



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – February 13, 2014

CONTACT: Megin McDonell, External Relations Director
(608) 441-0143 ext. 301; megin.mcdonell@fairwisconsin.com

Fair Wisconsin Statement on Introduction of Legislation to Repeal Constitutional Ban on Marriage Equality

Fair Wisconsin President & CEO, Katie Belanger, presented the following remarks today at a press conference to introduce legislation to repeal the 2006 constitutional amendment banning marriage and civil unions for same-sex couples in Wisconsin:

"I am Katie Belanger, the President & CEO of Fair Wisconsin, our state's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender advocacy organization. I want to thank Senator Tim Carpenter and Representative JoCasta Zamarripa for their leadership and representation of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in the State Capitol, as well as the numerous pro-fairness allies who have joined us today.

"Since the constitutional ban on marriage equality and civil unions passed in 2006, Fair Wisconsin has been at the forefront of the equality movement in Wisconsin. In 2009, we worked to support the passage of a statewide domestic partnership registry, the first and only example in our country of a state with an extremely broad ban on marriage and civil unions to provide limited legal protections to same-sex couples.

"Though an important step forward for Wisconsin, the registry is far from full equality. A domestic partnership doesn't carry the same meaning, or legal protections, as marriage. Many of us have gay and lesbian family members, neighbors, co-workers, and friends whom we love and respect, and who are good parents and good people. They deserve to be treated equally. Repealing our ban and moving one step closer to allowing same-sex couples to join marriage is critical to ensure that all families are treated with dignity and respect.

"We have a lot of work to do in order to ensure this effort is successful in Wisconsin. No state has successfully repealed their ban, and no state has passed full marriage equality without broad bipartisan support. For that reason, we encourage all members of the State Senate and State Assembly to stand on the right side of history – no matter what side of the aisle they stand on – and help move our state forward.

"From Kenosha to Eau Claire, Janesville to Appleton, and Manitowoc to Stevens Point, the people of Wisconsin are taking direct action to ensure same-sex couples are treated with dignity and respect. It's time for our state legislature to do the same."

###

*Fair Wisconsin, one of the state's most respected advocacy groups, has a proud history in education, grassroots organizing, outreach, and political action in the cause of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) equality. With a statewide board of directors and a full-time staff, Fair Wisconsin is the only organization to represent the Badger state in the Equality Federation, the strategic partner to state-based LGBT advocacy organizations.
To learn more visit fairwisconsin.com.*