

Pro-marriage young people do exist, say youth fighting for Indiana same-sex “marriage” ban

BY KIRSTEN ANDERSEN, Thu Feb 13, 2014

Over 100 young adults held a press conference Tuesday at Indiana's state House calling for an amendment protecting true marriage.

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, February 13, 2014 ([LifeSiteNews.com](http://www.lifesitenews.com)) – “The media claims we don't exist. Freedom Indiana claims there are none of us left. But as young Hoosiers, we are here today.”

Those were the words of Shane Weist, 33, who along with a group of more than 100 other young adults, held a [press conference](#) Tuesday in which they sought to prove that – despite media reports to the contrary – not every young person in America backs legally-sanctioned same-sex “marriage.”

Weist and his companions make up Young Hoosiers for Marriage, an Indiana-based group fighting for passage of HJR-3, an amendment to the state constitution defining marriage as a union between one man and one woman.

Also at issue in Indiana are so-called “civil unions,” which give many of the legal benefits of marriage without the name or federal recognition.

The House passed a version of the marriage amendment that stripped a provision banning civil unions, but the Senate must now debate whether to add the provision back in. A vote on the issue was expected late Thursday. If the two houses can come to an agreement on

wording, the final version will appear on the general election ballot in November for approval by voters.

Weist told reporters that Young Hoosiers for Marriage support the amendment as it was originally conceived. He urged the Senate to add the language banning civil unions back in the bill.

“The Senate should restore the second sentence because without it, marriage remains vulnerable to redefinition and will more likely face prolonged litigation in court,” Weist explained.

“We are committed to rebuilding culture to ensure that children are not intentionally deprived of a mother and a father,” he added.

The Young Hoosiers’ public debut was met with mockery and derision by homosexual activists, who quickly launched a competing Facebook page called “Young Hoosiers 4 Marriage” serving up personal attacks on Weist and his allies, whom they dubbed “Stepford Kidz.”

Jennifer Wagner, spokeswoman for Freedom Indiana, a gay activist group fighting the proposed ban, accused the Young Hoosiers of “astroturfing,” or pretending to be grassroots when they are not. “Where have they been the last six months?” Wagner asked the [Fort Wayne Journal Gazette](#). “Some of the national groups ... have realized their voice has been lacking.”

In an interview with LifeSiteNews Thursday, Isaac Cramer, 24, said neither he nor his fellow Young Hoosiers have any connections with national organizations, and if they are late to the party it is due to their very lack of organization or funding.

“It is never too late to take a stand for something you believe in,” Cramer told LifeSiteNews. “Right now Indiana is in the middle of this debate. We are the only State this year that would have a marriage amendment potentially on the ballot. Everyone is looking at Indiana. We want to show that there is a strong contingent of young Hoosiers who believe in preserving the truth about marriage.”

“It’s really hard with a grassroots, kind of organic coalition to thrive without funding and without any kind of networking outside of the people we know and the people *they* know, which is kind of how we grew,” Cramer said. “We knew people who knew people, and we kind of just kept forming by word of mouth. Before we knew it, we had people contacting us, saying ‘Hey, can I participate in your group?’” Cramer says he believes the real number of young people who oppose redefining marriage is much higher than media reports would have people believe, but that the controversy over the issue is so intense that many are afraid to speak up. Even Cramer himself was hesitant to speak on the record for this article, citing concerns about how his employers might react. But ultimately – stressing that his personal beliefs are his own, and should not be taken as representing his employers’ – he said he decided to go on the record because “it’s important to be willing to stand up.”

While the Young Hoosiers for Marriage are currently focused on getting the marriage amendment passed, they believe that is just the first battle in a larger war for the future of the culture. After the vote, they plan to expand their activism from the State House to Indiana’s college campuses and church youth groups, giving talks on the importance of traditional marriage and participating in debates with supporters of same-sex “marriage.”

Cramer said he hopes that by publicizing the fact that young people who support traditional marriage do exist, Young Hoosiers for Marriage will give others the courage to stand up, too.

“I think any time there is an issue that seems controversial, other people are going to be a little bit hesitant to speak out about it,” Cramer said. “I think that it takes somebody to be bold, and somebody to be courageous to take a stand for something, and ... other people see that and they realize that, ‘You know what, I can join forces.’ There’s always strength in numbers.”

Cramer told LifeSiteNews that since Tuesday’s press conference, their group – which includes the 100+ young people at the press conference, plus “around another 100 who couldn’t make it because they worked or had class” – has received many more requests from other young people in Indiana wanting to join. Most of them are in their early 20s, juniors and seniors in college.

Asked what he would say to young people who oppose gay “marriage” but are afraid to speak out, Cramer said, “It takes courage to stand up for something you believe in. Sometimes you’re going to receive negative backlash for a stance you take, but that shouldn’t discourage you from taking a stand.”

Cramer encouraged young people who want the safety in numbers provided by Young Hoosiers for Marriage to start their own groups. “You know friends, you know people in your community, you know kids in school, or college classmates who would be on your side, and that’s how you start,” he said. “You talk to people and you get their opinions, and a lot of times, your friends will share the same positions as you. You start small, and then you grow. It seems like it would be really hard, but really, you find that small group, and you just kind of build from there. That’s how we came together.”

For more information on Young Hoosiers for Marriage, you can e-mail the group at younghoosiersformarriage@gmail.com.

To read an opinion editorial supporting traditional marriage by a college student named Julie Kitchel, one of the group’s founders, see:

