

LGBTQ Organizations Unite in Calling for Transformational Change in Policing

Black people have been killed, Black people are dying at the hands of police, our country is in crisis, and we all need to take action. We cannot sit on the sidelines, we cannot acquiesce, and we cannot assign responsibility to others. We, as leaders in the LGBTQ movement, must rise up and call for structural change, for divestment of police resources and reinvestment in communities, and for long-term transformational change. Now is the time to take action, and this letter amplifies our strong calls for urgent and immediate action to be taken.

Ongoing police brutality and systemic racism has plagued this nation for generations and has been captured on video and laid bare to the public in the United States and around the world. In 2019, more than 1,000 people were killed at the hands of the police. We mourn the unacceptable and untimely deaths of Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland, Philando Castile, Eric Garner, Stephon Clark, Freddie Gray, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Mya Hall, Tony McDade, Rayshard Brooks and many more who were gone too soon.

We have seen with increased frequency the shocking video footage of police brutality. Officers have been recorded instigating violence, screaming obscenities, dragging individuals out of cars, using unnecessary force, holding individuals at gunpoint, and kneeling on peoples' necks to the desperate plea of "I can't breathe." These occurrences are stark reminders of a police system that needs structural changes, deconstruction, and transformation. No one should fear for their lives when they are pulled over by the police. Parents should not have to "have a talk" about how to engage with the police to their children. We as a nation are bleeding, and it is now, once again, time to call for change at every level of government.

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, along with more than 400 other civil rights organizations including LGBTQ organizations, outlined critical steps ranging from demilitarizing law enforcement to ending qualified immunity that must be taken at the federal level to end police brutality and create accountability. In response to the continued violence, Representative Karen Bass (D-CA), working closely with the Congressional Black Caucus and other leaders in Congress, introduced the Justice in Policing Act of 2020 that reflects those core priorities which we support.

We also call for a divestment of public funding from police and a reinvestment in communities. Specifically, both the power and scope of police responsibilities should be significantly curtailed, by shifting certain responsibilities — such as mental health crisis response — from armed police officers to the professionals who are properly trained and better equipped to manage those responsibilities. True change must include the following principles.

Divesting of Public Funding From Police and Investing in Our Communities

Public funding should be shifted from police to reinvesting in our communities. Crime is often a symptom of scarcity and our frayed social safety net is sorely underfunded. The United States spends twice as much on policing, prisons, and courts as it does on direct welfare programs such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and supplemental social security. Congress, states, and local governments can reduce incidents of crime and create healthy communities by investing in direct assistance programs, affordable housing, education, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and early intervention programs (including violence interruption programs).

Shifting Most First Responder Responsibilities Away From Police

Our current crisis-response system should place healthcare workers, like social workers and psychiatrists, at the frontline of immediate health crisis events, not police officers. Inadequate healthcare and a lack of social safety nets have led to increased police interaction with individuals experiencing mental health crises. As a result, police officers are often called to assist in mental health emergencies, despite having little or no relevant training. This should change.

End Predictive Policing

We must address and stop the current use of predictive policing techniques that disproportionately affect minority communities. Predictive policing forecasts crime using algorithmic techniques, based on historical crime data, to determine where to deploy police and who is most likely to commit a crime. Not only does this dangerously reinforce discriminatory biases in the criminal justice system, resulting in over-policing of vulnerable communities, such as people of color and those from the LGBTQ community, but there is a lack of transparency from agencies that employ this method. Law enforcement agencies are often not required to share how or what data is being analyzed. Furthermore, these predictive technologies serve to escalate the level of enforcement and increase police presence in communities that are already over-surveilled. All law enforcement strategies must take into account the privacy concerns of the communities being policed, as well as the impact of over-policing on vulnerable communities. The use of predictive policing algorithms disregards both.

Police Union Contracts Should Be Made Public and Officers Held Liable

Currently, police union contracts make it nearly impossible for civilians to view information about officers, including incidents of prior misconduct. In doing so, police officers are shielded from accountability for their actions. The disciplinary history of a police officer whose personnel records are riddled with instances of misconduct and bad behavior should not be protected from public scrutiny. Making these contracts public and removing barriers that restrict access to records of police misconduct would allow for greater transparency and oversight and are necessary for public safety. Police union contracts must also hold police officers financially liable for killings and excessive use of force, including ending paid administrative leave and eligibility to be rehired by police departments.

As we consider these proposals, we should also evaluate how we reduce our over-reliance on policing to secure public safety.

We, the undersigned, call out for change and call out for change now. There is no state, no municipal jurisdiction, and no law enforcement agency where transformational changes are not necessary and urgent. When celebrating Pride Month this June, we must remember that the protests and riots from Compton's Cafeteria to Stonewall were sparked by Black and Latinx transgender women calling for police reform due to harassment and mistreatment of LGBTQ people. We commemorate the history of the LGBTQ Movement, namely our resistance to police harassment and brutality across the nation, when such violence was common and expected. We remember this time as transformative, where we overcame our pain and fear to push for the ability to live a more authentic and free life. Today, we join together again to say that enough is enough. The time for structural change and transformation is now.

