



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN
FOUNDATION™



A TIME TO ACT

FATAL VIOLENCE
AGAINST
TRANSGENDER
PEOPLE IN
AMERICA 2017

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NOW, MORE THAN EVER, WE MUST STAND AGAINST HATE



Transgender people in America face bigotry and unjust barriers that threaten their dignity and too often put them at risk of violence. In 2017, when the flames of hate and discrimination are fanned by those at the very highest levels of government, the consequences can be deadly.

When the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation began monitoring and publicizing the killings of transgender people in 2013, we did so in part due to the limited public awareness of an epidemic impacting some of the most vulnerable members of our society. Victims of this violence were often misgendered and misnamed in police and news reports, as they sometimes still are today. Journalists, unfamiliar with transgender people and the unique challenges they face, commonly conflated sexual orientation with gender identity; some even quoted derogatory and transphobic names spoken by witnesses when describing the deceased. Few

connected the disturbing pattern of fatal violence that threatens the lives of thousands of Americans.

Today, HRC and the Trans People of Color Coalition stand among a network of activists and reporters who share information and elevate the tragic stories of those taken by anti-transgender violence, in hopes of bringing attention to a heartbreaking but preventable crisis. **While greater visibility is crucial to this effort, it is not enough. Over the past five years, more than 100 transgender people have been killed in the United States. In 2017, more transgender people have been killed than in any year in at least a decade.**

Each of the stories featured in this report is unique, tragic and devastating. They reflect the obstacles that many transgender Americans — but especially young transgender women of color — face in their daily lives. Unpacking these stories is a difficult but necessary process if we as a society want

to protect the most vulnerable and address the root causes for their unjust and premature deaths. While there is no single fix to this complex crisis, many solutions are right at our fingertips. In the later pages of this report, we detail ways in which individuals and their communities can take actionable steps to ensure their transgender family, friends and neighbors can live safely and freely.

There is still so much to be done to combat transphobia across our country and around the world. Nowhere is that more evident than at the doorstep of the White House, where Donald Trump and Mike Pence have made discrimination against LGBTQ people, as well as so many others, a top priority. Now, more than ever, we must continue to stand with our transgender friends and family in the fight for a world free of fear, violence and discrimination.



Chad Griffin
President
Human Rights Campaign



Kylar W. Broadus
Executive Director
Trans People of Color Coalition

TWENTY-FIVE LIVES SENSELESSLY ENDED. TWENTY-FIVE STORIES THAT MUST NOT GO UNHEEDED.

AT LEAST 25 TRANSGENDER PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THE UNITED STATES SINCE THE BEGINNING OF 2017. EIGHTY-FOUR PERCENT OF THEM WERE PEOPLE OF COLOR, AND 80 PERCENT WERE WOMEN. MORE THAN THREE IN FOUR WERE UNDER THE AGE OF 35.

We say “at least” because the stories detailed in this report very likely undercount the number of transgender people who were killed in the United States this year. **Data collection is often incomplete or unreliable when it comes to violent and fatal crimes against transgender people.** Some victims’ deaths may go unreported, while others may not be identified as transgender in the media, often because authorities, journalists and/or family members refuse to acknowledge their gender identity.

The unique but tragic details of each memorial bear reading and must be honored — these are not numbers but valuable human lives lost far too soon. Those killed came from and lived in rural, suburban and metropolitan communities; they were siblings, parents, advocates, people of faith, students and friends, who had bright futures and dreams.

Sadly representative of the discrimination transgender people face in too many facets of daily life, their killings were committed by lovers, acquaintances, family members, neighbors and strangers. Others faced the questionable use of deadly force at the hands of police. Many of their murders remain unsolved.

While the details of every one of these cases differ, we know that fatal violence — and gun violence in particular — disproportionately affects young transgender women of color. Across the United States, but especially in the South, where most of the victims resided, transphobia, homophobia, sexism, racism and poverty heighten the vulnerability of transgender people from an early age.

Even in the face of physical danger, hatred and discrimination — sometimes ruthlessly endorsed and enforced by those at the highest levels of our government — transgender Americans live courageously and overcome unjust barriers in all corners of this country. The individuals featured in this report are no different. In life, each one went to extraordinary lengths to live authentically as who they were. In death, their heartbreaking stories serve as reminders of the challenges countless transgender people face in our society every single day.

WHO IS TRANSGENDER?

