



## ***EQIL INSIDER SCOOP AUGUST 2013***

*In the August EQIL Insider Scoop:*

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**MARRIAGE REPORT** = Equality Illinois was a major player in the strong movements on both the legislative and legal fronts in July seeking to achieve the freedom to marry in Illinois. Here are the developments:

**COALITION BUILDING** = The new and improved Illinois Unites for Marriage coalition took shape, with its founders Equality Illinois, Lambda Legal and ACLU of Illinois being joined by major national and Illinois organizations to increase the strength, depth and diversity of the statewide effort. The [renewed \\$2 million strategy](#) included the naming of a campaign manager, John Kohlhepp, a veteran union organizer, and a field director and faith organizer.

"This will greatly strengthen our hand as we aim for action on Senate Bill 10 in the fall veto session of the General Assembly," said Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov. "After the disappointments of House inaction on the bill before representatives adjourned on May 31, we are seeing renewed energy and commitment from the LGBT community and allies throughout the state."



That enthusiasm can already be seen in the turnout for the coalition's town forums. More on that below. Stay tuned for email alerts and [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) updates for coalition events and when we need to start rallying

our supporters for outreach to the House.

**SEEKING ORDER FROM THE COURT** = As Lambda Legal and ACLU of Illinois asked the Cook County Circuit Court for a swift ruling in their case seeking to overturn the state's ban on gay and lesbian marriages, Equality Illinois helped more than 200 religious leaders and faith communities present a [friend of the court brief](#) in support of the lawsuit, arguing that religious doctrine should not be written into state law.

Authored by the law firm of Miller Shakman & Beem of Chicago on behalf of faith leaders across Illinois, the brief states, "The views of some religions should not be imposed on others, enshrined in legal doctrine, or used to deny same-sex couples equal legal standing in the eyes of Illinois law. Tradition does not justify abrogating individuals' constitutional rights."

**SHARING WITH THE COMMUNITY** = A big part of the renewed strategy is connecting the Illinois Unites coalition with the Illinois LGBT community and allies from the Wisconsin border to southern Illinois. Already there have been great turnouts and a lot of enthusiasm at events in Springfield, Waukegan, Belleville and the Center on Halsted in Chicago. [Learn more and stay up-to-date for a meeting in your area.](#) Two community meetings coming up next week are:

- South Chicago Community Meeting – 6 pm on Monday, Aug. 5 in the West Englewood Library, 1745 W. 63rd St., Chicago
- Quad Cities Community Meeting – 6:30 pm on Thursday, Aug. 8 in St. John's Lutheran Church, 4501 7th Ave., Rock Island



*The Center on Halsted was the site for a community meeting in Chicago.*



*Marriage equality supporters showed up at the Belleville meeting to share information in the Metro East area.*

“Our goal for these meetings is to create a direct line of communication between the community and the coalition,” stated Bernard Cherkasov, Equality Illinois CEO. “We’re using the time between now and the fall veto session to update LGBT Illinoisans on what’s happening in the legislature, listen to the community’s needs, and provide opportunities on how the community can become further engaged in winning the freedom to marry in Illinois.”



**FROM RUSSIA WITHOUT LOVE** = Unlike James Bond, the LGBT community is not getting any Russian love, and Equality Illinois is part of a movement fighting back. Earlier this week [we called on Chicago](#) to end its sister city relationship with Moscow as part of a concerted effort to protest Russia's criminalization of gay rights activism. Also, LGBT Illinoisans and allies should suspend their business relationships with Russia, and recreational or cultural travel to Russia should be canceled.

There cannot be business as usual in Illinois' relations with Russia until that country's oppressive laws are reversed and gays are no longer targeted for oppression. "Among countries with homophobic laws, Russia is unique in that it is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and wants to be a player on the European and world stages, yet it fails to provide basic human rights for millions of its citizens and visitors. More than being persecuted and harassed, people in Russia are also being violently attacked for their advocacy. This cannot go unanswered," said CEO Bernard Cherkasov.

**A MOVING EXPERIENCE** = We are reaching you from Equality Illinois' new headquarters, a sweet office suite in the historic Stevens Building in Downtown Chicago. Most importantly, here's how to reach us:

<p><b>Equality Illinois</b>  <b>17 N. State St.</b>  <b>Suite 1020</b>  <b>Chicago, IL 60602</b>  <b>773-477-7173 (main number)</b>  <b>INFO@EQIL.ORG (general email)</b></p>	
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Equality Illinois moved to Chicago's Loop in order to be closer to all the city's diverse LGBT communities, to connect better with the policy makers, government agencies and allied organizations with whom we work and to make it easier to travel throughout the state.

"Equality Illinois was born and nurtured for more than two decades in the gay and lesbian neighborhoods on Chicago's North Side, which helped us grow to become the state's oldest and largest advocacy organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Illinoisans, and that

heritage will always be an important part of our history and in our hearts," said EQIL CEO Bernard Cherkasov.



**SWEET CAROLINE** = Please join us in saying good bye and best of luck to our **Field Director Caroline Staerk**, who is moving on after devoting more than five years to fighting for LGBT rights at Equality Illinois. Community advocates will be stopping by

Sidetrack (3349 N. Halsted Street in Chicago - 21+ with ID) beginning at 5 pm on Friday, Aug. 2, to share their appreciation of Caroline, who tirelessly traveled Illinois to build the networks of support for our issues. And stay on at Sidetrack for First Friday!



