



EQIL INSIDER SCOOP OCTOBER 2013

In the October EQIL Insider Scoop:

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MARRIAGE REPORT = Equality Illinois is working to build the momentum for a vote on the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act during the veto session that opens in three weeks.

After a long summer recess, the General Assembly returns to Springfield later this month with only a few days scheduled to consider major issues, including the state's pension crisis. While it meets for the very abbreviated calendar—Oct. 22-24 and Nov. 5-7, the House must consider and pass the marriage equality bill.

"There is no reason to let up on the pressure on the House," said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois. "Every day that goes by is a day when gay and lesbian couples and their families in Illinois are treated as second class citizens by our own state."

In asking Rep. Greg Harris, the chief House sponsor of the bill, to delay the vote until the fall, the lawmakers wanted more time to consult their constituents and consider the implications of the freedom to marry. During

the summer recess, lawmakers heard from clergy, businesses and major employers, labor unions, and Illinoisans from every walk of life – all joining forces in calling for marriage equality. And in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision invalidating parts of DOMA, it has become even more urgent for gay and lesbian couples in Illinois to gain the freedom to marry and the federal benefits available only to married couples.

While we await action in Springfield, there is movement elsewhere. In Chicago, Circuit Court Judge Sophia Hall ruled that the Illinois court case challenging the state ban on same-sex marriages should continue. Equality Illinois believes the ruling creates greater urgency for the Illinois House to act this fall on the freedom to marry.

"State Representatives in the land of Abraham Lincoln should not wait for the courts to act while tens of thousands of couples are waiting for their full rights," Cherkasov said.

To that end, Equality Illinois is working with our partners in the Illinois Unites for Marriage Coalition to share the urgency of holding a vote. One way we've done that is by telling the stories of couples who are being denied the 1,138 federal and 648 state benefits of marriage plus the simple decency of society's recognition.

Couples shouldn't have to wait and – sadly – for some it's too late:



Robb and Steve wanted to marry in Illinois, but their union was cut short in September as Steve lost his battle with melanoma. Marriage in Illinois can't wait – and now it's too late for Robb & Steve. It's time – right now – for Illinois lawmakers to act. [Watch this video about Robb and Steve.](#)



Brenda and Lee spend their days in Chicago, serving their church community and spending time with one another. Despite their decade of love and commitment, they are treated as legal strangers in Illinois. [Read Brenda and Lee's story.](#)



Ryan and Kevin exchanged pendants with interlocking rings as a token of their commitment to each other. They're planning to marry in 2014 – and Illinois has the chance to offer the freedom to marry before their upcoming nuptials! [Read Ryan and Kevin's story.](#)



GET INVOLVED = Over the last few weeks new tools have come on line to make it easier for you to have your voices heard in Springfield. If everyone pitches in, our collective demand for equal treatment under the law will be amplified by the tens of thousands:

[Join a phone bank to urge your neighbors to contact their House members.](#) There are phone banks this week and in the weeks ahead in Peoria, Rock Island, Belleville, Mt. Prospect, South Holland, Elgin, Alton, Granite City, Aurora, Clarendon Hills, DeKalb, and in Chicago on the South and North Sides and in the Loop. [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up for a phone bank near you.

Urge your lawmakers to support the
FREEDOM TO MARRY!

GET INSTANTLY CONNECTED BY PHONE

- Enter your basic information online.
- Your phone will ring.
- Urge your lawmaker to support the freedom to marry in Illinois!

