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GOP backpedals from national legislation against same-sex marriage

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Congressional Republicans are generally no longer willing to back legislation that deals with same-sex marriage, according to [an article Politico published Friday](#). In terms of policy, this represents a huge shift from the last two election cycles — when opposition to gay marriage was a pillar of the Republican Party's platform.

"It's been one of the swiftest shifts in ideology and strategy for Republicans, as they've come nearly full circle on same-sex politics. What was once a front-and-center issue for rank-and-file Republicans — the subject of many hotly worded House and Senate floor speeches — is virtually a dead issue, as Republicans in Congress don't care to have gay marriage litigated in the Capitol."

Cato Institute senior fellow Michael Tanner penned an op-ed piece earlier this month titled "[Don't Retreat, Re-aim](#)" for the conservative National Review Online. He called for the GOP's move away from social issues like gay marriage to not be viewed as a retreat per se, but rather a chance to refocus its agenda on the economic issues that matter to more Americans.

"A USA Today/Gallup poll last month showed that ... only 38 percent (of voters) thought social issues such as abortion or gay marriage were important in this election. Even among Republicans, fewer than half were motivated by social issues. ... This election should present a clear contrast. President Obama and his congressional supporters stand for a bigger, costly and more intrusive government, financed by higher and higher taxes — all this, despite the fact that American voters clearly favor smaller, less expensive and less intrusive government."

The Associated Press reported this month that 2012 could be the [tipping point for public support of same-sex marriage](#), as the issue goes to voters in five states this year: North Carolina, Minnesota, Maryland,

Maine and Washington. "Since 1998, 31 states have had ballot measures related to same-sex marriage, and in every state the opponents ended up prevailing. However, the most recent vote was in 2009. Gay-rights activists believe public opinion is moving inexorably in their direction, citing both national polls and policy developments such as repeal of the ban on gays serving openly in the military."