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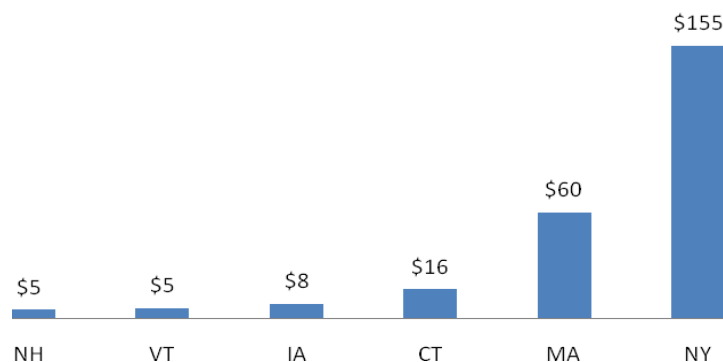


Spending on Weddings of Same-Sex Couples in the United States

The extension of marriage rights to same-sex couples in various jurisdictions will generate economic gains for the businesses in those jurisdictions due to increased spending on weddings. A 2004 Forbes magazine article projected that if same-sex marriage rights were granted nationwide, same-sex weddings would generate \$16.8 billion dollars in expenditures, adding significantly to America's annual \$70 billion wedding industry.ⁱ For over twenty years, various other commentators have argued or found that the first state or states to offer marriage equality would experience a wave of increased tourism from out-of-state couples that would bring millions of additional dollars in revenue to state businesses.ⁱⁱ This memorandum estimates the total spending by resident and out-of-state couples on their weddings in states that recognize marriage equality for same-sex couples, in the first year after equal marriage rights were introduced.

Total Wedding Spending In the First Year that Marriage is Extended to Same Sex Couples

(in millions)



These totals only include the amount that resident and non-resident same-sex couples spend on their weddings in the first year that marriage is extended to same-sex couples and the money spent by out of state guests on traveling to attend the weddings. It does not include other spending, such as on honeymoons by the couples, or money spent on items beyond standard tourism costs by guests, such as wedding gifts.

Calculations For Spending on Their Weddings the First Year that Marriage is Extended to Same-Sex Couples

Jurisdiction	Year Marriage recognition begins	Number of Resident Weddings	Resident Wedding Spending	Number of Non-Resident Weddings	Non-Resident Wedding Spending	Total Wedding Spending (in millions)
CT	2008	1,376	\$ 6,558	1,552	\$ 2,623	\$ 13.1
IA	2009	861	\$ 5,221	1,238	\$ 2,088	\$ 7.1
MA	2004	6,591	\$ 7,400 ⁱⁱⁱ	0 ^{iv}	N/A	\$ 48.8
NH	2010	394	\$ 6,107	592	\$ 2,443	\$ 3.9
VT	2009	497	\$ 4,602	778	\$ 1,841	\$ 3.7
NY	2011	13,261 ^v	\$ 6,930	3,315 ^{vi}	\$ 2,772	\$ 101.1

Number of Resident and Non-Resident Weddings – Unless otherwise indicated, the number of resident and non-resident weddings during the first year are based on actual data provided by states. Note that data for Washington D.C. were not available. Also, data from Iowa are incomplete, and do not include several couples who married whose gender was unknown. Finally, projections for New York are estimated based on the experience of the other states for which we have data.

Wedding Spending in first year after marriage equality - Data regarding average wedding expenditures for a given state and year are drawn from The Wedding Report at theweddingreport.com unless otherwise indicated. As a general matter, we are conservative in our estimates of same-sex couple’s spending. For example, we assume that resident same-sex couples will spend on average only a quarter on weddings as different-sex couples. This conservative estimate also reflects our assumption that some couples may have already had a civil union or other commitment ceremony, that same-sex couples may be less able to rely on the resources of their parents and family for wedding expenditures, and that some of this spending will be diverted spending. Finally, for non-resident couples, we assume that total expenditures are at tenth that of different-sex couples, or 40% of resident couples, to account for the fact that non-resident couples may split their expenditures between the wedding-jurisdiction and their home state. However, note that many same-sex couples who marry are older than different-sex couples, and therefore will have more disposable income. Thus, as survey of Massachusetts couples who actually married reveals, resident same-sex couples actually spent, on average, more than 25% of the average expenditures for a different-sex wedding.^{vii}

Calculations For Tourism Spending by Non-Resident Couples And by Non-Resident Guests of All Couples