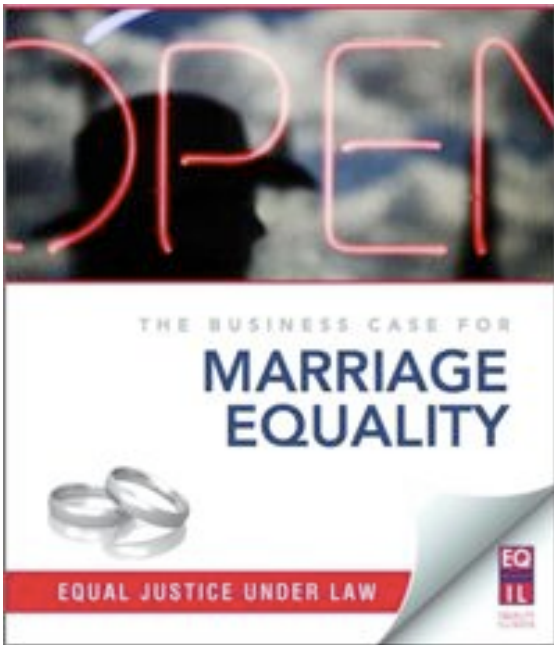
Call your [House member](#). You don't have to wait to be contacted by us or some allied organization to make a call. Just enter your information on [THIS LINK](#), and you'll be connected directly with your representative's office so you can urge them to vote "yes" on SB10.

Do an in-home version of a phone bank. This new online tool will help you engage your friends who you know support marriage for all Illinois families to take action with our campaign. It's easy to use -- and will make a really big impact. [GET STARTED HERE.](#)



www.MarchOnSpringfield.org

MARCH ON SPRINGFIELD = One other thing for your to-do list: Plan to attend the Oct. 22 March on Springfield for Marriage Equality. This is the day we have to make our voices heard by the thousands. Many logistical questions are answered on the [March on Springfield website](#). Equality Illinois is organizing scores of buses, and YOU can "captain" a bus for the easy day trip. Contact [Patty Dillon](#), our Director of Field Operations.



JUST THE FACTS = As Equality Illinois engages with Illinois House members regarding the freedom to marry in advance of the fall session, we are bringing with us not just the sense of justice that the issue demands but also the factual arguments. These Equality Illinois documents are also available for all of our supporters:

[Equality Illinois DOMA FAQs](#) – The Supreme Court decision applied to Illinois

[Equality Illinois Report on Civil Unions](#) – Separate Has Not Proven to be Equal

[Business Case for the Freedom to Marry](#) – Scores of Illinois-based corporations and business leaders, as well as national brands and executives, add their voices to our fight for marriage equality

[Religious Case for the Freedom to Marry](#) – More than 300 clergy representing multiple faiths and from congregations

throughout Illinois sign "An Open Letter from Illinois Clergy and Faith Leaders on Marriage."



**DINING OUT FOR
EQUALITY**

Dining Out for Equality is back on Thursday, October 10th! This is our fifth anniversary of the growing event that allows you to enjoy a great meal all while supporting a great cause.

Dine and/or drink at any of our participating restaurants and a significant portion of your bill will be donated to Equality Illinois to support our LGBT rights and marriage equality work across the state. Be sure to mention Dining Out for Equality when you make your reservation or sit at your table!

[Check Back Regularly for Restaurant Updates!](#)



Attend an Adoption Event
Children's Home & Aid and Spectrum LGBTQ of Rockford are hosting Pathways to Parenting 7 pm, Wed., Oct. 2 at 6625 N. 2nd St., Loves Park, IL [Click for more information](#)



FIRST FRIDAY = Join Equality Illinois PAC on Friday, October 4 for the always popular and fun monthly social. This month, preview the fall session of the House with our partners Lambda Legal and ACLU of Illinois and find out how you can help advance the freedom to marry in Illinois

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, October 4, 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.



Join us on Wednesday, October 23, 2013 or Thursday, October 24, 2013 for the two-night extravaganza that is Night of 100 Drag Queens. Now in its 21st year, come help us celebrate with this year's theme "100 Shades of Drag" with proceeds benefitting Equality Illinois. Be sure to purchase your tickets in advance as we have a lower rate for the VIP tickets, where doors open at 7:00 p.m. General admission kicks off at 8:00 p.m.

