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MEDIA RELEASE

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STATEWIDE GAY RIGHTS GROUP HELD PRAYER BREAKFAST IN SUPPORT OF GAY RIGHTS

CHICAGO - Equality Illinois, the state's largest organization advocating for full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, hosted interfaith prayer breakfast in support of equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender ("LGBT") people yesterday morning (April 8, 2010). The event was co-hosted by LGBT Change and Allied for Equality.

The Equality Prayer Breakfast was the first of its kind for the region, and included clergy from a wide array of major religious denominations – including, among others, Lutheran, Episcopal, Methodist, Conservative Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox Jewish. The assembled religious leaders stood in support of basic civil rights for LGBT people and of relationship recognition for same-sex couples.

At the end of the Equality Prayer Breakfast, attendees signed a petition in support of relationship recognition for same-sex couples.

"People of faith are among the strongest supporters of LGBT equality," –said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois – "because they believe in natural equality of all human beings."

"This assembly of esteemed leaders from a broad range of religious backgrounds just underscores that fairness is universal and all human beings are equal in the eyes of the Creator."

Public servants - such as state legislators – also attended the prayer breakfast, and were the subject of the Prayer for Those in Public Service, led by Rabbi Asher Lopatin of Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation, an Orthodox Jewish synagogue.

"It is our task to fight discrimination of our time," – said Rabbi Michael Siegel of Anshe Emet Synagogue, a Conservative Jewish congregation. "We must ensure that that members of GLBT community are no longer as treated as strangers in our land. It is *avodah kodesh* – holy work."

"Marriage is more than a piece of paper," –said the Very Rev Joy E Rogers, Dean of the Saint James Cathedral, an Episcopal congregation. "It says something about how society values your life, your love, your relationships."

"I am straight, Christian, a mom and a pastor; and I support marriage for same-sex couples," said Rev. Suzanne Anderson-Hurdle of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

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Equality Illinois was founded to secure, protect and defend the civil rights of lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender Illinoisans. It is one of the Midwest's largest gay civil rights organizations.