



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on April 5, 2012

“Gay Rights” Measure Turned Back by Anchorage Voters

“Amazing what happens when the curtain closes behind you in a voting booth,” wrote Jim Minnery of [Protect Anchorage](#), a grassroots campaign to defeat the measure, pointing out that the supposed momentum for Prop 5 dissipated once voters considered the consequences of its passage.

The [New York Times](#) noted that the defeat of the measure came despite an intense campaign by high-level supporters and even intrusion into the issue by outsiders. “The organizers of Proposition 5, a group called One Anchorage, included prominent politicians from both sides of the aisle (Alaska’s United States senators, Lisa Murkowski, a Republican, and Mark Begich, a Democrat, both said they supported it), and the group outspent the opposition more than 4 to 1.”



One Anchorage had a war chest of some \$340,000, and had pulled in the outside support of such notables as Tim Gill, a Colorado billionaire and “gay rights” supporter who wrote a \$25,000 check to the cause.

The ballot measure asked voters: “Shall the current Municipal Code sections providing legal protections against discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status, age, physical disability, and mental disability be amended to include protections on the basis of sexual orientation or transgender identity?”

While proponents emphasized both classes of protection, pro-family and conservative opponents focused on the issue of “transgender identity,” arguing that the term was left purposely ill-defined and warning that inclusion of such a protected class could harm employers, religious institutions, and individuals morally opposed to the homosexual lifestyle. Minnery told the *Anchorage Daily News* that the vagueness of the term was “a shocking flaw in Prop 5 and shows profound disrespect to voters that the authors didn’t feel it was important to provide a definition of transgender identity.”

Before the vote, Minnery had warned that notwithstanding the assurances by Prop 5 proponents that churches and faith-based non-profits would be protected by existing religious exemptions, passage of the measure would likely lead to “widespread and pervasive harm on religious liberty, affecting — among others — employers, employees, businesses, professionals, membership organizations, community groups, religious entities, and educational institutions.”

He pointed to other places in the U.S. that had approved similar “anti-discrimination” ordinances. “In communities across the country where similar measures have passed, religious freedoms are being taken away,” he wrote in an *Anchorage Daily News* op-ed, citing such examples as a wedding photographer in New Mexico who was ordered by the court to pay a lesbian couple more than \$6,000



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after he refused to photograph their “commitment” ceremony.

Similarly, Austin Nimmocks, an attorney with the [Alliance Defense Fund](#), warned in a [Townhall.com](#) column: “Any proclamation that the addition of ‘sexual orientation’ and ‘transgender identity’ to the law does not impact religious freedom demonstrates a woeful ignorance of the legal landscape where these provisions have been enacted across the country.... No one should be forced to celebrate behavior that directly conflicts with their beliefs.”

In reporting on the defeat of Prop 5, the *Anchorage Daily News* noted that the ballot initiative was the third attempt by homosexual activists “to outlaw discrimination against gay, lesbian and transgender people since the city’s charter took effect in 1975....” Two earlier measures, passed by the city assembly, were vetoed by a succession of Anchorage’s mayors — the first by Mayor George Sullivan in 1976, and the second by his son, Mayor Dan Sullivan, just three years ago.

Following the defeat organizers of the initiative [released a statement](#) suggesting that they were already planning their strategy for forcing an “anti-discrimination” measure on Anchorage despite the obvious will of the people. “Since the beginning of One Anchorage, we have been on the right side of history,” the group insisted. “While the vote totals released to date indicate that Prop 5 did not receive sufficient votes to become law, we know our long-term journey towards full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Alaskans will one day — and soon — become a reality.”

Jim Minnery of Protect Anchorage warned Alaskans of the next assault by “gay rights” advocates. “Although last night’s results are extremely gratifying,” Minnery said of measure’s defeat, “there is no time to rest on our laurels. Proposition 5 was an important battle, but it was just one battle in a larger war. More battles will come. We fully expect the other side will try to place this question before voters again. So today we rest, but tomorrow we begin preparing for the next fight.”



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