



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

April 2, 2013

Sen. Kirk's Endorsement Should Encourage Illinois Republicans to Support Marriage Bill

CHICAGO – Applauding U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk's announcement today supporting the freedom to marry for all Americans, Equality Illinois, the state's oldest, largest and most effective organization advocating for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Illinoisans, said Republican members of the Illinois House of Representatives should follow his leadership.

"As Illinois' highest-ranking Republican officeholder, Sen. Mark Kirk demonstrated today that he understands why the freedom to marry is so important for all loving couples," said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois. "When he said, 'Life comes down to who you love and who loves you back – government has no place in the middle,' Sen. Kirk cut to the heart of the argument."

When the Illinois House returns in a week, consideration of the freedom to marry is likely to be on the agenda, now carrying the endorsements of Illinois' two U.S. senators – Republican Mark Kirk and Democrat Dick Durbin; the two state party chairs Republican Pat Brady and Democrat Mike Madigan, the Illinois House speaker; plus Gov. Pat Quinn and Lt. Gov., Sheila Simon, both Democrats; state Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka, a Republican; Illinois Atty. Gen. Lisa Madigan, a Democrat; Senate President John Cullerton, a Democrat; and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, a Democrat.

"With that kind of bipartisan backing, we expect the Illinois House to act promptly when it returns to pass the marriage bill. The bill is fair to all who seek to protect religious rights while granting Illinoisans the freedom to marry the person they love. Sen. Kirk's support should help Illinois House Republicans in particular understand why their support of the measure is the right thing to do," Cherkasov said.

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