

EQUALITY ILLINOIS OCTOBER 2010

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1) "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL" DOESN'T FALL – Repeal Vote Stalls

On September 21, the U.S. Senate failed to proceed with a vote on the National Defense Authorization Act, which includes authorization to repeal the discriminatory and dysfunctional "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. This is a frustrating and heartbreaking setback, and our fight to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" continues. Majority Leader Harry Reid can attempt to end debate and bring the bill to the floor for a vote again. What we do not know is when he will do this, so this means we must keep the pressure on the Senate.

Here's what you can do to help overturn this hurtful policy: Call the offices of Senator Durbin and Senator Burris (Capitol switchboard line is 202-224-3121), thank them for the crucial support, and tell them to demand urgent action. According to a recent CNN poll, 78% of Americans believe that DADT is a bad law and that lesbian and gay servicemembers must be allowed to serve openly in the military. So we cannot allow just one senator to filibuster this important bill.

2) WASHINGTON ON THE LINE – EQIL Hosts Community Forum

Earlier this week, Equality Illinois hosted a community forum on the state of LGBT equality issues on the federal level. The forum was in partnership with HRC and featured Congressman Mike Quigley (IL-5). Panelists provided updates on the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell, on the status of Employment Non-Discrimination Act, on strategies for including bi-national same-sex couples in comprehensive immigration reform, and on developments relating to the so-called Defense of Marriage Act.

EQIL CEO Bernard Cherkasov also briefed attendees on actions undertaken by the executive branch, such as the recently-issued clarification stating that the Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity. Equality Illinois reiterated its commitment to ensuring that Employment Non-Discrimination Act includes gender identity.

3) GET NETWORKING – First Friday with WAVI & Vote Naked Illinois on October 1

Join Equality Illinois PAC for the monthly First Friday Networking Social featuring We Are Voting Illinois (WAVI) and Vote Naked Illinois. WAVI is a coordinated nonpartisan effort of 30 LGBT organizations to get out the vote in the Chicagoland area. Vote Naked Illinois is Equality Illinois' campaign, in partnership with Roosevelt University and Rock the Vote, to educate voters on the new election law allowing everyone to vote by mail and to help voters get their absentee ballots.

For a \$10 donation to the Equality Illinois PAC, you receive two drink tickets and a ticket for a door prize drawing.

Equality Illinois First Friday Networking Social
Friday, October 1, 2010
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Sidetrack – Glass Bar
3349 North Halsted Street, Chicago
(21 and over, with I.D.)

Contributions support the Equality Illinois Political Action Committee. Contributions are not tax deductible. Paid for by Equality Illinois PAC. A copy of our report filed with the State Board of Elections and the Cook County Clerk is (or will be) available for purchase from the State Board of Elections, Springfield, IL, or the Cook County Clerk's Office, 69 W. Washington, Chicago, IL 60601. State law requires that we report the occupation and name of the employer of any individual who contributes over \$500.00

4) PRIDE TIME – Join EQIL on October 2 in Carbondale for Pride Picnic and Rainbow Café 10th Anniversary Celebration Dinner

The second annual Carbondale Community Pride Picnic will take place tomorrow, October 2, beginning at 10:00am. Please join Equality Illinois and our supporters to celebrate our diverse, vibrant, and wonderful community.

What: Carbondale Pride Picnic
When: Saturday, October 2, beginning at 10:00am.
Where: Church of the Good Shepherd
515 Orchard Drive in Carbondale (618-457-2232)

We hope you will be able to join us to help us celebrate the amazing diversity within our community! With so much hurt, pain, and recent suicides within the LGBT community, we are in desperate need of a time together to share, educate, and show our love and respect for all LGBT individuals and our allies! There will be live entertainment, door prizes, a silent auction, food, educational and support groups, and many more activities for the entire family!

