



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WE DEMAND A RETRACTION! Jail tax petitioner's website makes false accusations

CINCINNATI, June 5, 2007 – Equality Cincinnati today is demanding the retraction of statements that appeared on a website claiming that opponents of an anti-gay referendum last year engaged in fraud. The website, <http://www.wedemandavote.com/> is sponsored by a group circulating a referendum petition to place a sales tax on the November ballot in Hamilton County.

The false statements say in part: "In a recent referendum effort to repeal a Cincinnati City Council ordinance, opponents of the referendum effort engaged in fraudulent counter-petition tactics, such as forging signatures of recognized electors including Tim Burke, the Chairman of the Hamilton County Democratic Party and the Chairman of the Hamilton County Board of Election, Cincinnati Reds owner Bob Castellini, and Cincinnati Enquirer reporter Greg Korte." (Emphasis added).

"The statements on the website are simply lies", Equality Cincinnati President Gary Wright said. "What's more shameful is that State Rep. Tom Brinkman, a founder of COAST, which is listed on the site as one the partners in the jail tax referendum effort, is responsible for most of the wrongdoing that they are attempting to attribute to other people. This smells like a further coverup of last year's malfeasance."

Mr. Brinkman was paid \$40,000 to collect signatures in 2006 to put Cincinnati's Human Rights Ordinance on the ballot, but failed when forged signatures and address changes made without the permission of over 1,000 voters sank the effort. Mr. Brinkman or someone working for him made the address changes in the quote above, in effect forging two of the signatures mentioned today on this website as examples of someone else's "fraud". If this is fraud, then Mr. Brinkman is responsible for it.

Neither Cincinnati Enquirer reporter Greg Korte nor Cincinnati Reds owner Bob Castellini ever signed last year's petitions. Mr. Brinkman or someone working for him changed other signer's addresses to make it appear that they did, in effect forging their signatures. Mr. Brinkman has never taken public

responsibility for or apologized to the voters for what he did, though Hamilton County Prosecutor Joe Deters made clear in a statement that changing these addresses was wrong. Two other people are awaiting trial for forgery in the same case.

“False statements like these are giving referendum drives a bad name,” Wright went on to say. “It makes it appear that the people in charge of this campaign are simply indifferent to the normal standards of honesty and decency that most people share.”

“We do not have a position on the sales tax. We are taking a position for honesty and integrity in public debate, and we call on some of our supporters who may be taking part in the We Demand A Vote coalition to demand honesty and integrity from their allies as well,” Wright said.

For more detail on last year’s petition fraud case, see www.EqualityCincinnati.org .

Equality Cincinnati is a non-profit organization working for full equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in the greater Cincinnati region.

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