



---

## *Interfaith Coalition on Nondiscrimination*

---

### **News Brief • May 2004**

---

#### **About ICON**

ICON seeks to give a powerful voice to people of faith across Indiana who believe that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) people should be welcomed into our faith communities and treated equally under the law. Our members feel we have a sacred responsibility to work to end discrimination against GLBT people.

This is the inaugural issue of ICON's Quarterly Newsletter! As momentum grows, so does the need to communicate more effectively. We hope you'll take a few minutes to read this brief, news-packed update.

#### **Legislative Briefing: We Came So Close!**

Believe it or not, in Indiana good, hard-working employees can still be fired simply because they're GLBT.

*ICON believes that must stop!*

So, twelve months ago, we began talking to other Hoosier organizations that care about GLBT civil rights, exploring the possibility of working together to change Indiana law. What resulted is an umbrella coalition of civil rights organizations called Indiana Equality (IE). In addition to ICON, some of the key participating organizations are Justice Inc., the Rainbow Chamber of Commerce, Indiana NOW, the Indiana Transgender Rights Advocacy Alliance, the Human Rights Campaign, the Indiana Youth Group, plus regional organizations in Ft. Wayne, Lafayette, Terre Haute, Bloomington, Columbus, and Evansville.

Our goal is to amend the Indiana Civil Rights Law to include GLBT people. The current Civil Rights Law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, and so forth. We seek to add

“sexual orientation and gender identity” to the list of protected classes.

ICON has a special responsibility in this effort. Since most of the opposition to GLBT civil rights is motivated by religious concerns, it is imperative that legislators learn that many people of faith support civil rights for GLBT people.

The 2004 session of the Indiana legislature began in January and ended in March. For months leading up to the legislative session, IE representatives met with legislators and their staff to discuss amending the Indiana Civil Rights Law. The response we got, even from conservatives (both Republican and Democrat), was surprisingly positive. Many said, in effect, “We realize this is an idea whose time has come.”

Given these positive soundings, we decided to try to line up official sponsors for our bill. We figured our bill had the best chance of moving forward in the House, which is controlled by Democrats. But, with an eye to the Senate (controlled by Republicans), we also knew our bill needed to move through the House in bipartisan fashion. So, we lined up two respected House sponsors, a Democrat and a Republican.

However, immediately before the legislative session opened, the debate about same-sex marriage boiled over with the Massachusetts court decision legalizing same-sex marriage there. Although IE's effort to amend the Indiana Civil Rights Law has no connection to gay marriage, many legislators were suddenly afraid to touch anything related to GLBT civil rights. House Republican Leader, Rep. Brian Bosma (from northeast Indianapolis) pressured the Republican House member who planned to sponsor our bill to withdraw her support. She did so.

ICON and other IE partners flooded Rep. Bosma with messages of concern, but he held his ground, even when senior Republicans urged him to reconsider.

*continued on page two*



*Indianapolis Star photo of ICON's Action Day at the Statehouse  
— see next page for details.*

---

Stripped of the opportunity for bipartisan sponsorship in the House, ICON and other IE coalition partners decided it was best to pull back. The worst possible outcome would have been to insist on sending the bill forward on a strict party-line vote, since this would have ensured defeat in the Republican controlled Senate.

Instead, we devoted our efforts this past legislative session to education. Working with its IE coalition partners, ICON agreed to sponsor the main public event during the legislative session. On January 27, we held a “Day of Doing Justice” at the Statehouse. Defying the season’s worst snow storm, dozens of people of faith from across the State gathered near the Statehouse for training that morning, then we walked to the Statehouse to talk to our legislators. We were able to meet with almost 20 legislators in small groups, educating them on the need for basic civil rights for GLBT people.

We also conducted a public demonstration on the steps of the Statehouse that day to dramatize the problem. Many of us put paper bags over our heads (*see photo on front page*) to represent the thousands of Hoosiers who must hide their sexual orientation or gender identity at work to avoid being fired. On our paper bags, we wrote our occupations. At the end of the action, we pulled our bags off our heads to dramatize our determination not to be intimidated.

Our demonstration drew substantial media coverage. *Of this you can be sure, on January 27, every State legislator knew that dozens of people of faith were at the Statehouse advocating civil rights for GLBT people. That sent a very powerful message!*

In retrospect, it is perhaps surprising that we came so close in an election year in such a conservative State to having a viable GLBT civil rights bill. This gives us great hope for the next legislative session. We will not rest until our objective is accomplished.

## Where From Here?

The next Indiana legislative session will begin in January 2005. Between now and then, ICON plans to hold individual meetings with at least 20 swing-vote legislators in their local offices across the State. Our goal will be to sit down with each legislator for a 45 minute discussion in his/her home district in the presence of at least 10 people of faith from that district.

This will enable us to spend quality time building relationships and educating swing legislators at a time they are not distracted by the frantic pace of the legislative session. The presence of a room

full of concerned voters and people of faith from their home districts will emphasize that this is not just a “big-city” issue or a “liberal versus conservative” issue.

