



TransJustice is a Project of
The Audre Lorde Project,
a LGBTSTGNC People of Color Center
for Community Organizing

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Contact: Julienne Brown
E-Mail: info4tdoa@alp.org
Phone: 646-509-1994

**Trans and Gender Non-Conforming People of Color and Allies Herald Stonewall Anniversary
Demand New York City Human Resources Administration Address Transphobic Discrimination**

(New York City, June 26, 2008) –In commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, TranJustice – a project of the Audre Lorde Project – will rally at Union Square South at 3pm as part of its Fifth Annual Trans Day of Action for Racial and Economic Justice. TransJustice and allies are marching as a reminder that the very communities that led the uprising - Trans and Gender Non Conforming People of Color - continue to face unbridled injustice, discrimination and violence. The purpose of the rally will be to highlight the many injustices still faced by the Transgender and Gender Non Conforming community namely, the rampant transphobia that characterizes welfare and job centers throughout New York City. The group is calling on the Human Resources Administration (HRA) – New York City’s welfare agency – to approve a procedure for preventing transphobic discrimination. There have been reports of harassment from HRA employees and other clients at various HRA sites throughout the city. A march to the Waverly Center, an HRA site will follow the Union Square rally, and then proceed to Sheridan Square, across the street from the famous Stonewall Inn.

According to Mya Vazquez, of TransJustice, “In order to survive we’re forced to apply for public benefits, yet when we go to welfare centers, we’re harassed, jeered at, and faced with discrimination because of our gender identities and/or expression.” She notes that Transgender and Gender Non Conforming People of Color are still denied basic rights due to the lack of awareness around Transgender issues, “The struggle for marriage rights has taken up so much national attention and resources, yet the issues of daily survival that Trans and Gender Non Conforming People of Color deal with go unnoticed”.

Over three years ago, Trans and Gender Non Conforming communities in New York City approached the HRA about the transphobic discrimination that occurs at welfare centers. Last year, a week before the Fourth Annual Trans Day of Action which was set to protest at HRA headquarters, HRA officials agreed to meet with TransJustice to hear community concerns. Consequently, a committee of organizations was assembled, including TransJustice, the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, Housing Works, Queers for Economic Justice and others, to develop procedures for the HRA to follow to address transphobic discrimination at HRA facilities. To date HRA still has not approved the procedure and informed TransJustice that they did not know when it would be approved. Kris Hayashi, Executive Director of the Audre Lorde Project stated the urgency of HRA addressing the demands of the Transgender and Gender Non Conforming community, “In the years that HRA has ignored and delayed action on the issue of transphobic discrimination at their agency, Trans and Gender Non Conforming communities have faced rampant discrimination limiting and even prohibiting access to essential services. HRA must approve the new procedure immediately.” There are over 100 endorsers for this event including CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities, The Sylvia Rivera Law Project, FIERCE, and Housing Works.

TransJustice, is one of the first political groups created by and for Trans and Gender Non-Conforming (TGNC) People of Color in New York City. Since its inception five years ago, TransJustice has organized to build power within Trans and Gender Non-Conforming People of Color communities. As stated in their points of unity, the group demands an end to the profiling, harassment, arrest, brutality and murder that occurs at the hands of the NYPD, and calls on Commissioner Ray Kelly to improve TGNC people’s safety in interactions with the police by implementing changes in NYPD policies. TranJustice demands an end to the violence and harassment faced by women and LGBT communities in New York City’s public transit system; that Trans and Gender Non Conforming people have access to respectful and safe living spaces; the full legalization of all immigrants; justice for the many Trans and Gender Non Conforming people who have been beaten, assaulted, raped, and murdered; and calls for an end to U.S. waged wars.

The Audre Lorde Project is a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two-Spirit, Trans and Gender Non Conforming People of Color Community Organizer Center based in Brooklyn, New York.

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