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A historic vote Tuesday in the Illinois House positioned that state to become the largest in the heartland to legalize gay marriage, following months of arduous lobbying efforts by both sides in President Barack Obama's home state.

Under the measure, which the House approved 61-54, gay weddings could be held in Illinois starting in June. The state Senate, which approved it in February, was expected to vote later Tuesday on a technical change allowing the new effective date.

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