

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EQUALITY ILLINOIS NEGOTIATIONS LEAD TO JOINT TAX FILING FOR CIVIL UNION COUPLES

CHICAGO – Equality Illinois, the state's oldest and largest organization advocating for LGBT equality, after months of discussion with the Illinois Department of Revenue, announces today that the State of Illinois will allow same-sex couples in a civil union to jointly file their 2011 state tax returns just as married spouses are currently allowed to do so.

"Since the beginning of June when same-sex couples first started entering into civil unions, no one could speak with certainty about how this new status would affect state tax policy," Randy Hannig, Director of Public Policy for Equality Illinois, said. "We immediately reached out to the Illinois Department of Revenue and started the process of figuring out a solid solution to this problem. Illinois law specifies that couples in a civil union are afforded the same rights and benefits as married spouses, so why should same-sex couples' state tax status be any different?"

Under the new guidelines issued by the Department of Revenue, same-sex couples in a civil union may elect to file state taxes as "married, filed jointly" or "married, filed separately" – the same options opposite-sex married couples may choose. If applicable, couples would check a box for "same-sex civil union return." In order to determine the adjusted gross income to include on state filings, couples will have to complete a pro forma federal IRS return.

"In order to ensure that couples in a civil union were afforded the same rights as other spouses, we needed the leadership of Gov. Quinn and Revenue Director Brian Hamer, and we thank them for standing up for equality," Bernard Cherkasov, Equality Illinois CEO, said. "We are grateful to them and their respective staffs for their commitment to equal treatment for same-sex couples."

With this new development, Illinois becomes the tenth state, along with Washington, D.C., to allow same-sex couples to file joint state tax returns.

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



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