

NEWS RELEASE – October 11, 2013

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March on Springfield Rally Speakers Will Highlight the Broad Coalition working for Illinois Marriage Equality

Leaders from labor, immigration, faith, women's health, business, sports and voting rights movements will join LGBT families, leaders and allies at equal marriage rally

CHICAGO – Organizers of the March on Springfield for Marriage Equality on October 22 today announced the roster of speakers at the rally. The speakers will represent the breadth and depth of the equal marriage coalition in Illinois. All speakers will deliver a common message to Illinois legislators: A majority of Illinoisans support the freedom to marry and the time for marriage equality in Illinois is now.

LGBT organizations, families and faith leaders will be joined at the podium by national and regional coalition partners for the 90 minute rally. They include:

- Michael Carrigan, President of the Illinois AFL-CIO
- Rudy Lozano, Uniting America Director, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
- Jamie Frazier, Senior Pastor, Lighthouse Church
- Bonnie Grabenhofer, National Action Vice President, National Organization for Women (NOW)
- Rev. Mark Kiyimba, Leader of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kampala, Uganda
- Toni Weaver, President, Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (Northern Illinois Region)
- Scott Cross, Illinois Chapter Lead, President Barack Obama's "Organizing for Action"
- Brigid Leahy, Director, Planned Parenthood of Illinois

Families, couples and LGBT youth from groups that are part of the Illinois Unites coalition for equal marriage will also tell their personal stories to the thousands gathered for the March. The coalition, formed by Equality Illinois, Lambda Legal, the ACLU, and The Civil Rights Agenda and almost 100 other organizations, is led by John Kohlhepp who will also speak at the rally.

A diverse group of lesbian, bisexual, gay & transgender activists and organizers will also speak including:

- LZ Granderson, openly gay ESPN Senior Writer & CNN Contributor
- Alexis Martinez, March on Springfield Co-Chair, and Native American Transgender activist
- Marquell Smith, African-American gay veteran and founder, Inclusive Community Project
- Andy Thayer, co-founder, Gay Liberation Network
- Robert Castillo, Latino community activist
- Vernita Gray, African-American community activist
- Liz Thomson, Director, Asian American Resource Center, University of Illinois/Chicago
- Bro. Michael Oboza, Founder, Bisexual Queer Alliance Chicago
- Tracy Baim, March on Springfield Co-Chair and co-Founder & Publisher, Windy City Media Group

More than three dozen elected leaders from state and local government who support marriage equality will be introduced at the rally by Kevin Boyer and Kim Hunt, co-chairs of the March on Springfield. The full list of expected politicians will be available prior to the rally. A full list of all the speakers will also be available at <http://www.marchonspringfield.org>.

"We march on Springfield to make sure that the voices of people from all over our state are heard loud and clear," the 13 co-chairs of the March on Springfield said in a joint statement. "It is time for Illinois to

treat all of its citizens equally, regardless of sexual orientation or gender, and we call on the Illinois House of Representatives to pass Senate Bill 10, the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act, during the fall veto session.”

The March on Springfield rally will take place from 1 to 2:30 pm. It will be preceded by Rock The March – a free one-hour concert featuring top LGBT talent with Illinois roots. At the rally’s conclusion, Illinois families will lead the attendees on a march around the State Capitol.

About the March

The March on Springfield for Marriage Equality will take place on Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2013, the scheduled first day of the fall veto session of the Illinois state legislature. The “March on Springfield” is part of a broad grassroots strategy to secure final passage of Senate Bill 10, the “Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act,” already approved by the Illinois Senate. Once adopted, Illinois will become the 14th state plus the District of Columbia, to treat all of its citizens equally under state marriage laws, and all married people in Illinois will be treated equally under federal law. For more information, visit <http://www.MarchOnSpringfield.org>, or find the March at Facebook.com/MarchOnSpringfield or on [Twitter @IllinoisMarches](#).

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Note for Media:

Resources for media will be available at the March on Springfield for Marriage Equality, including a riser for television cameras, electricity & internet access, a media tent for quiet interviews, and a list of speakers, families, politicians and activists who will be available for interviews. Access to the riser and tent will require a media credential, provided to media representatives at the rally. Full information will be distributed via email by October 15, and will be available at <http://www.marchonspringfield.org/media.php>.