



The 5th Annual NYC Trans Day of Action for Social and Economic Justice



POINTS OF UNITY

Initiated by TransJustice of the Audre Lorde Project, a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two-Spirit, Trans and Gender Non-Conforming People of Color Center for Community Organizing.

June 26, 2009

We call on Trans and Gender Non-Conforming (TGNC) communities and our allies from many movements to join us for the 5th Annual Trans Day of Action (TDOA) for Social and Economic Justice. As TGNC People of Color (POC) we recognize the importance of working together alongside other movements to build the world we want to see. Much has changed since last year's TDOA, the election of a new US President has brought hope to many of our communities, however we still live in a time when people of color, immigrants, youth, elders, rural communities, people living with disabilities and poor people are disproportionately underserved, face higher levels of discrimination, heightened surveillance and experience increased violence at the hands of the state. In fact, due to the growing financial crisis conditions have worsened. As a result, it is even more critical that we unite and work together towards ending the transphobia, racism, classism, sexism, ageism, ableism, homophobia and xenophobia within our movements for justice. We call for an end to the continued single issue platform of gay marriage over TGNC justice by our movements. Let's come together to let the world know that TGNC justice will not be undermined and together we will not be silenced! These are *the points of unity*, which hold together the purpose of this march:

• **We demand that all people receiving public assistance (welfare) including TGNC People of Color, be treated with respect and dignity.** We are in solidarity with all people living on public assistance. TGNC POC face transphobic harassment and discrimination when applying for and seeking to access public assistance/welfare. For over three years TGNC communities in NYC have called on the Human Resources Administration (HRA), the NYC agency responsible for public assistance, to address these systemic problems. After initially ignoring requests for a meeting, due to community pressure raised by TDOA, last year HRA agreed to meet. As a result, this past year TransJustice and a committee of organizations and community members including the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, Housing Works, Queers for Economic Justice, and others have worked with HRA to develop a new HRA procedure to prevent transphobic discrimination including TGNC cultural competency training. *To date we are currently awaiting HRA's final approval of the procedure and anticipate a response by Trans Day of Action.*

• **We demand an end to the profiling, discrimination, harassment, brutality and murders that occur at the hands of the Police.** Communities of color continue to face rampant police harassment and brutality. Last month two lesbians of color were brutally beaten by police officers in front of a club in Brooklyn, NY. In 2006 a Transgender woman of color was assaulted and harassed by an employee at a McDonald's, when the police arrived they arrested and abused her. We are in solidarity with all people impacted by police violence including supporters of Iman Morales, the family of Sean Bell and the Jersey 4. Like other oppressed communities, TGNC people are targeted, profiled and brutalized by the police daily. We demand an end to the brutality and harassment and call for Justice for all people impacted by police violence. We call for an independent prosecutor for all cases of police violence (www.peoplesjustice.org). To improve TGNC people's safety in interactions with the police *we demand that Commissioner Ray Kelly implement changes in NYPD policies and adopt the "Proposed Policy for the Treatment of Transgender People in NYPD Custody" and the associated changes to the NYPD patrol guide, submitted to the NYPD in April 2009.* (www.ipetitions.com/petition/NYPDTransPolicy/)

• **We demand an end to the violence and harassment faced by women and LGBTSTGNC communities in the NYC public transportation system (MTA).** Women and LGBTSTGNC communities face rampant violence and harassment in the NYC public transportation system. In 2005, a woman was sexually assaulted in a subway station in full view of a train conductor and a station agent. In 2006, a transgender woman was harassed by an MTA worker using anti-transgender slurs - bystanders joined in the harassment. We call on the MTA to be accountable and work proactively to end the violence and harassment that occurs in their transit system and to comply with Local Law 3 which prohibits gender identity/expression discrimination. (nyersforsafetransit.wordpress.com & newyorklawschool.typepad.com/leonardlink/2008/02/brooklyn-court.html)

• **We demand the full legalization of all immigrants.** In the last year, violence towards immigrants has increased. We oppose all forms of enforcement, which target people trying to survive a deepening global economic crisis, and are in solidarity with migrant rights organizations around the world. We oppose any immigration reform proposal that includes a registration process, more militarization at the border and further criminalization of undocumented people. TGNC people deserve the right to access competent and respectful immigration services. We demand that the consulates of all countries respect and honor our identities and issue passports and other documentation that accurately reflects who we are.