Later in the day Equality Illinois CEO Bernard Cherkasov will be speaking at the Rainbow Café 10th Anniversary Dinner. The dinner will take place at Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship (105 N. Parish Lane in Carbondale), beginning at 6:00pm. Call 618-967-6663 for more information about the dinner. Please join us to celebrate our diversity. We look forward to seeing you in Carbondale! Please, come join us to celebrate our diversity. We look forward to seeing you in Carbondale!

5) EQUITY HOSPITALS – EQIL Open Letter on Hospital Visitation

Following up on Presidential Memorandum on hospital visitation, EQIL joined forces with dozens of other organizations to submit comments on proposed rule. The letter underscored the urgency of allowing individuals to visit their same-sex partners in hospitals. We hear of too many cases, where hospitals arbitrarily decide what constitutes a family, denying partners the ability to spend time with each other at a hospital in the same way as heterosexual couples can.

The proposed rule directs hospitals, in part, to "(e)nsure that all visitors designated by the patient (or representative, where appropriate) enjoy visitation privileges that are no more restrictive than those that immediate family members would enjoy." The letter urges that the Department of Health and Human Services directly address some of the most persistent problems. "Given the issues around who is considered "family," the problems around interstate recognition of same-sex marriages, civil unions, and domestic partnership, and to safeguard visitation rights for other groups that are vulnerable to discrimination we recommend adding marital status, family composition, and primary language to the list of protected categories, wherever [protected] categories appear in the new rules."

View full text of the letter, including other recommendations, on EQIL website.

6) VOTE AU NATUREL – EQIL Launches Innovative Voter Registration Push

Tuesday, October 5 is the last day to register to vote! To vote on November 2 you **must register by October 5**. If you would like additional information on registering to vote or want to help with our voter outreach efforts, please contact Caroline Staerk, Field Director, at cstaerk@eqil.org, call 773-477-7173, or stop by the Equality Illinois office (3318 N. Halsted St., Chicago). Also, be sure to **visit VoteNakedIllinois.org or pick up a copy of this week's *Windy City Times* for an application to vote absentee!**

The elections held on Tuesday, November 2, will be extremely important, and Equality Illinois is doing everything possible to make sure you're ready. In fact, we've made it easy:

1. Verify that you're registered to vote!

Confirm that your registration to vote is current by [clicking here](#).

2. Register to vote or Update your registration!

Print the State of Illinois [Voter Registration card](#) and then

Have Equality Illinois' Deputy Registrar come to your home or office to pick up the form.

Alternatively, you can drop off your form at our office (3318 N. Halsted St., Chicago) or mail to [your local election board](#).

3. Vote!

You can now vote absentee from the comfort of your home for any reason, thanks to changes in Illinois law. You can request your absentee ballot using our innovative and easy to use get-out-the-vote program, [Vote Naked Illinois](#).

Don't miss our [eye-catching ad](#), which has been viewed over **40,000 times** since we launched just over one week ago. The Vote Naked campaign has been covered by a majority of leading news outlets in Illinois, from **NBC to CBS to FOX. Chicago Public Radio, NPR** affiliate, featured our program on air, and word of our program spread even beyond the borders of Illinois, with coverage in **Huffington Post, Detroit Free Press**, and even Italy's leading newspaper **La Repubblica** and Canada's **Toronto Sun**. Our project is among the first in Illinois to capitalize on new provisions in the state election law that allow properly registered voters to vote by mail for any reason. We are extremely grateful to Roosevelt University and Rock the Vote for partnering with us on Vote Naked Illinois.

7) AFFIRMING DIVERSITY – Join EQIL in Rock Island on October 6

Please join Equality Illinois and Quad Citizens Affirming Diversity on Wednesday, October 6th at 7:00PM for a discussion on the status of LGBT rights, hosted by the Young Adult Group.