African American Office of Gay Concerns
African Human Rights Coalition (AHRC)
AMAAD Institute
American Civil Liberties Union
American Protestant Union
Annapolis Pride
APAIT
APLA Health
Aqua Foundation for Women
Arianna's Center
Asexual Outreach
Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN)
AsylumConnect
Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network
AVOL Kentucky
B. Riley Sober House
Basic Rights Oregon
Baton Rouge Pride
Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice
Being Alive/People with AIDS Action Coalition, Inc.
Bet Mishpachah
BHT Foundation
Bi Women Quarterly
BiLaw
Billy DeFrank LGBTQ+ Community Center
BiPOL
Bisexual Organizing Project (BOP)
Bisexual Resource Center
BJF Interiors
Black Trans Advocacy Coalition
Black Trans Women Inc
Blue Ridge Pride Center, Inc.
Boston Gay Men's Chorus
Boston Pride
Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center
Brooklyn Community Pride Center
Campaign for Southern Equality
Campus Pride
CANDLE
Care Resource Community Health Centers, Inc.
Cascade AIDS Project
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Central Outreach Wellness
Cincinnati Men's Chorus
Coastal Bend PRIDE Center
Colors+
Community Education Group
Compass LGBTQ Community Center
Contigo Fund
Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide
Dallas Voice/Voice Publishing Co.

Deaf Queer Resource Center
Desert AIDS Project
Diocese of Southern Ohio
Disciples LGBTQ+ Alliance - AllianceQ
Dolphin Democrats
Drag Story Hour- Arizona
East Bay Getting to Zero
EduTechnologic
End Hep C SF
Equal Rights Washington
Equality Arizona
Equality Business Alliance
Equality California
Equality Delaware Foundation
Equality Florida
Equality Michigan
Equality Nevada
Equality New York
Equality North Carolina
Equality Ohio
Equality Prince William
Equality Texas
Equality Utah
EqualityMaine
Equitas Health
Equitas Health Institute
Family Equality
Fijate Bien Program/MPact Global Action for Gay Men's Health and Rights
FL NOW (National Organization for Women)
Florida LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus
Florida Trans Proud Inc
FORGE, Inc.
Four Corners Rainbow Youth Center
Frank Harr Foundation
Freedom for All Americans
Freedom Through Healing
FreeState Justice - Maryland's LGBTQ+ Advocates
Friendly House Inc/SAGE Metro Portland
GAPIMNY—Empowering Queer & Trans Asian Pacific Islanders
Gay City: Seattle's LGBTQ Center
Gay Freedom Band of Los Angeles (GFBLA)
Gender Equality New York
Georgia Equality
Get Out And Trek (GOAT)
GLAAD
GLBT Alliance of Santa Cruz
GLBT Historical Society
GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality
GLSEN
GLSEN Southern Nevada

GMHC
Harvey Milk Festival, Inc
Harvey Milk Foundation
Have A Gay Day
Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights
Hearts on a Wire
Henderson Equality Center
Hester Street Fair, LLC
Hetrick-Martin Institute: New Jersey
Holyoke Pride
Hope & Help, Inc.
Horizons Foundation
Houston GLBT Political Caucus
Howard Brown Health
Hudson Pride Center
Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation
Human Rights Alliance Santa Fe
Human Rights Campaign
Identity, Inc.
Immigration Equality
Inside Out Youth Services
Institute for LGBT Health and Wellbeing
International Association of Providers of AIDS Care
InterPride
Jackson Pride Center
JustUs Health
KatKeo Properties LLC
Keshet
Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles
Lambda Legal
Latino LinQ
Lesbians of Color Symposium (LOCS) Collective, Inc.
Lesbians Who Tech & Allies
Leslie Lohman Museum of Art
LGBT Caucus of the California Democratic Party
LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland
LGBT Life Center
LGBTQ Allyship
LGBTQ Center OC
LGBTQ Center of Bay County
LGBTQ Community Center of Southern Nevada
LGBTQ Community Center of the Desert
LGBTQ Northwest Indiana / Northwest Indiana Pride
LGBTQ+Allies Lake County
Liberty City LGBTQ Democratic Club
Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth (LIGALY)
Long Island LGBT Community Center
Lorain County LGBTQ+ & Allies Task Force
Los Angeles Bi Task Force
Los Angeles LGBT Center
Mass Equality

Math4cure
Mazzoni Center
Media for the Public Good, Inc. / OutCasting Media
Meroe & Wellness, LLC
Methodist Federation for Social Action
Movement Advancement Project
Nashville LGBT Chamber
Nashville Pride
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Equality Action Team (NEAT)
National LGBT Cancer Network
National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)
National LGBTQ Task Force
National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals, Inc.
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)
National Queer Theater
National Trans Visibility March
National Working Positive Coalition
New England Aces
New York City AIDS Memorial
New York City Gay Men's Chorus
New York LGBT Network
North Carolina AIDS Action Network
North Shore Alliance of LGBTQ Youth
Oakland LGBTQ Community Center
Oasis Legal Services
Oklahomans for Equality
ONE Archives Foundation
One Colorado
One Orlando Alliance
one-n-ten
Openhouse
ORAM - Organization for Refuge, Asylum and Migration
oSTEM
Our Family Coalition
Out & Equal
Out Boulder County
OUT Georgia Business Alliance
Out in Tech
Out in the Open
Out In The Vineyard
Out Leadership
Out on Film
OutCenter of Southwest Michigan
Outfest
OutNebraska
OutRight Action International
OUTspoken Leaders

