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Rally aims to mobilize foes of ban on affirmative action

By SUSAN WHITE

WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Nearly 200 people attended a Sunday rally at which Omaha Together One Community leaders sought to mobilize opposition to a proposal that would ban race- and gender-based affirmative action in Nebraska.

OTOC spokeswoman Brianne Ryba said the 25 institutions represented at the meeting pledged to have over 30,000 conversations about the ballot measure, known as Initiative 424, through personal contact, e-mails, bulletins and other means.

Members of OTOC also will hold a precinct walk Saturday. The public is invited to the 9 a.m. event at Pius X church near 70th and Blondo Streets.

OTOC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that describes itself as multi-ethnic and interfaith. Many of the institutions represented Sunday were churches, but other groups such as school and community organizations were also represented, Ryba said.

The group has said Initiative

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424 would harm women and minority-owned businesses.

Doug Tietz, director of the Nebraska Civil Rights Initiative, which is campaigning for Initiative 424, has said similar measures passed in other states have not hurt those states' business recruitment efforts.

Also at Sunday's meeting, OTOC members discussed the group's continuing efforts to curb violence. In addition, members discussed a report card the group has compiled about how the views of learning community candidates compare with OTOC priorities. The report card will be posted this week at the group's Web site, www.OTOC.org.

■ Contact the writer:
444-1272, news@owh.com