

# Equally Married, Equally Benefited: Same-sex Marriage, Health Insurance, Labor Market, and Social Security

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**Abstract.** This paper analyzes the economic impacts of same-sex marriage (SSM) legislation in the United States, focusing on the Supreme Court decisions in *United States v. Windsor* (2013) and *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015). The Windsor ruling federally recognized same-sex marriages, allowing same-sex couples access to federal benefits, whereas the Obergefell ruling mandated the legalization of SSM across all states. Employing a difference-in-differences approach, I evaluate changes in health insurance, labor market outcomes, and social security among same-sex couples (SSCs). Relative to opposite-sex couples, the recognition of SSM by the federal government increased SSCs' overall insurance coverage by 2.6%, primarily via increased coverage from employment by 5%. The study highlights the understudied *United States v. Windsor* (2013) and shows even in states without SSM prior to 2015, SSCs in not-yet-legal states responded with an increase of spill-over insurance coverage by 8% and employer-sponsored insurance by 4.8%, relative to SSCs in SSM-already-legal states. This study highlights the impact of federal recognition versus state SSM legalization, emphasizing spillover effects and the interplay of state-federal policies on insurance and labor market outcomes.

**Keywords:** same-sex marriage; health insurance; labor market; social security

**JEL Codes:** D10; I13; I18

# 1 Introduction

*Marriage responds to the universal fear that a lonely person might call out only to find no one there. It offers the hope of companionship and understanding and assurance that while both still live there will be someone to care for the other.*

– Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, *Majority Opinion in Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015)

Marriage has been described “the most important relation in life” and “the foundation of the family and society, without which there would be neither civilization nor progress” (Maynard v. Hill, 1888). Beyond its moral and philosophical importance, marriage in contemporary society entails a legally recognized contract that binds spouses to specific duties and entitlements. This contractual aspect of marriage, critical for defining economic and legal obligations between spouses (Piano et al., 2024). Historically, the recognition of marriage has not been universal, excluding various relationships from these legal benefits. Historically, the recognition of marriage has not been universal, excluding various relationships from these legal benefits. For instance, interracial marriage was not legal in the U.S. until Supreme Court’s ruling in *Loving v. Virginia* (1967), even though the first recorded interracial marriage dates back to 1565. Similarly, same-sex marriage (SSM) faced a protracted path to legalization across the United States. This paper aims to analyze how SSM legislation has economically reshaped the lives of sexual minority families, extending beyond mere access to marriage to include the broader implications of marital recognition.

Research has consistently shown that SSCs have historically faced disadvantages in accessing health insurance, healthcare, and healthcare utilization compared to opposite-sex couples (OSCs). SSCs were less likely to have insurance, have seen a doctor recently, have a usual source of healthcare, and more likely to have unmet medical needs (Heck et al., 2006; Buchmueller & Carpenter, 2010; Blosnich et al., 2016; Clift & Kirby, 2012; Xu et al., 2023). Notably, disparities in health insurance coverage and healthcare access persist for SSCs even after legal recognition of their marriages, underscoring the ongoing challenges in achieving healthcare equity (Xu et al., 2023).

The legalization of same-sex marriage (SSM) through landmark rulings *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015) has helped narrow disparities by increasing insurance coverage and

improving both physical and mental health for SSCs (Francis et al., 2012; Wight et al., 2013; Kail et al., 2015; Downing & Cha, 2020; Carpenter et al., 2021a,b; Mann et al., 2023). This progress stems partly from improved public attitudes towards minorities and reduced discrimination, particularly in the workplace (Hooghe & Meeusen, 2013; Aksoy et al., 2020; Nikolaou, 2022). Consequently, the legal recognition has also influenced labor market behaviors, altering labor supply among SSCs (Dillender, 2015; Sansone, 2019; Hansen et al., 2020; Martell & Nash, 2020). This paper contributes to the literature by providing further evidence on how federal recognition of SSM particularly enhances health insurance coverage among SSCs.

Piano et al. (2024) conceptualizes marriage as a contract provided by states, with associated benefits adding value to these contracts. This paper extends this framework by analyzing how the federal recognition of same-sex marriage, as well as state-level legalization, alters the economic and social conditions for same-sex couples. Specifically, it examines how these policy shifts influence the coverage and distribution of benefits within the marital contract 'market,' affecting same-sex couples as 'consumers' of these contracts.

I differentiate between two distinct phases of SSM legalization: state-level legalization and subsequent federal recognition. It particularly focuses on the economic and social impacts of two pivotal Supreme Court decisions—*United States v. Windsor* (2013), which initiated federal recognition of same-sex marriages, and *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), which mandated nationwide marriage equality. States that proactively legalized SSM before any federal intervention ('early-adopters') and those that legalized it following the 2015 mandate ('late-adopters') are presumed to exhibit inherent differences. By examining these groups separately, this analysis elucidates the differential impacts of state and federal legislative actions on same-sex couples.

The paper starts by employing a difference-in-differences (DiD) approach to isolate the specific impact of federal recognition on SSCs in states that had already legalized SSM by 2013 (early-adopter states). This design allows for a clean estimation of the effects of the Windsor ruling, independent of the direct effects of gaining access to marriage. In these early legalization states, the ruling required federal recognition of existing SSM, providing a unique opportunity to assess its impact. I observed a notable increase in insurance uptake; specifically, overall insurance coverage rose by 2.63%,

and employer-sponsored insurance (ESI) increased by 5.01%. Additionally, SSCs saw a 13.4% increase in social security income compared to OSCs post-2013. These findings underscore the substantial economic benefits that federal recognition conferred on same-sex couples in the early legalization states.

To assess the spillover effects of federal recognition on SSCs in states that legalized SSM after the 2013 Windsor ruling, this study again employs a DiD approach using early-adopter states as the control group, and SSCs in late-adopter states as the treatment group. This design allows for the examination of whether the federal recognition had an impact on SSCs in states where SSM was not yet legal during the time of the ruling. This analysis is able to isolate the effects of federal recognition across different legal contexts. In the late-adopter states, the federal recognition associated with the Windsor decision led to significant changes for SSCs. Specifically, insurance coverage increased by 8.02%, and ESI uptake rose by 4.75%. In terms of labor market effects, there was a notable decrease in weekly working hours by an average of 1.934 hours relative to SSCs in early-adopter states, although there were no significant changes in unemployment rates or total wage income. The observed reduction in weekly working hours among same-sex couples in late-adopter states, relative to those in early-adopter states, suggests that while improvements in working environments post-federal recognition may extend to late-adopter states, their impact on labor supply was less pronounced compared to early-adopter states. Additionally, these couples claimed 15.2% less in total social security income compared to before the ruling. These findings indicate that the federal recognition of SSM had extensive spill-over effects on SSCs, even in states that had not yet legalized same-sex marriage.

The 2015 Obergefell v. Hodges decision, which mandated same-sex marriage nationwide, showed that treatment effects had already begun to materialize before its implementation. This phenomenon is substantiated by the spillover effects identified from the 2013 Windsor decision. Such findings challenge previous studies that presumed uniform treatment effects across all states.

Additionally, I considered potential biases from concurrent policies by conducting robustness checks that exclude the influences from the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Medicaid expansion. Even after limiting the analysis to households unaffected by the ACA, the significant effects observed in the baseline results remained consistent.

This paper contributes to a growing literature focusing on marriage, marriage equality and sexual minorities. Firstly, an often-overlooked ruling (United States v. Windsor, 2013) on SSM is emphasized, and this contributes to the SSM literature by a detailed impact evaluation in health insurance, labor market outcomes and social security. Compared with the landmark ruling on marriage equality in 2015, estimation indicates that the 2013 ruling significantly affected SSCs, if not more, prior to the most-discussed one in 2015. Prior literature on same-sex marriage legalization in the US is summarized in Table 1.

The second contribution of this paper is an extension on the research design of same-sex marriage legislation in the health economics literature. Instead of assuming homogeneous legalization among states, I relaxed this assumption and allowed for heterogeneous treatment effects. Depending on the time of state-wise legalization relative to the Supreme Court rulings (early-adopter vs. late-adopter states), the research uncovers varying responses among same-sex couples, demonstrating nuanced impacts that previous studies have overlooked.

This study enriches the understanding of economic impacts associated with same-sex marriage (SSM) legislation, focusing on how these laws influence access to benefits typically conferred by marital contracts. By examining policy variations in SSM legislation, this research highlights how shifts in marriage laws can alter the economic landscape for same-sex couples, affecting their access to health insurance and labor market outcomes. Furthermore, the findings suggest that similar dynamics could apply to other policies that modify the contractual benefits of marriage, positioning this work within a broader discourse on public policy and marital economics.

This paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 provides a timeline and introduction of the institutional and legislative background of SSM legalization. Data and the descriptive statistics are summarized in Section 3, as Section 4 presents two empirical designs under the Difference-in-Differences framework. Next, Section 5 provides the empirical results in the two rulings. Lastly, Section 6 discusses some robustness check to the baseline setting, and conclusions are outlined in Section 7.

## 2 Institutional Background

In the United States, the definition of marriage has primarily fallen under the jurisdiction of individual states. Therefore, SSM legalization tends to start inside each states, and when the argument becomes more heated, the congress and Supreme Court might step in and intervene.

### 2.1 State Legislation

The civil rights movement for SSM began in the 1970s, most notably with the appeal to the Minnesota Supreme Court's ruling on *Baker v. Nelson* in 1972, which was subsequently dismissed by the US Supreme Court "for want of a substantial federal question"<sup>1</sup>. It was more than thirty years later when Massachusetts became the first U.S. state to legalize SSM in 2003<sup>2</sup>.

In 2008, the Supreme Court of California decided to legalize SSM in the state, but this was later overturned by Proposition 8, a state constitution amendment that banned SSM after less than six months of legalization, but it did not stop there. Before *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015) on Jun 26th of 2015, a total of thirty-five states and the District of Colombia had legalized SSM through court rulings, legislation, and/or referendums. A detailed timeline is provided in Table 2.

### 2.2 The Supreme Court

As of December 31 of 2003, there were 1,138 federal statutory provisions classified to the United States Code in which marital status is a factor in determining or receiving benefits, rights, and privileges (United States General Accounting Office, 2004). To receive these federally-provided benefits, the marriage must be valid under federal law. For example, the combined income of married partners is considered when applying for Medicaid benefits, as well as for the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program.

<sup>1</sup>*Baker v. Nelson*, 409 U.S. 810 (1972).

<sup>2</sup>Even though numerous attempts have been made in-between those years, for example, *Jones v. Hallahan*, 501 S.W.2d 588 (Ky. 1973), *Frances B. v. Mark B.*, 78 Misc.2d 112 (1974), *Singer v. Hara*, 522 P.2d 1187 (Wash. Ct. App. 1974), *De Santo v. Barnsley*, 476 A.2d 952 (Pa. Super. Ct. 1984), *Dean v. District of Columbia*, 653 A.2d 307 (D.C. 1995), *Storrs v. Holcomb*, 645 N.Y.S.2d 286 (App. Div. 1996), *Frandsen v. County of Brevard*, 828 So. 2d 757 (Fla. 2001), *Burns v. Burns*, 560 S.E.2d 47 (Ga. Ct. App. 2002), *Standhardt v. Superior Court ex rel. County of Maricopa*, 77 P.3d 451 (Ariz. Ct. App. 2003) etc.

United States v. Windsor (2013)<sup>3</sup> repealed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which had defined the term “marriage” under federal law as a “legal union between one man and one woman”. This decision required the federal government to recognize same-sex marriage performed in states where it was legal (hereafter, legal states). This marked the start of federal recognition of SSM, and many federal agencies began applying equal benefits to legally wedded same-sex couples since then.

Perhaps the most significant development is the landmark ruling *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015)<sup>4</sup>, which determined that the Fourteenth Amendment’s Due Process Clause protects the fundamental right to marry, applying equally to same-sex and opposite-sex couples. This ruling marked the complete legalization of SSM in the United States, making it universally legal and recognized nationwide.

### 2.3 Heterogeneity in Treatments

Striking down parts of DOMA, *USvW* requires the federal government to recognize same-sex marriages performed in states where it was legal, leading to the federal recognition of SSM - the first treatment discussed later. In contrast, *OvH* did not greatly change how existing SSMs were recognized, but instead provided access to marriage for many SSCs in the United States. This change is subsequently referred to as marriage equality<sup>5</sup>.

By the timing of state SSM legalization relatively to two Supreme Court rulings, states can be categorized into three types corresponding to the nature of treatment it received, explained in the Figure 1.

A early-adopter state is one that legalized SSM prior to both *USvW* in 2013 and *OvH* in 2015, such as Massachusetts (2004). Early-adopter states should receive only the treatment of federal recognition in 2013 after *USvW*, and no further treatment in 2015<sup>6</sup>.

Between *USvW* in 2013 and *OvH* in 2015, those that allowed SSM are conforming states, which followed the growing national consensus on SSM legislation and eventually

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<sup>3</sup>Hereafter, *USvW*.

<sup>4</sup>Hereafter, *OvH*.

<sup>5</sup>Despite federal recognition is explicit in *OvH*, given it’s ruled in 2015, two years after *USvW*, the Supreme Court essentially granted the access to same-sex marriage and the federal recognition simultaneously.

<sup>6</sup>Although one could also argue that the cross-state recognition as a result of *OvH* in 2015 had its effects on outcomes of interest, cross-state migration can reasonably be omitted in the short window between 2013 and 2015.

implemented the legalization on their own. Conforming states were treated by both federal recognition and marriage equality when their SSM law took effect.

Lastly, like conforming states, some states legalized SSM only in compliance with the OvH ruling, called late-adopter states. The treatment they received in 2015 is theoretically the same as conforming states, but the treatment is more exogenous. The variation in timing and exposure to treatments enabled me to estimate the treatment effects using a DiD framework. Panel (a) of Figure 2 is a map showing the geographical distribution of the three types of states under this framework.

