

March on Washington

On October 11, 1987, hundreds of thousands of LGBT people and allies gathered in Washington DC for the second National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. The march was a mass demonstration calling for funding for AIDS research and treatment and an end to discrimination. It drew LGBT people and allies from all over the U.S., including about 800 from Cincinnati. The Cincinnati contingent was mobilized by Gay and Lesbian March Activists. The group continued to agitate for Queer rights after the march. GLMA served as the Cincinnati chapter of ACT-UP and used the network's radical direct action tactics. They fought AIDS and agitated for funding, research, and treatments, and started advocating for a local Human Rights Ordinance.



Coalition for Rights

The 1987 March on Washington and the urgency of the AIDS crisis sparked another increase in community organization and activism. The result was several groups with different tactics working together in an organized campaign to stop discrimination based on sexual orientation. The Human Rights Ordinance Task Force, formed in 1990, was "a synergy between Stonewall's ever-expanding political machine, GLMA's direct action tactics, and the strength of [Greater Cincinnati Gay and Lesbian Coalition] GCGLC's 21 member organizations.

The fight for the Human Rights Ordinance came to a head in the summer of 1992. Gay and Lesbian activists had an editorial war in local newspapers with more conservative activists who opposed the Ordinance. Allies of the Task Force argued that the Ordinance was necessary and right, while opponents claimed the nondiscrimination protections were unnecessary "special rights." A late July public hearing on the Ordinance brought hundreds of people from both sides of the debate to City Hall, though the HRO Task Force felt they had a much stronger showing than their opposition. Work with politicians told the activists they had convinced enough members of Council to pass the ordinance, but for political expediency the vote on the Ordinance continued to be delayed until after November elections.