



EQIL INSIDER SCOOP *MAY 2013*

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MARRIAGE = At this important legislative juncture, our work continues for a vote sooner rather than later on the freedom to marry. Important developments of recent days come at a critical moment, as the House this week is now ready to take up policy bills sent over from the Senate, a list that is topped by SB10, the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act. "We are primed for victory," says **Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov**.



In the last week, **Illinois Atty. Gen. Lisa Madigan** wrote in a [Chicago Tribune column](#) that the "Illinois House (is) poised for final action." Meanwhile, **state Rep. Kelly Cassidy** said, "We're on track to pass this historic legislation." Their comments came on the heels of the significant support given by **state Rep. Ken Dunkin**, chair of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus, who [signed on as a chief co-sponsor of the bill](#).

Randy Hannig, our Director of Public Policy, reports, "We are sending a strong signal to lawmakers that the time to act on the marriage bill is NOW."

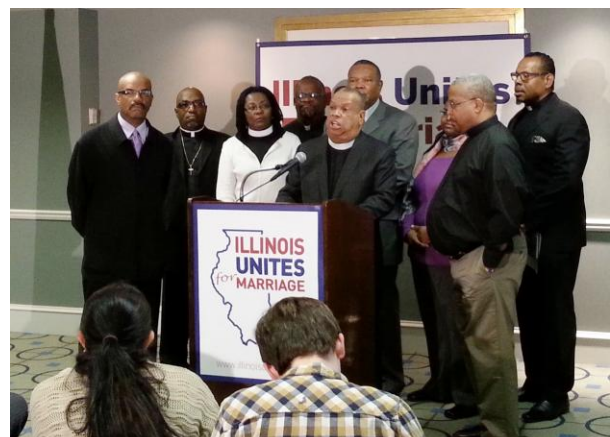
Marriage equality supporters rallied in April outside the Aurora office of state Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia, who is considering her vote on the issue. [See the whole photo gallery.](#)

Equality Illinois Field Director Caroline Staerk is urging us not to let up on the calls and emails to your representatives. Outside anti-marriage groups are continuing to fund robocalls to legislators, and we must counter that opposition with your

messages of support for the bill. Even if you've done it already and you know your legislator may be supportive, please reach out to your House member at [illinoisunites.org/letswin](#). And ask your friends and family throughout Illinois to also contact their lawmakers. We have to let Springfield hear how important this is.

The marriage bandwagon picked up steam throughout April. Early in the month **state Rep. Ed Sullivan Jr.** of Mundelein became the second Republican to endorse the marriage bill, joining GOP **state Rep. Ron Sandack** of Downers Grove, recognizing the bipartisan support for fairness. Other endorsers included the **NAACP Illinois Conference**.

And a group of **prominent African-American clergy members** announced their support. "This is about equality and justice. This is a matter of equal protection under the law for all citizens. This is not a religious issue," said the **Rev. Richard Tolliver** (speaking, on right) of St. Edmund's Episcopal Church in Chicago. "Nothing in your church will change."



YOU can amplify the words of all of these supporters by reaching out one more time to your state representative. Find out how to contact the House by clicking on [illinoisunites.org/letswin](#).

STATE REPORT = In addition to the marriage bill, the Equality Illinois advocacy team is actively involved in discussions with state lawmakers on many issues:



HIV DISCRIMINATION AGAINST YOUTH = We are helping the AIDS Foundation of Chicago to support the passage of House Bill 61, which repeals the state requirement that the HIV status of a child be reported to school principals when the Illinois Department of Public Health or local health departments learn of a positive status. Having passed the House, the bill is now currently under consideration in the Senate.

Today, Illinois is the only state in the country where health authorities are required by law to notify school principals of the names of students that test HIV-positive. School principals then have the authority to notify other school personnel as they see fit, which puts student's medical privacy at risk.

[Click here to send a message to your state senator to support HB 61, which ends 25 years of discrimination and brings Illinois law in line with that of 49 other states.](#)

FIGHTING DISCRIMINATORY BILLS = Equality Illinois prevented three bills from moving out of committee: 1) A measure to require voters to present a valid voter ID card, making it more difficult for transgender individuals to vote. 2) A proposed constitutional amendment defining marriage as one woman and one man. 3) Legislation to carve out religious exemptions for child welfare agencies that handle adoption and foster care placement.

