

PRESS RELEASE  
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**EQUALITY ILLINOIS FINDS WIDESPREAD USE OF CIVIL UNIONS LAW IN FIRST  
SIX MONTHS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

*Group Contacts All 102 Counties to Gauge Statewide Impact*

CHICAGO – Equality Illinois, the state's oldest and largest LGBT advocacy organization, announced today that during the first six months of the availability of civil unions in the state, at least 3,729 couples secured licenses. Of the state's 102 counties, 90 counties reported at least one license was issued.

“That so many couples secured licenses in the first six months after they became available on June 1 demonstrated the importance the families placed on the protections it provided,” said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois. “The fact that the figure grew to 3,729 civil unions licenses in the half year indicates a strong, ongoing desire for same-sex families to not only secure the legal recognition of government and the affirmation of their relationship from employers, family and friends but also the equal rights that civil unions guarantee.”

In addition to the 3,729 couples who applied for civil union licenses from June 1 to November 30, thousands of other couples' relationships were recognized as civil unions in the state. Same-sex couples who entered a marriage, civil union, or domestic partnership in another jurisdiction automatically had their relationships recognized as a civil union in Illinois on June 1.

Equality Illinois contacted each county clerk (the official entity responsible for issuing civil union licenses) to get the count of civil union licenses. No corner of Illinois was untouched by the desire of same-sex couples to be joined in civil unions. There were 1,878 licenses issued in Cook County, 658 in the five collar counties (DuPage, Kane\*, Lake, McHenry and Will) and 1,193 in the rest of Illinois. There were licenses issued in the northernmost Illinois counties bordering Wisconsin to the southernmost counties bordering Kentucky and Missouri.

“As we can see from these numbers and the range of locales, same-sex couples make their homes in all parts of Illinois,” said Randy Hannig, Director of Public Policy for Equality Illinois. “This recognition will have significant implications as state and local public officials deal with family law issues and members of Congress consider the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act.” Even with the successful implementation of civil unions in the state, Equality Illinois and its allies in the executive and legislative branches had to defend the new law against attempts by opponents to attack it and dilute protections for families.

“There was intense pressure in the General Assembly in Springfield and the courts to weaken it, and, with our allies, we fought back each time,” Hannig said. “We expect opponents to continue to try to weaken family protections during 2012 even as more same-sex couples are joined together in civil unions, and we will remain vigilant.”

For interviews and more information, including the county-by-county numbers, please contact Equality Illinois.

(\*Kane County reported civil union licenses issued June 1 – October 31.)

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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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