Jurisdiction	Different-Sex Wedding Guests	Average number out-of-state guests	Spending per tourist per visit (Spending per member of out-of-state same-sex couple)	Spending per day per tourist (spending per out-of-state guest)	Tourism Spending by Non-Resident Couples	Tourism Spending by Out-Of-State Guests	Total Tourism Spending (in millions)
CT	159	17	\$ 203 ^{viii}	\$ 81	\$ 628,495	\$2,749,594	\$3.4
IA	115	12	\$ 128 ^{ix}	\$ 53	\$316,271	\$862,543	\$1.2
MA	N/A	16	\$ 500 ^x	\$ 109	\$ -	\$11,494,704	\$11.5
NH	131	14	\$ 203 ^{xi}	\$ 81	\$239,598	\$715,327	\$1
VT	122	13	\$ 329	\$ 127	\$512,093	\$1,334,338	\$1.8
NY	131	14	\$ 329	\$ 127	\$5,049,408	\$48,603,884	\$53.7

We also calculate the travel and tourism spending of both non-resident couples who travel to the state, as well as out-of-state guests who may attend the wedding.

Tourism and Travel Spending by Non-Resident Couples

We assume that out-of-state partners planning a wedding spend as much as two tourists spend during an average visit.

Average number of out-of-state guests

A survey of Massachusetts suggests that on average, 65 guests attended same-sex couples' weddings.^{xii} This is a little less than half of the number of guests at different sex weddings in Massachusetts during this time according to The Wedding Report. The survey also reveals that 16 of these guests were out-of-state, or a little over one-tenth the total number of guests at different-sex weddings.^{xiii} Accordingly, we estimate that the number of out-of-state guests at same-sex weddings is a little over one-tenth the number of the total guests at different-sex weddings in that state as listed in the Wedding Report.^{xiv} Note that for smaller jurisdictions such as Connecticut and New Hampshire, this is a conservative assumption as guests are more likely to live outside their jurisdiction due to their smaller sizes. Similarly, weddings in New York City may attract more out-of-state guests than average. Finally, as we discuss above, we attribute only 40% of the wedding spending of resident couples to non-resident couples. Lower spending among non-resident couples may also be reflected by a lower number of guests. Accordingly, we attribute 40% of out-of-state guests to non-resident couples as to resident couples.

Spending by Out-Of-State Guests

We assume that out-of-state guests spent the average amount spent by a tourist for a one day visit based on state tourism reports as indicated in the table above. This estimate is conservative, because it does not include any additional spending that these guests might engage in because they are attending a wedding, such as buying gifts, nor does it capture the possibility that a guest may spend more than one day in the state.

ⁱ Aude Lagorce, *The Gay Marriage Windfall: \$16.8 Billion*, Forbes.com, April 5, 2005, available at http://www.forbes.com/commerce/2004/04/05/cx_al_0405gaymarriage.html (accessed May 2008).

ⁱⁱ See, e.g., Jennifer Gerada Brown, *Competitive Federalism and the Legislative Incentives to Recognize Same-Sex Marriage*, 68 S. Cal. L. Rev. 745, 772 (1995); How will Same-Sex Marriage Affect Hawaii's Tourism Industry?: Hearings Before the Commission on Sexual Orientation and the Law, 18th Legislative Session (Hawaii 1995) (testimony of Sumner Lacroix & James Mark); Shawn Hubler, *Hotels Are Hoping to Capitalize on a Gay Marriage Boom*, L.A. TIMES, Mar. 28, 2004, at C1; Helen Jung, *Gay Marriages May Bring Joy to Tourism*, OREGONIAN, Mar. 5, 2004 at D1 (quoting Joe D'Alessandro, President of the Portland Ore. Visitors Ass'n as saying gay marriage would no doubt provide an "economic boost" to Portland as gay couples and their families fly in for weddings, reporting that hotels in Vancouver had atypically high bookings and Macy's department store ran out of wedding rings during the month that San Francisco let same-sex couples marry); David Sarasohn, *Gay Marriage, Tourism: A Package Deal*, Oregonian, Apr. 11, 2004 at C4. ("It's definitely having a positive impact, because more people are coming to Portland. They fly in, sometimes with families, friends, children, whatever. I've talked to the hotel people, and they say they've seen an increase in gay and lesbian customers." (quoting D'Alessandro)); Heather Knight, *Windfall in Castro: 'Giddy' Newlyweds Have Been Boon For S.F. Neighborhood*, S.F. Chronicle, Feb. 18, 2004, at A1 (reporting that extending marriages to same-sex couples was "great for businesses as newlyweds throw their money at the neighborhood's florists, jewelry stores, liquor shops, bookstores, and photo processors."); Laura Bly, *Localities Cashing in on Same-Sex Marriages*, USA Today, Feb. 27 2004, at 1D; Dean E. Murphy, *San Francisco Toasts Gay Weddings*, N.Y. Times, Feb. 29 at 3; Thea Singer, *Three Swank Cities are Becoming Marriage Meccas for Gay Couples*, Boston Herald, Mar. 22, 2004, at 27 (reporting that wedding-related businesses such as hotels, banquet halls, florists, and jewelers, in Boston, Cambridge, and Northampton have seen "an upsurge of 10 to 100 percent in inquiries and bookings from gay couples" looking to marry); Marie Szaniszló, *P'town Set for Gay-Wed Rush*, Boston Herald, Apr. 11, 2004, at 10.

