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**Illinois Unites Congratulates Minnesota on Enacting  
Marriage Equality, Urges IL House to Act Now**

*Minnesota becomes 12<sup>th</sup> state extending freedom to marry, Illinois poised to become  
next state*

SPRINGFIELD – May 14, 2013 – In another victory for marriage equality, Minnesota became the 12<sup>th</sup> state today to extend the freedom to marry to gay and lesbian couples. One day after the Minnesota Senate passed the bill in a 37-30 vote, Gov. Mark Dayton signed the bill into law.

“It has been just a few short weeks since Rhode Island and Delaware passed marriage equality, and yet another state has recognized the freedom to marry for all. Minnesota is further proof that the American public has turned the corner on this issue,” said Rep. Greg Harris (D-Chicago), the chief House sponsor of the Illinois marriage bill, the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act.

“Everyone is now looking to Illinois,” Harris added. “I know my House colleagues want to be on the right side of history.”

The vote yesterday codified the growing support for marriage equality in Minnesota, first set into motion last November when voters rejected a ballot measure aimed at banning same-sex marriage in the state constitution.

Over the last three weeks, Rhode Island became the 10<sup>th</sup> state and Delaware became the 11<sup>th</sup> state to enact marriage equality. The Rhode Island bill drew support from every Republican in the state Senate, echoing increased GOP support across the country from figures that include U.S. Senators Mark Kirk (R-Illinois) and Rob Portman (R-Ohio.)

“I am thrilled that another state has chosen to recognize that marriage is about a commitment two people share, no matter who they are,” said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois. “Illinois looks forward to soon joining the Midwest consensus for equal marriage.”

In an editorial Monday, the *Sun-Times* wrote, “somewhere in the Illinois House, we believe, there are at least five members who have yet to say it out loud but know in

their gut that gay people should have the right to get married... Who will step up to be on the right side of history?"

Today's news comes against a backdrop of national and statewide polling showing steadily increasing support for marriage equality. Poll after poll shows that a majority of Americans and a majority of Illinoisans support extending marriage to gay and lesbian couples.

Illinois Unites for Marriage – a coalition led by Equality Illinois, Lambda Legal and the ACLU of Illinois – is continuing its statewide campaign in support of the bill, marshaling support and urging allies to step up contacts with their legislators as the House vote approaches. The coalition supporting the freedom to marry for all loving, committed couples – already strong with business, labor and community leaders, civic organizations, faith institutions and members of the clergy, African-American leaders, Republicans and Democrats – continues to grow.

Information about the legislation is available at [www.illinoisunites.org](http://www.illinoisunites.org), along with information about how citizens can make their voices heard.

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