



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF INDIANA, INC.

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Indiana League of Women Voters Joins Fight Against HJR-6

The League of Women Voters of Indiana (LWVIN) announced today that it has joined Freedom Indiana, a coalition opposing the amendment to the Indiana Constitution known as House Joint Resolution 6 (HJR-6).

The amendment would permanently alter the Indiana Constitution to define marriage and would remove existing protections under law for unmarried couples and same-sex families.

"The League of Women Voters believes we should protect all Hoosiers. The Indiana Constitution should not be used to deprive any citizen of civil rights," said LWVIN President Susanne Gaudin. "Since the League's inception, we have worked for equal rights and social reforms. In the 1960s the League worked tirelessly on civil rights issues. The 1970s brought the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) followed by threats through legislation to dilute existing civil rights laws and policies. In 1992 the LWVUS joined the National Endorsement Campaign in calling for the extension of existing civil rights laws by local, state and federal legislation to prohibit discrimination against lesbians and gay men in jobs, housing and public accommodations. In 2010, at the LWVUS Convention, language was added to the Equality of Opportunity position to equalize the rights of same-gender couples to those of heterosexual couples. Joining the Freedom Indiana coalition allows us to participate in another opportunity to work for equal rights, diversity and tolerance."

In order to amend the State Constitution, the bill must pass two General Assemblies. It passed in 2011 and the Indiana State Legislature is expected to consider this amendment again in January.

Indiana lawmakers can choose either to table or vote down the amendment or send it to voters for a statewide referendum next November. If it does not pass or is not called for action, our Constitution will be protected, and marriage will still be defined as between one man and one woman, by current law.

Freedom Indiana campaign manager Megan Robertson welcomed the League of Women Voters and its members across Indiana to the growing coalition.

"We're building the biggest group of grassroots volunteers and advocates Indiana has ever seen, and the League of Women Voters will be a tremendous partner as we move forward with that effort," Robertson said.

The proposed amendment reads as follows: “Only a marriage between one (1) man and one (1) woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in Indiana. A legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals shall not be valid or recognized.”

This amendment to the constitution would:

- duplicate existing law,
- ban all protections for same-gender couples and their families
- invalidate relationships and families (whether same gender or not) based on civil unions, domestic partnerships, or common-law marriages.

The League of Women Voters of Indiana opposes HJR6 based on the national League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) statement of position on Equality of Opportunity that reads: “The League of Women Voters of the United States supports equal rights for all under state and federal laws. LWVUS supports legislation to equalize the legal rights, obligations, and benefits available to same-gender couples with those available to heterosexual couples. LWVUS supports legislation to permit same-gender couples to marry under civil law. The League believes that the civil status of marriage is already clearly distinguished from the religious institution of marriage and that religious rights will be preserved.”

This position was revised by the National Board in January 1989, based on positions announced by the national board in January 1969, adopted by the 1972 Convention, expanded by the 1980 Convention and the 2010 Convention.