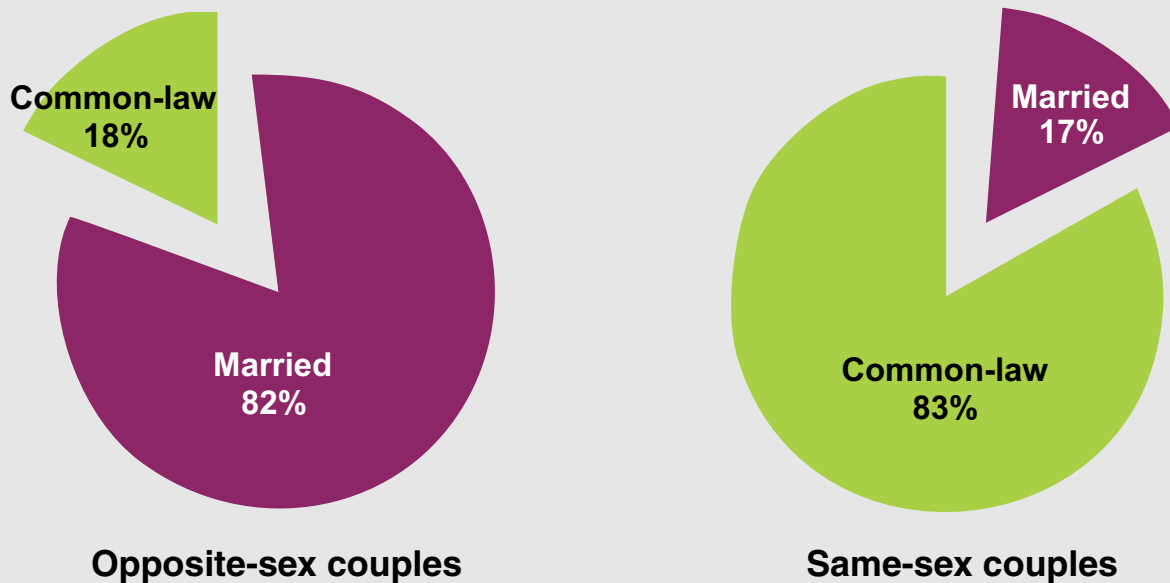




## 2.1.6 Family Structure

**Fig. 2.1.6 Opposite-sex and same-sex couples marital status, 2006**



*Adapted from Statistics Canada <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-553/table/t2-eng.cfm>, accessed on December 13, 2011.*

In 2001, a question about same-sex relationships was included in the Census for the first time. On June 17, 2003, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Justice Minister Martin Cauchon announced that the federal government was going to introduce legislation legalizing same-sex marriage across the country.

In 2005, the Supreme Court of Canada legalized same-sex marriage. One year later, the 2006 Census reported 17% of same-sex couples were married while 83% continued to live common law. Among opposite-sex couples, 82% were married and 18% were living common law.

### Implications

Same-sex couples have made significant progress toward legal equality with opposite-sex couples through Charter litigation. There have been a number of Charter challenges alleging discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation that have proceeded through the courts both in and apart from the family law context. Same-sex couples have used the Charter to gain rights and obligations similar to those available to opposite-sex couples.