IN THIS REPORT, WE USE THE TERM TRANSGENDER TO DESCRIBE PEOPLE WHOSE GENDER IDENTITY IS DIFFERENT FROM WHAT IS TYPICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE SEX ASSIGNED TO THEM AT BIRTH (I.E., THE SEX LISTED ON THEIR BIRTH CERTIFICATE). MANY TRANSGENDER PEOPLE ARE WOMEN OR MEN, WHILE MANY OTHERS HAVE A DIFFERENT GENDER IDENTITY, SUCH AS NON-BINARY, GENDER FLUID, GENDERQUEER, GENDER DIVERSE OR GENDER EXPANSIVE.



MESHA CALDWELL

On January 4, Mesha Caldwell, 41, a Black transgender woman, was found shot to death on a road near Canton, Mississippi. Caldwell was a well-known hair and makeup artist in the area and well-liked by friends. One friend said, “I think people will miss her style, her personality. She won many hair battles, and she hosted competitions in Canton for the young people, so she will be missed greatly.” Another friend and former roommate, transgender advocate Evonne Kaho, said that Caldwell was “a happy person who loved everyone and never met a stranger.” Misgendered in initial media reports, police are investigating her death as a homicide but no suspects have been named.

MESHA CALDWELL

SEAN RYAN HAKE



SEAN RYAN HAKE

On January 6, Sean Ryan Hake, 23, was shot multiple times by a police officer in Sharon, Pennsylvania. Hake, who had previously posted on Youtube about his own process toward self-acceptance as a transgender man, was killed in his home after Hake's mother called 911 to report that her son was suicidal and acting violent. One friend recalled that Sean "had a genuinely good heart and he had struggled with his problems." Police say Hake first threatened to put a razor blade to his mother's throat and then repeatedly refused police orders to put down a utility knife before they opened fire. The District Attorney has not pressed charges, arguing that the shooting was justified. On July 21, Hake's family filed a lawsuit against the Sharon Police Department, alleging that the officers involved in the incident violated his civil rights and used excessive force. In September, a federal judge ordered that mediation for the case be held by November.

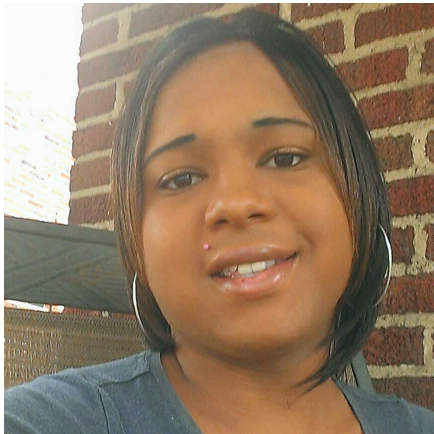


JAMIE LEE WOUNDED ARROW

Jamie Lee Wounded Arrow, 28, an American Indian woman who identified as transgender and two-spirit, was found stabbed to death in her apartment in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, on January 6. A suspect, 25-year-old Joshua Rayvon LeClaire, has been charged with her murder. A member of the Oglala Lakota tribe, she grew up on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. According to friends, Wounded Arrow worked in customer service and loved to spend her free time at the library. She studied social work at Oglala Lakota College and nursing at a Georgetown University summer program. Friends remembered her as an honest, compassionate person who made an impact on those who met her.

JAMIE LEE WOUNDED ARROW

JOJO STRIKER



JOJO STRIKER

“Funny and entertaining” are just a few words people used to describe JoJo Striker, 23, a Black transgender woman, who was found dead in a garage with a single gunshot wound in Toledo, Ohio, on February 8. Her family loved her deeply. Although police do not have any leads, Striker’s mother, Shanda Striker, said, “The police told us to leave it alone but that will never happen because I will always search for [JoJo’s] killer. This is a hate crime and it needs to stop.” Ohio’s hate crimes law does not include crimes motivated by gender identity. Striker was misgendered in the initial media and police reports.



JAQUARRIUS HOLLAND

Jaquarrius Holland, 18, was found shot to death with a single gunshot wound to the head in Monroe, Louisiana, on February 19. One friend, Chesna Littleberry, said that Holland was “like a younger sister” and had helped her learn to accept herself. Media coverage initially misreported Holland’s gender, and advocates did not learn that she was a transgender woman until her family and friends corrected those reports on social media. Holland, who also used the name Jaquarrius Brown, was shot after a “verbal altercation” with Malcom Derricktavios Harvey, who has been arrested, charged and is awaiting trial for second-degree murder.

