



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information, please contact:

Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, at 312-520-4919 or

Randy Hannig, Director of Public Policy of Equality Illinois, at 773-477-7173

**EQUALITY ILLINOIS APPLAUDS SPRINGFIELD COMMUNITY
FOR ENCOURAGING PUBLIC EMPLOYEE SPOUSAL BENEFITS**

CHICAGO – Equality Illinois, the state's oldest and largest organization advocating for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) equality, issued the following statement in response to Springfield's Joint Labor and Management Health Care Committee's unanimous decision to reverse its earlier ruling and allow spousal health insurance benefits for city employees in a civil union:

"We commend the LGBT community and our allies in Springfield for speaking out in favor of equal treatment for each and every couple," Randy Hannig, Jr., Director of Public Policy for Equality Illinois, said. "In the end, nearly 150 Springfield residents signed our petition urging the mayor and the Joint Labor and Management Health Care Committee to do the right thing and not discriminate against couples in a civil union. Because of the community's support, along with the leadership of Mayor Houston and Alderman Cory Jobe, the committee made the right decision in the end to reaffirm Illinois' civil union law that explicitly states that all benefits available to couples in a marriage must be available to couples in a civil union."

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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Mailing Address
3318 N. Halsted Street
Chicago, IL 60657

Phone
773-477-7173
Fax
773-477-6912
E-mail
info@eqil.org
Web
www.eqil.org