

## LGBT

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### ***Same-Sex Marriage Coalitions and the 501(c)(4) Strategic Organization***

**Thursday 11:15 am Panel 3**

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**Abstract:** This presentation will examine the established 501(c)(3)'s decision to either form a new 501(c)(4) organization as a strategic "buffer" for lobbying and political activity, or to join forces with other organizations or coalitions with (c)(4) designations or advantages. A newly founded 501(c)(4) is clearly a new organization in the field, but it also represents an organization as a tool of the parent organization or the coalition, a strategic move, a tactic played by another organization or by a coalition of organizations. The presentation focuses specifically on the perspectives of social movement organizations working for or against same-sex marriage or civil unions at the state level, a fertile research area given recent ballot referendums and initiatives for amendments to state constitutions either protecting same-sex unions or making them unconstitutional or illegal. The presentation will specifically examine the question, "What drives social movement and advocacy organizations, especially those working for or against same sex marriage rights, to form a new 501(c)(4) organizations, or to join forces with organizations or coalitions with (c)(4) advantages? A secondary question examines the strategic use of the new 501(c)(4) organization or coalition relationship. For example, 501(c)(4)s allow practically unlimited lobbying and political activity, and they also create an avenue to the creation of political action committees and so-called Super PACs, a path which is closed to 501(c)(3)s. In other words, how are new 501(c)(4) organizations strategically used in fighting for an organization's position in a contested issue?