JAQUARRIUS HOLLAND

TIARA RICHMOND



TIARA RICHMOND

Tiara Richmond, also known as Keke Collier, 24, was fatally shot on the morning of February 21. A transgender woman of color, she was found dead on the same street in Chicago, Illinois, as two other transgender women who were killed in 2012. According to local media reports, Richmond was in a vehicle with a man when the man fired shots. She was found lying on the ground nearby with gunshot wounds to her chest, arm and hand, and died later that day at the hospital. Richmond was originally misgendered in media reports and by police, who do not yet have any leads on the shooter. She loved to dance, was known by friends as the life of the party, and is survived by three siblings.

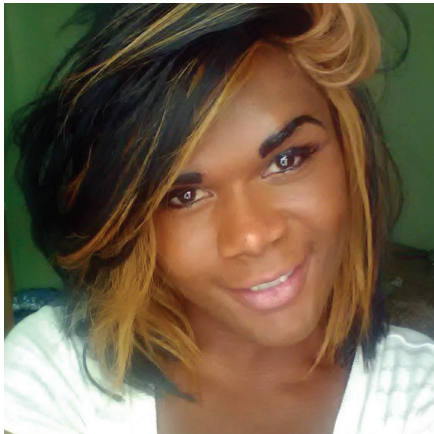


CHYNA GIBSON

Nationally known performer Chyna Gibson, 31, a Black transgender woman, was found shot to death in the parking lot outside of a clothing store in New Orleans, Louisiana, on February 25. Gibson, who went by the stage name Chyna Doll Dupree, was a much-loved performer in the ballroom and pageant communities. She was visiting friends and family in New Orleans to celebrate Mardi Gras at the time of her death. Since her death, New Orleans police have sought out multiple persons of interest for questioning, but have yet to make a statement on a suspect or whether they consider Gibson's death to be motivated by bias."

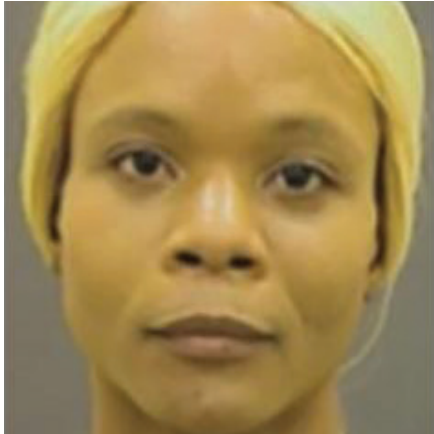
CHYNA GIBSON

CIARA MCELVEEN



CIARA MCELVEEN

Ciara McElveen, 26, a transgender woman of color, was stabbed to death in New Orleans, Louisiana, on February 27. According to a witness, McElveen was stabbed by a man in his vehicle, after which the perpetrator then pulled her from the vehicle and slammed her head to the ground, before returning to the car and driving away. McElveen was taken to a nearby hospital where she later succumbed to her injuries. Although there is some video evidence and the police were at one time questioning a person of interest, there are currently no suspects. Known by friends as a fun-loving, beautiful and outgoing person, McElveen performed outreach for the homeless community.

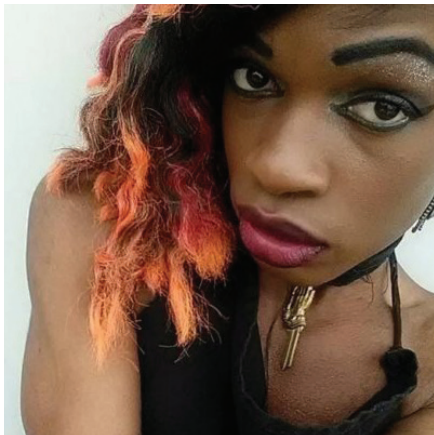


ALPHONZA WATSON

Alphonza Watson, 38, a Black transgender woman, was shot and killed in Baltimore, Maryland, on March 22. Witnesses told police they heard cries for help and gunshots before seeing two unidentified men speed away from the scene in a car. Watson was shot in the stomach and taken to Johns Hopkins Hospital, where she was pronounced dead shortly after arrival. Watson's mother said her daughter went by the nickname "Peaches" and was "the sunshine of our family." Watson loved cooking and gardening and was known to her loved ones as a "caring, passionate, fun person to be around," who was "always in a talkative and playful mood." According to her mother, Watson worked at an upscale retailer in Virginia where she was a top performing salesperson.

