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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### STATEWIDE GAY RIGHTS GROUP DENOUNCES EFFORTS AT ANTI-GAY CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

**CHICAGO** - Equality Illinois, the State's largest organization advocating for full equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender ("LGBT") people, denounced efforts by anti-LGBT organizations to amend the Illinois Constitution prohibiting recognition of marriages or civil unions between same-sex couples.

Earlier today, opponents of LGBT equality, led by the so-called Illinois Family Institute and Americans for Truth About Homosexuality, have announced their intentions to collect 300,000 signatures of registered voters to put a question on the 2012 ballot in support of an anti-marriage constitutional amendment. Their effort goes even further and calls for a prohibition of recognition of any "similar union".

"Tens of thousands of same-sex couples and thousands of children being raised by same-sex parents are relying on protections that civil unions will provide for their families. Proponents of this constitutional amendment are willing to harm these families and children for the sake of their own political agenda." - said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois.

Specifically, the ballot question calls for a Constitutional Amendment stating: "To secure and preserve the benefits of marriage for our society and for future generations of children, the union of one man and one woman in marriage shall be the only agreement recognized as a marriage or similar union for any purpose."

Illinois already has a statute prohibiting recognition of marriages between couples of the same sex. "At the time of financial crisis for the State, when the State is cutting millions of dollars from crucial social services, the amendment's proponents are forcing the State to spend millions of dollars on a ballot question to prohibit something that is already prohibited. This is just unacceptable," - continued Cherkasov.

In an action alert to its membership sent out immediately after the ballot effort was announced, Equality Illinois said that in the coming days the group will be investigating the legality of this initiative, convening a broad coalition of organizations committed to LGBT equality and determining the strategy for definitively defeating this effort.

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**Equality Illinois was founded in 1991 to secure, protect and defend full equality for lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender people. It is the State's largest LGBT advocacy organization.**