



Vote pending on 'gender identity' in Gainesville

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The citizens of Gainesville, Florida, are set to do battle over a gender-identity ordinance passed by the city council.

The ordinance passed by the civic leaders defines gender as follows: "An inner sense of being a specific gender, or the expression of a gender identity by verbal statement, appearance, or mannerisms, or other gender-related characteristics of an individual with or without regard to the individual's designated sex at birth."

Passage of the ordinance caused an uproar because, in essence, it permits people to use public facilities -- restrooms, locker rooms, changing rooms -- based on their inner feeling about their gender. As Jim Gilbert with [Citizens for Good Public Policy](#) explains, that means men could use women's restrooms and women could use men's rooms. And outside of the obvious, that poses a real problem, he says.

"We've got 263 sexual offenders registered in Gainesville," he points out. "Any one of them can legally enter a women's room in Gainesville."

Gilbert says when the ordinance was considered, irate citizens tried to convince the city to change that section. "And they would not budge on that because they really thought they were impervious to any kind of reaction or criticism," he recalls.



Evidently they were wrong. Citizens conducted a successful petition drive to put the issue on a ballot -- and in the days leading up to the election later this month, supporters of the current ordinance are outspending opponents 4-to-1 and state and national groups have loaned full-time personnel.

"They've had more than \$30,000, nearly \$40,000 now, come in from other parts of the state or from out of state from large organizations like the **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**," says Gilbert. "[P]eople like that have been giving them a lot of money, so they're outgunning us in terms of money. But in terms of popular support, we've got 'em."

That is, if enough opponents of the ordinance show up at the polls on March 24. A close vote is expected.