



Ballot Initiative STRATEGY CENTER

Ballot Bulletin

October 2009

In just a week, two important equality measures will go before voters in Maine and Washington.

In Maine, opponents of marriage equality (Stand for Marriage) are trying to overturn a marriage equality law passed by the legislature and signed by the governor in May. To date, six states have enacted laws or issued court rulings that permit same-sex marriage, including Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, Connecticut and Iowa. New Hampshire's law takes effect January 1.

The right-wing effort has been fueled by out-of-state money and support. The state ethics commission recently opened an investigation of the claims that groups working to repeal Maine's gay marriage law violated campaign finance laws in order [to hide the identities of donors](#).

The campaign opposed to equality has taken a page out of the playbook used in other states, running a false and misleading TV ad campaign but the [Protect Maine Equality campaign has fought back](#).

In order to support and protect marriage for all Maine families, the [Protect Maine Equality](#) campaign has organized [a broad based grassroots coalition](#) that has received the [editorial support](#) of newspapers across Maine.

The state of Washington is also involved in a hotly contested ballot initiative showdown. Referendum 71 seeks to repeal the domestic partnership bill passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor this year. Washington state, along with California, Oregon, New Jersey, and the District of Columbia, have laws that either recognize civil unions or domestic partnerships that afford same-sex couples similar rights to marriage.

News reports have confirmed that supporters of the domestic partnership repeal (Protect Marriage Washington) have [used deceptive signature petitions](#) in order to trick people into

signing their petitions, and signature gatherers for R-71 have [been caught on video](#) using misleading tactics, lying to citizens about the new domestic partnership law.

The right wing campaign has refused to release its signature petitions but a [federal appeals court ruled](#) that Washington's secretary of state must release the names and addresses of people who signed petitions because disclosure furthers the public interest in preserving the integrity of elections. A majority of the U.S. Supreme Court temporarily blocked state officials from releasing the names of people who signed the petition while they consider whether or not to accept an appeal.

The campaign working to approve Referendum 71 ([Washington Families Standing Together](#)) has also received widespread [editorial support](#). The campaign has also launched their [first TV ad](#) in support of Ref. 71.

All Politics is Local

In Kalamazoo, Michigan, a city ordinance outlawing employment, housing and public-accommodation discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identification took effect July 9, but was suspended once opponents turned in enough signed petitions to force a public vote.

A broad based campaign formed to defend the non-discrimination ordinance, [One Kalamazoo](#), has recently started running [TV ads in support of Referendum 1856](#).

Ballot Tube

BISC has [launched a new page](#) on our website where you can watch TV ads from campaigns working on the November 3 election.

Trendlines

Check out our October [Trendlines](#) where we take a look at the rigid revenue and spending caps or TABOR measures that Maine and Washington voters will weigh in on in this election.