

# SAME-SEX MAR MAINE GUBERNA

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Many people have been saying for a while that as time went on and Election Day got closer, many supporters of independent candidate Eliot Cutler would move over to Democrat Mike Michaud in the Maine gubernatorial election. I have been listening to these comments for many months, not sure whether they were correct or not. I recently decided to analyze the accuracy of this assertion, and I soon found that the answer was inextricably related to... gay marriage?

As you probably know, Maine had a referendum on gay marriage in 2012 that coincided with the presidential election that year. The referendum passed by a margin of 53-47 – smaller than Obama's 56-41 victory but wide enough to legalize gay marriage in Maine. I wondered soon after, what sort of relationship is there between Obama's performance and gay marriage's performance? Thus, I decided to analyze and compare those two elections to see if there were any patterns to be found. As it turned out, there were.

Here is a map comparing the 2012 presidential election in Maine with the 2012 gay marriage referendum. Red means that Obama outperformed gay marriage, while blue means that gay marriage outperformed Obama.

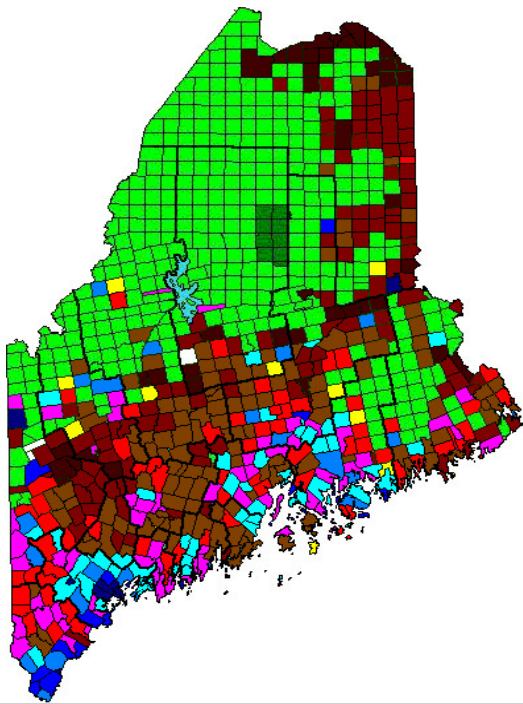
As you can see, Obama outperformed gay marriage in most of the state, but it was uneven. There were several places where Obama outperformed gay marriage by a much larger margin than the state as a whole, and there were some places where gay marriage outperformed Obama, sometimes by a wide margin. But what patterns can be found in these areas?

The area of Maine where gay marriage outperformed

Obama by the greatest margin was the area just north of Portland, namely the three towns of Falmouth, Cumberland, and Yarmouth. Gay marriage outperformed Obama in all of these towns by over ten percent. In fact, in Falmouth and Cumberland, Obama received only 53-54 percent of the vote, but two thirds of voters supported gay marriage. What are the characteristics of this area? This area is wealthy, by Maine standards, and it has the highest voter turnout of any region in Maine. This region is entirely contained in Maine's 25th senate district, which since 2010 has been represented by Richard Woodbury, an independent. This area also had relatively substantial declines in Obama's performance from 2008 to 2012; his performance declined by about four percent in each of the towns, compared to a decline of less than two percent in the state as a whole. Thus, it is clear that this area is economically moderate (due to its wealth and the declines in Obama's performance), socially liberal (clearly, from its support for gay marriage), and has an independent streak.

However, the areas in Maine where Obama outperformed gay marriage by the widest margins are completely different. These areas, in the darkest shade of red on the map, include the Rumford/Mexico area, Jay, Millinocket, and the entire St. John Valley. These towns all voted over 60 percent for Obama (several voted over 65 percent in his favor) and are all heavily Democratic at the local level as well. These areas were some of the first bastions of the Democratic Party in Maine back when Maine was mostly Republican. However, these areas all voted strongly against gay marriage. Rumford was the only one of these towns where gay marriage received over 40 percent, and in the St. John Valley, gay marriage didn't even get 30 percent in some of the towns. What do these areas have in common? They are all

# MARRIAGE AND THE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION



*Darkest Red: Obama outperformed gay marriage by 20+ percent*  
*Dark Red: Obama outperformed gay marriage by 10-20 percent*  
*Red/Brown: Obama outperformed gay marriage by 5-10 percent*  
*Red: Obama outperformed gay marriage by 2.5-5 percent*  
*Pink: Obama outperformed gay marriage by 0-2.5 percent*  
*Yellow: Tie*  
*Light Blue: Gay marriage outperformed Obama by 0-2.5 percent*  
*Blue: Gay marriage outperformed Obama by 2.5-5 percent*  
*Dark blue: Gay marriage outperformed Obama by 5-10 percent*  
*Darkest blue: Gay marriage outperformed Obama by 10+ percent*

working-class mill towns. All have large paper mills that provide a substantial percentage of local employment. All of these areas are very downscale and quite economically depressed. These areas also have a larger-than-normal percentage of Franco-Americans than other parts of Maine. These areas are strongly economically liberal (unions are quite strong here) and heavily Democratic, but they are also quite socially conservative.

So what does all this have to do with Cutler, Michaud, and the 2014 gubernatorial election in Maine? Well, think about this. The general characteristics of a Mainer who voted for gay marriage but against Obama in 2012 are a rich, economically moderate, socially liberal independent from the Portland suburbs. These characteristics are a perfect description of people like Eliot Cutler.

On the other hand, the general characteristics of a Mainer who voted for Obama but against gay marriage are a working-class mill worker who is economically liberal, is of French ancestry, and lives in a very locally-Democratic, downscale, unionized area. These characteristics are a perfect description of people like Mike Michaud.

Now, these descriptions are not perfect fits for the candidates themselves. Cutler probably voted for Obama in 2012, and Michaud likely voted for gay marriage. However, many people with the same characteristics and in the same demographics as Cutler and Michaud voted as I mentioned above.

It should be clear by now that Cutler and Michaud are very different people. A wealthy, socially-liberal Cutler voter from Falmouth is not going to see any appeal in an economically-liberal mill worker from the boonies. Similarly, a downscale, Franco-American Michaud supporter from Rumford is not going to see any appeal in a rich elitist from the Portland area.

Thus, there is not going to be any major shifting of voters from Cutler to Michaud, or vice versa, between now and Election Day. The 2014 gubernatorial election in Maine is close now and will remain close all the way to Election Day. I do think that Michaud is going to win, but probably by less than five points, and Cutler's support is not going to collapse as some people have claimed.