

Help Make Civil Unions a Reality: Write a Letter to Your State Representative

DO

- Make your letter personal—speak from your own experience. A recent Gallup Poll found that over 70% of all lawmakers said they pay a great deal of attention to personally written letters, while only 19% pay great attention to form letters
- Think about how you might represent the elected official's constituency. Are you a voter? A member of the representative's political party? A parent? A business owner? A taxpayer?
- Make sure you refer to HB 1826: The Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Unions Act
- State your support for HB 1826 in the first and last sentence of your letter
- Address your letter correctly (e.g., Representative Bill Black)
- Write legibly or type the letter
- Be brief and respectful. A well-worded one page letter can have a greater impact than a lengthy three or four pages
- Ask co-workers, family, and friends to write letters as well

DON'T

- Copy sample letters verbatim
- Be rude or threatening
- Include volumes of extra materials
- Put down every argument you can think of — stick to one or two key points

To learn more about the bill, visit <http://tinyurl.com/36p82l>

Sample Letter

Dear Representative _____:

As a constituent concerned about basic fairness and protecting the familial and financial security of all families in Illinois, I urge you to support the Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Unions Act, House Bill 1826. The legislation extends basic legal protections to gay and lesbians couples in Illinois by recognizing a civil union, and affording all the protections and responsibilities of marriage without changing Illinois' marriage laws.

The Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Union Act also assures that no religious denomination is compelled by state government to recognize or solemnize a relationship that falls outside of their religious tradition. While important religious values are protected, the legislation ensures that gay and lesbian couples and their families are allowed to participate in health care decisions, dispose of the bodily remains of a deceased loved one and enjoy pension benefits necessary to insure that a family remains intact after the loss of a parent.

As my representative in the Illinois General Assembly, it is my hope that you share this concern for all families in our state. I urge you to support House Bill 1826 and help extend the fairness of our state's legal protections and responsibilities to all couples.

I am following this issue closely and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Name

Address

City, State, Zip