

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 8, 2012

Equality Illinois Represents State at White House Briefing on LGBT Rights

WASHINGTON—On the heels of President Obama’s support of marriage equality, Equality Illinois is one of several major LGBT organizations invited to participate today in a White House briefing and reception during Pride Month.

“We are proud to be invited to the White House event to be the organization representing Illinois and the people who look to us to lead the advance for fairness and rights for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community,” said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, the state’s oldest and largest LGBT advocacy organization.

“As much as we celebrate what has been accomplished in the first term of the Obama administration, we look to it for continued leadership in the years ahead and appreciate the opportunity to share strategies for what more can be done on the federal and state levels,” Cherkasov said.

The conference, which is to be followed by a reception, are scheduled for Friday afternoon in the Indian Treaty Room of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building in the White House complex. A number of high-level administration officials are lined up to participate, including Matt Nosanchuk, the Department of Justice Senior Counselor for Civil Rights, and Assistant Secretary of the Department of Housing & Urban Development John Trasvina.

One focus of the meeting, according to an article in the Washington Blade, is extending rights through action on the state level. For example, administrative changes accomplished by federal agencies to advance equality might be duplicated at the state level, especially where state legislatures are reluctant to act.

Organized with the help of the Equality Federation, a national organization that supports state LGBT advocacy groups, the session is being held as the President has declared this Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month and, said in the proclamation, “I call upon the people of the United States to eliminate prejudice everywhere it exists, and to celebrate the great diversity of the American people.”

The Equality Federation estimated that only about 20 advocacy groups from the around the country have been invited to participate in today’s White House briefing, including Equality Illinois, according to the Blade. In addition to Cherkasov, the Equality Illinois delegation will include Randy Hannig, our Director of Public Policy, and Caroline Staerk, our Director of Field Programs.

“We look forward to reporting back to Illinois about the briefing and renewed calls to action. Even with the advances we’ve shared in the last few years, we have more work to accomplish in a myriad of areas, including marriage equality, anti-bullying efforts, transgender protections and workplace fairness,” Cherkasov said.

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