

**League of Women Voters of Alachua County/ Gainesville  
Position Statement on Proposed Charter Amendment 1  
Appearing on the Ballot March 24, 2009, City of Gainesville Election**

**The League of Women Voters of Alachua County/ Gainesville *opposes* the City of Gainesville Charter Amendment 1 for the following reasons:**

1. Passage of the Charter Amendment would remove anti-discrimination protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people in Gainesville. The League believes that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination and that there should be secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all.
2. The City Charter should not be amended to address an issue with a City ordinance. Instead, changes should be made directly to the original ordinance.
3. Passage of the Charter Amendment would restrict the City of Gainesville from enacting additional future provisions to their own anti-discrimination laws. Any future changes to Gainesville's anti-discrimination laws would need to be enacted at the State level. The League believes that local governments should have all powers not expressly prohibited by the Constitution or by general law. Gainesville should have "home rule" to determine what is best for its citizens.

Furthermore, the League does not feel this is a public safety issue; the existing ordinance does not legalize criminal behavior or any other illegal acts. The proposed charter amendment provides no additional protection from illegal acts.

**WE RECOMMEND VOTING "NO" ON AMENDMENT 1**

**Background Information**

In January 2008, the Gainesville City Commission amended the City's anti-discrimination ordinance to include gender identity as a category of persons protected from discrimination. As a response to the ordinance, Citizens for Good Public Policy, a local political action group, drafted a proposed amendment to the City of Gainesville Charter with the intention of removing gender identity as a protected category.

**What is Charter Amendment 1?**

Charter Amendment 1 is a proposed amendment to Gainesville's Charter, requiring that civil rights categories specified in the City of Gainesville's code of ordinances match those of the State of Florida and not extend beyond those categories. The State recognizes these categories: race, color, creed, religion, gender, national origin, age, handicap, marital and familial status. The City of Gainesville currently includes additional categories: lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people. The city also protects employees in all categories that work in companies that have 5 or more employees. The state civil rights act only protects those in companies with 15 or more employees.

**What Your Vote Will Mean on Charter Amendment 1:**

- **A "No" Vote:** Non-passage of Charter Amendment 1 would leave Gainesville's current anti-discrimination laws in place, which recognize sexual orientation and gender identity as civil rights categories protected from discrimination, and include protection for employees of smaller companies.
- **A "Yes" Vote:** Passage of the Charter Amendment 1 would remove anti-discrimination protection in employment, housing, public accommodations, and credit extension practices for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people in Gainesville. Passage would also restrict the City of Gainesville from implementing any additional civil rights categories to Gainesville's anti-discrimination laws. A yes vote would leave intact those civil rights protections specified under Florida state law.