



PRESS RELEASE

Founded in 1991, Equality Illinois is the state's oldest, largest and most effective organization advocating for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Illinoisans.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Equality Illinois Says It's Time for Illinois to Finally Pass the Marriage Bill

CHICAGO – With the Illinois General Assembly entering the final weeks of its spring session, Equality Illinois calls on the Illinois House to finish its work on the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act and pass the bill with the strongest possible majority so Illinois recognizes marriage equality.

With Rhode Island and Delaware in recent weeks and, today, Minnesota joining the roll call of states honoring the desire of loving, committed couples to marry, there is a sense of urgency to act in Illinois.

"It is our time," said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, the state's oldest and largest advocacy organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender voters. "Gay and lesbian couples in Illinois and their families deserve to be recognized. If the U.S. Supreme Court strikes down the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in June, as expected, and Illinois doesn't recognize the freedom to marry now, then Illinois families will be further harmed."

"It's not a matter of being the 10th or the 13th state to continue the national march toward full recognition of the dignity of all gay and lesbian couples and their families. The important number to achieve our goal of winning in Illinois is 60—the House majority needed to pass the bill," Cherkasov continued.

Cherkasov noted that Gov. Pat Quinn, Senate President John Cullerton, House Speaker Michael Madigan and other state officials have worked hard to secure passage of the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act. Coalitions of business and labor leaders, Democrats and Republicans, clergy members, Latino, African-American and Asian-American community leaders, and sports and entertainment figures joined forces to support the freedom to marry.

"Everyone has done the hard work to draft a fair bill that provides for marriage equality while guaranteeing religious freedom. Now, it is imperative that Illinois House members do their job at their next opportunity: heed the call of Speaker Madigan and pass Senate Bill 10," Cherkasov said.

"The people of Illinois support marriage equality, and the tide of history is calling on the Land of Lincoln to do the right thing," Cherkasov added.