

State Defeat, Cont.

Sandy Allen and Pam Wright flew to San Francisco to get married in March of 2004, during a brief window of time when the city was issuing licenses to same-sex couples. A legally recognized marriage in the United States was very important to the couple. Unfortunately, their license was voided by the California Supreme Court in August of that year.

In the same election as the repeal of Article XII - the 2004 presidential election - voters in Ohio and twelve other states passed constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage. Ohio's amendment also contained language prohibiting civil unions, or any institution that would "approximate marriage." 62% of Ohio and 56% of Hamilton County voted for the ban.

Local Advances

After the repeal of Article XII and the passage of new discrimination protections in 2006, the LGBTQ community in Cincinnati made rapid progress toward equality. By 2011 the city elected its first openly gay council member. Chris Seelbach had been involved in local politics for many years - in fact, he had worked in the campaign to repeal Article XII before working for city government.



With Seelbach on council, the city made improvements like extending transgender-inclusive health coverage to city employees, creating an LGBT liaison for the police department, and establishing a domestic partner registry. The city progressed so quickly that it increased its Municipal Equality Rating from the Human Rights Campaign from 77 in 2012 to a full 100 in 2014.

Loss of Space

Increased acceptance of LGBTQ people in the city did come with some trade-offs. As LGBTQ people felt more comfortable being out and it became easier to form communities and meet people online, the spaces created for the community were patronized less. Crazy Ladies, which had been open since 1979, closed its bookstore in 2002 and its center a few years after that. The GLBT Center followed suit in 2013, becoming an online-only resource.



Images: Campaign image from Chris Seelbach's website; Going Out of Business Sale, Crazy Ladies Bookstore, GLBT News 2002.