ⁱⁱⁱ Data drawn from NAOMI GOLDBERG, MICHAEL STEINBERGER, M.V. LEE BADGETT, THE BUSINESS BOOST FROM MARRIAGE EQUALITY: EVIDENCE FROM THE HEALTH AND MARRIAGE EQUALITY IN MASSACHUSETTS SURVEY (2009), available at <http://www3.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/pdf/BusinessBoost.pdf>.

^{iv} Non-resident weddings were not permitted in Massachusetts until 2008.

^v New York has 65,303 couples per 2010 census data. GARY J. GATES & ABIGAIL M. COOKE, NEW YORK CENSUS SNAPSHOT: 2010 (2011) available at http://www3.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/pdf/Census2010Snapshot_NewYork.pdf. Data from other states shows that at least 20-22% of domestic same-sex couples were married in those jurisdictions after the first year in which marriage was offered. Survey from New York suggests that approximately 21% of same-sex couples have already married elsewhere. Data on file from Gary J. Gates, The Williams Institute, Same-sex couples in US Census Bureau Data: Who Gets Counted and Why (2010) available at http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/pdf/WhoGetsCounted_FORMATTED1.pdf. However, it would be incorrect to therefore assume that *no* New York couples would therefore marry in the first year that marriage is offered, since many couples may choose not to travel to marry. Accordingly, we calculate that 20% of the resident same-sex couples wed in the first year.

^{vi} Data from other states show that the number out of state couples who marry is nearly equal to the number of resident couples that marry in the first year. However, data from the San Francisco County Clerk's office in California suggest that only a quarter of out of state couples married as in-state couples before the passage of Proposition 8. To be conservative, we adopt this figure as the number of out-of-state couples who marry.

^{vii} See GOLDBERG, STEINBERGER & BADGETT, *supra* note iii, at 1, fig. 2 (2009).

^{viii} The only source available is from a pre-recession report. Connecticut Office of Tourism, *Spending by Leisure Travelers Increased 18 percent to \$366 Million in 2003*, Dec. 18, 2003, which reports that average tourist spending is \$879. Since the recession, Connecticut has stopped commissioning such reports due to budgetary constraints. See Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, Research Publications, http://www.ct.gov/cct/cwp/view.asp?a=2128&Q=302656&CCTNAV_GID=1686. Accordingly, we conservatively assume that the average spending is the same as Connecticut's neighboring state, New Hampshire. (Note that marriage equality was achieved in Massachusetts pre-recession, so pre-recession tourism figures are used. Hence, we do not use Massachusetts tourism figures.)

^{ix} Reported data is not available. Based on an email to Amanda Baumle, September 18, 2008, we believe that the average household of 1.95 people spends an average of \$249 on a trip of 2.41 nights. LuAnn Reinders, Tourism Office, Iowa Department of Economic Development. 2007. 249 divided by 1.95 equals 128.

^x Tony D'Agostino, of the Mass. Office of Travel & Tourism, identified, in a telephone conversation on 6/16/08, \$500.00 as the average tourist expenditure. We divided this figure by the average tourist stay (4.6 days), from their 2005 Massachusetts Domestic Visitor Profile report, to come up with the per person per diem figure. See Massachusetts Domestic Visitor Profile: Calendar Year 2004, Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism, April 29, 2005 at <http://www.massvacation.com/pdf/domprof04.pdf> (last accessed on June 26, 2008).

^{xi} This is based on the weighted average daily spending per season in 2010, as listed at Institute for New Hampshire Studies, New Hampshire Tourism Data, <http://oz.plymouth.edu/inhs/Barometers/>. Since the length of visits is not given, we conservatively estimate that an out-of-state couple spends 2.5 days in the state, which is lower bound discovered in research in other states.

^{xii} Calculated using the weighted average of the midpoints of each range to calculate an average number of out-of-state guests in GOLDBERG, STEINBERGER & BADGETT, *supra* note iii. at 2, fig. 2.

^{xiii} *Id.* at 3. Average number of guests at a different-sex wedding was 148.

^{xiv} There is no way of knowing whether the different number of guests results from a change in the number of out-of-state guests, or from a different number of in-state guests. Also the Wedding Report provides a *range* of estimated guests at each wedding. We conservatively adopt the lower number.

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