FEDERAL REPORT = While we await the U.S. Supreme Court rulings expected later this spring on the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which federally recognizes only marriages between a man and a woman, and California's Proposition 8, which overturned that state's marriage equality, important movement continues on issues that impact the LGBT community and are on Equality Illinois' agenda, including:





U.S. Senators Dick Durbin and Mark Kirk discuss issues with Illinois constituents at a recent forum on Capitol Hill.

THE WORKPLACE = The Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would prohibit non-religious companies from discriminating in hiring and on the job based on sexual orientation and gender identity, was introduced with Republican **U.S. Senator Mark Kirk** of Illinois as one of the five original co-sponsors of the Senate version. A House version was also introduced with **Reps. Tammy Duckworth, Luis Gutierrez, Bill Foster, Mike Quigley, Bobby Rush, Jan Schakowsky and Brad Schneider**, all Democrats, signing on as original cosponsors.

Illinois already has a similar law on the books, but **Randy Hannig**, Director of Public Policy for Equality Illinois, explains the importance of the bill: "People can't be fired in this country for being straight, but in many states across the country, hard-working men and women can lose their jobs simply because of who they are of whom they love, and that just isn't right. Some states will never enjoy similar provisions unless the federal

government acts to make ENDA a reality."

FAMILY LEAVE = The Family and Medical Leave Inclusion Act was introduced by Democratic **Sen. Dick Durbin**. It would allow employees to take unpaid leave to care for a same-sex spouse or partner, parent-in-law, adult child, sibling, grandchild or grandparent. "Regardless of the make-up of one's family, all employees should be given the same rights to care for a sick loved one in a time of need," Durbin said in a statement. "For 20 years, we have had a law that provides unpaid leave for families in crisis. As families change, so should the laws designed to help them."

IMMIGRATION REFORM = The so-called comprehensive immigration reform bill introduced last month in the Senate is missing a critical element: It does not include language from the Uniting American Families Act, which would allow gay and lesbian Americans to sponsor their partners for immigration, just as opposite-sex couples can. Equality Illinois calls on **Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy** and our own **Sen. Dick Durbin**, who also sits on the committee, to ensure that the bill is truly comprehensive and includes binational, same-sex couples before it leaves the committee. Equality Illinois believes that the bill that the committee sends the full Senate must be fully inclusive. **Rep. Luis Gutierrez** (D-Illinois) is working with **Rep. Paul Ryan** (R-Wisconsin) on a similar bill, and we are counting on Rep. Gutierrez to make sure the bill is fully inclusive.



FIRST FRIDAY = GET NETWORKING at our First Friday Networking Social.

Join Equality Illinois PAC on Friday, May 3 for the always popular and fun monthly social! Can't wait to see you there! You can also learn about the latest

happenings with the marriage bill as the House reconvenes this week to begin working through bills passed through the Senate including the freedom to marry bill.

This month we also have the pleasure of partnering up with Vital Bridges. Vital Bridges' mission is to help people throughout metropolitan Chicago impacted by HIV and AIDS to improve their health and build self-sufficiency by providing food, nutrition counseling, housing, care coordination and prevention services. Come to learn more about their critical and life-changing work!

A big crowd always joins us for First Friday, so please come by for the fun, cocktails, and prize drawings. For a \$10 donation to the Equality Illinois PAC, you receive two drink tickets and a ticket for a door prize drawing. Friday, May 3, 6–8pm @ Sidetrack, 3349 North Halsted Street in Chicago (21+ with ID). Find out more on [Facebook](#).

Contributions support Equality Illinois PAC. Paid for by Equality Illinois PAC. Contributions are not tax deductible. A copy of our report filed with the State Board of Elections is (or will be) available on the Board's official website, elections.il.gov, or for purchase from the State Board of Elections, Springfield, Illinois. State law requires that we report the occupation and name of the employer of any individual who contributes over \$500.00.

SAFE SPACE DAY = Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago's Center for Gender Sexuality and HIV Prevention along with other Chicago organizations that serve Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) youth are hosting a "Safe Space Day" of workshops and events that focus on anti-bullying.

This FREE event for anyone under 24, hosted by the Center on Halsted, will consist of workshops, a resource fair, sports clinics, free food, guest speakers, performances and more. Workshops will be facilitated by DePaul University, Lambda Legal, About Face Theater, Chicago House, Lauren Lubin, director of 'We Exist: A Film About A Third Gender', Center on Halsted Youth Program and many, many more. There is an athletics portion that will be hosted by the Chicago Sky WNBA team and openly-gay and former NFL player **Wade Davis** and others. Lunch and snacks are provided by Wow Bao.

