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Equality Illinois Applauds Gov. Quinn's Call to Action on the Marriage Bill
Faith leaders lobby lawmakers in favor of freedom to marry

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois legislators meeting to hear the State of the State address today heard Gov. Pat Quinn urge them to act quickly to pass the marriage bill. Meanwhile, members of the clergy met with senators and representatives to advocate support of the freedom to marry and more faith leaders signed on to an open letter to the General Assembly.

The three-pronged effort on behalf of the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act came a day after the Senate Executive Committee voted 9-5 to send the bill to the full Senate for consideration, which Senate President John Cullerton has said could occur next week on Valentine's Day.

Gov. Quinn took note of that development this afternoon during his address to a joint session of the Illinois General Assembly.

"Our Illinois is not a land of discrimination," Gov. Quinn said, noting the passage of the civil unions bill two years ago. "Now it's time to take the next step."

The governor continued, "Marriage equality is coming to Illinois, and yesterday was a great start....Let's pass this bill for marriage equality and let's do it now."

Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, the state's oldest and largest organization advocating for LGBT Illinoisans, praised the governor's comments.

"Not only does Gov. Quinn support the right of all couples in love to commit to each other through the rite of civil marriage, he understands the urgency of swift legislative action," Cherkasov said. "Equality Illinois applauds the governor for raising the issue in the important State of the State address this year and suggests that lawmakers heed his call for passing the measure without delay."

The governor spoke shortly after the Illinois Unites for Marriage coalition released an updated **Open Letter from Illinois Clergy and Faith Leaders on Marriage** now signed by 300 clergy and faith leaders who support the freedom to marry.

After the governor's speech, a representative group of about 40 members of the clergy spread out through the Capitol to meet individually with senators and representatives asking them for their support.

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