### **3 Data and Empirical Design**

#### **3.1 American Community Survey (ACS)**

The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing nationwide survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. It collects detailed demographic, economic, social, and housing information from a representative sample of households across the United States and Puerto Rico. The ACS essentially serves as a more frequent version of the decennial census long-form questionnaire that was previously used to gather similar community-level data.

One of the key advantages of the ACS over the decennial census long-form is that it provides more timely data, with information being collected on an annual basis rather than once every ten years. This allows for the tracking of yearly changes and emerging trends in communities across the country.

The survey samples around 3.5 million housing unit addresses each year, making it a very large and statistically robust source of data at multiple geographic levels - including states, counties, cities, towns, and even neighborhoods. The comprehensive nature of the ACS questionnaire provides crucial information for allocating government program funding, defining legislative districts, and making decisions about community services and infrastructure investments.



### 3.1.1 Public use microdata

ACS provides public use micro-data files that contain anonymized records for a sample of housing units and group quarters residents. This micro-data allows researchers and data users to access the individual responses to the ACS questionnaire, enabling much more detailed and customized analyses compared to just using the pre-tabulated summary data products.

The ACS micro-data files contain the full range of responses collected through the survey, including data on demographic characteristics, housing details, employment, income, education, health insurance coverage and other topics. Crucially, the records have indicators for whether each householder is in a same-sex or opposite-sex relationship, allowing the micro-data to be used for studying outcomes related to sexual orientation.

### 3.1.2 Timing of legalization

Given the data in annual frequency and in order to improve power by increasing the sample size, if a state implemented legalization later than October, I only consider observations in that state from the following year as treated. For instance, the SSM law took effect in the state of Washington on December 6th, 2012. However, classifying all SSC observations from 2012 in Washington as part of the treatment group would bias the estimation. Consequently, only SSCs in Washington from 2013 onward are regarded as treated.

Adhering to this rule, the adjusted timing of legalization in each state is summarized in Table 3. All empirical results are checked using calendar years instead, no significant changes are found. States that did not legalize SSM prior to OvH are listed separately (hereafter, OvH states). And a map of the variation in timing with the adjustment is shown in panel (b) of figure 2.

### 3.1.3 Data quality and limitation

The time horizon of the data is limited to be from year 2008 because of a data quality concern on the identification of same-sex couples. To mitigate the inaccuracy issue,

there were formatting changes to the questionnaire of ACS since 2008. The layout of the gender question was edited, making it more difficult to accidentally mark both male and female. The drop in the reported number of same-sex couples between 2007 and 2008 can be attributed to these changes, which have resulted in a more reliable estimate of same-sex couple households.

The second limitation arises from the coding practices in the ACS between 2005 and 2012. During this period, all SSCs, regardless of their legal marital status, were classified as unmarried partners—even those who were legally married in states where same-sex marriage was recognized. This classification issue prevents accurate identification of legally married SSCs during these years, leading to potential underestimation of marriage-related benefits in the data. Consequently, any estimations of the effects of same-sex marriage legalization relative to OSCs should be considered as conservative or lower-bound estimates of the actual impacts.

### 3.1.4 Identification of SSC

To accurately identify SSCs and OSCs, observations in Group Quarters<sup>7</sup> are excluded. Next, a same-sex family needs to meet the following conditions to be identified:

- Criteria 1: Households (HHs) with at least two persons whose age is between 18 and 60.
- Criteria 2: Married-couple HHs or unmarried-partner HHs.
- Criteria 3: There is one member in the HH with a relationship to the reference person as “Husband/wife” or “Unmarried partner”<sup>8</sup>.

After cleaning, I have a total sample size of 5,385,474 families, including 73,161 SSCs (1.36%). 37,793 of them are female-female families, and 35,368 male-male families.

<sup>7</sup>The Census Bureau classifies all people not living in housing units as living in group quarters. A group quarters is a place where people live or stay, in a group living arrangement, that is owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing and/or services for the residents. Examples are college residence halls, residential treatment centers, skilled nursing facilities, group homes, military barracks, correctional facilities, and workers’ dormitories.

<sup>8</sup>The reference person is the person to whom the relationship of other people in the household is recorded. The household reference person is the person listed as the householder. The sub-family reference person is either the single parent or the husband/wife in a married-couple situation. Also see <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/technical-documentation/subject-definitions.html#referenceperson>.

### 3.1.5 Variables of interest

The primary outcome variables of interest are health insurance coverage, labor market outcomes, and social security. The selected outcome variables—health insurance coverage, labor market outcomes, and social security—are critical indicators of the economic and social impacts of same-sex marriage legalization. The dataset captures various dimensions of health insurance coverage, including general health insurance, employer-sponsored insurance (ESI), private insurance, and Medicaid<sup>9</sup>. I excluded Medicare since the study is confined to non-elderly adults, aligning with the target demographic most affected by changes in labor market. For each type of insurance, indicators were created to measure coverage comprehensively: a value of 1 indicates both partners are insured, 0.5 signifies one partner is insured, and 0 denotes no coverage.

In the labor market, the study evaluates labor force participation among SSCs and OSCs by examining the proportion of unemployed family members and total weekly hours worked by all family members. This provides insights into how employment dynamics differ between these groups. Additionally, data on total wage and salary income, along with information on total social security income and income from the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, are included. These variables offer a comprehensive view of the economic status of families, allowing for an assessment of how same-sex marriage legalization impacts financial outcomes and social benefits for SSCs relative to OSCs.

Since two Supreme Court rulings, *United States v. Windsor* (2013) and *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), each created different treatment effects, and the treatment varies by the states, I will estimate these effects separately. Table 4 summarizes the pre- and post-treatment outcome variables of interest along with controls in early-adopter states, and table 5 gives the descriptive statistics of the sample in late-adopter states.

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<sup>9</sup>In ACS definition, it contains “Medicaid, Medical Assistance, or any kind of government-assistance plan for those with low incomes or a disability”. For simplicity, I refer to this group of public-sponsored health insurance plans as “Medicaid”.

## 4 Difference-in-differences

### 4.1 Same-sex couple vs. opposite-sex couple

The first specification of Difference-in-difference model is used to identify the treatment effect of the Supreme Court rulings using OSCs as the control group. Therefore, the estimated treatment effect represents the change in outcomes of SSCs relatively to OSCs. It takes the form:

$$Y_{ist} = \alpha + \beta(Post13_t * SSC_i) + \tau_s + \mu_t + X'_{ist}\gamma + \epsilon_{ist} \quad (1)$$

$$Y_{ist} = \alpha + \beta(Post15_t * SSC_i) + \tau_s + \mu_t + X'_{ist}\gamma + \epsilon_{ist} \quad (2)$$

where  $Y_{ist}$  is the outcomes of interest.  $Post13_t$  and  $Post15_t$  are indicators of whether the observation is surveyed after the USvW or the OvH ruling,  $SSC_i$  is an indicator for same-sex couple,  $\tau_s$  is state fixed effect,  $\mu_t$  is year fixed effect.  $X_{ist}$  are a series of household-level characteristics, including family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, disabilities, and state-level characteristics (population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate). The standard error  $\epsilon_{ist}$  is clustered at state level.

When running the estimation, I restrict my sample to only include observations that were directly affected by the rulings. For example, USvW in June 2013 is not expected to have direct effects on SSCs living in Texas because the legalization of SSM did not take effect until the June of 2015. As a results, for the USvW ruling, I only include SSCs and OSCs living in early-adopter states.

On the other hand, the OvH ruling in 2015 should not directly change the Medicaid enrollment status of a same-sex couple living in a early-adopter state, where they had been enjoying the right to marry prior to 2015 and federal recognition since 2013. When estimating the treatment effect of 2015 ruling, I only include SSCs and OSCs living in late-adopter states.

## 4.2 Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. early-adopter states

Additionally, I investigate a different Average Treatment on Treated (ATT) effect of the two rulings on same-sex couples living in different states (early-adopter vs. late-adopter). This approach addresses potential systematic differences between same-sex and opposite-sex couples that could bias comparisons. By focusing on same-sex couples across different types of states, the analysis mitigates concerns that variations in sexual orientation may overshadow the impact of geographic location (early-adopter versus late-adopter states), thus providing a more nuanced understanding of the effects.

With this design, the control group is SSCs living in early-adopter states, and the effects I am estimating represent the change in outcomes of late-adopter state SSCs relatively to early-adopter state SSCs. The regression equation with this design therefore takes the form of

$$Y_{ist} = \alpha + \beta(Post13_t * LateAdopter_s) + \tau_s + \mu_t + X'_{ist}\gamma + \epsilon_{ist} \quad (3)$$

$$Y_{ist} = \alpha + \beta(Post15_t * LateAdopter_s) + \tau_s + \mu_t + X'_{ist}\gamma + \epsilon_{ist} \quad (4)$$

where  $Y_{ist}$  is the outcomes of interest.  $Post13_t$  and  $Post15_t$  are indicators of whether the observation is surveyed after the USvW or the OvH ruling,  $LateAdopter_s$  is an indicator for late-adopter states,  $\tau_s$  is state fixed effect,  $\mu_t$  is year fixed effect.  $X_{ist}$  are the same set of controls as in Equation 1. The standard error  $\epsilon_{ist}$  is again clustered at state level.

Here, sample is restricted to SSCs living in both early-adopter and late-adopter states, excluding pre-legalization early-adopter state samples.

## 5 Empirical Results

### 5.1 Federal recognition: United States v. Windsor (2013)

#### 5.1.1 Same-sex couple vs. opposite-sex couple

The first set of DiD regressions aims to estimate the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) of federal recognition. Here, the sample is restricted to states that legalized SSM on or prior to 2013 (early-adopter states), and observations before

legalization are excluded. Therefore, with the DiD design, the treatment group is SSCs in early-adopter states and the control group is OSCs in early-adopter states.

Regarding insurance coverage (shown in Figure 4, and Table 6), I observe higher take-up overall (2.63%), increased coverage through ESI by 5.01%, and a higher private insurance coverage of 0.89%. Note that the large confidence interval in the pre-treatment period is mostly due to that only a few states legalized SSM in early years.

In the labor market, I do not find conclusive results (As in Figure 5), whereas my data exhibits an increase in total social security income of SSCs compared to OSCs by approximately 13.4% in Figure 6. See Table 7 and Table 8 for DD estimators.

To summarize, results here indicate that federal recognition of SSM indeed narrowed the health insurance gap between SSCs and OSCs, and this change happened mainly through an expanded ESI coverage.

### 5.1.2 Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. early-adopter states

Using the second DD setup, I employ the same regression on SSCs living in both early-adopter and late-adopter states, and estimate the ATT of federal recognition on late-adopter state SSCs compared to their counterparts in early-adopter states. With this design, the treatment effects measure the spill-over of federal recognition in early-adopter states to late-adopter states.

DD regression in Figure 7 shows a persistent increase in both overall insurance as well coverage through employment, 8.02% and 4.75% respectively. See Table 9 for details. There was no significant change in the private coverage, which includes coverage through ACA marketplace that started in October 1st of 2013<sup>10</sup>. This offers additional evidence to the spill-over effect against the potential threat from Medicaid Expansion that was implemented at the same time.

In the labor market, Figure 8 shows no significant change in unemployment, but a reduction of weekly working hours of late-adopter state SSCs relative to SSCs in early-adopter states by 1.934 hours. On the other hand, I observe a decreased social security

<sup>10</sup>Although a big fraction of the states did not expanded the eligibility of Medicaid as mandated in the ACA bill, the opening of health insurance exchanges is required by law.

income (by approximately 15.2%) accompanied by an increase in SSI recipient as in Figure 9 in spite of an insignificant DD estimator. See Table 10 and Table 11 for details. My findings here show that although the 2013 ruling did not directly lift the legal restriction of SSM in the late-adopter states, it had a spill-over effect on health insurance coverage to SSCs in not-yet-legal states compared to SSCs in SSM legal states. Potential channels and discussion on the spill-over is discussed in Section 6.

## 5.2 Marriage equality: Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)

### 5.2.1 Same-sex couple vs. opposite-sex couple

The second set of DiD regressions aims to estimate the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) of marriage equality. Here, sample is restricted to states that did not legalize SSM until 2015 (late-adopter states). Therefore, the SSCs in this sub-sample did not have access to marriage before OvH, and the ruling in 2015 granted them both marriage equality and federal recognition. In this case, the control group is OSCs in late-adopter states, and the treatment group is SSCs in late-adopter states.

Unlike results in the federal recognition of the same-sex marriage, pre-trends are found in both overall insurance coverage and ESI. As in Figure 10, the treatment effects happened prior to the 2015 ruling that ensured marriage equality, which are consistent with the spill-over found in the previous section. A significant decrease of 1.99% in Medicaid coverage is shown in panel (d) and Table 12. This can be explained by the fact that combined income of both spouses may disqualify them for Medicaid, the eligibility of which depends on the federal poverty line (FPL)<sup>11</sup>.

No significant effects can be seen in unemployment and wage (see Figure 11, and Table 13). For weekly hours worked, results show a significant 2.139 hours increase. No change in social security income is found (see Figure 12, and Table 14), even though DD estimator of SSI shows a reduction of around 7.37%.

<sup>11</sup>To be eligible for Medicaid, the household needs to have an income equal to 400% of the FPL at most, which is the threshold for getting partially subsidized insurance plans.

### 5.2.2 Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. early-adopter states

Again, alternative setup on the 2015 ruling uses SSCs in both early-adopter and late-adopter states as the sub-sample of interest. The ATT estimated here represents the treatment effect of marriage equality on SSCs living in late-adopter states relative to SSCs in early-adopter states.

From Figure 13, a significant pre-trend can be found in both overall coverage and ESI, even though DD estimators in Table 15 shows significance in both outcomes. The event study indicates a possible pre-exposure to the treatment, which could be explained by the spill-over discussed earlier. No conclusive results are given in the event study on labor market outcomes and social security recipient (See Figure 14, Figure 12, Table 16, and Table 17). These event study graphs imply that the increase of overall coverage and ESI may not be the results of the 2015 ruling, but of an earlier event.