ALPHONZA WATSON

KENNE MCFADDEN



KENNE MCFADDEN

After initially misgendering her and mistaking her death for a drowning, police in San Antonio, Texas, have classified the death of Kenne McFadden, 27, as a homicide. McFadden, a Black transgender woman, was found on April 9 in the San Antonio River, into which police believe she was pushed. Friends of McFadden described her as outgoing, assertive, charismatic and lovable, calling her “everything you would expect in a friend.” McFadden worked as a waitress, enjoyed singing and poetry, and was in the process of transitioning.



CHAY REED

Chay Reed, 28, a Black transgender woman, was shot and killed on April 21 in Miami, Florida. Reed was shot in the stomach while running across the street. Her attacker fled the scene and is still at large. Media coverage and police reports initially misidentified her gender. Police say there is “no evidence to indicate this was a hate crime” and are still looking for witnesses. Florida’s hate crimes law does not include crimes motivated by gender identity. Reed was known for her dance moves and friends say she was sweet, hilarious and full of life.

CHAY
REED

KENNETH BOSTICK



KENNETH BOSTICK

Kenneth Bostick, 59, died on May 5 of a severe head injury sustained on April 25 in New York City. Bostick was struck in the head with a metal object, in what appears to be an unprovoked attack. Joseph Griffin, 26, was charged with manslaughter and criminal mischief on May 19. Bostick was homeless for much of the past decade and had been living in a shelter since March. According to social worker and friend Jennifer Daisy, Bostick was the “kindest, sweetest, gentlest person.” Conflicting media reports initially led to uncertainty about Bostick’s gender identity, but interviews based on those who knew him have since confirmed that he identified as a transgender man.

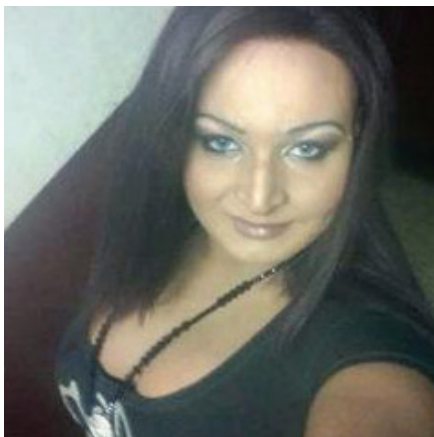


SHERRELL FAULKNER

Sherrell Faulkner, 46, a Black transgender woman, died on May 16 of injuries sustained during an attack on November 30, 2016 in Charlotte, North Carolina. Faulkner was assaulted and originally found near a dumpster in one of Charlotte's LGBTQ-friendly neighborhoods. Friends and family remember her as “genuine,” “hilarious” and deeply religious. After her death, the attack is now being investigated as a homicide; no arrests have been made.

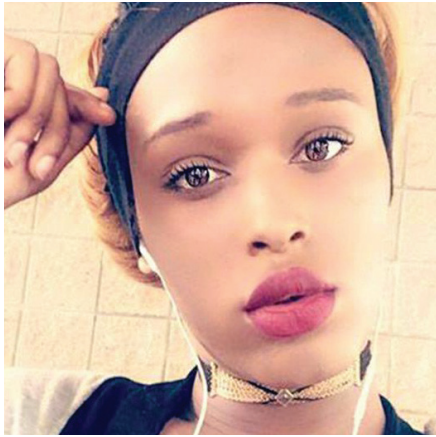
SHERRELL FAULKNER

KENDRA MARIE ADAMS



KENDRA MARIE ADAMS

Kendra Marie Adams, 28, was found dead on June 13 with burns on her body in a building that was under construction in Ithaca, New York. Michael A. Davis, 45, of Dryden, has been charged with second-degree murder and first-degree arson and police say he had a “personal relationship” with Adams. Adams also went by Josie Berrios, the name used in initial media reports on her death. Although initial reports by police misgendered Adams based on her identification, police were swift to correct the record. According to friends, Adams was a mixed race woman of color, “a little latina, a little Egyptian, and others all of which she was proud of.” She was a well-known local performer and a founding member of the House of Merlot.

