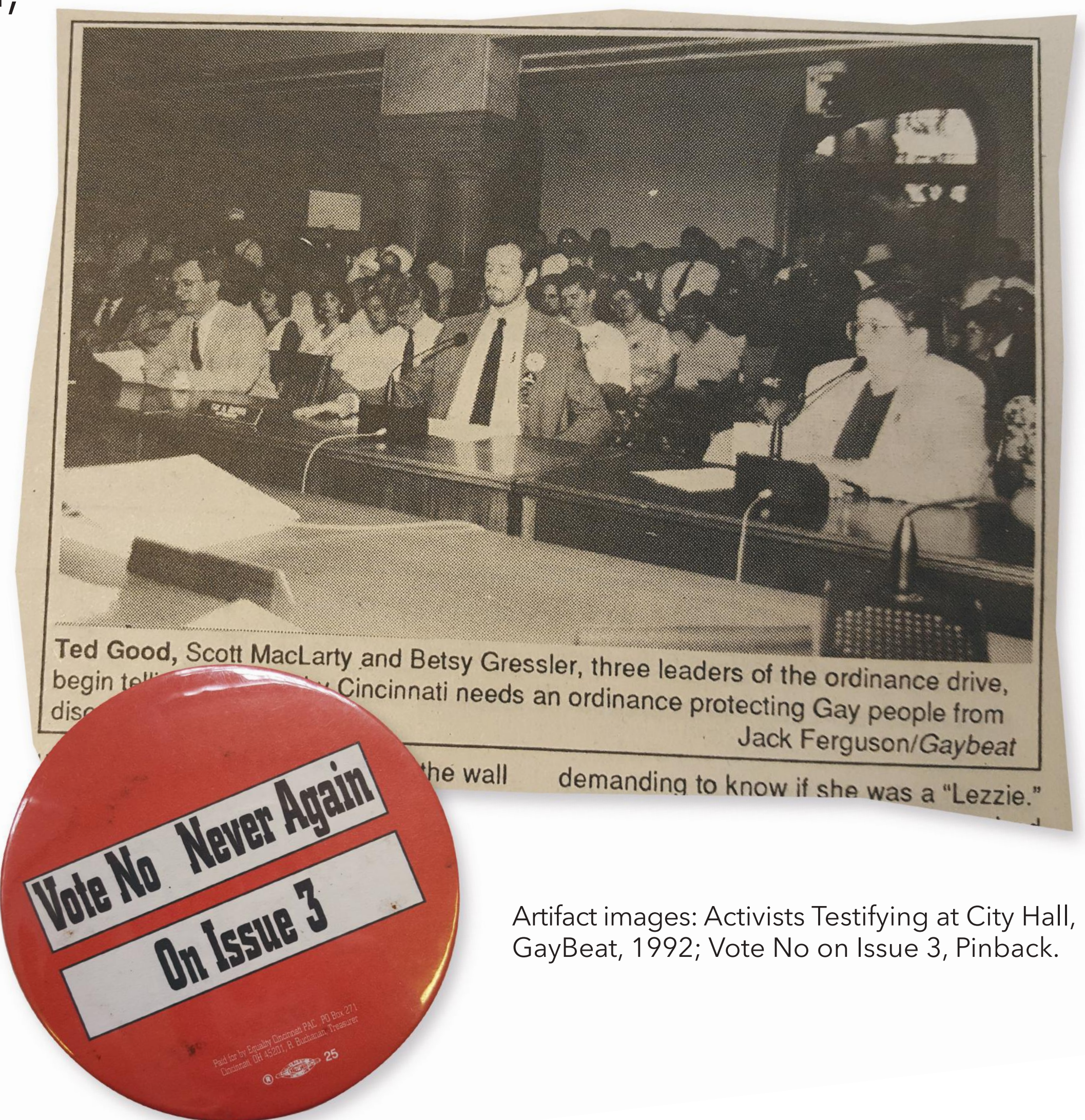


Coalition for Rights, Cont.

On November 25, 1992, Cincinnati City Council passed a Human Rights Ordinance that banned discrimination based on race, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, disability status, or Appalachian regional ancestry. Transgender people were not explicitly protected by the ordinance, and HIV status, although addressed earlier in the campaign, did not make it into the final wording of the Ordinance. The Ordinance applied to employment, public accommodations, housing, and city services. The two-and-a-half-year campaign of the Task Force had achieved its goal, but the work was far from over.



Artifact images: Activists Testifying at City Hall, GayBeat, 1992; Vote No on Issue 3, Pinback.

