



The 4th 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 27, 2008

We call on our Trans and Gender Non-Conforming (TGNC) community and on all of our allies from many movements to join us for the *4th Annual Trans Day of Action for Social and Economic Justice*. We as TGNC People of Color (POC) recognize the importance of working together alongside other movements to change the world we want to see. We live in a time when people of color, immigrants and poor people are disproportionately underserved, face higher levels of discrimination, heightened surveillance and experience increased violence at the hands of the state. It is critical that we unite and work together towards dismantling the transphobia, racism, classism, sexism, ageism, ableism, homophobia and xenophobia that permeates throughout our movements for social justice. Let's come together to let the world know that TGNC rights will not be undermined and together we will not be silenced! These are *the points of unity*, which hold together the purpose of this important march:

- **We demand that TGNC people have equal access to employment and education opportunities.** We are outraged by the high numbers of TGNC people who are unemployed. Many 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. TGNC people demand that all employers and educational institutions implement non-discrimination policies that respect the rights of all workers and students and that they comply with the NYC Human Rights Law that prohibits discrimination against gender identity and expression!
- **We demand that all people receiving public assistance entitlements including TGNC People of Color, be treated with respect and dignity.** We stand in solidarity with all people living on public assistance. The NYC agency responsible for the administration of public welfare, the Human Resources Administration (HRA), continues to ignore our demands to address the systemic problems that exist internally and perpetuate the transphobia and harassment faced by TGNC people of color when applying for benefits such as welfare, access to shelters, access to culturally competent and sensitive healthcare, drug treatment programs, adult protective services, eviction prevention, and other essential services. We demand that the NYC HRA: conduct an internal investigation of these incidents; follow NYC 'Guidelines Regarding Gender Identity Discrimination' and develop means of enforcement; implement mandatory cultural competency training on gender identity/expression; implement a fully accessible process for reporting incidents of discrimination; and, commit to prioritize hiring of TGNC employees.
- **We demand the full legalization of all immigrants.** 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 oppose the guest worker program, the Real ID Act, enforcement provisions to build more walls and give greater powers to the Department of Homeland Security, increased barriers for asylum seekers, the HIV ban and other anti-immigrant policies that continue to divide our communities.
- **We stand in solidarity with all prisoners, especially the many TGNC people behind the walls who are often invisible even within prisoner's rights 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 high level of 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 continues to target 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 are opposed to the closing of the "gay and Trans housing" unit on Rikers. We call attention to the criminal injustice system that increasingly puts POC, immigrants, TGNC people 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 severe 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. However, many homeless TGNC people continue to 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 that person's 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 the dignity of all homeless people.

- **We demand that all children and youth, under the jurisdiction of the Administration of Children Services (ACS) and Private Foster Care Agencies, have the right to the freedom of gender expression and identity.** In the 2002-landmark case *Jean Doe v. Bell*, it was established that children in NYC's foster care system cannot be discriminated against for being transgender and cannot be forced to only wear clothing associated with their birth gender. Government institutions like ACS and private foster care agencies must be accountable for the health of people under their care, and recognize that this responsibility must include TGNC people and Trans related health care. We demand that ACS initiates a full investigation of all the incidents of misallocation of personal funds and the violations of confidentiality issues that have negatively affected the lives of children and youth under their care.
- **We oppose the Bush Administration's "War on Terrorism"** as an excuse to legitimize the expansion of the U.S. as a imperial super power and to justify a national security strategy that is really meant to militarize our borders and heighten surveillance and control over people living in the U.S., separating our communities by fostering feelings of hate, xenophobia, and violence. Every day we see more and more of our basic human rights like healthcare, jobs, education, housing, privacy, self-determination and the right of dissent slipping away from all of us. We must stand up now to 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** yet these incidents continue to be silenced, misclassified or blamed on the victim. The police and the 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 look deeper into the root causes of why these incidents happen. As a society that seeks social justice we seek to find ways of holding people accountable and coming to a joint understanding of how we can make our communities safer for all of us. Like many other oppressed communities like communities of color, immigrants and the poor, TGNC people are also targeted, profiled and brutalized by the police. We demand an end to the profiling, harassment, arrest, brutality and murder that occurs at the hands of the police! These incidents of violence do not occur in isolation, and are aggravated by racism, sexism, classism, xenophobia, misogyny, ageism and damaging strict heterosexist values.

We stand in solidarity with the family of Sean Bell, who are still tirelessly working towards justice after the police were later acquitted of charges. We stand in solidarity with the Jersey 4, 4 Lesbian women arrested in the West Village for defending themselves from a man that assaulted them. We stand in solidarity with Miriam, a transgender woman who was pushed out the window of her 4th floor apt and left for dead. We commemorate the memory of Amanda Milan, Sakia Gunn, Ruby Ordeñana, Gwen Araujo, Erika Keels, Victoria Arellano, Lawrence King, Saneesha Stewart and the many other brave souls we have lost, who struggled and lived their lives fearlessly day in and day out, being true to who they were. They keep the fire of struggle burning within all of us.

On June 27, 2008, TGNC People of Color and allies will take on the streets of New York City once again and demand justice to let the world know that the Stonewall rebellion is not over and we will continue fighting for social and economic justice, raising our voices until we are heard. We call on all social justice activists from communities of color, the LGBT movement, immigrant rights movement, the anti-war movement, the reproductive rights movement, youth and student groups, trade unions and worker organizations, religious communities and HIV/AIDS and social service agencies, both local and organizations around the country to endorse this call to action and to build contingents to march in solidarity together on June 27, 2008.

To endorse the Trans Day of Action for Social and Economic Justice 2008, send an email to endorsetdoa@alp.org, for more information about the march send an email to info4tdoa@alp.org or contact Elizabeth Marie Rivera at 718-596-0342 x18. Join us on MySpace at www.myspace.com/transjusticenyc