



AREA 10

AGENCY ON AGING

Area 10 Agency on Aging of Monroe and Owen Counties adopts the following resolution:

WHEREAS, marriage equality is good for the elderly.

WHEREAS, same-sex couples often face inequities in retirement, and tend to have less retirement income than different sex-couples. In States that provide for marriage equality, this inequity is mitigated by receipt of Social Security spousal, survivor, and death benefits. In States that do not provide for marriage equality, LGBT elderly are excluded from this important benefit. Older LGBT adults have a right to the same benefits enjoyed by their heterosexual counterparts; Identified by Forbes in 2012 as one of the top 25 places to retire, Bloomington is home to many aging LGBT residents. Indeed, according to a recent survey conducted on behalf of Area 10 Agency on Aging, six percent of survey respondents age 60 or over in Monroe and Owen counties identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered. Through their professional and life experience, older residents enrich the quality of our community life. Because Indiana does not recognize same-sex marriages, LGBT retirees may choose to retire to a marriage equality State. This would be a loss for our community;

WHEREAS, marriage equality is good for the physical and mental health of LGBT residents, a fact recognized by numerous professional medical organizations, such as the Indiana State Medical Association, the American Medical Association, and the American Psychological Association: Legal marriage confers numerous financial and legal benefits, including access to health care. Improved access to healthcare translates into improved health outcomes. Same-sex households have reduced access to health insurance; as a consequence, these households suffer from significantly worse physical health outcomes compared with the community at large. While marriage inequality already harms the health of LGBT residents, HJR-3's prohibition of any legal status "substantially similar" may eliminate domestic partner benefits, injuring the health of LGBT Hoosiers even further; In response to institutionalized discrimination, the LGBT community suffers significantly from minority stress, a stress that results in substantially higher rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, suicide attempts and actual suicides. In a study evaluating the psychological health of LGBT participants subsequent to the approval of constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage in 14 States, participants reported a 36 percent increase in mood disorder, a 248 percent increase for generalized anxiety disorder and a 42 percent increase for alcohol use disorder;

WHEREAS, many faith traditions in Monroe and Owen counties support same-sex marriage and wish to solemnize legal same-sex marriages; over 300 Indiana clergy and faith leaders have indicated their opposition to HJR-3;

WHEREAS, full marriage equality in Indiana respects religious freedom – no religious denomination would be required to solemnize a marriage in violation of his or her right of free exercise of religion guaranteed by the First Amendment;

WHEREAS, the institution of marriage and the ability of people to form families of their own choosing is not static and has changed over time. At previous junctures in history, women were considered property and interracial marriages were prohibited by antimiscegenation laws;

WHEREAS, we are now at a new juncture. In the space of just ten years, sixteen States and the District of Columbia have recognized the legal right of same-sex marriage. At present, Indiana is currently one of a handful of States that could provide equal marriage to same-sex couples by amending State statute; and

WHEREAS, this is an opportunity. By supporting marriage equality, Indiana has the opportunity to enhance our economic competitiveness, support Hoosier families, and to be on the right side of history. The Area 10 Council on Aging of Monroe and Owen Counties, Inc. adopts the following resolution:

First: As board members committed to protect the health, welfare, and safety of older adults in Monroe and Owen counties, we find that a ban on same-sex marriage threatens our economic vibrancy, harms same-sex families who call the Area 10 region home, and is antithetical to our community's commitment to inclusiveness.

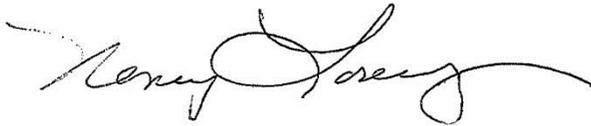
Second: We affirm that same-sex couples within our region have a fundamental right to marry and to have a marriage that is legal in another State, recognized in Indiana. Therefore, we call upon Indiana legislators to repeal the provisions of Indiana Code §31-11-1-1.

Third: We condemn any effort to enshrine discrimination into the Indiana Constitution and call upon Indiana legislators to reject HJR-3.

Fourth. We call upon members of our community and all Hoosiers to support marriage equality and to voice their opposition to HJR-3.

Fifth. We direct our executive director to send a copy of this resolution, duly adopted, to members of the Indiana General Assembly representing our region and to the Governor of Indiana.

Adopted this day January 30, 2014:



Nancy Lorenz, Chair



Carle Crawford, Secretary/Treasurer