



Washington United for Marriage Launches Diverse, Statewide Coalition and Campaign to Win Freedom to Marry in Washington State in 2012

BELLEVUE, Wash. – November 14, 2011 – A broad, statewide coalition of organizations, congregations, unions and business associations came together today to announce the formation of Washington United for Marriage – a coalition that will work to obtain civil marriage for lesbian and gay couples in Washington state in 2012.

Washington United for Marriage marks the ultimate step toward achieving the freedom to marry for lesbian and gay couples in Washington. The long list of supporting members includes faith-based organizations such as the Faith Action Network and Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, unions including SEIU Washington State Council and UFCW 21, and numerous advocacy organizations and business associations across the state.

The grassroots effort is led by a group of the state’s leading human rights organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington, Equal Rights Washington, Human Rights Campaign, Legal Voice, and Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest.

“The freedom to marry the person you love is fundamental to a democratic society,” said Jennifer Shaw, deputy director of the ACLU of Washington. “The ACLU has joined Washington United for Marriage because it is a matter of basic fairness that all loving, committed couples should be able to marry.”

Washington United for Marriage will lead the statewide effort to educate and advocate for the freedom to marry for all Washingtonians. The coalition will mobilize constituents to talk to their legislators before and during the 2012 legislative session to ensure that the majority of Washington state citizens who support marriage equality have their voices heard. The goal is to have legislation legalizing civil marriage for lesbian and gay couples passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Chris Gregoire next year.

“Now is the time to act to protect and strengthen all families in Washington state,” said Lacey All, foundation and national board of directors, Human Rights Campaign. “As we face the challenges of the current economic climate together, no family should be confronted with additional burdens to care for their loved ones.”

Washington United for Marriage plans to build momentum and support over the coming months by engaging constituents throughout Washington state at a series of town hall meetings held at various places of worship and community centers in every corner of the state.

“Though we come from different parts of Washington state, we are united in ensuring that all of Washington’s gay and lesbian couples can legally marry,” said Rod Hearne, executive director of Equal Rights Washington, the state’s LGBT civil rights organization. “Countless individuals have a story to tell about why civil marriage matters to them, and we will work neighbor-to-neighbor to ensure the voices of the loving and committed couples in Washington, many raising children, are heard.”

Community Meetings Throughout Washington State on Marriage Equality:

<p>Puyallup Monday, November 14 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. First Christian Church of Puyallup 623 9th Ave.</p>	<p>Lakewood Tuesday, November 15 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. Clover Park Tech College 4500 Steilacoom Blvd. SW</p>
<p>Vancouver Thursday, November 17 6 p.m.-8 p.m. YWCA Clark County 3609 Main St.</p>	<p>Gig Harbor Thursday, November 17 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. United Methodist Church 7400 Pioneer Way</p>
<p>Seattle Sunday, November 20 3p.m.-5 p.m. St. Mark's Cathedral Bloedel Hall 1245 10th Ave. E</p>	<p>Bellevue Monday, November 21 7 p.m.-9 p.m. East Shore Unitarian Church 12700 Southeast 32nd St.</p>
<p>Richland (Tri-Cities) Monday, November 21 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. Shalom United Church of Christ 505 McMurray St.</p>	<p>Spokane Tuesday, November 22 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. Spokane Falls Community College; Bldg. 24, Rm. 110 3410 W Fort George Wright Drive</p>
<p>Bellingham Tuesday, November 29 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. Fairhaven College Auditorium 516 High St.</p>	

About Washington United for Marriage: Washington United for Marriage is a coalition of organizations, congregations, unions, and business associations working together to secure civil marriage for loving, committed gay and lesbian couples. To find more information and learn how you can help, visit WashingtonUnitedForMarriage.org. Engage with Washington United for Marriage on social media at [Twitter.com/WA4Marriage](https://twitter.com/WA4Marriage) and at [Facebook.com/WashingtonUnited](https://facebook.com/WashingtonUnited).

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