## 6 Robustness Check and Discussion

### 6.1 Concurrent Healthcare Reform

One potential threat to the spill-over estimation above is the concurrent healthcare system reform that happened on 2010, the Affordable Care Act (ACA). With the event study graphs in section 5.2, ACA could potentially be the reason of the early response in outcomes. Implementing in 2014, ACA establishes private insurance marketplace in each state, and expands the eligibility of Medicaid coverage to able-bodied childless low-income individuals<sup>12</sup>. Outlined below, two sets of robustness check isolate the interference of ACA, re-estimate the ATT, and have found same conclusions.

#### 6.1.1 ACA Expansion and Health Insurance Take-up

The first major policy change from ACA is the expanded Medicaid eligibility to able-bodied childless individual with low income. After the passing of ACA back in 2010,

<sup>12</sup>ACA also established a small business exchange (Small Business Health Options Program, SHOP) for employers to gain better access to the insurance market for their employees. However, the launch and participation of SHOP face challenges from the beginning, so SHOP is not expected to have significant bias to my findings. See <https://chirblog.org/winding-small-business-marketplaces-feds-acknowledge-failure-launch/>.



Supreme Court's decision on *National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius* in 2012 allows states to decide whether the eligibility shall be expanded. Therefore, this allows me to run the same estimation on a sub-sample of households in ACA non-expansion states. By doing so, I look at households that are completely not affected by the policy reform in Medicaid. The sample here includes same-sex couples living in post-SSM early-adopter states, and late-adopter states that do not expand ACA.

Doing so ensures that the ATTs estimated by DiD function as a lower-bound of the true ATTs. Since most late-adopter states do not expand ACA whereas most early-adopter states are involved in expansion, a fraction of the true ATTs could be negated by the improvement of coverage in early-adopter states.

Figure 16 and Table 18 demonstrates the event studies of insurance coverage status for same-sex couples. We could notice that the significant increase of 8.77% and 5.12% in overall coverage and ESI persist absence of ACA expansion. Moreover, we observe a insignificant response in private coverage after the treatment. This further contradicts with the interference from private coverage exchanges/marketplace in ACA.

### 6.1.2 Income and ACA Eligibility

The second major change in ACA is the establishment of health insurance marketplace. The marketplace is a federal/state regulated exchange that allows households to purchase different levels of health insurance plans to fit their needs. In ACS micro-data, the coverage through this channel is considered private insurance. Despite I found, in Section 5, no change in private coverage from the rulings, I further restricted my sample to HHs with annual income above 400% FPL<sup>13</sup>. This threshold excludes all household that might be affected by the change in ACA through income.

On insurance outcome, Figure 17 shows a similar positive spill-over of federal recognition on late-adopter state SSCs, with a 2.27% increase in overall coverage and 2.78% increase in ESI. No significant change in private insurance and Medicaid is found, which is consistent with the restriction on the sample (See Table 19).

<sup>13</sup>Although Medicaid expansion lower the Medicaid income eligibility to below 138% of FPL, 400% of FPL is the threshold to qualify for premium tax credit that subsidizes an insurance marketplace plan. See <https://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/federal-poverty-level-fpl/> for details.

In the labor market, I again find a decrease of 2.26 hours of work per week, and no conclusive results are drawn from social security since my sample here focuses on higher-income HHs (For trends and DD estimators, refer to Figure 18, Figure 19, Table 20, and Table 21).

## 6.2 Discussion: the Spill-over

The surprising results in the spill-over effects of *United States v. Windsor* (2013) on same-sex couples can happen through several channels. First of all, 2013 ruling even though did not specifically target same-sex households in late-adopter states, it improved workplace anti-discrimination, which was empirically validated and mentioned as a potential channel in literature (Sansone, 2019). Friendlier work environment could incentivize higher willingness to include same-sex dependent in ESI, as well as improve sexual minority's access to better employment with more ESI coverage.

Secondly, the ruling in 2013 provides incentives for insurance companies and employers to avoid setting eligibility restrictions on same-sex couples. This is supported by the significant increases in ESI across all specifications. Thirdly, Badgett & Mallory (2014) provides descriptive evidence from administrative data that more same-sex couples get married following the ruling, both in-state and out-of state. They see nearly twice as many couples married in New England states in 2013 than in 2012, with larger increase in out-of-state travels for marriage.

Lastly, Crandall-Hollick et al. (2013) explains that the Supreme Court decision may lower the effective health insurance premiums paid by married same-sex couples on employer-sponsored insurance (ESI) plans. Previously, the employer's contribution towards the premium for a same-sex spouse was taxable income for the employee, unlike for opposite-sex spouses. Post-decision, with same-sex marriages recognized for federal tax purposes, these contributions are no longer taxable, thereby reducing the tax liability for same-sex couples and encouraging higher enrollment in employer-provided family health plans.

## **7 Conclusion**

This study utilized a difference-in-differences approach to investigate the impacts of two pivotal Supreme Court decisions regarding same-sex marriage in the United States - the 2013 *United States v. Windsor* ruling and the 2015 *Obergefell v. Hodges* ruling. The findings highlight substantial benefits in terms of improved health insurance coverage accrued by same-sex couples following the expansion of marriage rights and federal recognition of their unions.

By acknowledging the incremental layers of reform inherent in the legalization of same-sex marriage, I separately estimated the treatment effect of state-level access to marriage, and the federal recognition followed by extended federal benefits, building upon the existing literature on the same-sex marriage. Despite a smaller effect size, I discovered that federal recognition in SSM-legal states, reduced the disparities in health insurance coverage of SSCs compared to opposite-sex counterparts. This enhancement primarily manifested through broader employment-based coverage, benefiting same-sex partners both as employees and as dependents.

In assessing the impact of federal recognition on same-sex couples, it was crucial to account for potential confounding factors like the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which was implemented in 2014 and significantly altered healthcare eligibility and insurance market structures. To isolate the effects of legal changes from ACA impacts, robustness checks were conducted on sub-samples from states that did not expand Medicaid and households earning above 400% of the Federal Poverty Level, ensuring they were unaffected by ACA's subsidy criteria. These checks confirmed that increases in health insurance coverage and employment benefits observed among same-sex couples were attributable to federal recognition rather than ACA interventions. This distinction is critical in understanding the specific economic benefits that federal recognition has conferred on same-sex couples, highlighting its unique role independent of broader healthcare reforms.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on the economic and social impacts of same-sex marriage legalization, as well as how public policy could help narrow the economic gap between heterosexual families and sexual & gender minorities.

The findings highlight the potential for policy interventions to reshape the landscape for marginalized communities and foster greater inclusivity within societal institutions.

While the legislative process and institutional context were specific to the United States, the lessons learned from this research can inform policymakers globally as more countries legalize same-sex marriage and provide equal legal treatment towards LGBTQ+ community. Furthermore, the broader implications extend beyond same-sex unions, as similar logic can be applied to any policies that modify the supply and benefits associated with the marital contract.

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## 8 Tables

Table 1: Summary of SSM Literature

Outcome	Literature	USvW	OvH	Data
Health	Carpenter, Eppink, et al. (2021)	✗	✓	BRFSS
	Kail, Acosta and Wright (2015)	✗	✓	CPS
	Wight, LeBlanc and Badgett (2013)	✗	✓	CHIS <sup>a</sup>
	Francis, Mialon and Peng (2012) <sup>b</sup>	✗	✓	State-level data
Insurance	Mann et al. (2023)	✗	✗	ACS
	Carpenter, Gonzales, et al. (2021)	✗	✗	ACS, NHIS
	Carpenter, Eppink, et al. (2021)	✗	✓	BRFSS
	Downing and Cha (2020)	✗	✓	ACS
	Tumin and Kroeger (2020)	✗	✓	NHIS
Healthcare Use	Carpenter, Eppink, et al. (2021)	✗	✗	BRFSS
Labor Market	Martell and Nash (2020)	✗	✓	ACS, NHIS
	Hansen et al. (2020)	✗	✓	ACS, CPS, ATUS
	Sansone (2019)	✗	✓	ACS
	Dillender (2015)	✗	✓	CPS
Miscellaneous	Piano, Behr and West (2024)	✗	✓	State-level data
	Isaac (2023)	✓	✗	ACS
	Cheng et al. (2021)	✓	✗	ACS

This table summarizes the existing literature on the same-sex marriage in the context of the United States of America. The same-sex marriage legalization is divided into two layers in my study, recognition by the federal government of the existing same-sex marriage, and the access to same-sex marriage in the first place. The Supreme Court ruling on *United States v. Windsor* (USvW) decided that the federal government must give the same benefits and treatment to same-sex marriages performed in legal state, and the ruling on *Obergefell v. Hodges* (OvH) on the other hand decided that all states must allow same-sex marriage. The miscellaneous outcome is primarily on taxation.

<sup>a</sup>California Health Interview Survey

<sup>b</sup>Instead of SSM legalization, this study is on the ban on SSM.

Table 2: Date and Form of SSM Legalization

State	Date of Decision	Date of Effect	Form
Massachusetts	Nov 18th, 2003	May 17th, 2004	Court decision
California	May 15th, 2008 (Overturned)	Jun 16th, 2008	Court decision
	Aug 4th, 2010	Jun 26th, 2013	Court decision
Connecticut	Oct 10th, 2008	Nov 12th, 2008	Court decision
Iowa	Apr 3rd, 2009	Apr 27th, 2009	Court decision
Vermont	Apr 7th, 2009	Sep 1st, 2009	State legislation
New Hampshire	Jun 3rd, 2009	Jan 1st, 2010	State legislation
District of Columbia	Dec 18th, 2009	March 3rd, 2010	State legislation
New York	Jun 24th, 2011	July 24th, 2011	State legislation
Washington	Feb 13th, 2012	Dec 6th, 2012	State legislation <sup>14</sup>
Maryland	Mar 1st, 2012	Jan 1st, 2013	Referendum
Maine	Nov 6th, 2012	Dec 29th, 2012	Referendum
New Jersey	Sep 27th, 2013	Oct 21st, 2013	Court decision
New Mexico	Dec 19th, 2013	Aug 21st, 2013	Court decision, county clerk <sup>15</sup>
Rhode Island	May 2nd, 2013	Aug 1st, 2013	State legislation
Delaware	May 7th, 2013	Jul 1st, 2013	State legislation
Minnesota	May 14th, 2013	Aug 1st, 2013	State legislation
Hawaii	Nov 13th, 2013	Dec 2nd, 2013	State legislation
Illinois	Nov 20th, 2013	Feb 26th, 2014	State legislation, court decision <sup>16</sup>
Utah	Dec 20th, 2013 (Court Stay <sup>17</sup> )	Dec 20th, 2013	Court decision
	Oct 6th, 2014	Oct 6th, 2014	Court Decision
Oregon	May 19th, 2014	May 19th, 2014	Court decision
Pennsylvania	May 20th, 2014	May 20th, 2014	Court decision
Virginia	Oct 6th, 2014	Oct 6th, 2014	Court decision
Indiana	Jun 25th, 2014	Oct 6th, 2014	Court decision
Wisconsin	Sep 4th, 2014	Oct 6th, 2014	Court decision

*Continued on next page*<sup>14</sup>Affirmed by a referendum<sup>15</sup>The New Mexico Supreme Court ruled that the same-sex marriage is permitted on Dec 19th of 2013, even though eight county clerks had already been issuing marriage license to same-sex couples since Aug of 2013.<sup>16</sup>The legislation was set to be effective from Jun 1st of 2014, but a U.S. District Judge ruled on Feb 21st of 2014, that the marriage is available immediately.<sup>17</sup>Stay is an action taken by a court to stop a legal proceeding or the actions of a party.

Table 2 – Continued from previous page

State	Date of Decision	Date of Effect	Form
Oklahoma	Jul 18th, 2014	Oct 6th, 2014	Court decision
Colorado	Jul 9th, 2014	Oct 7th, 2014	Court decision
West Virginia	Jul 28th, 2014	Oct 9th, 2014	Court decision
North Carolina	Oct 10th, 2014	Oct 10th, 2014	Court decision
Wyoming	Oct 17th, 2014	Oct 21st, 2014	Court decision
South Carolina	Nov 12th, 2014	Nov 20th, 2014	Court decision
Idaho	May 13th, 2014	Oct 15th, 2014	Court decision
Nevada	Oct 7th, 2014	Oct 9th, 2014	Court decision
Alaska	Oct 12th, 2014	Oct 12th, 2014	Court decision
Arizona	Oct 17th, 2014	Oct 17th, 2014	Court decision
Montana	Nov 19th, 2014	Nov 19th, 2014	Court decision
Florida	Aug 21st, 2014	Jan 6th, 2015	Court decision

Table 3: States Group by SSM Legalization Year (Adjusted)

Year	State
2004	Massachusetts
2009	Connecticut*, Iowa, Vermont
2010	New Hampshire, District of Columbia
2011	New York
2013	California, Washington*, Maryland, Maine*, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Delaware, Minnesota
2014	New Jersey*, Hawaii*, Illinois, Oregon, Pennsylvania
2015	Utah*, Virginia*, Indiana*, Wisconsin*, Oklahoma*, Colorado*, West Virginia*, North Carolina*, Wyoming*, South Carolina*, Idaho*, Nevada*, Alaska*, Arizona*, Montana*, Florida
OvH States	Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas

In this table, states in the U.S. are grouped based on the different timing of same-sex marriage legalization within the states. Given the data used in annual basis, if a state implemented the legalization later than October in that year, the treatment year will be set as the following year. States in the table marked by \* are these approximated states. Note that states that did not legalize the same-sex marriage prior to Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) are listed separately.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics: Early-adopter States