Attendance to this day is FREE and anyone under 24 is welcome to attend on Sunday, May 5, 11 am to 5 pm, at The Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted Ave., Chicago

SPEAKING OF EQUALITY = Please come out to hear from our experts, share your experiences and ask some questions. Our staff members have been at the front lines of the marriage battle in Springfield and building the statewide coalition supporting the bill. We also work on many other issues facing the LGBT community.

May 2: An Equality Illinois speaker explains what lies ahead in implementing the marriage bill at a joint meeting of Belleville PFLAG and Metro East Pride. Listen and ask questions at 6:30 pm at the St. Paul United Church of Christ, 115 W. B St., Belleville.

May 5: Field Director **Caroline Staerk** will speak at 2-4 pm at the Hinsdale PFLAG meeting at the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale, 11 West Maple, Hinsdale

May 13: Field Director **Caroline Staerk** will speak at 5:30-7:30 pm at the Bloomington-Normal PFLAG meeting at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 1613 E. Emerson, Bloomington

WOMEN'S WEDNESDAY = Join us for our monthly social gathering for the ladies! Our next event is on Wednesday, May 8th, from 7pm-9pm, at Mary's Attic in Andersonville (5400 N Clark St, above Hamburger Mary's) with live entertainment and plenty of fun.

The evening will include: 2 Free Drinks, A Free Door Prize Ticket, Entertainment, "Mary"-oke and more, all for just \$10 admission. Don't miss it! Bring a friend, grab a drink, and banish the mid-week blues, all while supporting our work on marriage equality and LGBT rights in Illinois. Find out more on [Facebook](#).



HELPING WITH PRIDE = We are always prideful. But this is the season to strut our stuff.

There are events around the state, and Equality Illinois needs your help to do everything from staffing a booth to decorating a parade float.

The dates for events through June are listed below. Right now we are looking for assistance for our pride booths in **Springfield, Rockford or the Quad Cities.**

If you can help, please get in touch with Equality Illinois Field Director Caroline Staerk at cstaerk@eqil.org. It's lots of fun! **Please volunteer.**

UPCOMING PRIDE EVENTS = Please stop by our booths in Springfield, Rockford and the Quad Cities! Get updates on LGBT issues, learn more about Equality Illinois and find out how you can help the cause.

May 18: Springfield Pride is located in Downtown Springfield on Capital Avenue between 4th & 6th Streets and runs from Noon to 9pm. For more info on the festival go to: <http://www.springfieldpride.org>.

June 1-2: Rockford Pride will be held at Vasa Park (6616 42nd Street, Rockford) and runs from 11am to 11pm on Saturday and Sunday. For more info on the festival go to: <http://www.Rockfordpridefest.com>.

June 1-2: Quad Cities Pride is located in Downtown Davenport, Iowa between 2nd and Warren

Streets and runs from Noon to Midnight on Saturday and Noon to 8pm on Sunday. For more info on the festival go to: <http://www.qcpride.org/>.

June 30: The **Chicago Pride Parade** is the highlight of the season, starting at Noon at Montrose and Broadway and winding south to Diversey and Sheridan.



EVEREST FOR EQUALITY = Equality Illinois is excited to be a beneficiary alongside the Human Rights Campaign in Joe Rudy's climb of Mount Everest in early 2014. He is embarking on this climb to raise awareness and funds for marriage equality and LGBT rights. This challenging climb takes more than two months to reach the summit at 29,035 feet. We'll introduce you to Joe and offer more details about the climb in the months ahead. If you are interested in learning more about his climb or making a tax-deductible donation to support his efforts, please visit www.everest4equality.org.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS = Calendar of Upcoming Events

MAY 2013

- 2 MAY – Metro East Marriage Meeting – Belleville PFLAG and Metro East Pride forum featuring EQIL speaker – 6:30 pm @ St. Paul United Church of Christ (115 W. B St., Belleville)
- 3 MAY – First Friday – 6 pm @ Sidetrack (3349 North Halsted St., Chicago)
- 5 MAY – Safe Space Day – 11 am to 5 pm @ at The Center on Halsted (3656 N. Halsted Ave., Chicag
- 5 MAY – Hinsdale PFLAG meeting – 2-4 pm the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale (11 West Maple, Hinsdale)
- 8 MAY – Women's Wednesday – 7 pm @ Mary's Attic (5400 N. Clark St., Chicago)
- 13 MAY – Bloomington-Normal PFLAG with Field Director **Caroline Staerk** – 5:30-7:30 pm @ Unitarian Universalist Church (1613 E. Emerson, Bloomington)
- 18 MAY – Springfield Pride – Noon-9 pm @ Downtown Springfield (Capitol Avenue between 4th & 6th Streets)