[Purchase tickets in advance for Wednesday, October 23 here!](#)

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS = Calendar of Upcoming Events

OCTOBER 2013

2 OCTOBER – Pathways to Parenting – Children's Home + Aid and Spectrum LGBTQ of Rockford – 6 pm @ Spectrum LGBTQ (6625 N. 2nd St., Loves Park, IL)

4 OCTOBER – First Friday – Marriage Action Preview – 6 pm @ Sidetrack (3349 N. Halsted St., Chicago)

10 OCTOBER – Dining Out for Equality – At your favorite restaurant

22 OCTOBER – March on Springfield

22 OCTOBER – Fall session of General Assembly

23-24 OCTOBER – Night of 100 Drag Queens – 7 pm VIP & 8 pm General Admission @ Sidetrack (3349 N. Halsted St., Chicago)

NOVEMBER 2013

1 NOVEMBER – First Friday – 6 pm @ Sidetrack (3349 N. Halsted St., Chicago)

6 NOVEMBER – Fall Wine Tasting – 6 pm @ Sidetrack (3349 N. Halsted St., Chicago)

9 NOVEMBER – Underwear Fashion Show – @ Hydrate (3458 N. Halsted St., Chicago)



NATIONAL HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY = Equality Illinois joined hundreds of other organizations nationally last Friday in [signing a joint letter](#) to re-engage with the broader LGBT community in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), gay and bisexual men accounted for 63% of all new HIV infections in 2010, and perhaps most concerning is the 22% increase among those between 13 and 24 years old. In fact, gay men are the only group in which HIV infections are increasing. In Illinois, there were more than 33,600 persons living with HIV or AIDS during 2010, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health.

"The epidemic is not over. We must never forget the lives lost in the state's LGBT community or become complacent because there is the potential for eradicating HIV/AIDS. The best solution is education and prevention, to which we all must recommit," said **Bernard Cherkasov**, CEO of Equality Illinois.



Reps. Hultgren and Lipinski

LEGALIZING DISCRIMINATION = Two Illinois congressmen last month signed on as cosponsors of what they call the "Marriage and Religious Freedom Act." The only freedom, however, is to allow federal employees, businesses, individuals, and other entities to actively discriminate against lawfully married gay and lesbian couples all across the country. In effect, H.R. 3133 would create the right to discriminate in the public arena by giving our opponents permission to refuse service to gay and lesbian couples with absolutely zero repercussions.

Congressmen Hultgren's and Lipinski's egregious attempts to legalize discrimination cannot be tolerated in this country, which was founded as a place of promise and opportunity for all. They need to hear from their constituents.

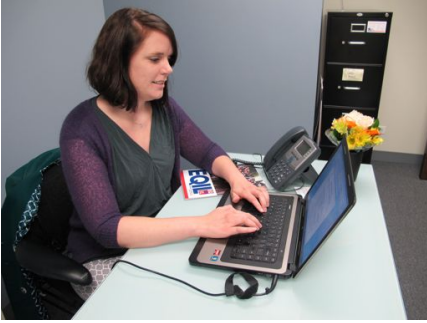
Call Rep. Hultgren's Washington, D.C. office at [\(202\) 225-2976](#) and his district office at [\(630\) 232-7104](#).

Call Rep. Lipinski's Washington, D.C. office at [\(202\) 225-5701](#) and his district office at [\(312\) 886-0481](#).

Equality Illinois is proud to welcome two new staff members who bring a wealth of experience and

STAFFING UP:

enthusiasm to our team. **Patricia Dillon** is our new Director of Field Operations, and **Chris Huaracha** is our new operations/administration coordinator:



Patty Dillon has worked as an organizer with Planned Parenthood in North Carolina and organized voters for President Obama's re-election campaign in Ohio. Most recently she served as state coordinator for Organizing for Action in Michigan. [Read more about Patty.](#)



Chris Huaracha left the corporate world to volunteer and work at non-profits. Most recently, he was a finance associate at an organization providing advisory services to the banking community in developing economies in Africa and Asia to give the poor access to capital. [Read more about Chris.](#)



ON FIRE = Hundreds of Equality Illinois members attending the Chicago Fire's second LGBT Pride Night Game were entertained by a pre-match concert and tailgate party and a match that ended in a 2-2 tie. Hope to see you next year at Toyota Park!

NICE TO MEET YOU = Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov was honored to attend a dinner at the



Israeli ambassador's residence in Washington, DC for the Rosh Hashanah holiday, where he had a chance to chat with **U.S. Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan** and other dignitaries.



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.

If you no longer wish to receive updates on LGBT-rights issues, click [here](#) to unsubscribe.