Variable	Pre-2013				Post-2013			
	SSC		OSC		SSC		OSC	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Overall Coverage	0.9396	0.1922	0.9320	0.2246	0.9327	0.2074	0.9194	0.2425
ESI	0.7866	0.3534	0.7906	0.3797	0.7461	0.3786	0.7296	0.4102
Private Insurance	0.1000	0.2546	0.0907	0.2600	0.1104	0.2668	0.1039	0.2749
Medicaid	0.0859	0.2368	0.0888	0.2664	0.0949	0.2490	0.1056	0.2848
Unemployment	0.0401	0.1963	0.0412	0.1988	0.0314	0.1743	0.0265	0.1607
Weekly Hours Worked	74.373	24.293	70.551	23.737	73.642	25.308	69.677	24.327
Log Total Wage	10.8977	2.4473	10.7524	2.4344	10.9344	2.5220	10.7818	2.5229
Log Total Social Security	0.3648	1.8149	0.3092	1.6652	0.3922	1.8774	0.2696	1.5625
Log Total SSI	0.2611	1.5179	0.1784	1.2643	0.2501	1.4885	0.1733	1.2467
Family Size	2.8341	1.0595	3.4323	1.2987	2.7777	1.2025	3.4415	1.3943
Log Total Income	11.4698	0.9465	11.3169	0.9921	11.4739	1.1995	11.3441	1.1037
Disability	0.1221	0.3275	0.0984	0.2978	0.1425	0.3495	0.1077	0.3099
Average Age	42.6811	9.3769	43.5937	9.5969	41.9821	9.9867	43.0899	9.8398
Hispanic	0.1165	0.3209	0.0915	0.2883	0.2280	0.4196	0.2082	0.4060
Asian	0.0155	0.1237	0.0113	0.1058	0.0349	0.1835	0.0242	0.1536
Black	0.0768	0.2664	0.0623	0.2416	0.0977	0.2970	0.0678	0.2514
Log Population	16.362	1.1729	16.338	1.1028	16.408	1.1588	16.386	1.1087
Log GDP	13.538	1.1398	13.485	1.1260	13.674	1.1741	13.629	1.1628
Log Disposable Income	10.621	0.1058	10.611	0.0995	10.790	0.1183	10.779	0.1150
Unemployment rate	8.7338	2.1896	8.5256	2.2350	5.2985	1.5425	5.2611	1.5480
Observations	2,317		155,629		16,741		909,035	

This sample is used to estimate the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) of the 2013 Supreme Court ruling on *United States v. Windsor*, that invalidate part of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). The decision marked the federal recognition of the same-sex marriage in the united state. Sample here is restricted to early-adopter states, those who legalized the same-sex marriage in their states prior to the ruling, and observations from before SSM was legal in those states are excluded. Column two to fifth contain the descriptive statistics of the pre-treatment outcomes and characteristics of the treatment and control households. And column sixth to ninth, on the other hand, includes the mean and standard deviation of the post-treatment treatment and control groups.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics: Late-adopter States

Variable	Pre-2015				Post-2015			
	SSC		OSC		SSC		OSC	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Overall Coverage	0.8296	0.3113	0.8517	0.3218	0.9074	0.2417	0.9045	0.2621
ESI	0.6669	0.3976	0.7031	0.4233	0.7163	0.3906	0.7207	0.4116
Private Insurance	0.1122	0.2580	0.1027	0.2746	0.1143	0.2702	0.1115	0.2831
Medicaid	0.0621	0.1936	0.0560	0.2102	0.0847	0.2343	0.0815	0.2504
Unemployment	0.0433	0.2036	0.0403	0.1967	0.0235	0.1515	0.0208	0.1429
Weekly Hours Worked	72.243	25.988	68.911	25.236	73.654	24.863	70.311	24.671
Log Total Wage	10.500	2.5775	10.413	2.6234	10.781	2.4127	10.699	2.5188
Log Total Social Security	0.5051	2.1028	0.3906	1.8624	0.4132	1.9114	0.3323	1.7280
Log Total SSI	0.3099	1.6403	0.1848	1.2780	0.2744	1.5549	0.1921	1.3100
Family Size	2.8784	1.1753	3.3731	1.3275	2.7886	1.1753	3.2657	1.3336
Log Total Income	11.092	1.1607	11.059	1.0645	11.277	1.1767	11.263	1.0888
Disability	0.1708	0.3763	0.1364	0.3432	0.1677	0.3736	0.1279	0.3340
Average Age	41.480	9.8093	42.655	10.103	40.860	10.456	42.668	10.127
Hispanic	0.1593	0.3660	0.1357	0.3424	0.2081	0.4060	0.1627	0.3691
Asian	0.0318	0.1755	0.0262	0.1597	0.0349	0.1837	0.0261	0.1595
Black	0.1035	0.3046	0.0898	0.2859	0.1172	0.3217	0.0834	0.2765
Log Population	16.006	0.7465	15.884	0.7953	16.022	0.7929	15.952	0.8119
Log GDP	12.921	0.7764	12.798	0.8274	13.004	0.8409	12.931	0.8606
Log Disposable Income	10.475	0.0947	10.467	0.0990	10.642	0.0934	10.635	0.0950
Unemployment rate	7.7600	1.9606	7.7037	2.0436	4.2500	0.8573	4.2880	0.8679
Observations	18,521		1,793,944		19,567		1,234,083	

This sample is used to estimate the average treatment effect on the treated (ATT) of the 2015 Supreme Court ruling on *Obergefell v. Hodges*, that legalize the same-sex marriage across the United States. The decision ensured an equal access of the same-sex marriage in the whole country. Sample here is restricted to late-adopter states, those who did legalized the same-sex marriage in their states prior to the ruling (with adjustment). Column two to fifth contain the descriptive statistics of the pre-treatment outcomes and characteristics of the treatment and control households. And column sixth to ninth, on the other hand, includes the mean and standard deviation of the post-treatment treatment and control groups.

Table 6: Effect of United States v. Windsor (2013) on Insurance  
Same-sex couples vs. Opposite-sex couples

VARIABLES SSC vs OSC	Overall Coverage (1)	ESI (2)	Private Insurance (3)	Medicaid (4)
DD Estimator	0.0263*** (0.0067)	0.0501*** (0.0072)	0.0089* (0.0051)	-0.0378*** (0.0090)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline	0.9396	0.7866	0.1000	0.0859
N	920,474	920,474	920,474	920,474

Dependent variables: probability couple insured, probability couple has employer-sponsored insurance, probability couple has privately-purchased insurance (excluding purchases through a government program), and probability couple has Medicaid or other government-sponsored health insurance. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

Table 7: Effect of United States v. Windsor (2013) on Labor Market  
Same-sex couples vs. Opposite-sex couples

VARIABLES SSC vs OSC	Unemployment (1)	Weekly Hours Worked (2)	Log Total Wage (3)
DD Estimator	0.0073 (0.0060)	4.0760*** (0.8710)	0.0565 (0.0605)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
Baseline	0.0401	74.373	10.898
N	920,474	920,474	920,474

Dependent variables: probability couple unemployed, combined weekly working hours, and log of combine wage and salary income. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

Table 8: Effect of United States v. Windsor (2013) on Social Security  
Same-sex couples vs. Opposite-sex couples

VARIABLES SSC vs OSC	Log Total Social Security (1)	Log Total SSI (2)
DD Estimator	0.1340*** (0.0290)	-0.0546 (0.0893)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓
Baseline	0.3648	0.2611
N	920,474	920,474

Dependent variables: log of combine social security benefits, and log of combined Supplemental Security Income benefits. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

Table 9: Effect of United States v. Windsor (2013) on Insurance  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states

VARIABLES Early-adopter vs Late-adopter	Overall Coverage (1)	ESI (2)	Private Insurance (3)	Medicaid (4)
DD Estimator	0.0802*** (0.0119)	0.0475*** (0.0126)	0.0042 (0.0078)	0.0333*** (0.0105)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline	0.8226	0.6679	0.1094	0.0589
N	28,312	28,312	28,312	28,312

Dependent variables: probability couple insured, probability couple has employer-sponsored insurance, probability couple has privately-purchased insurance (excluding purchases through a government program), and probability couple has Medicaid or other government-sponsored health insurance. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \*p<0.10, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01.

Table 10: Effect of United States v. Windsor (2013) on Labor Market  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states

VARIABLES Early-adopter vs Late-adopter	Unemployment (1)	Weekly Hours Worked (2)	Log Total Wage (3)
DD Estimator	-0.0152** (0.0073)	-1.934** (0.7420)	0.0510 (0.0697)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
Baseline	0.0474	72.532	10.472
N	28,312	28,312	28,312

Dependent variables: probability couple unemployed, combined weekly working hours, and log of combine wage and salary income. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \*p<0.10, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01.

Table 11: Effect of United States v. Windsor (2013) on Social Security  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states

VARIABLES Early-adopter vs Late-adopter	Log Total Social Security (1)	Log Total SSI (2)
DD Estimator	-0.1520*** (0.0522)	-0.0838 (0.0878)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓
Baseline	0.5099	0.3057
N	28,312	28,312

Dependent variables: log of combine social security benefits, and log of combined Supplemental Security Income benefits. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \*p<0.10, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01.

Table 12: Effect of Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) on Insurance  
Same-sex couples vs. Opposite-sex couples

VARIABLES SSC vs OSC	Overall Coverage (1)	ESI (2)	Private Insurance (3)	Medicaid (4)
DD Estimator	0.0528*** (0.0056)	0.0616*** (0.0058)	0.0017 (0.0049)	-0.0199*** (0.0027)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline	0.8296	0.6669	0.1122	0.0621
N	2,692,598	2,692,598	2,692,598	2,692,598

Dependent variables: probability couple insured, probability couple has employer-sponsored insurance, probability couple has privately-purchased insurance (excluding purchases through a government program), and probability couple has Medicaid or other government-sponsored health insurance. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \*p<0.10, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01.



Table 13: Effect of Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) on Labor Market  
Same-sex couples vs. Opposite-sex couples

VARIABLES SSC vs OSC	Unemployment (1)	Weekly Hours Worked (2)	Log Total Wage (3)
DD Estimator	-0.0062* (0.0035)	2.1390*** (0.2740)	0.0602* (0.0315)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
Baseline	0.0433	72.243	10.501
N	2,692,598	2,692,598	2,692,598

Dependent variables: probability couple unemployed, combined weekly working hours, and log of combine wage and salary income. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

Table 14: Effect of Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) on Social Security  
Same-sex couples vs. Opposite-sex couples

VARIABLES SSC vs OSC	Log Total Social Security (1)	Log Total SSI (2)
DD Estimator	-0.0034 (0.0262)	-0.0737*** (0.0266)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓
Baseline	0.5051	0.3099
N	2,692,598	2,692,598

Dependent variables: log of combine social security benefits, and log of combined Supplemental Security Income benefits. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

Table 15: Effect of Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) on Insurance  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states

VARIABLES Early-adopter vs Late-adopter	Overall Coverage (1)	ESI (2)	Private Insurance (3)	Medicaid (4)
DD Estimator	0.0534*** (0.0118)	0.0477*** (0.0094)	0.0006 (0.0070)	0.0138* (0.0073)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline	0.8296	0.6669	0.1122	0.0621
N	28,312	28,312	28,312	28,312

Dependent variables: probability couple insured, probability couple has employer-sponsored insurance, probability couple has privately-purchased insurance (excluding purchases through a government program), and probability couple has Medicaid or other government-sponsored health insurance. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

Table 16: Effect of Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) on Labor Market  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states

VARIABLES Early-adopter vs Late-adopter	Unemployment (1)	Weekly Hours Worked (2)	Log Total Wage (3)
DD Estimator	-0.0097 (0.0060)	0.0124 (0.5300)	0.0877 (0.0593)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
Baseline	0.0433	72.243	10.501
N	28,312	28,312	28,312

Dependent variables: probability couple unemployed, combined weekly working hours, and log of combine wage and salary income. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

Table 17: Effect of Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) on Social Security  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states

VARIABLES Early-adopter vs Late-adopter	Log Total Social Security (1)	Log Total SSI (2)
DD Estimator	-0.1070** (0.0516)	-0.0537 (0.0586)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓
Baseline	0.5051	0.3099
N	28,312	28,312

Dependent variables: log of combine social security benefits, and log of combined Supplemental Security Income benefits. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \*p<0.10, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01.

Table 18: Effect of United States v. Windsor (2013) on Insurance  
SSCs in ACA Non-expansion Late-adopter States vs. Legal Early-adopter States

VARIABLES Early-adopter vs Late-adopter	Overall Coverage (1)	ESI (2)	Private Insurance (3)	Medicaid (4)
DD Estimator	0.0877*** (0.0136)	0.0512*** (0.0125)	0.0092 (0.0092)	0.0342*** (0.0109)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline	0.8159	0.6618	0.1141	0.0507
N	21,924	21,924	21,924	21,924

Dependent variables: probability couple insured, probability couple has employer-sponsored insurance, probability couple has privately-purchased insurance (excluding purchases through a government program), and probability couple has Medicaid or other government-sponsored health insurance. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \*p<0.10, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01.

Table 19: Effect of United States v. Windsor (2013) on Insurance  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states (Above 400% FPL)

VARIABLES Early-adopter vs Late-adopter	Overall Coverage (1)	ESI (2)	Private Insurance (3)	Medicaid (4)
DD Estimator	0.0227*** (0.0073)	0.0278* (0.0157)	-0.0087 (0.0110)	0.0044 (0.0066)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓
Baseline	0.9367	0.7795	0.1119	0.0592
N	16,690	16,690	16,690	16,690

Dependent variables: probability couple insured, probability couple has employer-sponsored insurance, probability couple has privately-purchased insurance (excluding purchases through a government program), and probability couple has Medicaid or other government-sponsored health insurance. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). Sample is restricted to same-sex households in late-adopter states or post-legalization early-adopter states with annual income above 400% of FPL. All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \*p<0.10, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01.

Table 20: Effect of United States v. Windsor (2013) on Labor Market  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states (Above 400% FPL)

VARIABLES Early-adopter vs Late-adopter	Unemployment (1)	Weekly Hours Worked (2)	Log Total Wage (3)
DD Estimator	-0.0078 (0.0099)	-2.2632** (0.8563)	0.0307 (0.0840)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓	✓
Baseline	0.0213	77.240	11.193
N	16,690	16,690	16,690

Dependent variables: probability couple unemployed, combined weekly working hours, and log of combine wage and salary income. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). Sample is restricted to same-sex households in late-adopter states or post-legalization early-adopter states with annual income above 400% of FPL. All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \*p<0.10, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01.