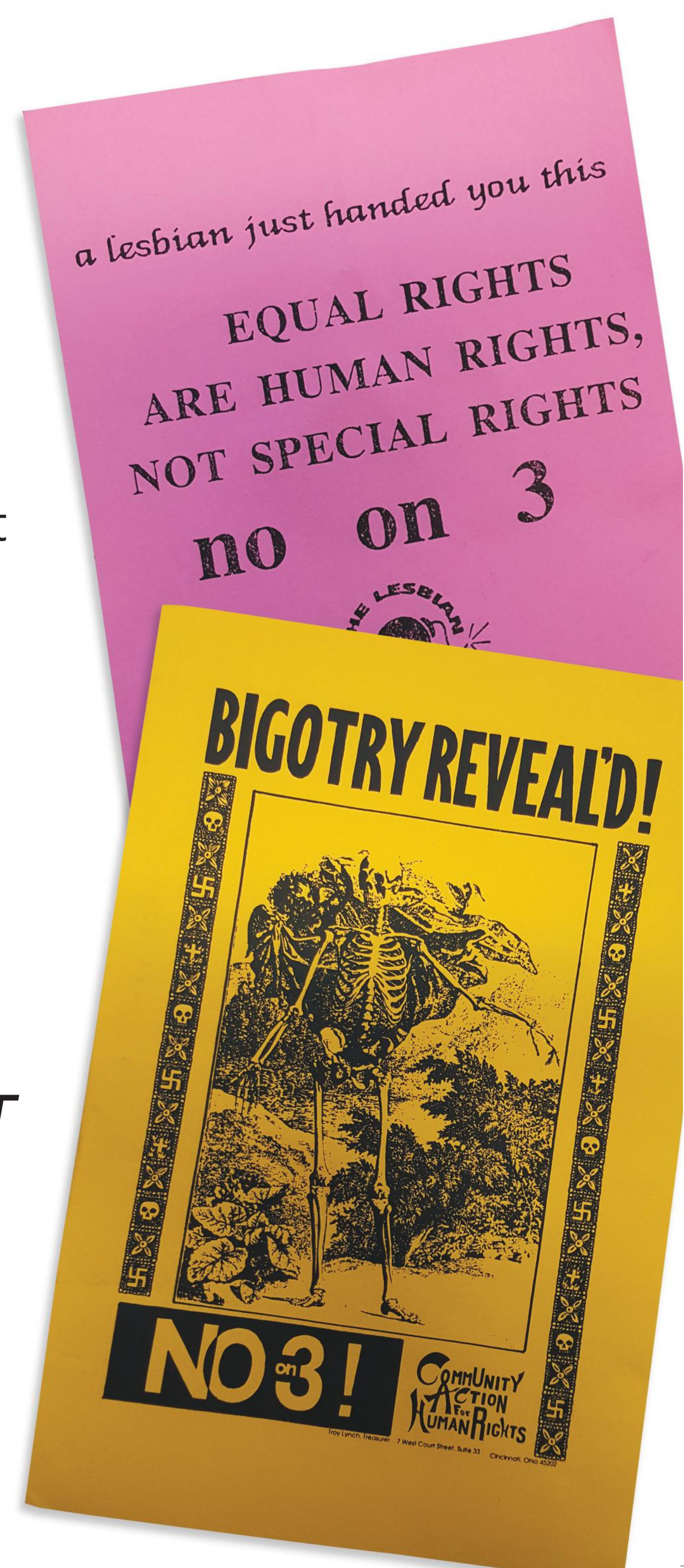
Backlash

Even before the Human Rights Ordinance was passed, an opposition group called Citizens for Community Values started organizing to try to stop it. Their sub-committee, "Equal Rights Not Special Rights" put Issue 3 on the 1993 ballot to repeal the "sexual orientation" language of the Human Rights Ordinance. Stonewall Cincinnati and a coalition ran a "No on 3" campaign. They had support from the city's leading civil rights advocates, but Stonewall had administrative and organizational struggles leading up to the election. While Stonewall's "No On 3" campaign focused on "fairness", more radical activists like the Lesbian Avengers came out while canvassing to make the issue about LGB rights. Citizens for Community Values had sizable financial support from campaigns in other states and were savvy about selling their message that nondiscrimination protections for the LGBT community were "special rights".

Another group, "Community Action for Human Rights" spent money on advertising, but some voters found their message cryptic and their fear-mongering alienating.

To the shock of many LGBT people and allies, the ballot initiative passed with 62% of the votes. A single sentence would become Article XII of Cincinnati's charter:

"NO SPECIAL CLASS STATUS MAY BE GRANTED BASED UPON SEXUAL ORIENTATION, CONDUCT OR RELATIONSHIPS".



Artifact Images: Lesbian Avengers flyer, 1993; Community Action for Human Rights Flyer, 1993.