



Equality Illinois Hails Senate Vote for Marriage *Now the House Must Add Its Voice*

SPRINGFIELD (February 14, 2013) – Equality Illinois, the state's oldest and largest advocacy organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Illinoisans, today hailed the historic vote by the Illinois Senate affirming the freedom to marry.

Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, in the state Capitol for the vote, said, "While this historic day is only half the battle, the Senate today put Illinois on the road to recognizing that, as President Obama said in his inaugural address, 'the love we commit to one another must be equal'."

Cherkasov praised and thanked Sen. Heather Steans, the Senate sponsor, for her expertise in moving the bill through the chamber from introduction to passage. "Sen. Steans, always a passionate voice for LGBT equality, has earned our gratitude, and we congratulate her," Cherkasov said.

Now the battle moves to the Illinois House of Representatives, where Rep. Greg Harris picks up management of the legislation. He has already been hard at work lining up support for the bill.

The freedom to marry has the backing of many leaders, including Illinois Republican chairman Pat Brady and Illinois Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka, also a Republican, who discussed her support at Saturday's Equality Illinois gala.

"Hey, fair is fair. For goodness sakes, if people want to get married, let them have the right to be in love and have family life and all that good stuff. Go for it!" Topinka told Gay Chicago TV at the Equality Illinois gala.

Cherkasov said the only way for the House to reflect the will of the people on this issue is to recognize the freedom to marry.

"Democrats and Republicans, moderates and independents, people of faith and employers of all size - all have called for the General Assembly to pass the marriage bill as soon as possible and without creating unnecessary obstacles. The time is now," Cherkasov said.

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