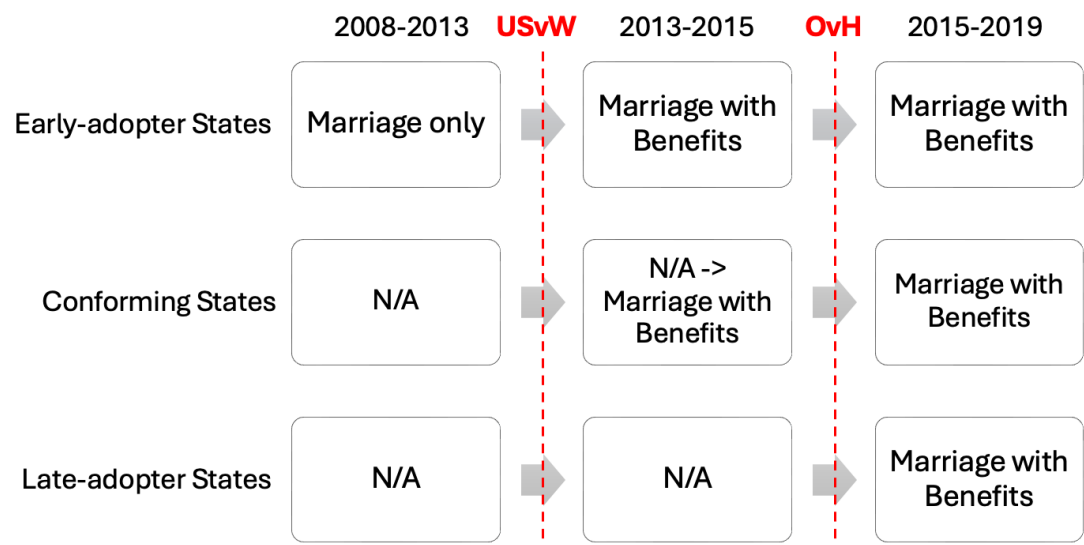
Table 21: Effect of United States v. Windsor (2013) on Social Security  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states (Above 400% FPL)

VARIABLES	Log Total Social Security	Log Total SSI
Early-adopter vs Late-adopter	(1)	(2)
DD Estimator	-0.1020** (0.0441)	0.0006 (0.0584)
Year Fixed Effect	✓	✓
State Fixed Effect	✓	✓
Baseline	0.3258	0.1967
N	16,690	16,690

Dependent variables: log of combine social security benefits, and log of combined Supplemental Security Income benefits. Standard errors in parenthesis clustered at the state level (51 clusters: 50 states plus the District of Colombia). Sample is restricted to same-sex households in late-adopter states or post-legalization early-adopter states with annual income above 400% of FPL. All specifications include year and state fixed effect, individual and state-level controls. Individual controls: family size, family income, average age of the couple, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. State-level controls: population, GDP, disposable income per capita, and unemployment rate. \* $p < 0.10$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

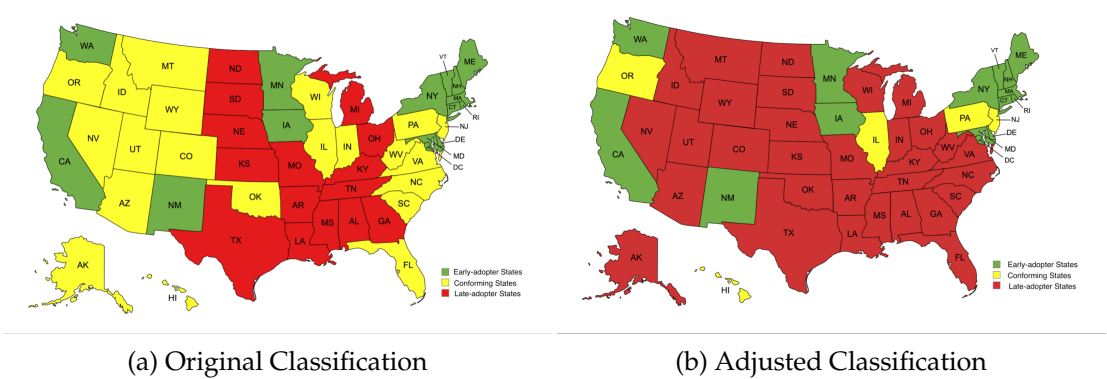
9 Figures

Figure 1: Timeline of Same-sex Marriage Legalization



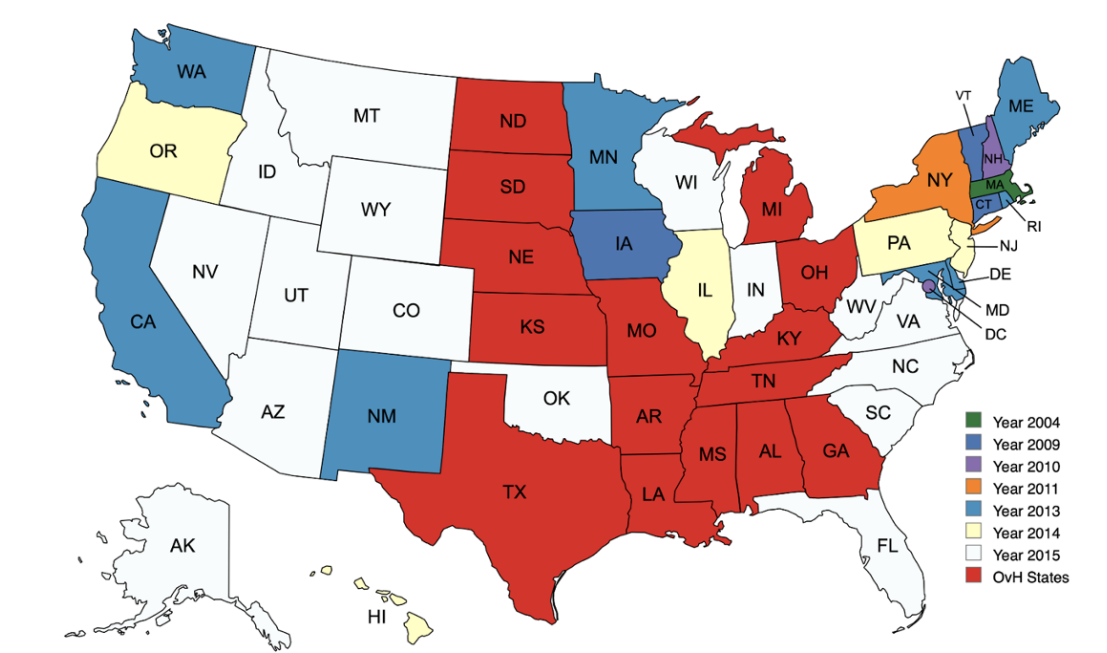
This figure shows the heterogeneous treatments from two Supreme Court rulings on same-sex marriage by type of state a same-sex couple lives in. SSCs in early-adopter state have access to marriage before both rulings, therefore USvW in 2013 only granted their existing marriage federal recognition and benefits. SSCs in conforming states gained federally-recognized marriage between two rulings, whereas those in late-adopter states got it on 2015 in compliance with OvH.

Figure 2: Classification of States



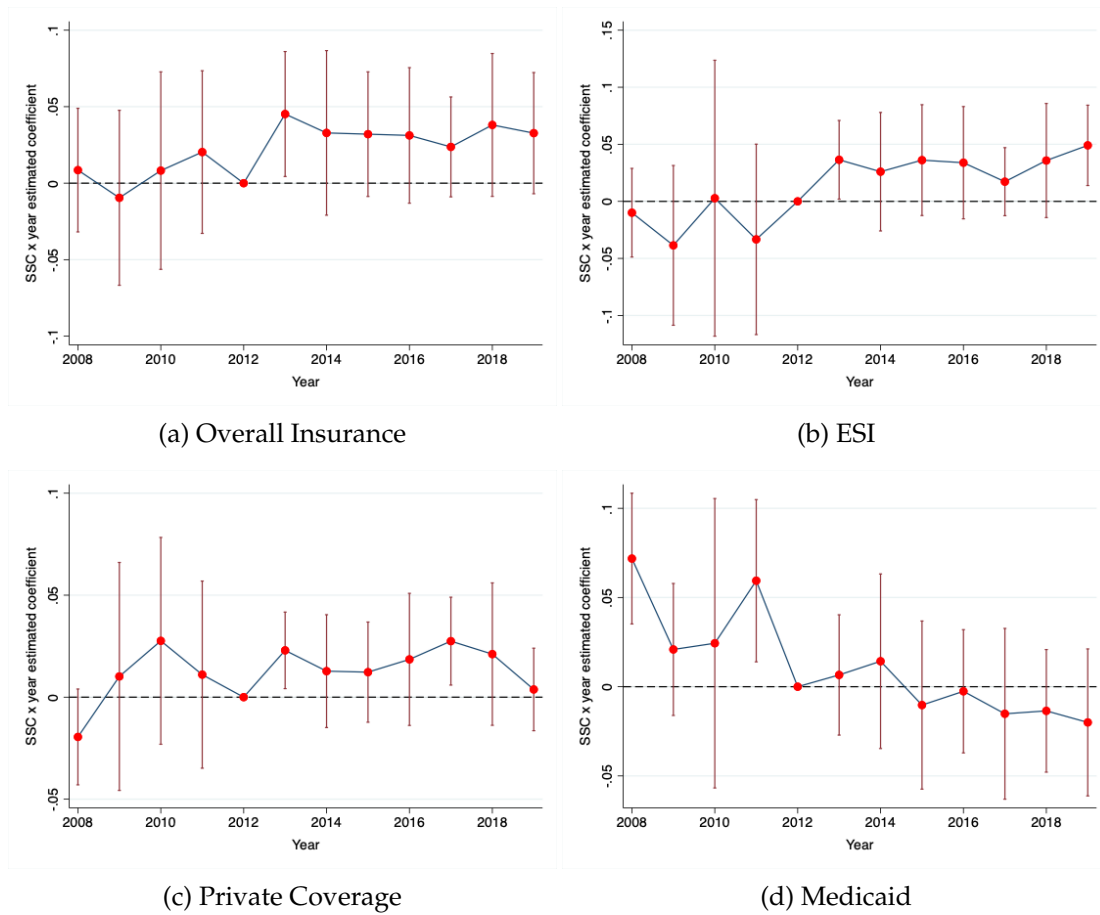
Panel (a) marks the states with their type based on the effective year of same-sex marriage. In panel (b), some conforming states are adjusted into late-adopter states, if within-state legalization happened in 2015 but before OvH ruling, or later than October of 2014.

Figure 3: States by SSM Legalization Year



This map shows the variation in same-sex marriage legalization year. Note that states legalized SSM by OvH ruling are listed separately.

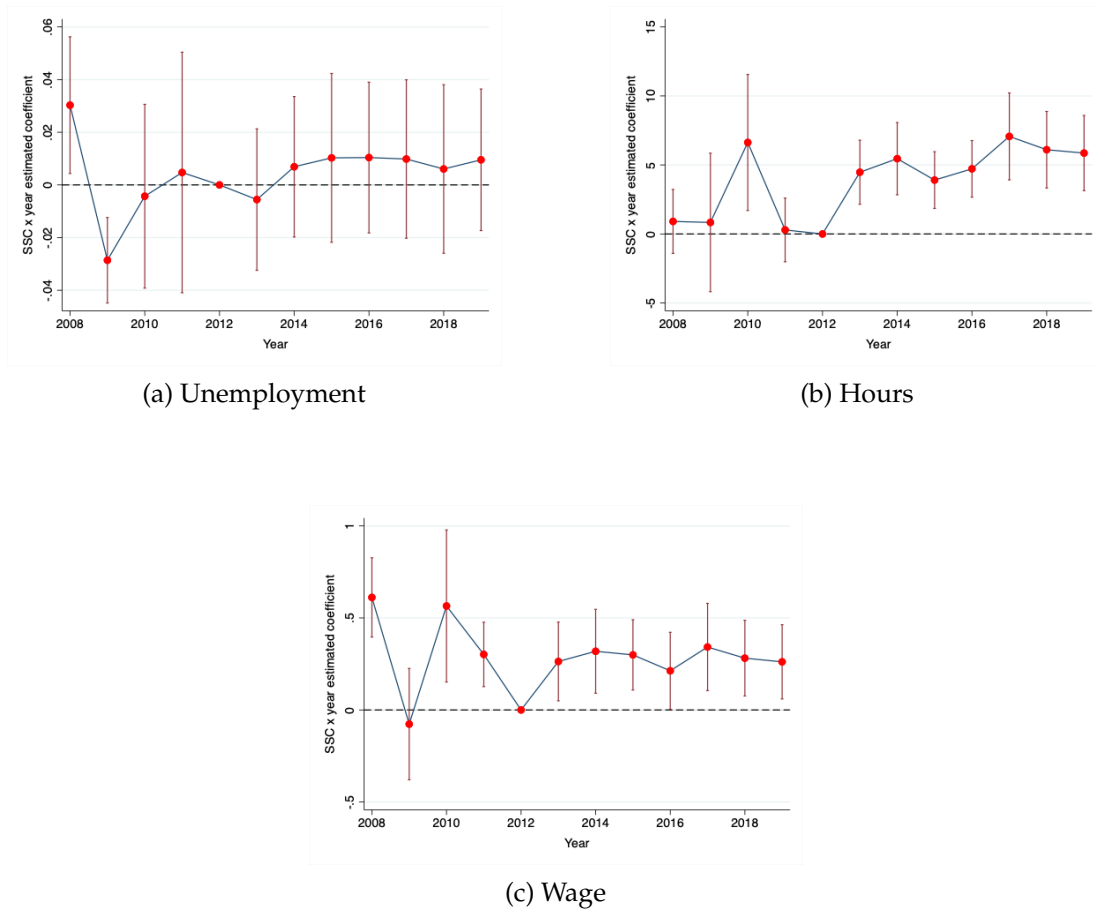
Figure 4: Trends in Insurance Coverage for United States v. Windsor (2013)  
Same-sex couples vs. Opposite-sex couples



Effect of USvW ruling (federal recognition) on SSCs' insurance take-up relative to OSCs. Sample is restricted to households in early-adopter states and excludes pre-legalization observations.

