



**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

August 29, 2013

Equality Illinois Applauds Federal Rulings Implementing Marriage Equality *State's LGBT Advocacy Organization Urges Illinois House Remedy Economic Injustice*

CHICAGO – Equality Illinois today applauded two important rulings by federal agencies implementing the demise of the Defense of Marriage Act that directly affect same-sex married couples living in Illinois.

"While we are pleased with the Obama Administration's actions, at the same time the decisions highlight the inequality faced by couples who cannot marry in their home state," said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, the state's oldest, largest and most effective advocacy organization for lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual Illinoisans.

First, the Department of the Treasury and the IRS ruled that if couples were married in jurisdictions with marriage equality, then the tax policy considers the couples as married for all purposes and federal tax provisions regardless of where they live, even in Illinois.

In a separate ruling, the Department of Health and Human Services announced that beneficiaries in private Medicare plans will have access to equal coverage when it comes to care in nursing homes where their spouse lives. And this, too, will apply to all married same-sex couples, regardless of their own state's recognition of their marriage.

"These rulings hammer home the fact that non-marriages, including civil unions, will not be recognized, underscoring the urgency of our battle for marriage equality in Illinois," Cherkasov said.

Rulings such as these did not happen automatically, despite the Obama Administration's support for the broadest possible interpretation of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that same-sex married couples be treated equally under federal law. Equality Illinois, through numerous meetings in Washington and other communications with Administration officials and members of Congress, has been a vocal advocate that implementation of the court's decision apply to same-sex married couples living in states that don't recognize their marriages, such as Illinois.

"Illinois couples should not be forced to go to another jurisdiction in order to marry and return home to enjoy the federal protections and benefits that are rightfully theirs. These

rulings add more impetus to the fight for the freedom to marry, an argument we will carry to the Illinois House of Representatives," Cherkasov said.

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For media assistance, please contact:

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