



**EQUALITY
ILLINOIS**

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

November 21, 2013

Equality Illinois Marriage Forums Help Community Understand New Law *Fourteen Meetings Planned Throughout Illinois*

CHICAGO – With the ink barely dry on Gov. Pat Quinn's signature on the new Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act, Equality Illinois today is launching a statewide series of public forums to help couples seeking to get married understand the law.

The first forum is scheduled for tonight, Thursday, Nov. 21, in Oak Park. The others will be scheduled in the weeks ahead in Aurora, Belleville, Bloomington-Normal, Carbondale, Champaign-Urbana, Chicago (Hyde Park), Chicago (Lakeview), Palatine, Peoria, Quad Cities, Rockford, Springfield and Waukegan.

"We expect that many of the more than 5,000 couples who received civil unions in Illinois and thousands more loving, devoted couples will want to express their love and build a family in the institution of marriage," said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, the state's oldest and largest advocacy organization of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Illinoisans.

"Until recent years that was only a dream in the U.S., and it is coming to Illinois in just over six months. We want to help couples take advantage of their right to get married. We've already been flooded with questions," Cherkasov said.

Frequently asked questions include how to convert a civil union into a marriage and how a couple married elsewhere is treated by the new law. Many of the questions are answered in our *Equality Illinois Marriage Guide* (http://eqil.org/cmsdocuments/Marriage_Rights.pdf).

"As was our experience when the civil union law passed, couples want to meet and discuss the details, the requirements and the steps needed to get married," Cherkasov said.

Participants are urged to register for these forums at the accompanying link to ensure seating. The Equality Illinois Marriage Forums already scheduled are:

Thursday, Nov. 21 - Oak Park - 6 pm, Oak Park Temple, 1235 N. Harlem Ave., Oak Park - <http://tinyurl.com/oakpark-forum>

Tuesday, Dec. 3 - Aurora - 6 pm, Bethany of Fox Valley UMC, 2200 Ridge Avenue, Aurora
- <http://tinyurl.com/auroralL-forum>

Wednesday, Dec. 4 - Palatine - 6 pm, Countryside Unitarian Universalist Church,
1025 N. Smith St., Palatine - <http://tinyurl.com/palatine-forum>

Monday, Dec. 9 - Quad Cities - 6 pm, St. Johns Lutheran Church, 4501 7th Ave., Rock
Island - <http://tinyurl.com/quadcities-forum>

Tuesday, Dec. 10 - Rockford - 6 pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4848 Turner St.,
Rockford - <http://tinyurl.com/rockford-forum>

Tuesday, Dec. 10 - Chicago (Lakeview) - 6:30 pm, Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted St.,
Chicago - <http://tinyurl.com/lakeview-forum>

Wednesday, Dec. 11 - Champaign-Urbana - 6 pm, Champaign Public Library, Robeson
Pavilion Room C, 200 W. Green St., Champaign - <http://tinyurl.com/champaign-forum>

Thursday, Dec. 12 - Carbondale - 6 pm., Church of the Good Shepherd, 515 S. Orchard
Dr., Carbondale - <http://tinyurl.com/carbondale-forum>

Thursday, Dec. 12 - Springfield - 6 pm, Phoenix Center, 109 E. Lawrence Ave.,
Springfield - <http://tinyurl.com/springfield-forum>

Tuesday, Dec. 17 - Belleville - 6:30 pm, Southwestern Illinois College, Rm. 2106 Liberal
Arts Building, 2500 Carlyle Ave., Belleville - <http://tinyurl.com/bellevilleIL-forum>

Tuesday, Jan. 14 - Bloomington-Normal - 6 pm, Bloomington Police Department, Osborn
Room, 305 S. East St., Bloomington - <http://tinyurl.com/bloomington-forum>

The forums in the remaining cities will be announced shortly.

#

For media assistance, please contact:

Mitchell Locin Media Liaison for Equality Illinois – 773-477-7173; info@eqil.org