

Windy City Times

Harris Introduces Same-Sex Marriage Bill

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On Feb. 22, State Rep. Greg Harris, D-Chicago, introduced House Bill 1615, the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act—a measure that would make Illinois only the second state in the United States to recognize same-sex marriages. (Currently, Massachusetts is the only state that does.) The measure has been referred to the Rules Committee.

“The purpose of this legislation is to secure basic human rights in Illinois for our brothers, sisters, friends, relatives, co-workers and neighbors who are gay or lesbian,” Harris said in a statement. “These proud, loving couples make great contributions to our society and deserve the dignity and fair treatment afforded to others under our current marriage laws.”

While the goal of the act is to allow everyone to marry in Illinois, regardless of sexual orientation, the measure also allows religious officials the option of not performing a same-sex wedding ceremony if they feel the event conflicts with their religious beliefs.

“It’ll be a very interesting time for the legislature as we discuss—what is for a lot of colleagues—uncharted territory and new ground,” Harris told Windy City Times.