Palm Beach County Human Rights Council
Pan Eros Foundation
Partnership Project
Peer Support Space, Inc.
Peoria Proud
PFLAG Cape Cod
PFLAG Crown Point (Northwest Indiana)
PFLAG National
PFLAG NYC
PFLAG Olympia
PFLAG Orlando, Inc.
PFLAG South Miami
PFLAG Spartanburg
PFLAG Washington State Council
PFund Foundation
Philadelphia Family Pride
Phoenix Gay Men's Chorus
Phoenix Pride
Planned Parenthood Keystone
Planned Parenthood Keystone's Youth Programs (Rainbow Room, The Spectrum, The Curve)
Plexus LGBT Chamber of Commerce
Point Foundation
PRC
Pride Arts (Pride Films and Plays)
Pride at Work
Pride Center of the Capital Region
Pride Center West Texas
Pride Community Center, Inc (Brazos Valley, Texas)
Pride Community Services Organization
Pride Films and Plays/Pride Arts
Pride Fund 1
Pride Law Fund
Project MORE Foundation
Project No Labels
PROMO
Proud Haven Inc
Q Christian Fellowship
QLatinx
QLaw Foundation of Washington
Queens LGBT Center (Q-Center)
Queer Connect, Inc.
Queer Kid Stuff
Queerocracy
Rainbow Elder Care of Greater Dayton
Rainbow Pride Youth Alliance
Rebellious PR & Consulting
Reconciling Ministries Network
Resource Center
Rhode Island Pride
Ring of Keys
Rockland County Pride Center

RUSA LGBT - Russian-speaking American Association
Sacramento LGBT Community Center
Safe Schools Action Network
SAGE -- Advocacy and Services for LGBT Elders
SAGE Metro Detroit
SAGE Upstate
San Diego LGBT Visitors Center
San Diego Pride
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
San Francisco Community Health Center
San Francisco Dykes on Bikes® Womens Motorcycle Contingent
Sandhills PRIDE
Sarwood Inc.
SAVE - Safeguarding American Values for Everyone
Seattle Aces and Aros
Seattle Choruses: SMC/SWC
Sero Project
SF LGBT Center
Side by Side VA
Silver State Equality-Nevada
SOJOURN
Southern Arizona Gender Alliance
SpeakOUT Boston
Spectrum Spokane
Stanislaus LGBTQ+ Collaborative for Well-Being
StartOut
Still Bisexual
Stonewall Columbus
Stonewall Democratic Club
Stonewall Democrats of Central Ohio
Stonewall National Museum & Archives
Stonewall Sports - Richmond
SunServe
TBuddy
Tennessee Equality Project
Texas Pride Impact Funds
The Affirmative Couch, LLC
The Bearded Ladies Cabaret
The Box Gallery
The Bros in Convo Initiative
The Chroma Museum
The Cubbyhole Bar
The DC Center for the LGBT Community
The Diversity Center
The Fund for Community Reparations for Autistic People of Color's Interdependence, Survival, and Empowerment
The Great Griffon
The Hetrick-Martin Institute
The Human Rights Alliance Santa Fe
The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center
The LGBT Asylum Project

The LGBT Center of Greater Reading
The LGBT Pink Panthers Movement
The LGBTQ Center Long Beach
The LOFT LGBT Community Services Center
The OUT Foundation
The Pride Center at Equality Park
The Pride Center of Maryland
The Rainbow Times
The San Diego LGBT Community Center
The Source LGBT+ Center
The Spahr Center
The Stonewall Inn Gives Back Initiative
The Transgender Training Institute
The TransLatin@ Coalition
The Trevor Project
Three Dollar Bill Cinema (Seattle Queer Film Festival)
TPAN
Trans In Color
TransFamily Support Services
Transgender Assistance Program Virginia
Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund
Transgender Michigan
transnewyork
TransOhio
True Colors United
True Colors, Inc.
Truth Wins Out
TurnOut
Under The Arc
UNITY COALITION|COALICION UNIDA
Uplift Outreach Center
Uptown Gay & Lesbian Alliance (UGLA)
Valley AIDS Council
Valley Community Healthcare
Virtual Arizona Pride
Watermark
Waves Ahead Corp & SAGE Puerto Rico
WayOUT
Wenatchee Pride
White Mountains Pride
Whitman-Walker Institute
William Way LGBT Community Center
Woodhull Freedom Foundation
Yakima Pride
Yale GALA: Yale's LGBT Alumni
Young Democrats of Georgia LGBTQ+ Caucus
Youth Outlook
Youth Pride, Inc.
Zebra Coalition