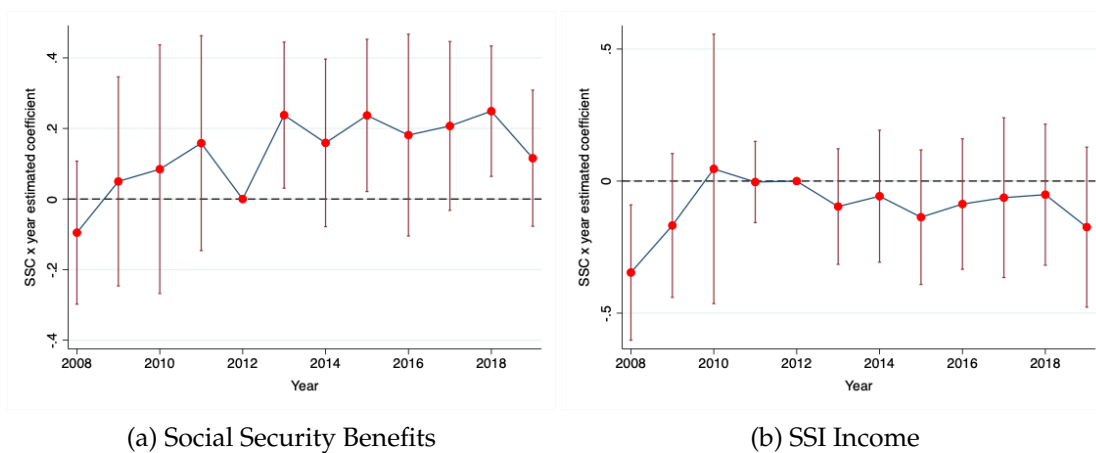


Figure 5: Trends in Labor Market Outcomes for United States v. Windsor (2013)  
Same-sex couples vs. Opposite-sex couples



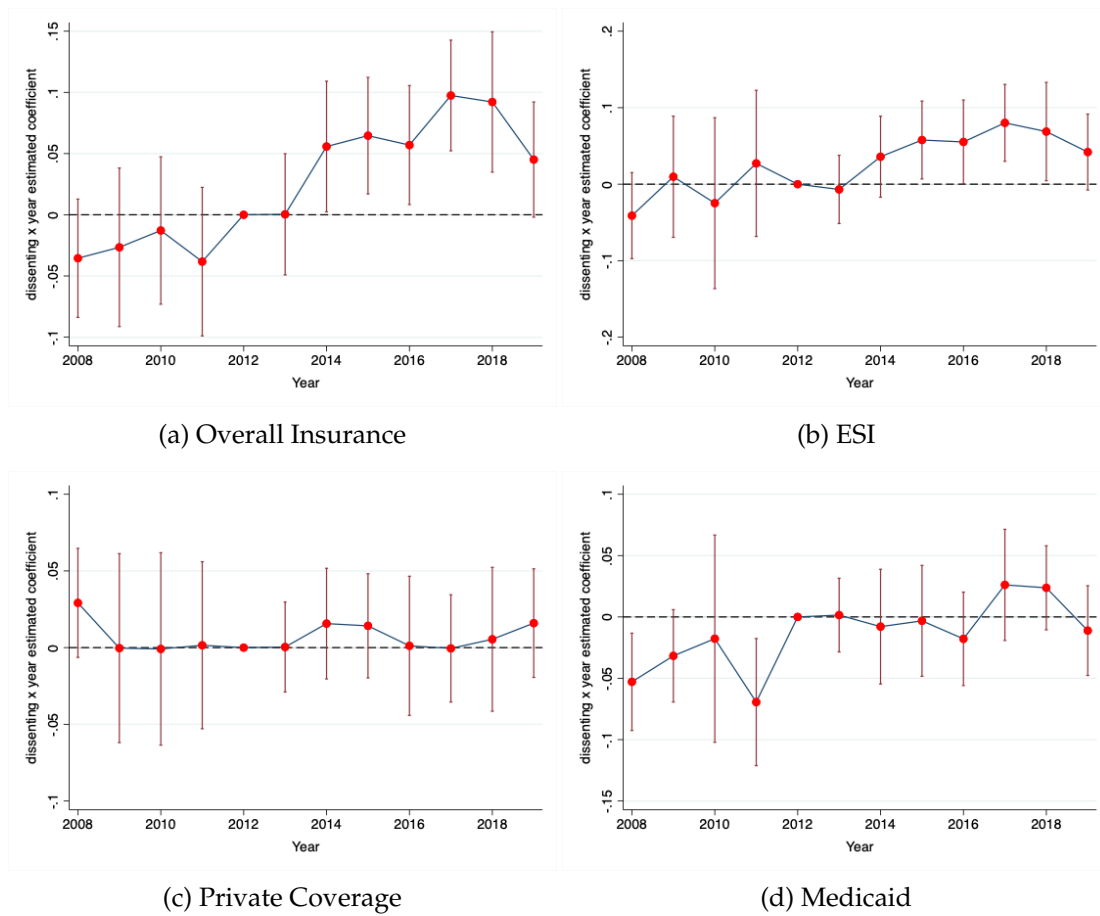
Effect of USvW ruling (federal recognition) on SSCs' labor market outcomes relative to OSCs. Sample is restricted to households in early-adopter states and excludes pre-legalization observations.

Figure 6: Trends in Social Security for United States v. Windsor (2013)  
Same-sex couples vs. Opposite-sex couples



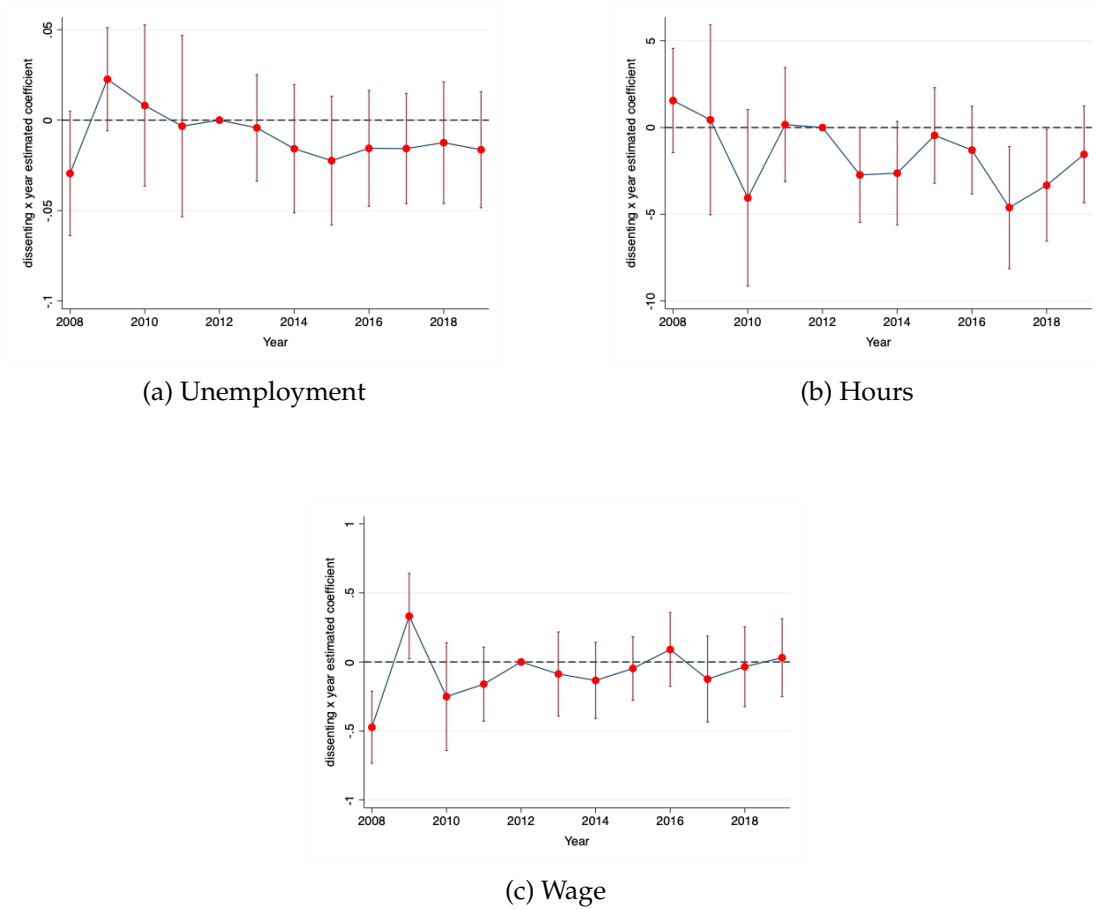
Effect of USvW ruling (federal recognition) on SSCs' social security receipt relative to OSCs. Sample is restricted to households in early-adopter states and excludes pre-legalization observations.

Figure 7: Trends in Insurance Coverage for United States v. Windsor (2013)  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states



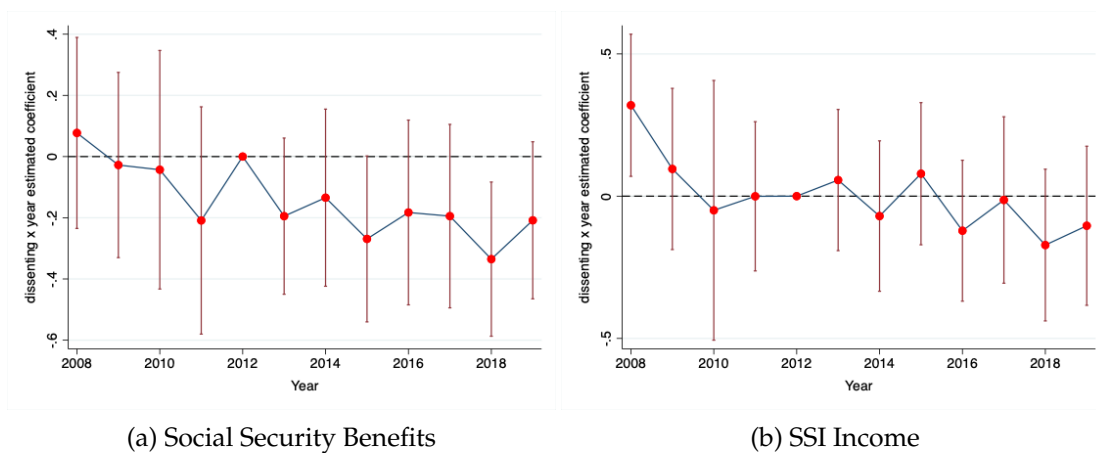
Effect of USvW ruling (federal recognition) on late-adopter state SSCs' insurance take-up relative to SSCs in early-adopter states. Sample is restricted to same-sex households in late-adopter states or post-legalization early-adopter states.

Figure 8: Trends in Labor Market Outcomes for United States v. Windsor (2013)  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states



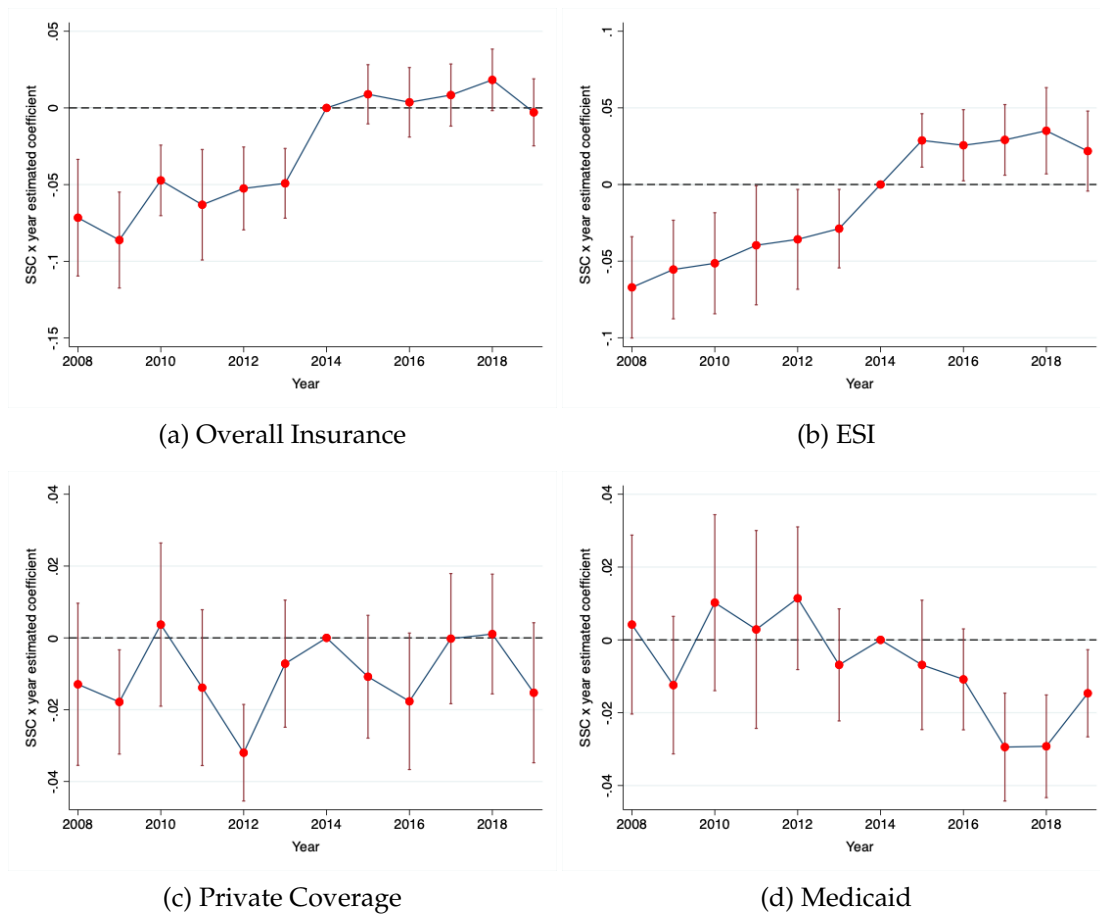
Effect of USvW ruling (federal recognition) on late-adopter state SSCs' labor market outcomes relative to SSCs in early-adopter states. Sample is restricted to same-sex households in late-adopter states or post-legalization early-adopter states.