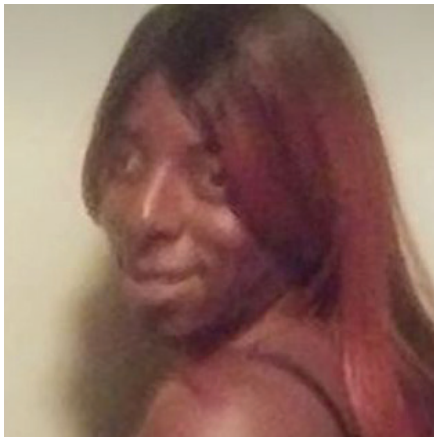


AVA LE'RAY BARRIN

Ava Le'Ray Barrin, 17, a Black transgender woman, was shot and killed in Athens, Georgia, on June 25. She was fatally shot in the chest during an altercation with Jalen Breon Brown, 21, in the parking lot of an Athens apartment building. Brown has been arrested and charged with murder and aggravated assault. Friends remember Barrin as a "social butterfly, unapologetically real" and an "amazing girl" who "loved to make people laugh." Barrin had ambitious goals for her life and aspired to move to Los Angeles to make her dream of becoming a model a reality.

AVA LE'RAY BARRIN

EBONY MORGAN



EBONY MORGAN

Ebony Morgan, 28, a Black transgender woman, was shot multiple times in Lynchburg, Virginia, on July 2. Morgan was transferred to a local hospital where she succumbed to her injuries. Authorities have arrested and charged Kenneth Allen Kelly, Jr. with second degree murder and use of a firearm in commission of a felony. Police have not publicly disclosed whether the homicide was motivated by bias, but are investigating whether Morgan's gender identity was a factor.



TEETEE DANGERFIELD

TeeTee Dangerfield, 32, a Black transgender woman, was shot and killed on July 31 in Atlanta, Georgia. Dangerfield was found with multiple gunshot wounds outside of her vehicle at her apartment complex. A restaurant server and union shop steward, Dangerfield had just purchased a three-bedroom house and was beloved by her colleagues as a happy, vivacious person. Tyrone Kemp has been arrested and charged with malice murder.

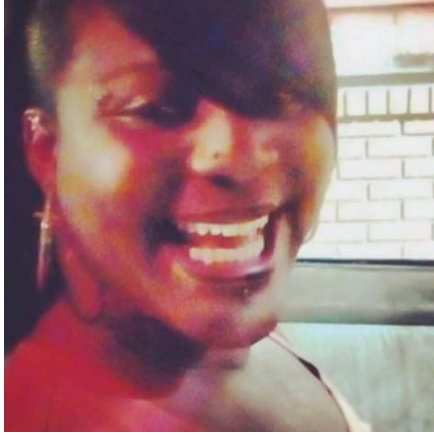
TEETEE
DANGERFIELD

GWYNEVERE RIVER SONG



GWYNEVERE RIVER SONG

Gwynevere River Song, 26, was shot and killed in Waxahachie, Texas, on August 12. They died at home after an argument escalated into violence and Song was pronounced dead at the scene. Another adult, whose name has not been released, was taken to a hospital and the investigation is ongoing. Described by their mother as “incredibly smart” with a mind “like a sponge full of knowledge,” Song was a 2015 graduate of the University of Texas at Austin. According to their Facebook profile, they identified as “femandrogyné” and as a member of the bisexual community.

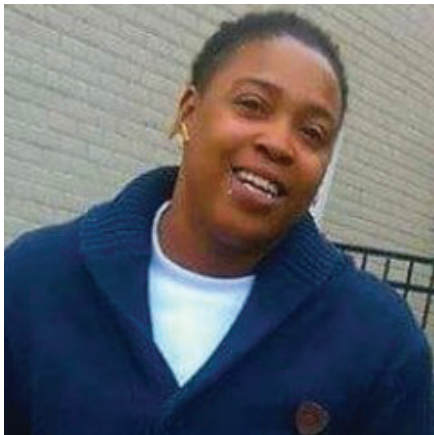


KIWI HERRING

Kiwi Herring, 30, a married Black transgender woman and mother of three young children, was shot and killed by police in St. Louis, Missouri, on August 22 during an argument with her neighbor. Police were dispatched after Herring allegedly stabbed her neighbor. Following an altercation on the scene, police discharged their weapons. Herring was pronounced dead at the scene. Relatives suggest the neighbor was transphobic and that excessive force by police led to her death. Friends and family describe Herring as generous in spirit and “always the life of the party.”

KIWI HERRING

KASHMIRE NAZIER REDD



KASHMIRE NAZIER REDD

Kashmire Nazier Redd, 28, a transgender man and person of color, was killed by his partner on September 5 in Gates, New York. Redd's partner, Doris Carrasquillo, 40, allegedly stabbed him several times during an argument inside their shared apartment. Redd left the building and collapsed on the front lawn before Gates police responded to the incident. Redd died soon after at the hospital. Police have ruled this a domestic violence case and Doris Carrasquillo is now facing one count of first-degree manslaughter.

