

Winning Ballot Measures

Cincinnati LGBT Community

SITUATION

When LGBT issues are put up to a popular vote in the form of ballot measures or propositions, they become very difficult campaigns to win. Organizing & Training has played a pivotal role in helping our community face these types of measures, finding strategies to help turn around what has been a long-time losing streak.

One community that we helped fight hard and win is Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1993, Cincinnati earned the distinction of being called “ the most anti-gay city in the country” when voters passed Article XII, an anti-gay law that permanently forbid the City Council from enacting anti-discrimination or relationship protections for LGBT people.

STRATEGY/SOLUTION

By 2003, the community was ready to launch a ballot measure campaign to repeal Article XII and they asked for our help. We helped launch the campaign by training 35 leaders and volunteers how to raise money, recruit volunteers, and run an effective campaign. We provided ongoing support to the campaign as the Cincinnati team worked to expand their volunteer base and door-to-door canvass campaign. By election day, not only did the campaign repeal Article XII, but they ended with a list over 2,000 new volunteers and donors.

In 2006, when our opposition threatened to repeal a newly-enacted anti-discrimination law, this base of support was critical for launching a second campaign. To help the Cincinnati community launch their campaign quickly, four veteran Task Force organizers relocated to Cincinnati manage the campaign and take on other key roles.

RESULT

Mid-campaign, the opposition withdrew the signatures it had gathered to place the anti-discrimination law on the November ballot. Our team was happy to leave Cincinnati with non-discrimination legally protected.