Figure 9: Trends in Social Security for United States v. Windsor (2013)  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states



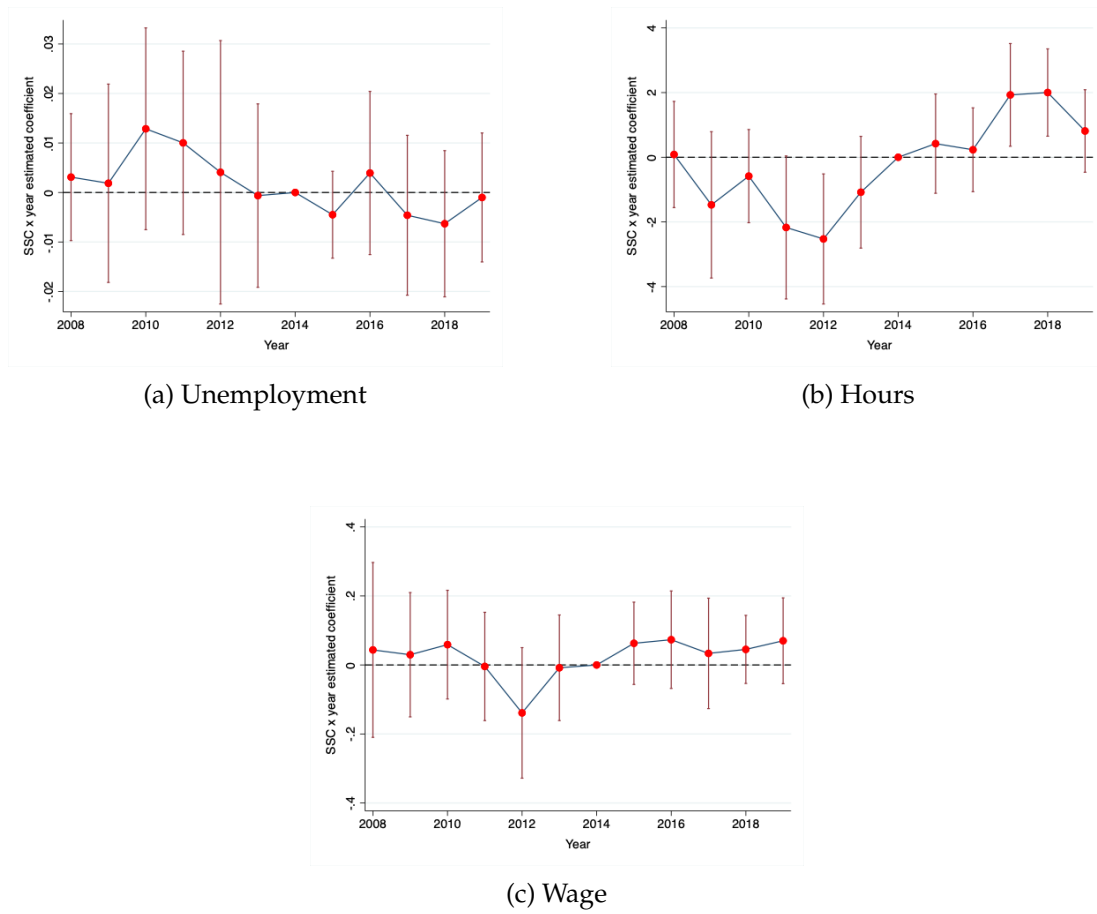
Effect of USvW ruling (federal recognition) on late-adopter state SSCs' social security receipt relative to SSCs in early-adopter states. Sample is restricted to same-sex households in late-adopter states or post-legalization early-adopter states.

Figure 10: Trends in Insurance Coverage for Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)  
Same-sex couples vs. Opposite-sex couples



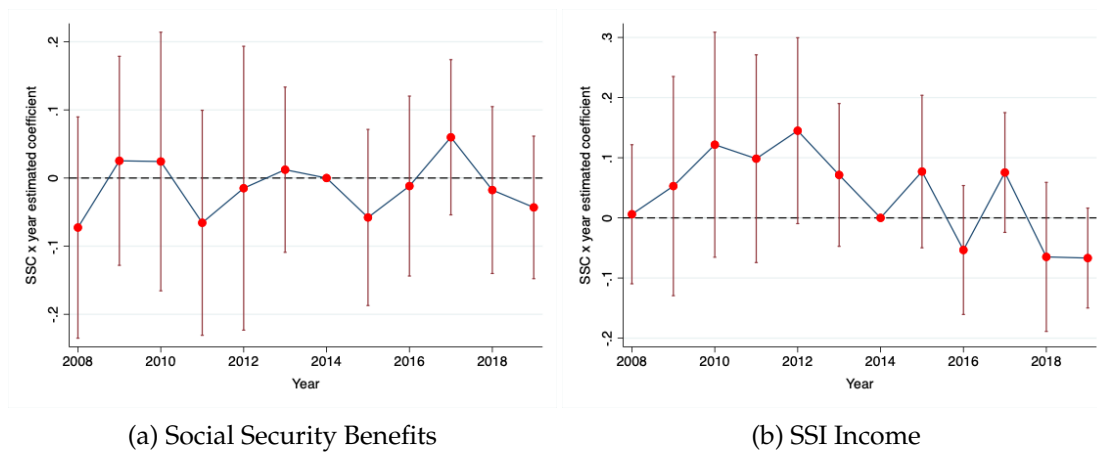
Effect of OvH ruling (marriage equality) on SSCs' insurance take-up relative to OSCs.  
Sample is restricted to households in late-adopter states.

Figure 11: Trends in Labor Market Outcomes for Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)  
Same-sex couples vs. Opposite-sex couples



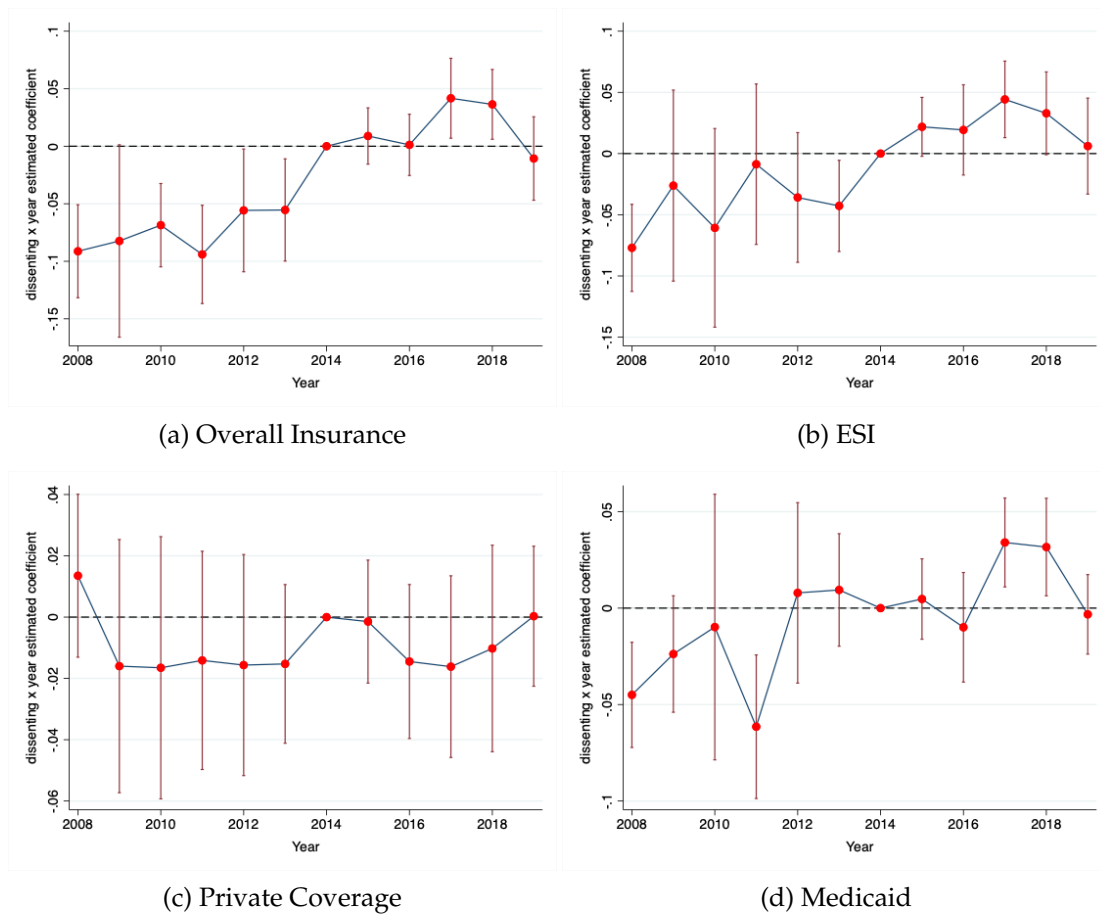
Effect of OvH ruling (marriage equality) on SSCs' labor market outcomes relative to OSCs. Sample is restricted to households in late-adopter states.

Figure 12: Trends in Social Security for Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)  
Same-sex couples vs. Opposite-sex couples



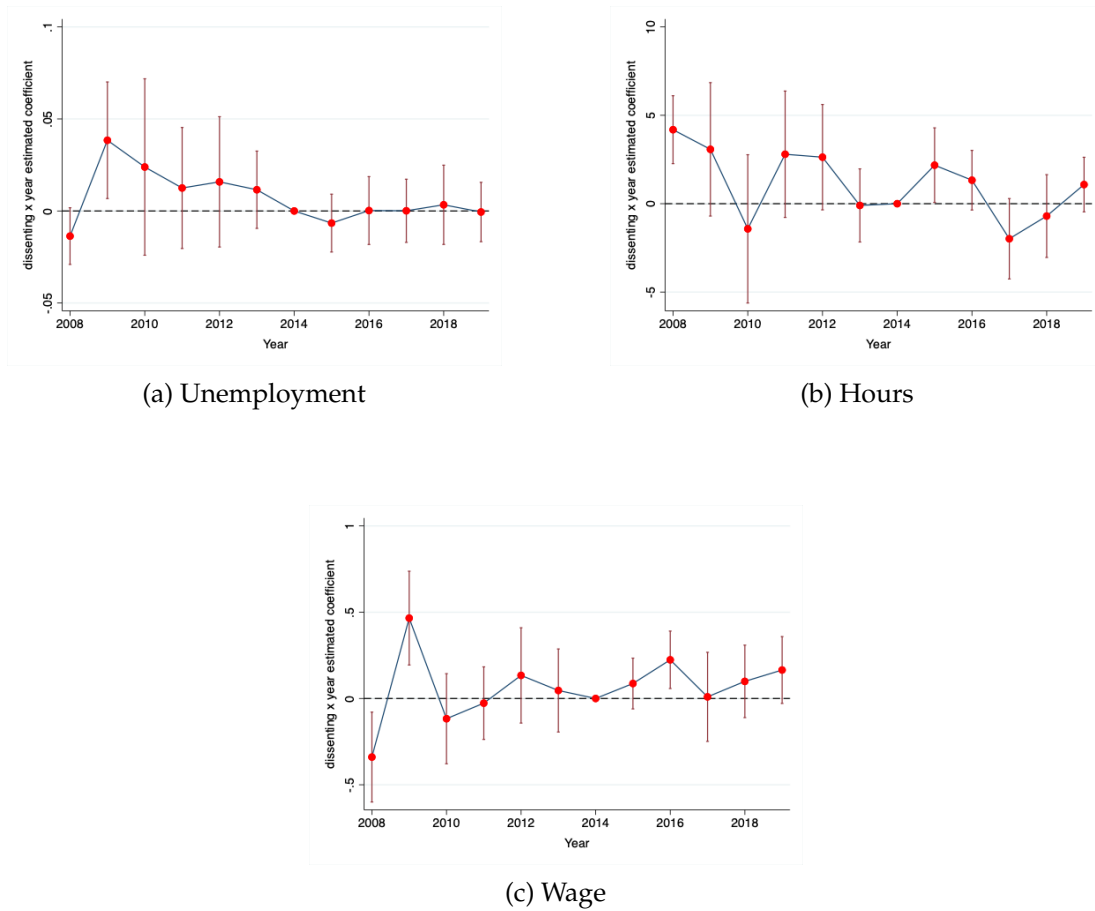
Effect of OvH ruling (marriage equality) on SSCs' social security receipt relative to OSCs. Sample is restricted to households in late-adopter states.

Figure 13: Trends in Insurance Coverage for Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states



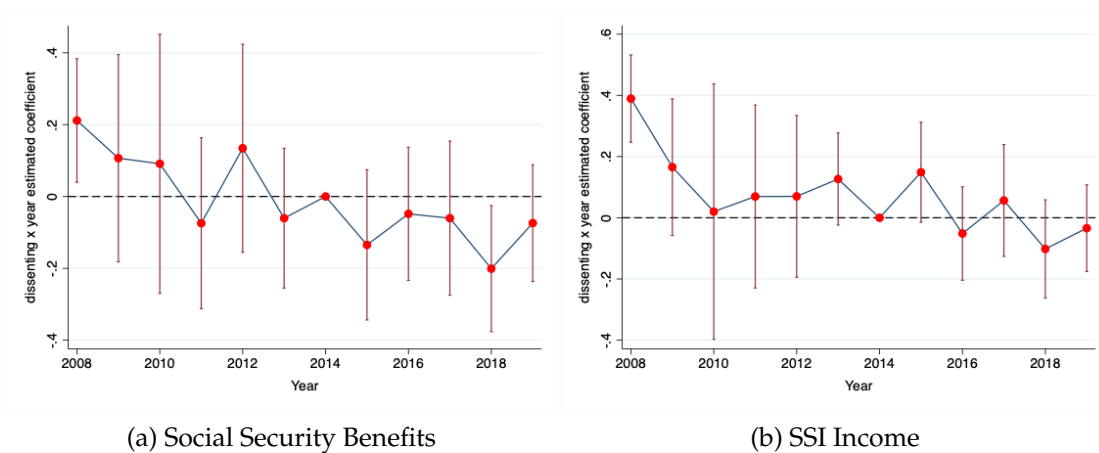
Effect of OvH ruling (marriage equality) on late-adopter state SSCs' insurance take-up relative to SSCs in early-adopter states. Sample is restricted to same-sex households in late-adopter states or post-legalization early-adopter states.

