

BASIC TALKING POINTS FOR SOLICITORS

Citizens to Restore Fairness

As of August 6, 2006

Overview

On November 7, 2006, Cincinnati voters will once again have a chance to take a stand against discrimination and for fairness.

The issue at stake is the city's Human Rights Ordinance (HRO) — that's the law that says everyone's protected from discrimination whether you're black or white, male or female, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, nontransgender or heterosexual.

Background

In March, the City Council voted to add sexual orientation and transgender status to the city's HRO. Soon thereafter, Phil Burress and Citizens for Community Values gathered the signatures needed to put our law up for a public vote so that gay and transgender people could still be singled out for discrimination.

If they succeed, it will remain legal in Cincinnati to fire someone from their job, kick them out of their apartment, or deny them access to a hotel or restaurant simply because they're gay.

For 11 years, under Article XII of the city charter, gay and transgender people were explicitly singled out for discrimination in Cincinnati. Before its repeal in 2004, it was the only law of its kind in the United States.

Cincinnati and mainstream America support protections for LGBT people:

- 86 percent of the Fortune 500 companies currently include sexual orientation in their nondiscrimination policies, including Procter & Gamble, 5/3 Bank, Federated Department Stores, GE, and Duke Energy.[\[1\]](#) The Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce also includes sexual orientation in its nondiscrimination policies.
- 11 cities in Ohio (Athens, Cleveland, Cleveland Heights, Columbus, Dayton, Lakewood, North Olmstead, Oberlin, Toledo, Westlake, Yellow Springs, and Youngstown), 3 in Kentucky (Covington, Lexington-Fayette County, Louisville-Jefferson County) and 5 in Indiana (Bloomington, Ft. Wayne, Indianapolis, Lafayette, West Lafayette) already include sexual orientation in their anti-discrimination laws.[\[2\]](#)

Cincinnati can't afford to be left behind. While Article XII was in effect in Cincinnati, the city lost an estimated \$40 million in convention contracts from companies refusing to do business in a city with such an anti-gay law on the books. [\[3\]](#)

Why We Can Win

A majority of Cincinnati voters already took a stand against discrimination when they voted to repeal Article XII in 2004. So did the City Council and the mayor when they voted this March.

Citizens to Restore Fairness begins this campaign with a list of about 3,000 volunteers and donors who helped repeal Article XII.

We are also beginning with a large list of supportive voters. Of the 58,000 votes we need to win, the campaign already has a list of 12,000 voters who voted for fairness in 2004.

The campaign has already hired seven experienced and professional full-time staff members.

We are conducting a paid poll of likely Cincinnati voters to develop the most effective campaign message possible.

As we did in 2004, the campaign will launch a comprehensive campaign to change the hearts and minds of Cincinnati voters about gay and transgender people:

- We will build a team of over 2,000 volunteers to talk with thousands of voters door-to-door about how anti-gay discrimination hurts all of us.
- We will launch a large-scale ad campaign on TV and radio.
- We will send tens of thousands of pieces of mail to supportive voters to shore up our support and counter the lies and misinformation from the other side.

The campaign has already received significant financial contributions from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the Human Rights Campaign, and People for the American Way.

Key Campaign Challenges

Right now this election is too close to call.

We need 58,000 votes to win. To persuade sufficient swing voters and to turnout our supporters, we must raise \$750,000 and recruit over 2,000 volunteers.

We have only 3.5 months to build our campaign. The campaign to repeal Article XII had 18 months.

We will have to work harder this time to turn out our supporters to vote. Many of the same voters that stood with us in 2004 may not vote in a non-presidential election year.

Ken Blackwell's anti-gay posture is well known. He and his allies at CCV will be trying to use divide-and-conquer tactics — including vilifying the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community among socially conservative African-Americans — to help his campaign for governor. We must once again work to unite Cincinnatians on the issue of fairness.

^[1] [State of the Workplace 2005 – 2006](#), Human Rights Campaign, June 29, 2006, pages 2 & 15.

^[2] [States, Cities, and Counties with Civil Rights Ordinances, Policies, or Proclamations Prohibiting Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation](#), National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, June 2005, pages 16 – 17.

^[3] [Greater Cincinnati Convention and Visitors Bureau, 2004](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Didn't we just pass a law protecting gays and lesbians from discrimination?

No, though many people understandably believe so. In 2004, city voters repealed an anti-gay law known as Article XII, but repealing Article XII did not restore protection from discrimination. It only made it possible for our City Council to act to do so. We are now finishing the work that began when city voters clearly said discrimination was wrong by repealing Article XII.

What does this law actually do?

The City's Human Rights Ordinance specifically covers discrimination on the job, in housing, and in public accommodation, and it has been in place since 1992. The law makes it illegal to "unlawfully segregate, separate, or treat individuals differently" based on race, gender, age, color, religion, disability status, marital status, or ethnic, national, or Appalachian regional origin. The only change being proposed now is to add sexual orientation and transgender status to the list of characteristics that are already covered. In fact, heterosexuals who feel that they have been discriminated against because of their sexual orientation will have the same protections as gays and lesbians.

I am against same-sex marriage. Does this law make same-sex marriage legal?

The Ohio Constitution bans same-sex marriage. This law has nothing to do with marriage. It just protects people from discrimination on the job, in housing, and in public accommodations based on sexual orientation and transgender status.

My church says that homosexuals cannot be ministers or priests. Will we be forced to hire gay ministers?

No. Religious and fraternal organizations are exempt from Cincinnati's nondiscrimination laws. The U.S. and Ohio Constitutions already protect freedom of religion. This law only provides the civil protections that everyone deserves, regardless of their beliefs, in their daily lives.

'Transgender status' was not included in the original Human Rights Ordinance in 1992. Why are we adding it to the definition of 'sexual orientation' now?

In 2003, the city passed a Hate Crimes Ordinance that defined sexual orientation to include transgender status, and this change will make the Human Rights Ordinance consistent with the Hate Crimes Law. Transgender people are often the most vulnerable to discrimination.