

LGBTQ Organizations Unite to Combat Racial Violence

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.” Those words, written over 30 years ago by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, remind us that indifference can never bridge the divide of hate. And, today, they should serve as a call to action to all of us, and to the Movement for LGBTQ equality.

This spring has been a stark and stinging reminder that racism, and its strategic objective, white supremacy, is as defining a characteristic of the American experience as those ideals upon which we claim to hold our democracy — justice, equality, liberty.

- We listened to the haunting pleas of George Floyd for the most basic of human needs — simply, breath — as a Minneapolis police officer kneeled with cruel indifference on his neck.
- We felt the pain of Breonna Taylor’s boyfriend as he called 9-1-1 after plainclothes Louisville police kicked down the door of their home and shot her eight times as she slept in her bed.
- We watched the shooting death of Ahmaud Arbery by white vigilantes in Brunswick, GA, aware that they evaded the consequence of their actions until the video surfaced and sparked national outrage.
- We saw the weaponizing of race by a white woman who pantomimed fear in calling the police on Christian Cooper, a Black gay man bird-watching in Central Park.
- We have heard and read about the killings of transgender people -- Black transgender women in particular — with such regularity, it is no exaggeration to describe it as an epidemic of violence. This year alone, we have lost at least 12 members of our community: Dustin Parker, Neulisa Luciano Ruiz, Yampi Méndez Arocho, Monika Diamond, Lexi, Johanna Metzger, Serena Angelique Velázquez Ramos, Layla Pelaez Sánchez, Penélope Díaz Ramírez, Nina Pop, Helle Jae O’Regan, and Tony McDade.

All of these incidents are stark reminders of why we must speak out when hate, violence, and systemic racism claim — too often with impunity — Black Lives.

The LGBTQ Movement’s work has earned significant victories in expanding the civil rights of LGBTQ people. But what good are civil rights without the freedom to enjoy them?

Many of our organizations have made progress in adopting intersectionality as a core value and have committed to be more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. But this moment requires that we go further — that we make explicit commitments to embrace anti-racism and end white supremacy, not as necessary corollaries to our mission, but as integral to the objective of full equality for LGBTQ people.

We, the undersigned, recognize we cannot remain neutral, nor will awareness substitute for action. The LGBTQ community knows about the work of resisting police brutality and violence.

We celebrate June as Pride Month, because it commemorates, in part, our resisting police harassment and brutality at Stonewall in New York City, and earlier in California, when such violence was common and expected. We remember it as a breakthrough moment when we refused to accept humiliation and fear as the price of living fully, freely, and authentically.

We understand what it means to rise up and push back against a culture that tells us we are less than, that our lives don't matter. Today, we join together again to say [#BlackLivesMatter](#) and commit ourselves to the action those words require.

Affirmations, Dave Garcia, Executive Director
AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Aisha N. Davis, Director of Policy
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Anthony D. Romero, Executive Director
Arkansas Transgender Equity Collaborative, Tonya Estell, Board of Directors
Campaign for Southern Equality, Rev. Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, Executive Director
Cathedral Of Hope UCC, Rev. Dr. Neil G Thomas, Senior Pastor
Center on Halsted, Modesto Valle, CEO
Equality Arizona, Michael Soto, Executive Director
Equality California, Rick Chavez Zbur, Executive Director
Equality Delaware, Mark Purpura and Lisa Goodman, Board Chairs
Equality Federation, Rebecca Isaacs, Executive Director
Equality Florida, Nadine Smith, Executive Director
Equality Illinois, Brian Johnson, CEO
Equality New Mexico, Adrian N. Carver, Executive Director
Equality New York, Amanda Babine, Executive Director
Equality North Carolina, Kendra R Johnson, Executive Director
Equality Ohio, Grant Stancliff, Communications Director
Equality Texas, Ricardo Martinez, CEO
Fair Wisconsin, Megin McDonell, Executive Director
Fairness Campaign, Tamara Russell, Board Member
Family Equality, Denise Brogan-Kator, Chief Policy Officer
Freedom for All Americans, Kasey Suffredini, CEO & National Campaign Director
FreeState Justice, Mark Procopio, Executive Director
Gay City: Seattle's LGBTQ Center, Fred Swanson, Executive Director
Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), Kelsey Louie, CEO
Georgia Equality, Jeff Graham, Executive Director
GLAAD, Sarah Kate Ellis, President and CEO
GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), Janson Wu, Executive Director
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality, Hector Vargas, Executive Director
GLSEN, Eliza Byard, Executive Director
GSAFE, Brian Juchems, Co-Director
Human Rights Campaign, Alphonso David, President
Immigration Equality, Aaron C. Morris, Executive Director

Ingersoll Gender Center, Karter Booher, Executive Director
Lambda Legal, Kevin Jennings, CEO
LGBT Community Center of the Desert, Mike Thompson, CEO
LGBT Life Center, Stacie Walls, CEO
Louisiana Trans Advocates, Peyton Rose Michelle, Director of Operations
Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition, Tre'Andre Valentine, Executive Director
MassEquality, Tanya V. Neslusan, Executive Director
Movement Advancement Project, Ineke Mushovic, Executive Director
National Black Justice Coalition, David Johns, Executive Director
National Center for Lesbian Rights, Imani Rupert-Gordon, Executive Director
National Center for Transgender Equality, Mara Keisling, Executive Director
National LGBTQ Task Force, Rea Carey, Executive Director
NMAC, Paul Kawata, Executive Director
Oakland LGBTQ Community Center, Joe Hawkins, CEO
Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, Erin Uritus, CEO
One Colorado, Daniel Ramos, Executive Director
One Iowa, Courtney Reyes, Executive Director
OutFront Minnesota, Monica Meyer, Executive Director
OutNebraska, Abbi Swatsworth, Executive Director
Pacific Center for Human Growth, Michelle Gonzalez, Executive Director
PFLAG National, Brian K. Bond, Executive Director
PRC, Brett Andrews, CEO
Rainbow Community Center of Contra Costa County, Kiku Johnson, Executive Director
Resource Center, Cece Cox, CEO
Sacramento LGBT Community Center, David Heitstuman, CEO
San Francisco Community Health Center, Lance Toma, CEO
SF LGBT Center, Rebecca Rolfe, Executive Director
SAGE, Michael Adams, CEO
San Diego LGBT Community Center, Cara Dessert, CEO
Silver State Equality, André C. Wade, State Director
Tennessee Equality Project, Chris Sanders, Executive Director
The Diversity Center, Sharon E Papo, Executive Director
The Gala Pride and Diversity Center, Michelle Call, Executive Director
The Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgender Community Center, Glennnda Testone, Executive Director
The LGBTQ Center, Long Beach, Porter Gilberg, Executive Director
The LGBTQ Center, NYC, Reg Calcagno, Senior Director of Government Affairs
The Trevor Project, Amit Paley, CEO
Transgender Education Network of Texas (TENT), Emmett Schelling, Executive Director
Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund (TLDEF), Andy Marra, Executive Director

TransOhio, James Knapp, Chair & Executive Director
Uptown Gay & Lesbian Alliance (UGLA), Carl Matthes, President
Wyoming Equality, Sara Burlingame, Executive Director

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