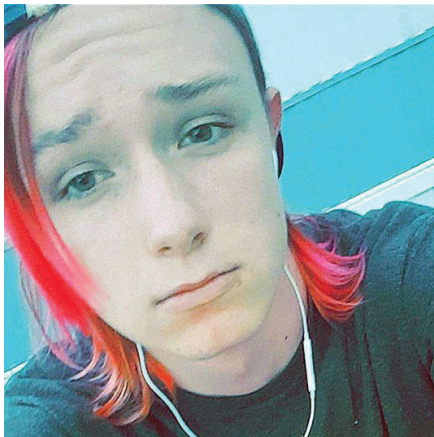


DERRICKA BANNER

Derricka Banner, 26, a Black transgender woman, was found shot to death in Charlotte, North Carolina, on September 12. Banner was a resident of Lenoir, North Carolina, and was in Charlotte visiting friends when she was shot and killed in a vehicle. Montavious Sanchez Berry was arrested by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg police in connection with the killing. Berry, 18, has been charged with murder, armed robbery and shooting into an occupied vehicle. According to her godmother, Denise Helton, the two would speak on the phone every morning to say "I love you." Other loved ones described Banner as a "playful spirit" and "go-getter" who enjoyed life.

DERRICKA BANNER

ALLY STEINFELD



ALLY STEINFELD

Ally Steinfeld, 17, a White transgender woman, was stabbed to death in Missouri in early September. Full of energy that matched her bright pink hair, Steinfeld loved listening to music and is survived by her partner, Marie Carma, who described her as “sweet, kind, loving and caring.” Steinfeld was stabbed multiple times, including in her genitals, and her eyes were gouged out by her attackers. Her body was then burned in an attempt to conceal the crime. Regardless of the brutality of her murder, police do not consider her murder a hate crime.*

*In September, HRC sent a letter calling on the Missouri attorney general to oversee the investigation of this murder as a potential hate crime. Although the attorney general’s office confirmed receipt of the letter, they currently do not plan to take action in this case. Three people have been charged with several crimes, including first-degree murder, while a fourth person has been charged with abandonment of a corpse and tampering with evidence.



SCOUT SCHULTZ

Scout Schultz, 21, a student at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Georgia, was shot dead on September 16 by a Georgia Tech Police Department officer after campus police responded to a call reporting a person wielding a knife. The Schultz family attorney told local media that he believed Schultz was having a mental breakdown and that the officers overreacted in their response. Schultz identified as non-binary and intersex and used they/them pronouns. Described as an “inspirational member of our community and a constant fighter for human rights,” they were an outspoken progressive and LGBTQ rights activist, including serving as President of the Georgia Tech Pride Alliance. The shooting is currently being investigated by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

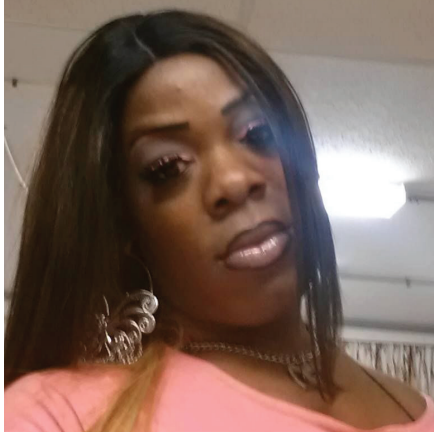
SCOUT SCHULTZ

STEPHANIE MONTEZ



STEPHANIE MONTEZ

Stephanie Montez, 47, a transgender Latina woman, was murdered on October 21 near Robstown, Texas. The police, who misgendered Montez in initial reports and called her a “man in a dress,” found her body with multiple gunshot wounds to the chest, shoulder and abdomen. The investigation into her murder is ongoing. Loved ones remember her as a sweet and supportive friend who loved to dance.



