



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Ohio Equal Rights Launches Statewide Signature Collection Campaign to Protect Individual Freedoms**

COLUMBUS, OHIO, January 14, 2026 — Ohio Equal Rights (OER) officially launches its statewide signature collection campaign on Jan. 14 to place two constitutional amendments on the ballot: the **Ohio Equal Rights Amendment** and the **Right to Marry Amendment**.

These amendments are designed to add new equal rights protections to the Ohio Constitution, ensuring the individual freedoms of all Ohioans at a time when basic rights are increasingly vulnerable. The deadline to collect and submit 413,487 valid signatures for each issue from registered voters in at least half of Ohio's 88 counties is July 1 to place both amendments on the November 2026 ballot.

The Ohio Equal Rights Amendment would prohibit discrimination by state and local governments based on race, color, creed or religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression regardless of sex assigned at birth, pregnancy status, genetic information, disease status, age, disability, recovery status, familial status, ancestry, national origin, or military and veteran status – ensuring that no Ohioan is denied services, dignity, or opportunity because of who they are.

The Right to Marry Amendment would remove a 2004 provision from the state Constitution that prohibits same-sex marriage. Currently, if federal protections fall, marriage equality would disappear overnight in Ohio, leaving more than 40,000 families without protection.



**"Individual rights are constantly under attack in this country, and Ohioans deserve protections that cannot be taken away by shifting political winds,"** said **Susan Appel, Volunteer Campaign Manager for Ohio Equal Rights.** **"We cannot trust that the government will always do the right thing simply because it should. So we're doing what Ohioans have always done—we're taking matters into our own hands."**

OER's original plan was to submit one proposal. However, due to an August 2025 decision from the Ohio Ballot Board, the proposal was split into two separate amendments, doubling the work of organizers.

**"The reality is that Ohioans believe in fairness. We believe in minding our own business and letting people live their lives. These amendments simply reflect the values we already share. There should be no objections to putting them in writing," Appel said.**

The campaign's launch marks the beginning of a historic grassroots effort to guarantee fairness, dignity, and equal treatment under the law. The amendments would ensure that Ohioans—not politicians—decide how their families are treated, how their identities are respected, and how their rights are protected.

**"Ohioans deserve a Constitution that reflects the will of the people—not outdated laws or political agendas," Appel said. "These amendments are about protecting families, protecting freedom, and protecting the basic principle that government should not be telling people how to live their lives."**

Ohio Equal Rights emphasizes that this is a citizen-led, all-volunteer effort—Ohio's strongest form of direct democracy.

**"This campaign will succeed because Ohioans support fairness," Appel said. "We're not asking for special treatment. We're guaranteeing equal treatment. And we're doing it together, as voters, as neighbors, and as people who care about the future of this state. Everyone involved in this campaign is**



**volunteering their time because we believe that protecting equality for all Ohioans is critical."**

Ohio Equal Rights invites individuals and groups interested in collaborating on this initiative to reach out via the organization's website,

<http://www.ohioequalrights.org>. Opportunities to support the campaign include:

- Donations: Contributions help fund critical advocacy, educational outreach, and community engagement efforts.
- Volunteering: Volunteer opportunities range from event planning and outreach to advocacy efforts and administrative support.
- Partnerships: Collaborate with OER to amplify shared values and coordinate efforts toward passing comprehensive protections.

**Let's work together to ensure Ohio becomes a beacon of fairness and equality. Join us in the fight for comprehensive protections for every Ohioan.**

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#### **About Ohio Equal Rights:**

Ohio Equal Rights is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to advancing equality, ensuring legal protections for all Ohioans, and building a brighter economic future for our state. By uniting communities across the state, OER aims to build a brighter, more inclusive future for Ohio.

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