Speakers Rick Garcia (*Director of Public Policy*) and Caroline Staerk (*Field Director*) from Equality Illinois will discuss the progress being made, what legislation is currently being worked on, and what the future looks like for LGBT citizens of our State. Speakers will also briefly touch upon what is happening with LGBT rights legislation on a national level.

Where: Quad Citizens Affirming Diversity - 1608 2nd Ave, Rock Island, IL 61201

When: Wednesday, October 6th from 7:00 - 8:00PM

Quad Citizens Affirming Diversity: 309-786-2580 • <http://qcad-outforgood.org> • qcad.outforgood@gmail.com

If you plan to attend, please email Caroline at cstaerk@eqil.org.

8) STRONGER TOGETHER– EQIL Join Responsible Budget Coalition

Equality Illinois joined forces with dozens of other organizations urging a responsible solution to the looming fiscal crisis. The statement recognized that painful cuts to key programs have

already been made, impacting schools, medical and human services providers, small businesses, etc. "We call on every Illinois elected official and candidate to acknowledge that this fiscal crisis demands a balanced approach that includes significant new revenue." Other co-signers include AIDS Foundation of Chicago, TPAN, Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, AARP Illinois, and Protestants for the Common Good.

[View full text of the Coalition's Call to Action and the list of signatories on EQIL website.](#)

9) STORYTELLING 101 – EQIL Features “Stories from the Heartland” on www.eqil.org

Equality Illinois launched a new project this summer called **Stories from the Heartland**. The project highlights the fact that there is no better voice than our *own* to educate, celebrate, and highlight the similarities and diversity within the LGBTQ community.

Stories have the power to change the hearts and minds of legislators and voters from across the state of Illinois so to start, we asked couples to share their relationships with us on video. Check out the YouTube videos of couples from across the State [\[http://www.youtube.com/user/equalityillinois\]](http://www.youtube.com/user/equalityillinois).

Thanks to John and Mario, Tony and Tony, Scott and Joel, Casey and Jen, Suzanna and Danielle, Elizabeth and Caroline, and Pat and Kathleen for sharing their inspirational stories with us. And thanks to Devon, one of our great summer interns, for interviewing these fantastic members of our community and putting these videos together! **Stories from the Heartland** is a work in progress. Stay tuned for more updates and additional fascinating stories from community members like you. If you would like to participate, please let us know!

10) GET YOUR DRAG ON – Night of 100 Drag Queens is October 19 and 20

Please join us for the **18th annual Night of 100 Drag Queens**. This year's theme, **2010...A Space Oddity**, promises to be even more fun and wacky than you can imagine! This community favorite is a must-see revue.

What: Night of 100 Drag Queens – 2010...A Space Oddity
When: Tuesday & Wednesday, October 19 & 20, 2010
(VIP Reception & Show: 7:00pm / General Admission: 8:00pm)
Where: Sidetrack (3349 N. Halsted Street, Chicago)
Note: 21 and over (With ID)

Get your tickets now, as Night of 100 Drag Queens is sure to sell out!

https://equalityfederation.salsalabs.com/o/35010/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event_KEY=367

11) OUR HISTORY – October 26 Forum on LGBT History from Holocaust to Modern Times

Join the Holocaust Remembrance Committee, the young leadership of the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center, Equality Illinois and the Center on Halsted for a discussion on LGBT persecution over the years. We will explore the experiences of gay Holocaust survivors and the Nazis' attempts to find a "cure" for homosexuality, and discuss modern-day laws and actions that oppress LGBT people in the United States and around the world. The program will be facilitated by Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, and Dr. Danny Cohen, Lecturer at Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy.

When: Tuesday, October 26, 2010 @ 6:30PM
Where: Center on Halsted, 3656 N Halsted, Chicago
(Hoover-Leppen Theater, 3rd Floor)
Dessert Reception to Follow
Museum Member Price: \$5
Non-Museum Member Price: \$7
Reservations available online at <http://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/hrc>

Space is limited. Please respond by Thursday, October 21, 2010.

