

Tolerance of Homosexuality and Time at Work among Gays and Lesbians in the United States

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We study how the labor supply of gay men and lesbian women responds to changes in tolerance of homosexuality in the United States. We combine American Community Survey data from 2003 to 2015 with attitudinal data from the General Social Survey. We calculate tolerance of homosexuality as the percent of respondents in each state that believe same-sex sexual relation are 'wrong only sometimes' or 'not wrong at all'. We measure the impact of state tolerance of homosexuality within a given year on the allocation of time in paid labor. Because the lack of tolerance can subject gay men and lesbian women to negative public interactions, we focus on the labor supply margin. We find that increases in tolerance of homosexuality lead gay men to allocate more, but lesbian women to allocate less, time to paid labor. A one percent increase in tolerance is associated with 1.5 *more* hours of annual paid labor among gay men and one *less* hour in paid labor among lesbian women. These changes are largest in states that do include sexual orientation as a protected class in workplace antidiscrimination laws. These effects are also largest among households without children. Among lesbian households, the decrease in paid labor is over twice as large for a lesbian who earns less than her partner.