

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **EQUALITY ILLINOIS REJECTS CARDINAL GEORGE'S NARROW VISION**

CHICAGO – Equality Illinois is saddened that Cardinal Francis George used a grand celebration on Sunday to denigrate Americans who seek marriages outside the definition he wants to impose on everyone regardless of their religious beliefs.

“Just as marriage equality will not impose any requirement on any religion, Cardinal George should not continue to urge that his singular vision of marriage be embodied in civil law to be imposed on everyone else,” said Randy Hannig, Director of Public Policy of Equality Illinois, the state’s oldest, largest and most-respected LGBT advocacy organization.

The cardinal spoke out at a mass held to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversaries of 400 couples. Instead of simply honoring these families, the cardinal turned the special occasion into a political speech, saying, “There must surely be ways in our civil society, where we can honor friendships, where we can respect other people, without destroying the nature of marriage. It is very important, for your whole lives give witness to what marriage truly means. And while civil laws might change – if they do – then society will be the worse for it.”

The cardinal is out of touch and fails to recognize that there are thousands of people of all sexual orientations within his own archdiocese who are more than ‘friends,’ who are in fact living as loving couples and entitled to the same traditions, legal protections and respect as the married couples honored by George.

“These gay and lesbian couples are committed to their families, many are raising children, and they fully dream of celebrating their own golden wedding anniversaries if the law will allow,” Hannig said.



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“Numerous faith leaders and other religious practices recognize the right of lesbian and gay people to marry, yet the cardinal argues that his belief supersedes what other religions should be able to practice and should continue to be embodied in secular law,” Hannig said.

“Millions of Americans live in jurisdictions where marriage equality is already the law, and society in those locales is hardly the ‘worse for it,’ as the cardinal predicts,” said Hannig.