
Marriage co-sponsor: Call the measure

by Kate Sosin, *Windy City Times*
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Rep. Greg Harris, chief sponsor of the Illinois marriage equality bill, has been cautious in comments since the measure fell short in the spring. But other sponsors of the bill report optimism.

The strongest of those comments came from openly gay co-sponsor Sam Yingling, who told *Windy City Times* that his roll call indicates that the bill has the 60 votes it needs to pass in veto session.

"I believe the votes are there," Yingling said. "There will always be excuses as to why the vote should be delayed, but the overwhelming majority of people in Illinois support marriage equality, and we need to vote on it and get it done."

Yingling said he thinks that the bill has more votes than in did in May, when Harris, faced with the possibility of the bill failing, decided to hold off on a vote until fall veto session.

Illinois Unites for Marriage Campaign Manager John Kohlhepp has said that his team is working with the goal of seeing a vote during veto session.

Veto session begins Oct. 22. Activists have planned a massive march on the capitol that day at noon, an effort to turn the heat on lawmakers who might be tempted to delay a controversial vote until after election filing deadlines later in the season.

Yingling's comments come alongside reports that sponsors and LGBT leaders might wait until January to call the bill, a move that could spark community protest from supporters who expected a vote in May.

Yingling said he wants to see a vote in veto session, but that supporters also need to keep pressure on the lawmakers to pass the bill.

"We still have to fight for this," Yingling said. "This isn't something that's going to magically happen."

Rep. Sara Feigenholtz of Chicago was more reserved in her predictions.

"I think things are moving in the right direction," she said. "My sense is there is cautious optimism."

Feigenholtz said that sponsors and LGBT leaders have made improvements since the May shortfall.

"We are working," she said. "There is constant vigilance on this."

The final decision on the vote timeline rests with Harris. He has stated repeatedly that he will not give a timeline or a vote count for the bill.