



Gay & Straight: Activating Change Together

We, the undersigned – people of faith from a variety of faith communities across our state -- **strongly support the Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Union Act**. We dedicate our lives to fostering faith and values, and we work daily to promote love, justice, and fairness for all. Standing on these beliefs, we think that it is morally just to grant the rights and responsibilities to couples that cannot have a civil marriage, not only to same sex couples, but also to seniors who fear losing financial resources.

We agree that gay and lesbian couples and senior couples should be able to:

- ✓ participate in medical decision making
- ✓ control the disposition of a deceased partner's remains
- ✓ visit a loved one in the hospital
- ✓ share a nursing home room
- ✓ have access to pension benefits

There can be no justification for discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Some have used the name of religion to justify slavery, to deny women the right to vote and deny marriage to interracial couples – people of goodwill find that unconscionable today. We accept our brothers and sisters and recognize that their relationships and families need civil recognition and protections.

There are differences among our many religious traditions. Some recognize and bless same-sex unions and some do not. The Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Union Act reaffirms the Constitutional guarantee that no religious denomination would be compelled or forced to solemnize any relationship that is outside its faith tradition. It gives legal recognition and protections to loving, committed couples. We agree that all Illinois couples should be legally protected and urge you as a state legislator to support this bill to achieve equality.

Scripture and tradition carry the message of love, justice and inclusion of all. The very basis of a union is to protect the family, strengthen our communities and emphasize compassion and love. No couple should be excluded from civil/legal protections.

We want to promote the common good -- what is best for individuals, couples, families, children, and society. As people of faith and citizens of Illinois, we ask you to stand for the freedom of all our citizens and support the civil union bill. **It's not only a matter of equality - it's a matter of conscience and justice.**

Sincerely,

*(see below)*

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a joint program between Equality Illinois (EQIL) and Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)

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Rev. Dr. Tony Thieman-Somora, David Bishop (Vice Moderator), Chris Bryak, Jim Buckles, Jarnell Carter, Lawrence Coopriider, Stanley Dial, Amanda Kemper, Sharon Mathi, Mary Metcalf, Larry Park, Anthony Somora Jr., Mary Wilcoxson, and Sara Wilcoxson (Members) of:  
Heartland MCC  
Springfield, IL 62702

Rev. Martin Woulfe of:  
Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
Springfield, IL 62711

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Rev. William Nesbit Jr. of:  
St. Charles Episcopal Church  
St. Charles, IL 60174

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Rev. Bret Myers of:  
The Federated Church of Sycamore – UCC & UU  
Sycamore, IL 60178

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Rev. Eileen Shanley-Roberts and Ross Shanley-Roberts (Youth Group Leader) of:  
Christ Episcopal Church  
Waukegan, IL 60085

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Rev. Denise Griebler of:  
St. Michael's UCC  
West Chicago, IL 60185

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Rev. Dr. Bradley Pace of:  
Trinity Episcopal Church in Wheaton  
Wheaton, IL 60187

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Rabbi Samuel Gordon and Cantor Ross Wolman of:  
Congregation Sukkat Shalom – Reform  
Wilmette, IL 60091

Rev. Tripp Hudgins of:  
Community Church of Wilmette – American Baptist  
Wilmette, IL 60091

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Rev. Daniel Larsen of:  
Congregational Unitarian Church  
Woodstock, IL 60098

**OTHER SUPPORTERS:** *(Alphabetical by city, surname)*

Sandra Gumm (Member) of:  
St. Paul United Church of Christ  
Arlington Heights, IL 60005

Nancy Polancich of:  
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

Arlington Heights, IL

Janice Turner (Member) of:  
Our Lady of the Wayside – Catholic  
Arlington Heights, IL 60005

Linda Venturi of:  
Arlington Heights, IL 60005

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Dr. Ronda DeVold of:  
Reconciling Journey Ministries – UMC  
Aurora, IL 60504

Kristie Svaleson of:  
Aurora, IL 60502

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Jay Simon (Unitarian) of:  
Barrington, IL 60010

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Stephanie Wollert (Member) of:  
First Congregational UCC  
Carpentersville, IL

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Toby Powers and Lanita Combs (Members) of:  
Berdan Baptist Church  
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Champaign, IL 61820

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Nora Brathol of:  
Chicago, IL 60640

Molly Campbell (Unitarian) of:  
Chicago, IL 60605

Michael Carr of:  
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel – Catholic  
Chicago, IL 60613

Megan Cochran of:  
Chicago, IL 60613

Seminarian Nicole Collins of:  
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Chicago, IL 60690

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Chicago, IL 60607

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Chicago, IL 60632

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Chicago, IL 60640

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Christ Lutheran Church and Lutherans Concerned Chicago  
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Chicago, IL 60634

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Gregory Gross of:  
Chicago, IL 60625

Eleanor Hall of:  
Chicago, IL 60637

Glenn Hering of:  
Chicago, IL 60643

Jordan Hestermann (Executive Director) of:  
Becoming We The People  
Chicago, IL 60616

Rosalind Hurwitz of:  
Chicago, IL 60613

Sue Laurie, M.Div. of:  
Methodist Church  
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Elvira Pellitteri of:  
Chicago, IL 60637

