

FAIRNESS MATTERS:
**Talking Points on the Illinois Religious Freedom Protection
and Civil Union Act SB2436/HB1826**

- **We should allow all Illinois families to protect their loved ones.** The denial of basic legal recognition harms Illinois families and couples most severely in times of economic insecurity, ill health and even death. Without the protections and responsibilities offered by civil union, gay couples may be unable to visit each other in a hospital, make life saving medical decisions for each other or even bury their loved one with dignity. It is wrong to deny couples these protections.
- **All Illinoisans should be treated fairly under the law.** Without civil unions, many Illinois couples and families are unable to obtain the protections the State of Illinois grants automatically to other couples. It simply is unfair that long term, committed, gay couples should be prevented from legally protecting their loved ones, while different sex couples may marry the same week they meet.
- **Real Illinois families are hurt right now by the denial of basic legal protections.** All over Illinois, gay couples and their families have been hurt because they are denied a universally recognized legal status. Gay and lesbian Illinoisans have been turned away from hospital visiting rooms, denied pension and healthcare benefits and refused the ability to make life saving medical decisions or bury their loved one with dignity– despite personal commitments that have stood the test of time.
- **Drafting legal contracts is not adequate to ensure fairness and protect Illinois families.** Some people believe that gay and lesbian couples can simply sign a few legal documents to protect each other. In fact, personal legal contracts simply cannot provide all the protections that families need. Contracts can be prohibitively expensive to obtain and difficult to enforce in an emergency. It is unfair to ask gay couples to go through costly, time-consuming hoops just to protect their families.