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Log Cabin GOP claims sponsors for civil unions bill

By Jo Mannies

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State Rep. **Bob Johnson**, R-Lee's Summit, is slated to headline Thursday night's meeting of the Log Cabin Republicans of Greater St. Louis.

The event begins at 7 p.m. at Bar Italia in the Central West End. Johnson would be latest in a parade of lawmakers who have addressed the group, which represents gay and lesbian Republicans.

According to President **Charles Stadlander**, the meeting will focus on a proposed civil-union bill, which would be filed during the next legislative session that begins in January.

"We have one sponsor and four confirmed Republican co-sponsors, although we are still seeking other supporters," he said. "Our support for the bill will come across the entire state, not just the St. Louis area."

The Log Cabin group plans "to have a full-time lobbyist in Jefferson City to drum up support," Stadlander added.

A key aspect of the bill is that it would not be limited to homosexual partners. Rather, it would allow civil unions between any two, unmarried adults.

That provision would address the concerns of elderly people, who may want to designate a non-relative of either sex as a legal partner for the purposes of making medical decisions. Single or widowed elderly people often have relationships, but don't want to get married because that could affect their pensions or health benefits, Stadlander said.

To pay for the lobbying, the Log Cabin group held a fundraiser a couple weeks ago and plans to hold another one on Nov. 12. The goal is \$70,000, Stadlander said.

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