As our plan unfolds over the next few months, we may contact you to ask you to attend one of these key meetings.

## Coalition Building

Our other critical objective is to rapidly grow the membership base of ICON. Currently, when we speak to legislators, we are able to say that 250 clergy from across the State have signed our open letter supporting our call for GLBT Civil Rights legislation. That gets their attention! However, *legislators also typically want to know the size of our official membership base.*

For that reason, in the last few months, ICON has moved from a loose affiliation of supportive congregations and individuals to become an incorporated nonprofit membership organization. Already the following congregations have become official members:

- Bloomington Friends Meeting (Quaker)
- Central Christian Church, Indianapolis
- First Congregational Church, Indianapolis
- Holy Eucharist Orthodox Catholic Church, Indpls.
- Jesus Metropolitan Community Church, Indianapolis
- Lutherans Concerned Central Indiana
- Northeast United Church of Christ, Indianapolis
- St. Luke’s United Methodist Church, Indianapolis
- St. Mark’s United Methodist Church, Bloomington
- St. Peter’s United Church of Christ, Carmel
- The Church Within, Indianapolis
- Plus about 50 individuals, including many clergy!

We are deeply grateful for all you trailblazers who are our initial members! We still have a long way to go. How wonderful it would be if even half of the 250 clergy who’ve signed our open letter rallied their congregations to become official congregational members. (*If you would like to receive*

*an information packet to help your congregation consider membership, just let us know. Email [gminer@jesusmcc.org](mailto:gminer@jesusmcc.org) or phone (317) 894-5110.*) How wonderful if hundreds of you individuals, *both clergy and laity*, receiving this mailing would respond with your personal membership. Your membership will add clout to our message, while providing critical financial support to continue ICON’s work.

Together, we’re changing Indiana for the better! There is strength in numbers! **Please join with us.** ■



*Rev. Judith Carson and Rev. Jeff Miner with the crowd at the Day of Doing Justice.*



# ICON Membership Application

## Instructions:

1. Complete this form.
2. Make check or money order payable to ICON, or complete the credit card info block.
3. Mail the completed form and payment to:

**Interfaith Coalition on Nondiscrimination**  
**2950 East 55th Place**  
**Indianapolis, IN 46220**

## Membership Categories

### Voting Congregations and Religious Organizations

- Sustaining Members, \$100 to 300 annually. *ICON recognizes that congregations and religious organizations have differing financial resources. Although \$300 is recommended as the annual membership fee, any amount starting at \$100 is acceptable for annual membership.*

### Nonvoting Supporting Memberships

- Other Not-for-profit Organizations \$150 annually  
 Corporate Membership \$200 annually  
 Individual Membership \$25 annually  
 Household Membership \$40 annually

## Additional Contributions

- \$10       \$50       \$100  
 \$250       \$500       Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Individual Options For Additional Involvement (optional)

### Scope (select all that apply)

- Fundraising/Finance       Membership Development  
 Meeting/Events       Issues/Direction  
 Communications

### Time (select one)

- Occasional Project <4 hours       1 Day Annually  
 1 to 5 Days Annually       6 to 12 Days Annually  
 12 Days Annually

### Range (select one)

- Home City Only       25 – 50 Miles  
 50 – 75 Miles       75 – 100 Miles  
 Anywhere within Indiana

## Payment Options

- Check or money order enclosed (payable to "ICON")  
 Visa     MasterCard     American Express

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you know individuals or organizations that would want the opportunity to become a member of ICON? Please provide their names and addresses on a separate sheet, and we'll contact them.**

**Membership Information:** Address, telephone number, and e-mail remain confidential unless advance written authorization is obtained.

## Individuals & Households

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name *Household Membership Only* \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- Please ***do not*** publish name(s) in ICON literature.

Household Membership:

Please publish names     Individually     Together

## Congregations, Organizations & Corporations

Org. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Officer Name & Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* Delegate Name & Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\* An appointed delegate speaks and votes on behalf of the organization at membership meetings, unless and until the organization presents a written authorization, signed by an officer of the organization, designating someone else to serve as delegate.**

## Purpose Acknowledgement and Signatures

By signing below, the member, organization and appointed delegate acknowledges and agrees to support the purpose of the Interfaith Coalition on Nondiscrimination.

**Purpose:** *ICON is an organization of people of faith who are concerned about the consequences of intolerance against people who are members of sexual and gender minorities. Particularly, we are concerned about religious intolerance and lack of acceptance of God's diversity. Our purpose is to create positive change through education and social action, so that gay, lesbian, bisexual, intersexed, and transgendered people will be able to live in peace and equality.*

Individual Member Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Household Membership Only*

Individual Member Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Officer Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Appointed Delegate Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



ICON

*Interfaith Coalition on  
Nondiscrimination*

---

*2950 East 55th Place  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46220*

---

***Exciting progress on the legislative front!***



ICON