



Kalamazoo to keep gay protections law

By OnTopMag.com

Kalamazoo, MI - Voters in Kalamazoo, Michigan on Tuesday decided to keep a controversial gay protections law approved by city leaders in June, ABC affiliate WZZM reported.

With 89% of precincts reporting at 10PM, the effort to repeal the law trailed 61% to 38%.

City leaders approved the measure that makes it illegal to discriminate based on sexual orientation and gender identity (transgender protections) in the areas of employment, housing and public accommodations twice before opponents forced them to put the measure up for a vote.

The group Kalamazoo Citizens Voting No to Special Rights, backed by the anti-gay Christian-group American Family Association (AFA), vociferously opposed the legislation, calling it an attempt to discriminate against religious groups, despite the law's exemption for churches.

Officials put the measure up for a vote after the group submitted 2,088 signatures against the ordinance – 60% more than the 1,273 valid voter signatures needed to qualify for the ballot box.

Jon Hoadley stepped down as executive director of pro-gay group Stonewall Democrats to head One Kalamazoo in August. The newly formed group headed the effort to retain the law.

In taking the position, Hoadley explained why national leaders were getting involved in a local gay rights issue.

"The local community asked me to participate in helping them pass a local ordinance that will help make LGBT lives better," Hoadley told [Bilerico's Bil Browning](#). "The AFA is going to send in big guns and spend a lot of money sending out misinformation about our community and our lives. These people aren't local either."

Hoadley said social conservative groups are using small towns like Kalamazoo to "find new ways to scare voters at a local level and move those lessons forward nationally." Voters in the college town of Gainesville, Florida rejected an effort to repeal a similar city ordinance in March.