

10th November 2021

## **San Diego City HRC Commission**

Dear Commissioners,

Let's join HRC Commissioners from the City and County, Elected Officials, Community leaders, and San Diego citizens to recommit to ending discrimination and transphobia by amplifying the visibility and voices of the transgender community. November 13th, 11AM at the Hillcrest Flagpole on University Ave. at Normal st.

At our October 20th meeting of the City of San Diego's HRC Commission, we had discussion about joining with our County HRC Commissioners to lend our voices and explore ways that we can address the discrimination, hate speech and violence that is perpetrated against the Transgender, Gender Non-conforming and Non-Binary community. While no vote was called the general response was positive and affirmative.

Yesterday, Nov. 9th, The County HRC Commission took up our recommendation and passed it in the affirmative with a nearly unanimous vote. This agenda item did not happen without incident as a County Commissioner not only abstained in the vote but made a judgemental, and inappropriate comment directed at our own Commissioner Julia Legaspi. County HRC Commissioner putting on full display the discrimination, hate speech, disenfranchisement and marginalization we are bringing awareness to during Transgender Awareness Week, in hopes of attaining genuine equality.

November 13<sup>th</sup>-20 is Transgendered Awareness Week highlighting and focusing on the progress and unfinished work in the fight for transgender and non-binary equality. On Nov.20<sup>th</sup>, the week culminates with Transgender Day of Remembrance where the Transgendered flag flown over Hillcrest is lowered to half-mast in honor of those who have been killed and the increase in fatal violence against Gender non-conforming, Non-binary people and Transgender people and those who have been lost to fatal violence over the years.

Transgender Day of Remembrance, founded in 1999 by [Gwendolyn Ann Smith](#), a transgender woman, to memorialize the murder of transgender woman [Rita Hester](#). Started as a web-based project started by Smith it has evolved into an international day of action. Since 2010, TDoR observed in over 185 cities has only grown, while the number of reported cases of anti-transgender hate crimes has grown to an alarming number.

Fatal violence disproportionately affects transgender women of color. Everyday the intersections of racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia deprive San Diegans, employment, housing, healthcare and other necessities, and trans Immigrants and refugees face barriers that threaten their safety and make them vulnerable. Studies from the [National Center for Transgender Equality](#) (NCTE) and the [National LGBTQ Task Force](#) document report that transgender and gender non-conforming individuals face greater systemic discrimination and harassment in education, employment, housing and public accommodations.

Our Gender Non-conforming youth also are affected by a hostile school environment which they experience at four times the rate of their fellow students. The HRC's [analysis](#) found that transgender and gender-expansive students experience all forms of harassment and bullying in our schools and communities, in far greater numbers than their cisgender peers. Students report being afraid to go to school, which results in poorer grades and the narrowing of opportunities after high school. The toll includes higher levels of substance abuse and mental health crises including depression and suicidality,

- 43% were bullied on school property at three times the rate of their cisgender peers;
- 29% reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, compared to 7% of cisgender students;
- 35% reported skipping school due to fear for their safety, compared to 9% of cisgender students;
- 33% reported experiencing sexual violence and 28% reported being raped. These numbers diverge significantly from those of cisgender youth, at three to four times; and
- 29% reported attempting suicide at least once in their life, over four times the national average.

How we can make a difference for the Greater San Diego Region:

- As Commissioners for the City of San Diego we should encourage Mayor Todd Gloria to proclaim the week leading up to Nov. 20th Transgendered Awareness week, and join other forward leaning cities in making safety and equality for all San Diego's Gender Diverse people a priority.
- Work with our City Council, Mayor, and Board of County Supervisors to eliminate stigma against trans and gender non-conforming people, using the correct names and pronouns, supporting laws and policies that prohibit discrimination based on gender identity, uplifting transgender and gender non-conforming voices and building inclusive communities throughout society. HRC's Transgender Justice Initiative was launched in 2019 to dismantle unjust systemic barriers to transgender empowerment and help end the epidemic of violence by

addressing the root causes of the physical danger, hatred and discrimination faced by transgender people in the San Diego region

- Support transgendered and gender diverse youth with support to ensure that youth shelters are inclusive and welcoming to LGBTQ youth who are overrepresented among the homeless youth population with approximately 40 percent of homeless youth identifying as LGBTQ. Our efforts could encourage the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families to issue guidance to assist service providers in understanding their obligations to LGBTQ youth including ensuring that transgender youth have access to gender-specific clothing, programming, and housing consistent with their gender identity.
- Designate a sub-committee in the City and County HRC Commissions on Transgendered and Non-binary equity, inclusion and discrimination complaints. In addition the Sub-Committee will report to the Mayor's LGBTQI+ advisory committee and to the City's new Chief of Race & Equity Officer.

Our combined show of unity will encourage community members to take part and to honor these lives and memories as well as to take the opportunity to reflect on the work that remains to be done.

Opportunities available

Nov. 13<sup>th</sup> – Transgendered Awareness Week Kick off (Press Event) All Commissioners are invited to attend and encouraged to participate along with our County Commissioners in proclaiming a way forward for our entire region.

Where Hillcrest Flag Pole (Normal and University ave.) 11 AM

Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> – Transgender Day of Remembrance. All are invited to attend and show support and honor in remembering those harmed and fatally killed. We look to a time where the numbers are reduced to zero and our transgendered and non-binary friends and family are celebrated and can realize a life time of promise and potential.

Where Waterfront Park 5-6PM

Sincerely,

San Diego City Commissioner

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