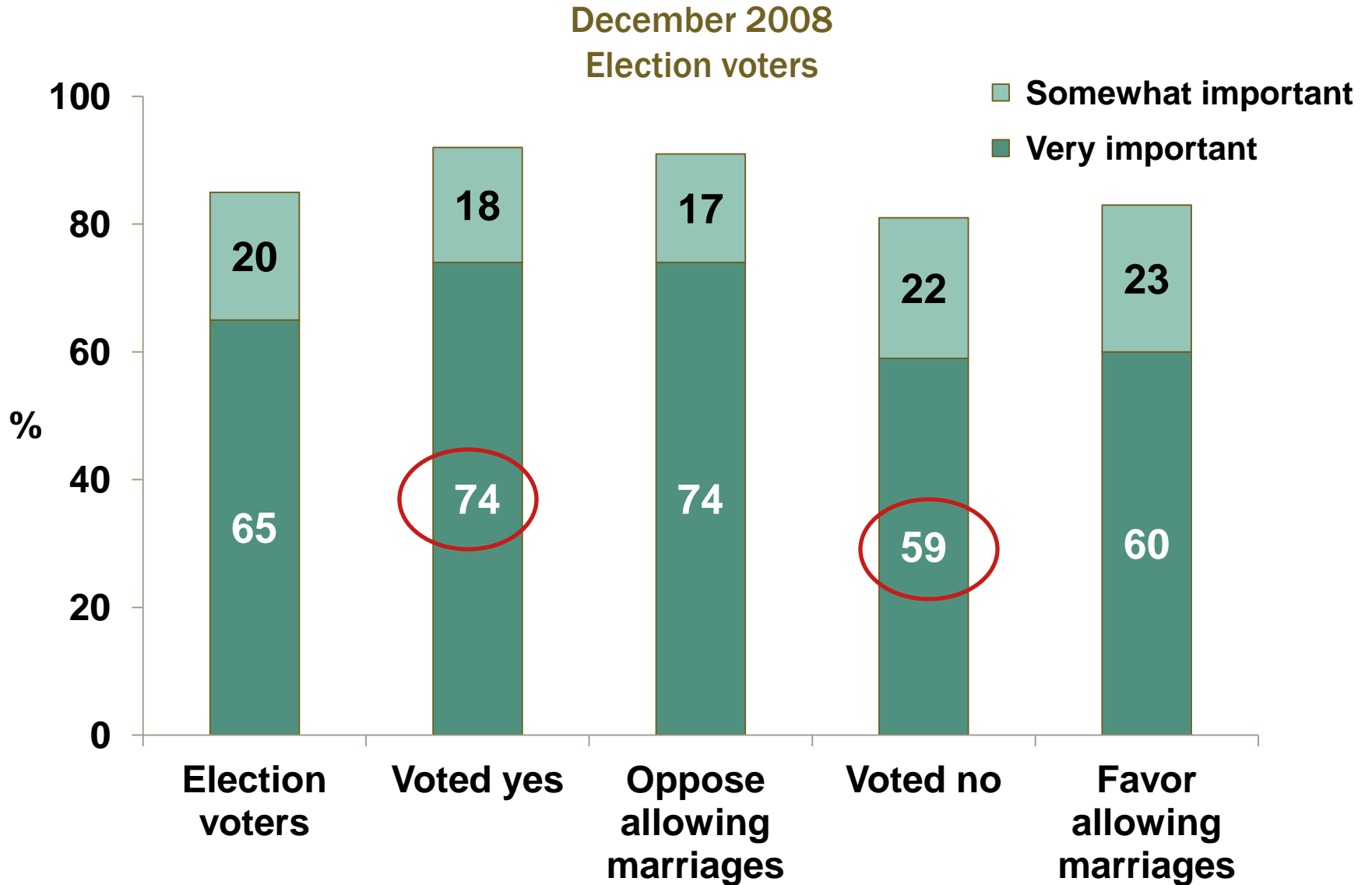
# Vote Intention by Attitudes



# Vote by Attitudes



# Importance of Outcome on Prop. 8



# Item Non-Response

Rates of Refusal on same-sex marriage questions minimal

<i>Likely voters</i>	Jan 00
General question: Allowing marriage	1%
Prop. 22	0
Prop. 26	0
Bush/Gore match-up	2
Direction of state	1
Approval of Governor	0

<i>Likely voters</i>	Oct 08
General question: Allowing marriage	1%
Prop. 8	0
Prop. 4	0
Prop. 11	0
Obama/McCain race	3
Direction of state	1
Approval of Governor	0

<i>Election voters</i>	Dec 08
General question: Allowing marriage	3%
Prop. 8	5
Prop. 4	5
Prop. 11	5
Obama/McCain race	7
Direction of state	1
Approval of Governor	1



# Question Ordering

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- **January 2000: no separation**
  - Prop. 22: Q9
  - Vermont court: Q10
  - General question: Q11
- **2008: separation**
  - Prop. 8: Q12 (Aug.), Q19 (Oct.), Q23 (Dec.)
  - General question: Q42 (Aug.), Q44 (Oct. and Dec.)
- **Since Aug. 2005, general question typically after questions about abortion and/or immigration, and after other state and national issues**



# Conclusions

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- Important to include questions about general attitudes and track over time
  - General attitudes reflected in election outcomes
  - Prop.8 outcome not exactly predicted by pre-election polling on the measure
  - General attitudes ultimately prevailed in voting preferences
- Item non-response a non-issue on same-sex marriage
- Need more analysis on question ordering, but support consistent placement over time



# Notes on the use of these slides

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These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.

December 2010



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