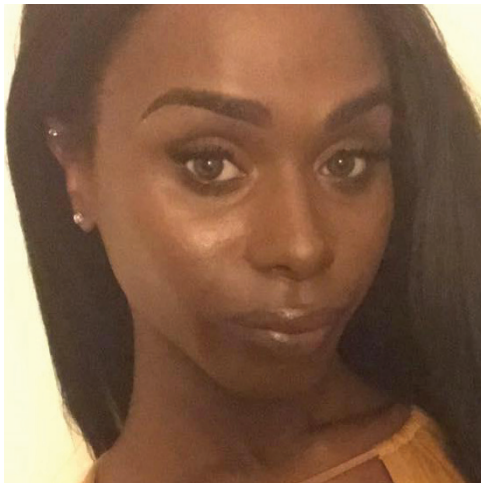
CANDACE TOWNS

Candace Towns, 30, a Black transgender woman, was found shot to death on a driveway near where she was staying in Macon, Georgia, on October 31. A local newspaper reported that in July 2009 Towns was previously shot in the ankle, just a few blocks from where her body was found. Town's best friend, Malaysa Monroe, remembered her fondly; "If I needed anything she would give it to me. She would give me the clothes off her back." Police are investigating the murder and do not have any suspects.

CANDACE TOWNS

OF NOTE: LATE 2016 & OTHER DEATHS

This document marks the third year HRC has published a report tracking Fatal Violence Against Transgender People in America. Because last year's report was released in November 2016 to coincide with Transgender Day of Remembrance, India Monroe's story was not included. We remember her life and death here.



INDIA MONROE

India Monroe, 29, a Black transgender woman, was shot to death in a Newport News, Virginia, home on December 21, 2016. Her body was found alongside the body of Mark Gray, 37. Law enforcement have ruled Monroe's death a homicide and are investigating it as a domestic incident. Monroe was originally misgendered in police and news reports. Known to be "sweet and kind," friends who attended her funeral note that she was buried under her birth name and made to appear male, including wearing a suit and having had her hair cut short. It is unclear whether Monroe was out to her family.

In the story below, news reports indicate that the victim did not identify as transgender but may have been targeted by his attacker due to anti-transgender (and/or broadly anti-LGBTQ) bias. Because of the ways anti-transgender bias — based on both perceived and real gender identities, as well as bias against those who are gender non-conforming — can put someone at risk for violence, we have included his story below.



ANTHONY TORRES

Anthony Torres, 40, also known by his gender non-conforming alter ego, “Bubbles,” was shot and killed in San Francisco, California, on September 9, 2017. Torres was well-known in the transgender community and beyond as an activist, artist and DJ. “The city loses a loving, special character, the type of person that makes San Francisco the great, unique place that it is,” said one friend. Members of the community say the shooter emerged from a nearby strip club, walked across the street where Torres was playing music, and began arguing with him before opening fire. Preliminary police reports of the shooting described a female victim and Torres’s own attorney initially identified him as a transgender woman, but friends have since clarified that he identified as a gay man “who enjoyed wearing women’s clothing and makeup.” Police have yet to identify a suspect.

THE STATISTICS BEHIND THE FACES

Transgender women are estimated to face more than four times the risk of becoming homicide victims than the general population of all women.¹

Accurate data and information can be a critical tool used to combat anti-transgender violence and its pernicious role in stifling and threatening transgender lives. However, as was the case in many of the stories presented here, tracking the violence is often impeded by anti-transgender bias itself. Law enforcement, journalists and sometimes even family members often refuse to accept and acknowledge victims' gender identities. This can lead to preliminary police reports or news articles that misgender victims, making it difficult to track cases as they occur.

As it does in many facets of life for transgender people, stigma and discrimination can further complicate data collection even beyond murder cases. Fear of harassment or discrimination from local police and government agencies can prevent transgender people, especially women of color, from coming forward and reporting crimes or seeking help. News media may further stigmatize victims by highlighting arrest records and using mugshots instead of personal photos when reporting their deaths.

In the face of these challenges, HRC stands among a number of other civil rights groups and news organizations that track and share information on fatal violence against transgender people. In doing so, we hope to lift up the brave lives of those lost too soon, while seeking justice for both their deaths and the rights of transgender people everywhere to live freely and safely.

¹ Estimate from [Addressing Anti-Transgender Violence: Exploring Realities, Challenges and Solutions for Policymakers and Community Advocates](#), Human Rights Campaign and Trans People of Color Coalition, 2015.

SINCE JANUARY 2013, HRC AND TPOCC HAVE RECORDED AT LEAST **102 TRANSGENDER PEOPLE** WHO WERE VICTIMS OF FATAL VIOLENCE.

At least 87 were transgender people of color

Fatal violence disproportionately impacts transgender people of color. Seventy-five victims tracked in the past five years of reporting have been Black or African American, while 10 have identified as Hispanic or Latinx.

