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ABSTRACT:

Same-sex marriage has risen to the top of political agendas across Latin America, but it is still illegal in many countries. Public support about the issue varies greatly, and the roles of the courts, presidents, and legislatures have also differed. This article focuses on legislators because they are charged with representing the public and converting demands into policy. Although many legislatures have now voted on the issue, the literature has not intensively examined the policy makers' attitudes toward same-sex marriage. This study applies a theoretical framework that extends theories considering context and social contact and uses a survey of the region's legislators to study the correlates of support for same-sex marriage. Although the study also tests for individual-level variables (e.g., gender and ideology), the models focus on the contextual role of religiosity. The results show that having more secular colleagues encourages even pious legislators to support same-sex marriage.

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