

POLL DISTORTS RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ISSUE

In January, an AP-GfK poll found that 57 percent agreed that “wedding-related businesses with religious objections should be allowed to refuse service to same-sex couples.” An April Reuters/Ipsos poll was released that tapped the following questions:

“Businesses should not be allowed to discriminate (by refusing services or a job) because of their religious beliefs.” 59 percent agreed and 24 percent disagreed.

“Businesses should have the right not to hire certain people or groups based on the employer’s religious beliefs.” 56 percent disagreed and 26 percent agreed.

“Businesses should have the right to refuse services to certain people or groups based on religious beliefs.” 54 percent disagreed and 28 percent agreed.

In its news story, Reuters said, “Most Americans Side with Gays in Religious Freedom Disputes.” This is dishonest.

The AP poll was itself biased: it only asked if businesses could refuse to service a gay wedding. Had it also asked if the government should force business owners who have religious objections to gay marriage to service a gay wedding, the majority siding with business owners would have been even higher than 57 percent.

The Reuters poll is much worse: not only are the questions similarly front-loaded against business owners, they do not mention gay marriage, never mind servicing a gay wedding. Moreover, questions about hiring are entirely different; they only muddy the real issue even further.

There are three different issues here, not one: serving a gay person; hiring a gay person; and servicing a gay wedding. The latter is not identical to the other two, and it alone is being contested by people of faith. The distortion by Reuters is deliberate and detestable.