



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

February 11, 2013

Gov. Quinn Urges Marriage Bill Supporters to Work for Passage

CHICAGO – Gov. Patrick Quinn is declaring this to be "an historic week in Illinois" with action anticipated this Thursday on freedom to marry legislation in the Illinois Senate.

Gov. Quinn used his appearance at the Equality Illinois Justice for All Gala Saturday night to issue a call to arms for supporters of the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act, which he has promised to sign. (Photos below.)

"This year we're going to pass and make a law called marriage equality in Illinois," Gov. Quinn said. "When people band together and work together using the power of democracy, we can make sure we pass a landmark law. And I hope everybody works together in these next few weeks so we get the votes in the Senate, to get the votes in the House, and make history in Illinois." [You can watch the governor's remarks here.](#)

Excitement is building for the expected Valentine's Day vote. Saturday night in the Chicago Hilton, the biggest black-tie gala for LGBT equality in the Midwest was a combination celebration of the coming vote and a call to action.

"To all those who said 'it's not gonna happen,' it is happening," Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, told the crowd. "The freedom to marry is unstoppable; in the Land of Lincoln, it is inevitable!"

The bill has been endorsed by more than 300 members of the clergy and top Illinois business leaders, and, according to polls, the freedom to marry has the support of a majority of Americans and a majority of Illinoisans.

In addition to Quinn, gala attendees included Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who is part of the national group Mayors for the Freedom to Marry. Scores of other federal, state and local officials attended the event, including U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley, U.S. Rep. Brad Schneider, Lt. Gov Sheila Simon, Attorney General Lisa Madigan, Illinois Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka, Illinois Senate President John Cullerton, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez, and the bill's legislative sponsors, state Sen. Heather Steans and state Rep. Greg Harris.

At the gala, Sen. Steans was honored with the Equality Illinois Freedom Award for her indefatigable work on behalf of equality.

Equality Illinois also recognized United Airlines with the Business Leadership Award for the company's

long history of commitment to the LGBT community.

The gala was co-chaired by renowned chef Art Smith, the Chicago-based restaurateur and TV celebrity, and his husband, artist Jesus Salgueiro.



Illinois Gov. Patrick Quinn addresses the Equality Illinois Justice for All Gala, Feb. 9, 2013.
Must Credit: Mystic Images Photography.



Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel welcomes the crowd at the Equality Illinois Justice for All Gala, Feb. 9, 2013.
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