• **We are in solidarity with all prisoners, especially the many TGNC people behind the walls who are often invisible to our movements.** We call attention to the under-reported accounts of severe violence and rape that our community faces at the hands of correction officers and other prisoners. We demand an end to the torture and discrimination TGNC prisoners face. We demand that all TGNC prisoners receive competent and respectful healthcare. We oppose the continued growth of the prison industrial complex that targets our communities, yet we recognize that TGNC people need access to services and facilities that lessen our vulnerability to violence within the present jails and prisons. We call attention to the criminal injustice system that increasingly puts POC, immigrants, TGNC and poor people behind bars - further criminalizing our communities and our lives.

• **We demand that TGNC people have access to respectful and safe living spaces.** Many TGNC people face discrimination from landlords and housing administrators displacing us from our homes due to gender identity or expression. A disproportionate number of TGNC people have been or are currently homeless and face discrimination when trying to access shelters and other assisted living programs. NYC law and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) state that people will be placed in shelters according to gender identity and that discrimination based on gender identity will not be tolerated. We demand that all DHS shelter administrators continue to provide adequate Trans sensitivity trainings for all personnel and enforce clear non-discrimination policies that respect all homeless people.

• **We demand that TGNC people have equal access to employment and education opportunities.** We are outraged by increasing unemployment facing all communities, particularly TGNC POC. TGNC people continue to face blatant discrimination and harassment from employers due to systemic transphobia. Few TGNC people have access to opportunities for learning in a safe school environment. We demand that employers and educational institutions implement non-discrimination policies and comply with Local Law 3.

• **We demand that all people, including TGNC people, have access to essential health and human services.** We are in a period of ongoing budget cuts to critical services such as HIV/AIDS, youth, LGBT, etc. We call on Governor Paterson and Mayor Bloomberg to stop the budget cuts to essential health and human services and restore funding. The Piers have been a safe space for our community, particularly LGBTSTGNC youth of color for years. In solidarity with FIERCE, we demand the establishment of a 24hour LGBT youth center at the Piers. (www.fierceny.org)

• **We demand that children and youth under jurisdiction of the Administration of Children Services (ACS) and Private Foster Care Agencies, have the right to freedom of gender expression/identity.** In 2002 it was established that NYC's foster care system cannot discriminate against TGNC children and youth nor force them to only wear clothing associated with birth gender. ACS and private foster care agencies must be accountable for the health of people under their care including TGNC people. After organized community pressure ACS established an anti-discrimination policy for TGNC people. We demand that ACS fully implement this policy.

• **We oppose all the public and hidden wars of the U.S.** the continued occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the expansion of U.S. militarization. We are appalled by the ongoing attacks on the people of Palestine through the denial of equal rights inside Israel, division through the wall, economic isolation, blockades of supplies and imports, escalating militarization throughout the occupied territories, and the continued refusal of Palestinian refugees' right of return. We support organizations intensifying efforts through boycott, divestment, and sanction strategies. We oppose escalating military activities everywhere. We demand the immediate removal of all U.S. troops from all countries under occupation and demand an end of use of U.S. dollars to cultivate and sponsor wars against people in the U.S. and abroad.

• **We demand justice for the many TGNC people who have been beaten, assaulted, raped, and murdered.** These incidents continue to be silenced, misclassified or blamed on TNGC people. The police and media continue to criminalize us even when we try to defend ourselves. An increase in hate crime laws will not solve the problem but will give increased power to the state to put more people in jail. Instead we call for a unified effort for all of us to address the root causes of why these incidents happen. As a society that seeks social justice we seek to find ways of preventing attacks on TGNC people by building strong and knowledgeable communities and using transformative justice to hold people accountable.

We commemorate Amanda Milan, Sakia Gunn, Ruby Ordeñana, Gwen Araujo, Erika Keels, Victoria Arellano, Lawrence King, Saneesha Stewart, Duanna Johnson, Angie Zapata, Teish Cannon, Taysia Elzy and the many others we have lost, who struggled and lived fearlessly, being true to who they were. They keep the fire of struggle burning within all of us.

On June 26, 2009, TGNC POC and allies will take to the streets of NYC once again and demand justice to let the world know, that on the 40th anniversary of Stonewall, the rebellion is not over and we will continue fighting for justice, raising our voices until we are heard. We call on all activist and organizers for justice, both local and organizations around the country to endorse this call to action and to build contingents to march in solidarity together. **To endorse TDOA 2009, send an email to endorsetdoa@alp.org, for more info contact - info4tdoa@alp.org or Mya at 718-596-0342 x 23.**