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Most Americans Believe Christian Bakers Should Not Be Forced to Make Cakes for Gay Weddings

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Nearly seven in 10, or 68 percent of Americans believe that bakers should not be forced to make cakes for gay weddings if it goes against their religious beliefs, a major national survey has found.

Washington D.C.-based think tank [the Cato Institute](#) reported on its findings on various free speech and social issues concerning Americans on Tuesday, and found that Americans are largely split on religious freedom vs. LGBT rights issues.

"While 50 percent of Americans say businesses with religious objections should be required to provide services to gays and lesbians, only 32 percent think a baker should be required to bake a special-order cake for a same-sex wedding," the report stated.

"Instead 68 percent say a baker should not be required to bake a custom wedding cake if doing so violates their religious convictions."

Democrats and Republicans were largely on opposite sides of the issue, while evangelicals, at 42 percent, were most likely to believe that baking a custom cake for a same-sex wedding would constitute an endorsement of that wedding.

"In contrast, about a quarter of mainline Protestants (26 percent), Catholics (27 percent), or other religious groups (28 percent) view it as an endorsement. Only 14 percent of non-religious people agree," it added.

Most Americans rejected the notion that a baker should be punished for refusing to make a cake for a same-sex wedding, with 66 percent declaring that nothing should happen to him or her.

Twenty percent of respondents suggested that people should boycott the bakery, while only 12 percent said that a baker should pay a fine. A minority of 6 percent said that a baker should lose their business license, while 1 percent suggested such a baker should go to jail.

"Strong liberals stand out with a majority (58 percent) who favor some form of government punishment for a baker who refuses to bake the cake. In contrast, 22 percent of moderates and

only 4 percent of strong conservatives support some form of government sanction against the baker or bakery," the results found.

One major case heading to the Supreme Court this December concerns Colorado Christian baker Jack Phillips, who has been fined and found guilty by the Colorado Civil Rights Commission for refusing to make a cake for a same-sex couple back in 2012.

Alliance Defending Freedom, his representatives, have warned that if he loses his case to overturn the punishment, religious freedom across America could be endangered.

"The government should never be able to force artists out of the marketplace — and financially devastate them — just because it disagrees with them. Your right to earn a living and to create art shouldn't depend on whether your view is popular or in line with government orthodoxy," the law group argued last month.

The Cato Institute poll, which in collaboration with YouGov collected responses from 2,547 U.S. adults between August 15 to 23, with a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, found that the vast majority of Americans also oppose requiring churches to conduct gay weddings.

"This is non-controversial, with strong majorities of Democrats (73 percent), independents (81 percent), Republicans (91 percent), evangelical Protestants (92 percent), and non-religious people (72 percent) in agreement," the survey found.

At the same time, however, 52 percent of respondents said that local government officials should be required to perform same-sex wedding ceremonies, even if that violates the official's religious beliefs.

Forty-seven percent of the total argued that there shouldn't be such a requirement.