

Restoring Fairness

By 2002, a reinvigorated movement was working to repeal Article XII. Citizens to Restore Fairness included a new generation of LGBT activists who hadn't been burned out by the fight against Issue 3. They teamed up with local organizations working on human rights and a national LGBT activist campaign. In 2003, these activists managed to pass an ordinance against Hate Crimes, including those against LGBT people. This ordinance would prove valuable during the backlash generated by the renewed fight for LGBT rights. In 1992, the Human Rights Ordinance Task Force focused on passing an Ordinance through City Council, which meant convincing at least 5 politicians to vote for it. To repeal Article XII, Citizens to Restore Fairness would have to convince a majority of Cincinnati voters. The campaign ran two years of ground-level canvassing, talking to voters clearly about Gay and Lesbian rights, often with volunteers coming out while canvassing. The goal was to put a human face on the issue of LGBT rights.



Local Victory

In November 2004, 54% of Cincinnati voters repealed Article XII. The victory signaled both the success of the broad canvassing campaign and a major turning point in the treatment of LGBTQ people in the city. Activists celebrated the repeal of Article XII at Alchemize, a Cincinnati bar. Ironically, the 2004 ballot issue to repeal Article XII was also "Issue 3"

State Defeat

While Cincinnati had been working toward nondiscrimination protections, same-sex marriage had become the most visible fight for LGBT rights in the country. Although it played out on the national stage, marriage was a deeply personal decision for many Cincinnati couples. Jim Wiggins and Bruce Beisner married in a religious ceremony in Cincinnati in fall 2000. Both St. John's Unitarian and Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church clergy participated in the ceremony. Their marriage was not legally recognized at the time.

"We didn't think marrying would affect our relationship much after almost 14 years, but it has. We feel legitimized and more committed now living with each other."

-Sandy Allen, quoted in GLBT News