Christopher Pett of:  
Dignity – Catholic  
Chicago, IL

Donna Pfeiffer of:  
Chicago, IL 60641

John Pfeiffer (Buddhist) of:  
Chicago, IL 60640

Katy Resop of:  
ELCA  
Chicago, IL

Erica Spilde (Delegations Coordinator) of:  
Chicago Religious Leader Network on Latin America  
Chicago, IL

Richard Ring and Catherine Thomson (Members) of:  
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Chicago, IL 60657

Seminarian Benedict Varnum of:  
Disciples Divinity House  
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Rich Wilson of:  
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Unity in Chicago  
Chicago, IL 60660

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Michael Glenn of:  
Coal City, IL 60416

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Holly Kerr, Andrew Singleton (Social Action Members), and Robert Kollman (Member) of:  
North Shore Unitarian Church  
Deerfield, IL

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Phillip King and John Sunderman (Members) of:  
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church  
Downers Grove, IL

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Margo Kanas of:  
Elgin, IL 60120

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Kim Sipich of:  
Elmhurst, IL 60126

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Paula Basta, M.Div. (Member) of:  
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Evanston, IL 60202  
Lynn Briskin of:  
Evanston, IL 60202

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Karen O'Connor (Member) of:  
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Jean Pierce (Member) of:  
Geneva Unitarian Universalist Church  
Geneva, IL

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Ellen Roth of:  
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Janice Simpson (Congregant) of:  
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Christy O'Brien of:  
Highland Park, IL 60035

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Karen McDowell (Member) of:  
Unitarian Church of Hinsdale  
Hinsdale, IL 60521

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Alderman Scott Tinsley Hall (Member) of:  
The Congregational Church of Jacksonville – UCC  
Jacksonville, IL 62650

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Mary Anne Gates (Member) of:  
Holy Family Parish – Catholic  
Johnsburg, IL 60051

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Karen Joseph (Member) of:  
First Christian Church – Disciples of Christ  
Lindenhurst, IL 60046

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John Larson (Member) of:  
St. John's Episcopal Church  
Lockport, IL 60441

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Shamike Stiles of:  
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Dr. Jon Cole of:  
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Melissa Grombacher of:  
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Jeffrey Cobb (Member) of:  
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Leigh Maisenbacher of:  
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Alice Desai of:  
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Jorge Sanchez (Member) of:  
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Varina Simmons (Admin Assistant) of:  
Spring Creek UCC  
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Trenda Kennedy of:  
Springfield, IL 62703

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Richard Gorlewski of:  
St. Patrick Catholic Church  
St. Charles, IL 60174

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Seminarian Gina Durbin, Seminarian Kelly Durbin, James Walsh and Charles Zwiener Jr. (Members) of:  
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Sandra Miller (Wiccan) of:  
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Gary Schichner of:  
Watseka, IL 60970

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Jessica Steidl (Member) of:  
St. John's Lutheran Church – ELCA  
Woodstock, IL 60098

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Lindsay Flannigan, IL

Daniel Blair, IL

**SUPPORTERS FROM OUT OF STATE:**

Caleb Laieski of: Gays and Lesbians Against Discrimination – Phoenix, AZ

Cantor David Reinwald of: CA

Rev. Michael Fincher of: Episcopal Campus Ministry at UCLA – Los Angeles, CA

Linda Orosco of: Hammond, IN

Rev. Marilyn Robb of: United Methodist Church, NE Conference – Portland, ME

Rastic Samela of: Freeland, MD

Rev. Twila Broadway of: Deaconess Abundant Life Communities – Concord, MA

Rev. Dr. William Coleman of: First UMC – Chatham, MA

Rev. Dr. Wendell Luke, Jr of: United Methodist Church, NE Conference – Chelmsford, MA

Rev. Gary Nettleton of: UMC – Boston, MA

John Kempf of: Douglas United Church of Christ – Saugatuck, MI

Rev. Jim Todd retired pastor of: Christ UMC – Lawrence, MA

Rev. Regina Nicolosi of: Roman Catholic Women Priests – Red Wing, MN

Rebecca L'Heureux of: Berlin, New Hampshire

Rev. Dr. Rita Root, Interim Conference Minister of: New York Conference, UCC – New York

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons: All Souls Unitarian – New York City, NY

Rev. Dr. Elaine Caldbeck: Episcopal Church – southern OH

Emily Kesselman of: Philadelphia, PA

Rev. Madeline Edwards (Chaplain) of: Audie L Murphy VA Hospital – San Antonio, TX

Rev. Bill Hoglund of: LaCrosse, WI

Robert Puhr of: Milwaukee, WI

Eileen Garbutt of: Brightwaves MCC – Brighton, United Kingdom

**Abbreviations**

**ELCA = Evangelical Lutheran Church of America**

**M/B = Mennonite/Brethren**

**MCC = Metropolitan Community Churches**

**UU = Unitarian Universalist**

**UCC = United Church of Christ (CMA = Chicago Metropolitan Association)**  
**UMC = United Method**