



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Equality Illinois Ready for Marriage Equality Battle**

CHICAGO – The chief House and Senate sponsors of the marriage equality bill, Rep. Greg Harris and Sen. Heather Steans, said today they believe the legislature is ready to recognize the love and commitment of all couples in the state. Equality Illinois says the time is now for marriage equality in Illinois.

"We are dedicating our efforts to leaving no stone unturned in helping them to reach that goal," said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois. "Our members and supporters by the thousands will be contacting lawmakers, and we urge everyone who believes that we all should be treated fairly and equally by the law to reach out to your senator and representative to let them know to vote 'yes' on the marriage equality bill."

Myths and untruths have been heard about what will happen when marriage equality is passed in Illinois. "We call on members of the legislature, the media and the public to carefully consider the validity and source of such claims and reject them for the fear-sowing myths that they are," Cherkasov said.

Here are some truths:

- All couples deserve a chance to have their love and commitment recognized as civil marriage under state law.
- Marriage equality expands religious freedom, allowing marriage ceremonies by those faiths that want to perform them while firmly ensuring that other faiths can follow their own tenets not to perform them.
- Civil unions are separate, unequal and confusing and have not proven to be an equal substitute for marriage.
- All couples in the state should be able to provide their children with the protections afforded by marriage.
- In the nine states and District of Columbia where marriage equality is legal, families, religious freedoms and society have only strengthened.

"The time is now for all lawmakers to understand that Illinois should be on the right side of history," Cherkasov said.

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*Note to media NOT FOR PUBLICATION:*

*Equality Illinois can help you tell the story of marriage equality in the days and weeks ahead. We can provide political and policy analysis and connect you with faith and community leaders and, most importantly, the couples whose lives are impacted by the inability to marry.*

*For additional media assistance, please contact Equality Illinois at:*  
[773-477-7173](tel:773-477-7173)

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.

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