12) WICKED GOOD – Wicked Opening Night Benefit for Equality Illinois

Please join us for *Wicked* Opening Night Benefit for Equality Illinois on Wednesday, December 1st! This is one incredible evening to enjoy the return of the hit show to Chicago, while supporting the cause of marriage equality. **VIP ticket-holders are invited to a post-theater VIP party at the luxurious Crimson Lounge** (333 N. Dearborn St.), to which the *Wicked* cast is also invited, where you will be treated to decadent appetizers and splendid cocktails.

Tickets are limited. **Purchase yours now, as this event is sure to sell out!** You can also order your tickets by calling the Equality Illinois office at 773-477-7173. We look forward to seeing you for this fantastic, star-studded evening!

13) CELEBRATE – 2011 JUSTICE FOR ALL GALA – Mark Your Calendar!

Mark your calendars: Equality Illinois 20th Anniversary Justice for All Gala will be held on Saturday, February 12, 2011, at the Hilton Chicago.

Justice for All is the largest and most fun annual LGBT black-tie gala in the Midwest, with over 1,000 people attending each year. Join attending elected officials, business executives, community leaders, as well as your next-door neighbors!

This event directly benefits the Equality Illinois Education Project, a 501(c)(3) organization, and funds raised help support our mission to secure, protect and defend equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Illinois. The Gala generates substantial media attention in the gay as well as mainstream Illinois media.

Join us for one important night, one important cause.

Equality Illinois 2010 Justice for All Gala
Saturday, February 12, 2011
Hilton Chicago

Save the date now and plan on joining us for an extraordinary evening. Tables and individual tickets will be available for purchase starting October 13th at www.equalityillinois.org, or by calling our office – 773-477-7173.

Guests who purchase Platinum or Premier Tables or Individual Tickets are also invited to the Premier Reception, Friday, February 11th.

Call our office at 773-477-7173 (or email) with questions regarding the Gala:
Gala Sponsorship – Bernard Cherkasov (bcherkasov@eqil.org)
Table & Ticket Purchases – Joey McDonald (jmcdonald@eqil.org)
Program Book Advertising – Caroline Staerk (cstaerk@eqil.org)
Silent Auction Donations – Kevin Mork (kmork@eqil.org)

Gala Table/Ticket purchases are tax-deductible as provided by law.

14) UP NEXT – Calendar of Upcoming Events

October 2010

Oct. 1 – Equality Illinois, We Are Voting IL, and Vote Naked First Friday Networking Event

Oct. 2 – Carbondale Pride Picnic

Oct. 5 – Last Day to Register to Vote

Oct. 11–28 – Absentee ballots sent out and early voting starts

Oct. 13 – Gala Table Captains Reception

Oct. 19 & 20 – Night of 100 Drag Queens

Oct. 26 – Community Forum with Illinois Holocaust Museum and Equality Illinois
Oct. 28 – Last day absentee request forms can be mailed in

November 2010

Nov. 3 – Fall Wine Tasting Event at Sidetrack
Nov. 5 – Equality Illinois First Friday Networking Event
Nov. 6 – Transgender Community Event @ The Glenwood
Nov. 11 – Veteran's Day
Nov. 25 – Thanksgiving Day

December 2010

Dec. 1 – Wicked Opening Night Benefit for Equality Illinois (also World AIDS Day)
Dec. 3 – Equality Illinois First Friday Networking Event
Dec. 10 – Human Rights Day
Dec. 31 – New Year's Eve & New Year's Eve Party @ Sidetrack

January 2011

Jan. 7 – Equality Illinois First Friday Networking Event

February 2011

Feb. 1 – National Freedom Day
Feb. 4 – Equality Illinois First Friday Networking Event
Feb. 11 – 2011 Justice for All Premier Reception
Feb. 12 – 2011 Justice for All Gala
Feb. 14 – Valentine's Day
Feb. 21 – President's Day

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