**FIRST FRIDAY** = Join Equality Illinois PAC on Friday, August 2 for the always popular and fun monthly social!

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, August 2, 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](http://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.*

**MARKET DAYS** = Join Equality Illinois and dot429 at [429Inspired | Chicago](#) for a fabulous kick off to Market Days on Thursday, August 8 at Crimson Lounge from 6-9 pm. [dot429](#), the world's largest LGBT professional network, is partnering with Equality Illinois for an evening of cocktails and community networking. With proceeds benefiting the work of Equality Illinois, head into the Market Days weekend with new additions to your professional network. [Purchase tickets online](#).



**Stop by the Equality Illinois booth at the 2013 Northalsted Market Days in Chicago on Saturday-Sunday, Aug. 10-11, to learn the latest about the fight for the freedom to marry, sign up to volunteer and check in on all the other LGBT issues.**





**Saturday, August 24, 2013**

**4:30 PM Pre-Party; 6:10 PM Game**

Join Equality Illinois at the **Chicago White Sox'** first official LGBT Pride Night! Mix and mingle with other LGBT sports fans while cheering on the Sox or at our Pregame Mixer at Bacardi at the Park. Enjoy drinks and lite bites, make a new sporty friend, and have your chance to win great Sox giveaways. A drawing among ticket purchasers will select 10 people to enjoy a complimentary ride to the game by Uber. Act now to purchase tickets online: [eqil.org/sox.html](http://eqil.org/sox.html)

**CARBONDALE RALLY** = A Love=Love rally in Carbondale at 3 pm on Thursday, Aug. 15 will show House members that there is widespread support in southern Illinois for the freedom to marry. Come join the fun, sign a postcard to be delivered to your state representative and find out what you can do when the legislature returns to Springfield in the fall. **Love=Love Rally, 3-6 pm on Wed., Aug. 15, at The Pavillion, US 51 and East Main Street, Carbondale.**



**ILLINOIS STATE FAIR** = Join Equality Illinois and Lambda Legal for our second year at the Illinois State Fair Aug. 8-18. We had a great time last year and reached thousands of Illinoisans who may not come to events such as a Pride fest. Please stop by our booth, which will again be near the Heartland Area by the west side of the Skyglider, near Gate 2 at Peoria Rd. and Sangamon Ave.

## **WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS = Calendar of Upcoming Events**

### **AUGUST 2013**

2 AUGUST – First Friday – 6 pm @ Sidetrack (3349 North Halsted St., Chicago)

8 AUGUST – Market Days Kick Off - Dot49 cocktail party benefitting EQIL – 6 pm @ Crimson Lounge, (333 N. Dearborn, Chicago)

8-18 AUGUST – Illinois State Fair @ The Equality Illinois/Lambda Legal booth (Springfield)

10-11 AUGUST – Northalsted Market Days @ Halsted Street (between Addison and Belmont, Chicago)

15 AUGUST – Carbondale Rally – 3 pm @ The Pavillion (US 51 and East Main Street, Carbondale)

24 AUGUST – Out at the Sox – 4:30 - 9 pm @ U.S. Cellular Field (333 W. 35th, Chicago)

### **SEPTEMBER 2013**

6 SEPTEMBER – First Friday – 6 pm @ Sidetrack (3349 North Halsted St., Chicago)

7 SEPTEMBER – Operation Do Ask, Do Tell – A forum for LGBT servicemembers and veterans – 8 am @ Jesse Brown VA Medical Center (820 S. Damen Ave., Chicago)

28 SEPTEMBER – Chicago Fire Pride Night – 7:30 pm @ Toyota Park (7000 S. Harlem Ave., Bridgeview)

**EQUALITY ILLINOIS MEETS WASHINGTON = Equality Illinois Education Project Chair Dalila Fridi and CEO Bernard Cherkasov** (pictured below on either side of **Sen. Dick Durbin**) led an EQIL delegation to Washington earlier this week for one of our periodic days of conferences in the

capital. Meetings with the state's congressional delegation included visits with Sen. Durbin and **Sen. Mark Kirk**, and the EQIL group also talked to officials in the Obama administration. The agenda included the implementation of the Supreme Court decision ending the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), the state of the Employee Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) and other LGBT issues.



**ENDA** = Equality Illinois last month praised the leadership of Sen. Mark Kirk of Illinois in helping to move the trans-inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) out of a U.S. Senate committee. Kirk was one of three Republicans on the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee to vote for the bill and the only Republican who is a co-sponsor.

Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, said, "Sen. Kirk is demonstrating by his leadership that discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual and now, transgender people in the workplace should no longer be acceptable in America. Because such discrimination is already illegal in Illinois, Sen. Kirk knows from experience that equality strengthens the work environment, allowing employers to hire the best person for the job and encouraging all workers to do their best without worrying about how they will be treated. Along with his support for the freedom to marry, Sen. Kirk is also asserting that equal treatment under the law is a conservative, Republican value, and his leadership on these issues should be followed by Republicans in Illinois and across the country."

**TRANSLIFE CENTER** = A new [TransLife Center](#) opened in July in Chicago's Edgewater neighborhood. Created by Chicago House and believed to be the first of its kind in the nation, the Trans Life Center is a transgender-specific support center that provides transitional housing, legal services, job connections, and a myriad of other essential services to Chicago's transgender community. It was created as a response to the extremely high rates of unemployment, homelessness, poverty, and violence that many transgender Americans face from their early teens onward.



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](mailto:info@eqil.org) or call 773-477-7173.

Stay informed of LGBT-equality matters by visiting us at [www.eqil.org](http://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.