Figure 14: Trends in Labor Market Outcomes for Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states



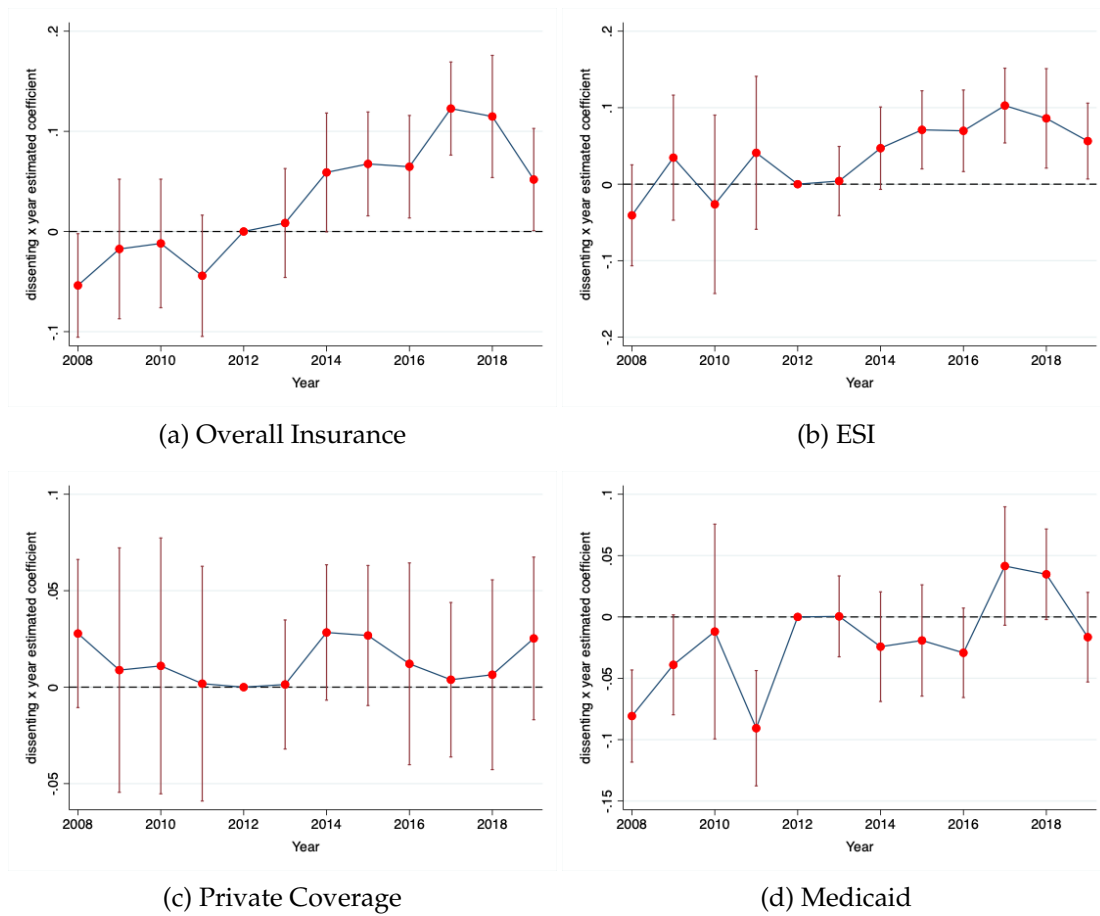
Effect of OvH ruling (marriage equality) on late-adopter state SSCs' labor market outcomes relative to SSCs in early-adopter states. Sample is restricted to same-sex households in late-adopter states or post-legalization early-adopter states.

Figure 15: Trends in Social Security for Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states



Effect of OvH ruling (marriage equality) on late-adopter state SSCs' social security receipt relative to SSCs in early-adopter states. Sample is restricted to same-sex households in late-adopter states or post-legalization early-adopter states.

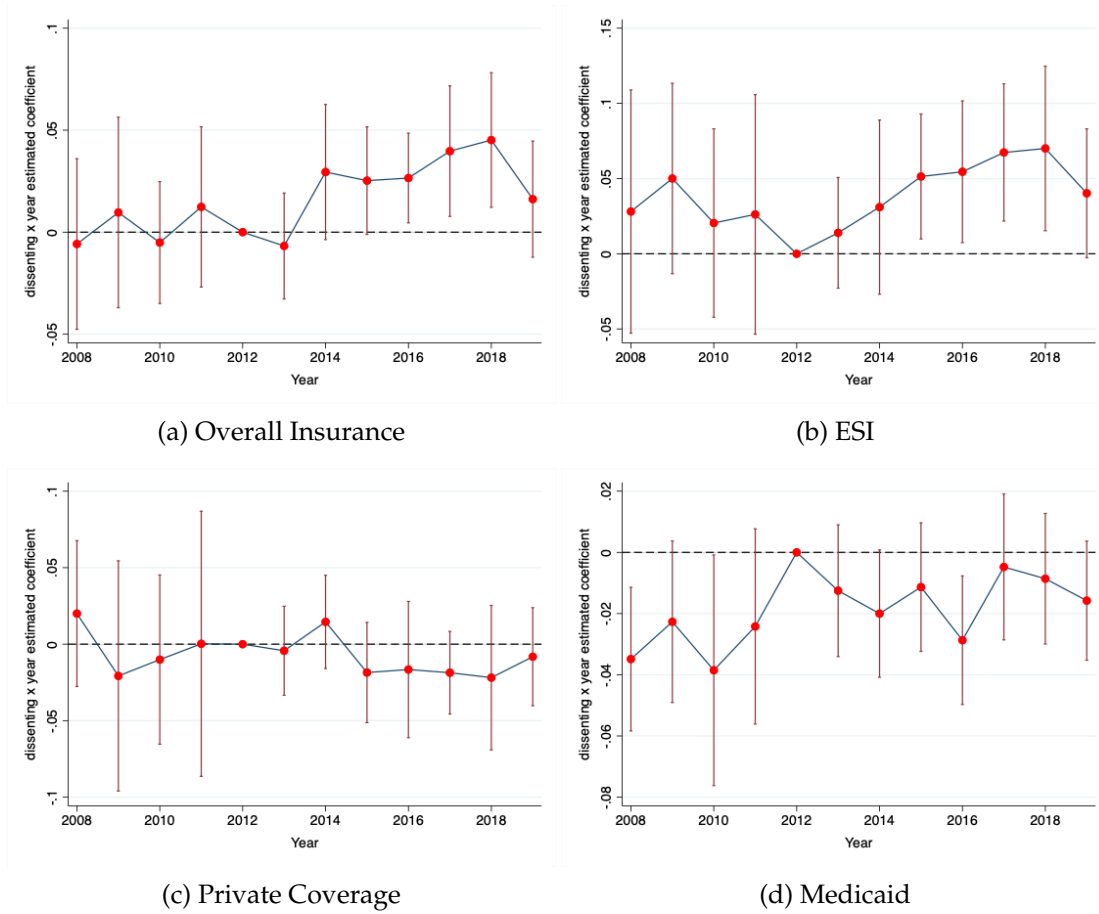
Figure 16: Trends in Insurance Coverage for United States v. Windsor (2013)  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states (ACA  
not-yet-expanded)



Effect of USvW ruling (federal recognition) on late-adopter state SSCs' insurance take-up relative to SSCs in early-adopter states. Sample is restricted to same-sex households in late-adopter states or post-legalization early-adopter states that had not yet expand Medicaid eligibility.

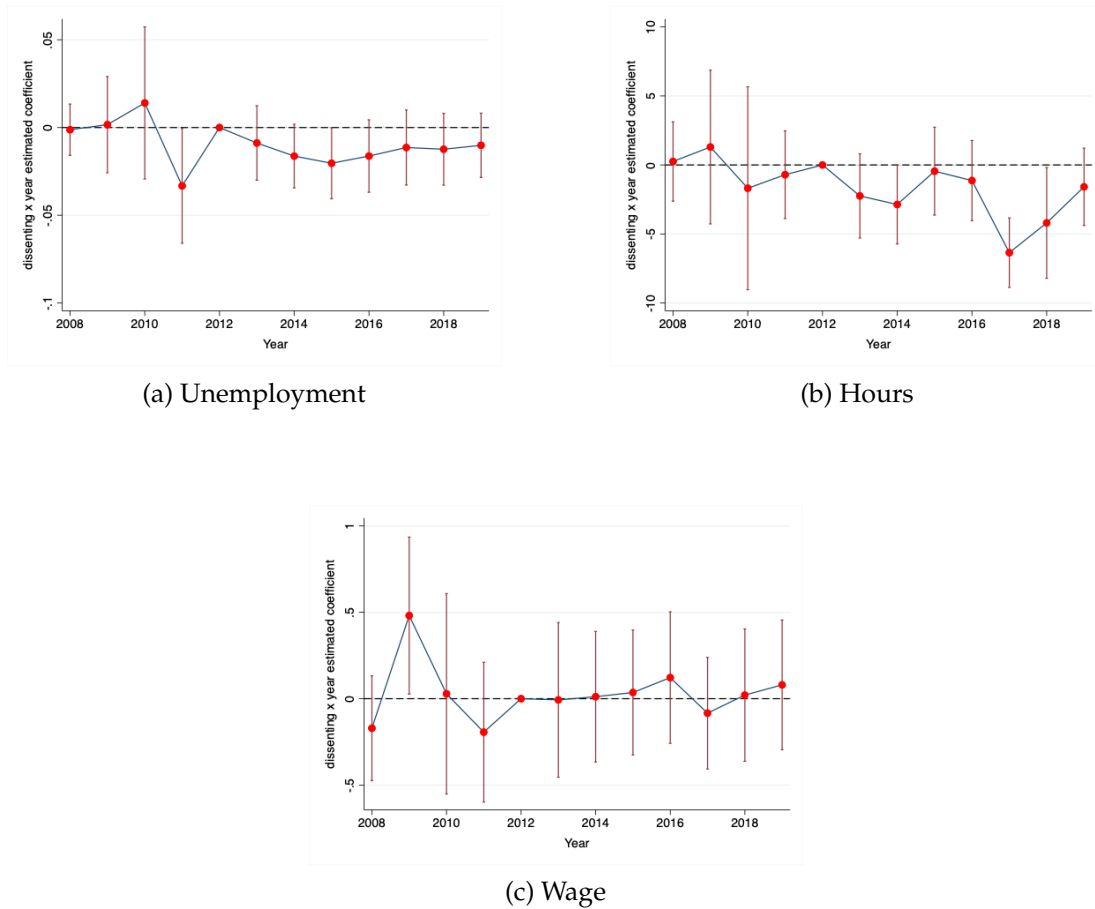


Figure 17: Trends in Insurance Coverage for United States v. Windsor (2013)  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states (Above 400% FPL)



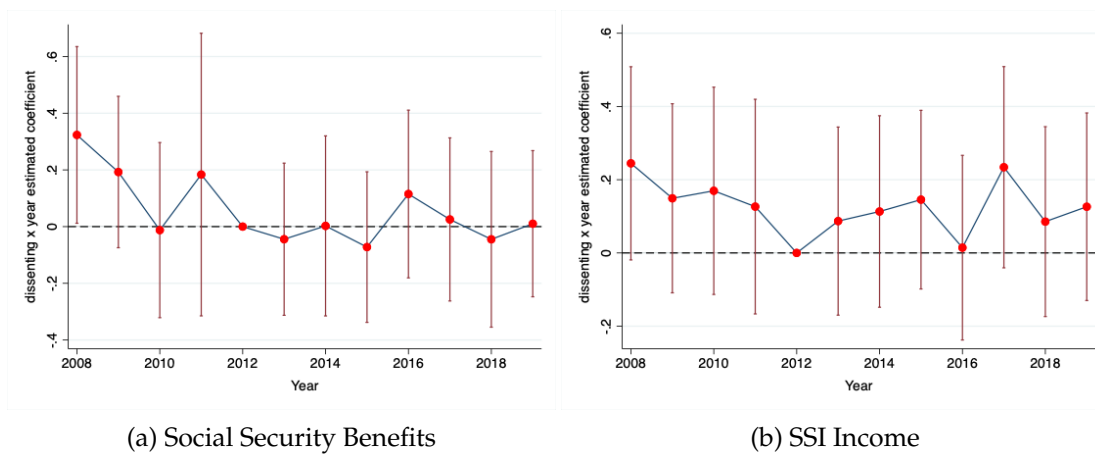
Effect of USvW ruling (federal recognition) on late-adopter state SSCs' insurance take-up relative to SSCs in early-adopter states. Sample is restricted to same-sex households in late-adopter states or post-legalization early-adopter states with annual income above 400% of FPL.

Figure 18: Trends in Labor Market Outcomes for United States v. Windsor (2013)  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states (Above 400% FPL)



Effect of USvW ruling (federal recognition) on late-adopter state SSCs' labor market outcomes relative to SSCs in early-adopter states. Sample is restricted to same-sex households in late-adopter states or post-legalization early-adopter states with annual income above 400% of FPL.

Figure 19: Trends in Social Security for United States v. Windsor (2013)  
Same-sex couples in late-adopter states vs. in early-adopter states (Above 400% FPL)



Effect of USvW ruling (federal recognition) on late-adopter state SSCs' social security receipt relative to SSCs in early-adopter states. Sample is restricted to same-sex households in late-adopter states or post-legalization early-adopter states with annual income above 400% of FPL.