The Illinois legislature created the Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Union Act (“The Act”) which became effective June 1, 2011. The Act creates a legal relationship between two persons of the same or opposite sex who form a civil union. Civil union couples shall have all the same legal rights, obligations, and responsibilities that are afforded or recognized by the laws of Illinois to spouses. As required by The Act, this policy provides parties to a civil union and a marriage identical benefits and protections.