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Gov. Quinn on Illinois marriage equality: 'It's going to happen'

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CHICAGO, IL -- Illinois Governor Pat Quinn is confident Illinois will become the 10th state to legalize gay marriage.

"It's going to happen," Quinn said. "I signed the bill for civil unions and I think this year we'll have marriage equality passed by the Senate and House. I'll sign it into law."

Quinn made the statement during a Jan. 13 appearance on *Fox 32 Sunday*. Last June the Governor confirmed to ChicagoPride.com that he'd sign marriage equality legislation into law.

"The key is to get a majority in both houses of the Legislature to get a bill on my desk I can sign," Quinn said before the Chicago Pride Parade last year.

In January 2011, Quinn signed legislation creating civil unions for gay and straight couples, but problems arose almost immediately. Last year, 25 gay and lesbian couples represented by Lambda Legal and the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois brought a lawsuit seeking to overturn Illinois' 16-year-old ban on same-sex marriages.

"The key is marriage equality," Quinn said last week. "That is the point in time that we have arrived at in the State of Illinois."

Last Wednesday state Rep. Greg Harris (D-Chicago) and state Sen. Heather Steans (D-Chicago) introduced legislation that would grant gay and lesbian couples the freedom to marry. Harris and Steans said they wouldn't call for a vote until they had a majority, but Steans told the Associated Press that it's a matter of "when, not if" the measure will pass. The General Assembly is currently out but returns back into session Feb. 5.

In addition to Gov. Quinn, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and President Barack Obama now support full marriage equality.

If Illinois approves gay marriage nearly twenty percent of the U.S. population will live in states recognizing marriage equality, according to the Human Rights Campaign.

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