JUNE 2013

- 1-2 JUNE – Rockford Pride – 11 am @ Vasa Park (6616 42nd Street, Rockford)
- 1-2 JUNE – Quad Cities Pride – Noon @ Downtown Davenport, Iowa (between 2nd and Warren Streets)
- 5 JUNE – Spring Wine Tasting Party – @ Sidetrack (3349 N. Halsted St., Chicago)
- 7 JUNE – First Friday – 6 pm @ Sidetrack (3349 North Halsted St., Chicago)
- 12 JUNE – Women's Wednesday – 7 pm @ Mary's Attic (5400 N. Clark St., Chicago)
- 30 JUNE – Chicago Pride Parade – 12 pm (Broadway and Montrose to Diversey and Sheridan)



COMING OUT = Equality Illinois Board Member Christina Kahrl (on left) is the perfect choice to analyze the coming out announcement of NBA player Jason Collins.

Crain's Chicago Business called Equality Illinois for a suggestion of someone to write a column about the news, and we turned to Kahrl. [Read her op-ed piece in today's Crain's: "Who Else Will Join Jason Collins' Coming Out Party?"](#)

Not only is she very active in LGBT causes, Kahrl is a veteran sports reporter, currently writing and editing for ESPN.com. In addition to her duties with Equality Illinois, Kahrl is also on the board of You Can Play, an organization dedicated to ensuring equality, respect and safety for all athletes regardless of their sexual orientation.

Equality Illinois and Kahrl are also working with The Last Closet on getting a resolution passed in the Chicago City Council that would urge the commissioners of all five major sports leagues to PUBLICLY support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender athletes. A public hearing on the resolution will take place May 7 at City Hall.

MAKING PLANS = Equality Illinois convened leaders of faith-based and community organizations last week in Bloomington/Normal to begin the visioning work for our movement's priorities, renewing and expanding partnerships, and strengthening the involvement of our Faith Outreach network. Participants from various parts of the state shared insights on issues moving forward. We plan to host a similar convening in the Chicagoland area in May so please stay tuned and participate!

STOP WINING; WE WON! = After winning a month-long contest that included LGBT organizations from across the nation, Equality Illinois, the state's oldest and largest LGBT advocacy organization, was named the recipient last week of a \$2,750 contribution from [Égalité](#), the first national wine created in support of equality for gay Americans. [Read the story.](#)



“We deeply appreciate that our friends on Facebook recognize the work Equality Illinois does every day on issues of importance to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Illinoisans, and that they voted for us in the Égalité poll,” said **Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois**. “We thank Égalité for its generous contribution to Equality Illinois and its continuing support for the LGBT community.”

PENNY WISE, EQUALITY STRONG = Our new **Penny Wise, Equality Strong** program, a series of free workshops to help LGBTs get their personal finances in order, launched in April with an event at Mayne Stage in Rogers Park. The program is a part of a new initiative of the City of Chicago's Treasurer's Office to eradicate poverty among various minority groups in different parts of the city. Our sessions are moderated by personal banking experts from Chase. Stay tuned for announcements of the next session in a different part of the city in July.



Relive the sounds and sights of the 2013 Justice for All Gala: [Gay Chicago TV](#); Photo albums [Gallery 1](#) [Gallery 2](#) [Gallery 3](#) [Gallery 4](#)

SAVE THE DATE = Justice for All Gala-2014 is already set for Saturday, February 8, 2014 at the Hilton Chicago. Plan to attend the Midwest's biggest formal LGBT event of the year. It's always a fun-packed party.

If you would like an Equality Illinois speaker at your event at work, a local civic organization, on campus, a union meeting, your religious group, a home EQIL fundraiser, or wherever, please contact us at info@eqil.org or call [773-477-7173](tel:773-477-7173).

Stay informed of LGBT-equality matters by visiting us at www.eqil.org. Also, please follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

We can only succeed in our mission if you stand with us, so please [make a financial contribution](#) today.