



Illinois legislators meeting on marriage equality

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by Kate Sosin, Windy City Times*

A group of Illinois legislators has started meeting with local LGBT groups to strategize on making marriage equality a reality in Illinois.

State representatives Greg Harris, Deb Mell, Ann Williams, Kelly Cassidy, Sara Feigenholtz and Senator Heather Steans are in talks with Illinois organizations about introducing a bill that would allow same-sex partners to marry in Illinois.

According to Harris, the bill will not likely be introduced until at least 2013. Harris believes the fight will be difficult, especially as anti-gay political candidates work to bolster support for upcoming presidential elections.

"I do not delude myself into thinking this will be an easy process," Harris said. "But we need to take the first step."

Harris and others will be working with Equality Illinois, the American Civil Liberties Union, Lambda Legal, The Civil Rights Agenda, Log Cabin Republicans and the Human Rights Campaign, among others, he said.

November elections will be crucial for marriage equality advocates. The entire general assembly will be up for election then

"We have to be ready to stand up and defend the gains that we've made and to look toward the next steps," he said.

Harris added that those next steps will be educating the community and the legislature on why marriage equality matters.