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EQUALITY ILLINOIS APPOINTS DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY

Speaker Madigan's Senior Staffer Joins State's Largest LGBT Equality Organization; Immediately Welcomed by Political Leaders

CHICAGO - Equality Illinois, the State's largest organization advocating for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equality, announced the appointment of Randy Hannig as its Director of Public Policy. A native of Springfield coming from Speaker Michael Madigan's senior staff and having staffed crucial legislative races across the State, Hannig brings with him both the intimate knowledge of the State political process and his relationships with key stakeholders.

"Randy honed his skills working on the toughest legislative issues and on the toughest political races. He has the skills, passion, determination, and professionalism that LGBT equality movement needs to take on the many challenges that lie ahead," said Bernard Cherkasov, Equality Illinois CEO.

Hannig's hiring signals a strengthening of the organization's commitment to the political process in Springfield as it prepares to protect the newly-implemented civil union law, pursue greater marriage equality, and capitalize on the opportunities coming with remapped legislative districts. He joins Equality Illinois' existing bipartisan advocacy team in Springfield.

"Randy brings the skills that our movement needs in order to succeed legislatively and to win at the ballot box," said Jeremy Gottschalk, Chair of Equality Illinois' Board of Directors. "The entire Board is excited about Randy joining the Equality Illinois family."

Hannig's nearly seven years of experience working closely with major players in state government as a senior member of the Illinois House Democratic staff will allow him to advocate effectively for LGBT issues in Springfield and beyond. Furthermore, his significant knowledge of state and federal politics will help to identify and assist those candidates running for office who support full LGBT equality.

"I am nothing short of excited to have been chosen as Director of Public Policy for such an esteemed organization," Hannig said. "I look forward to working with elected officials, local activists, and community leaders to make Illinois a better place for LGBT citizens to live and work."

Political leadership across the State immediately welcomed Hannig's appointment. "Randy has worked extensively in many parts of our state and has strong relationships across Illinois," said State Representative Greg Harris (Chicago), chief sponsor of the Civil Union law. "He brings not only organizational experience, but also diverse networks to the fight for equality."

"Randy is known for the strength of his advocacy skills and for his ability to work across the aisle. I look forward to working with him as we pursue full equality for LGBT people in Illinois," said State Representative Sara Feigenholtz (Chicago).

"We still have a lot of work ahead as we move toward full equality for LGBT people, and I look forward to working with Randy Hannig to get that job done," said State Representative Deb Mell (Chicago).

"Randy is a great leader who will be able to work effectively with policy makers to help accomplish the vision of Equality Illinois to provide full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals in Illinois," said Representative Toni Berrios (Chicago). "Having worked with Randy in the past, I know he will take this position very seriously and work to improve the quality of life for thousands of Illinoisans."

"I have worked closely with Randy on a number of projects over the years, and I am more than confident that he will do a stellar job representing the interests of the LGBT community across Illinois. I look forward to having Randy in my district in the near future to talk with local LGBT constituents about issues that matter to them," said State Representative Naomi Jakobsson (Urbana).

"I believe Randy Hannig's experience with the legislature and his extensive network in southern Illinois will be a great asset. I am looking forward to working closely with him," said State Representative Kelly Cassidy (Chicago).

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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.