



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on December 8, 2010

Illinois Legislature Passes Bill Legalizing Same-Sex Civil Unions

The Illinois legislature has passed a bill legalizing civil unions in the state, including homosexual partnerships. When Democratic Governor Pat Quinn signs the bill, which he indicated he would do early next year, the law will make Illinois one of the few states granting rights to same-sex partners, and will push the state closer to legalizing homosexual "marriage." Quinn called the measure a "landmark law" that will become "the law of the land of Lincoln in the coming year." The statute is set to go into effect in June 2011.



Currently Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont along with the District of Columbia allow homosexuals to marry, and the state of New Jersey has a law similar to the one passed in Illinois legalizing civil unions. Four other states grant domestic partnerships similar to the Illinois law (including many of the legal rights), but without the official stamp of civil unions or legal marriage.

Proponents of the legislation attempted to make political hay of Illinois supposed cultural conservatism in order to demonstrate how homosexual partnerships are becoming accepted even among provincial mid-Westerners. Upon passage of the bill, Rick Garcia of Equality Illinois, a homosexual rights group, claimed that sober, clear-minded, cautious Midwesterners are taking this action.

Controversial Chicago Mayor Richard Daley said passage of the bill should be used as a springboard for full legalization of homosexual marriage in the state. Applauding the Illinois legislature for coming into this new century by passing the civil unions bill, he declared that the states openly homosexual residents finally realized they should have the same rights under state law, which is really important, and eventually marriage will take place it has to be.

Calling Chicago's homosexual community great citizens and a tremendous resource, Daley closed his press conference at the city's historic Navy Pier by gushing about the new law, I am for this, it finally came, and Were in the new century, we have to move faster.

Pro-family champions of traditional marriage warned that, true to Daley's gleeful predictions, the new law could ultimately lead to the legalization of full-blown marriage between homosexuals, a move they say would deeply jeopardize stable society. This will be the entry to a slippery slope, said Ron Stephens, one of the state Republican legislators who voted against the bill. The next thing we'll see will be consideration of gay marriage.

While homosexual activists agree that their ultimate goal is full recognition and legalization of homosexual marriage that is equal to traditional marriage, they see the civil unions law as moving in the right direction. Civil unions are not marriage, but they provide important benefits and are a step in the right direction, said Joe Solmonese of the Human Rights Campaign, one of the nation's largest homosexual rights groups.



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The new law will give homosexual partners (as well as heterosexual couples) who engage in civil unions many of the same legal rights that have been accorded natural couples, including the power to make emergency medical decisions and rights to legal inheritance.

Among pro-family and religious groups that battled passage of the bill was the Catholic Conference of Illinois, which pointed out that civil union between same sex partners is different from homosexual marriage in name only, and warned that the measure will further damage the already fragile institution of marriage. Everyone has the right to marry, but no one has the right to change the nature of marriage, said Cardinal Francis George, Archbishop of Chicago, in a statement prior to the bills passage. The public understanding of marriage will be negatively affected by passage of a bill that ignores the natural fact that sexual complementarity is at the core of marriage.

David E. Smith of the Illinois Family Institute, a grass-roots group that has worked tirelessly to defend traditional moral values in the state, warned that the new law will likely open the floodgates to discrimination and civil rights lawsuits. Religious liberty and freedom of conscience will diminish for conservatives in Illinois.

Robert Gillian, executive director of the Catholic Conference of Illinois, said passage of the Illinois bill is definitely part of a larger plan by homosexual activists. There's absolutely a long-term strategy here, he told the *Chicago Tribune*. I'm sure they are assessing every state in the country for possible opportunities. They are well-funded, they are well-organized, they are very aggressive, and they don't take no for an answer.

Camilla Taylor, an attorney with the homosexual activist group Lambda Legal, confirmed that hers and other groups are laying a well-planned foundation they hope will lead to nationwide legalization of marriage for homosexuals. It's no secret that our end goal is marriage, and that's what we're fighting for, she told the *Chicago Tribune*. And whether we have to achieve it through the legislature or the courts, that's what we'll do.

But pro-family leaders emphasize that homosexual activists aren't the only determined group in the fight. On December 6, leaders from some of the nations most influential faith groups released an open letter, entitled [The Protection of Marriage: A Shared Commitment](#), which re-affirmed their commitment to defending the traditional institution of marriage, and called for others to join them. In the letter, released the same day the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals heard arguments in the case against California's marriage protection amendment (Prop.8), the leaders called traditional marriage an institution fundamental to the well-being of all of society, and affirmed their unified commitment to promote and protect it.

The letter was signed by such diverse faith leaders as Dr. Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals; Dr. George Wood, head of the Assemblies of God; Dr. Richard Land of the Southern Baptists; David Burton, Presiding Bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints; Nathan Diament of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America; the Most Rev. Timothy M. Dolan, Archbishop of New York and head of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops; and even Manmohan Singh, Secretary General of the American region of the World Sikh Council.

Concluded the letter: The preservation of the unique meaning of marriage is not a special or limited interest but serves the good of all. Therefore, we invite and encourage all people, both within and beyond our faith communities, to stand with us in promoting and protecting marriage as the union of one man and one woman.



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Photo: Illinois state Sen. David Koehler, D-Peoria, left, confers with Sen. Don Harmon, D-Oak Park, shortly before debate of the civil union legislation on the floor of the Senate, Dec. 1, 2010, in Springfield, Ill.: AP Images



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