Most were transgender women

At least 88 transgender women were victims of fatal violence, as well as seven transgender men and seven others with a different (e.g., non-binary) or unknown gender identity. In the latter case, some victims' gender identities remain uncertain due to the limited information provided by police reports or news articles, especially in incidents occurring further back in 2013 or 2014.

More than three-quarters were under the age of 35

This figure includes four minors under the age of 18, and 27 individuals between the ages of 18 and 25. Transgender youth face significant challenges in their homes, schools and communities, including harassment, family rejection, and homelessness.

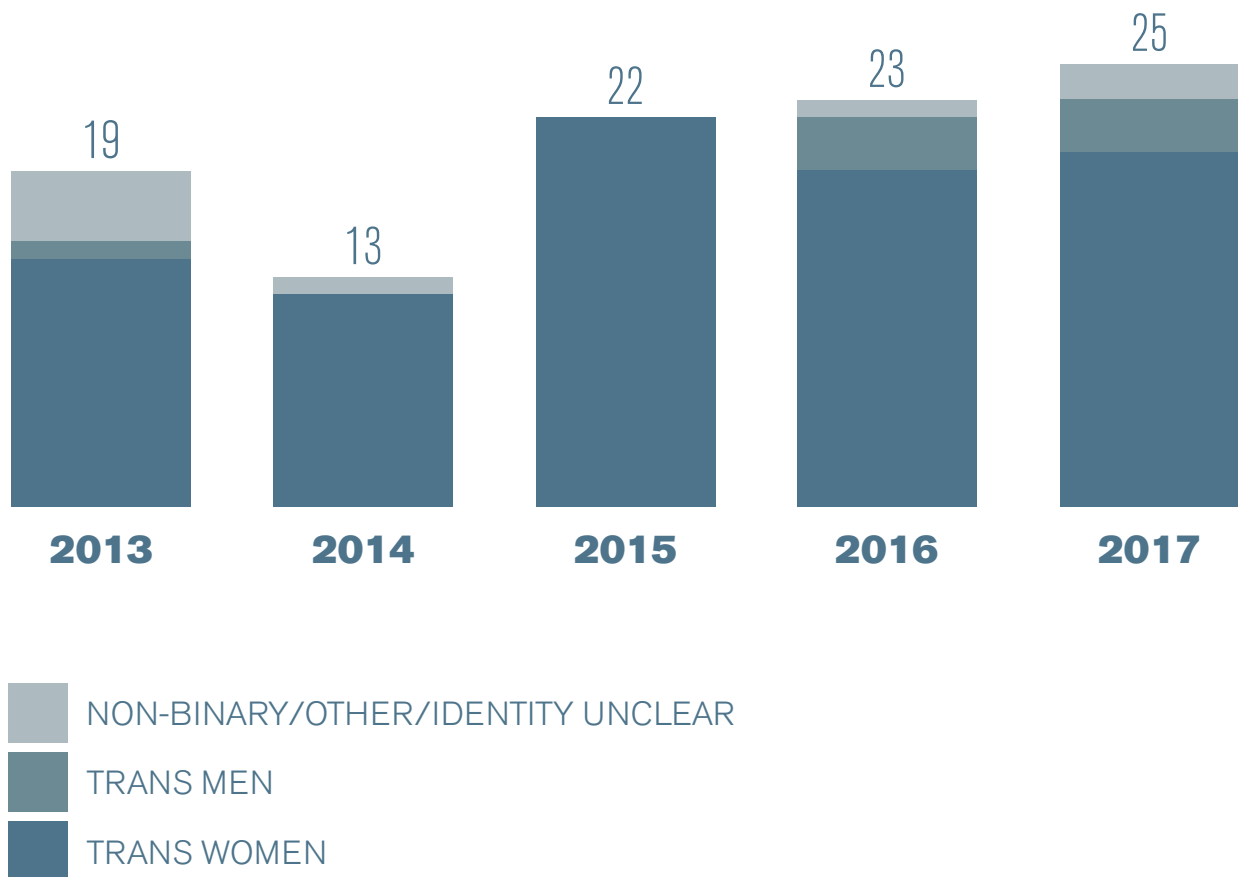
Most were victims of gun violence

As it does in many communities in America, gun violence significantly threatens the lives of transgender people and especially transgender people of color. Since 2013, at least 61 transgender victims have died from gunshot wounds. Four of these cases were sustained in altercations with police, including instances where the use of deadly force has been questioned.

More than half lived in the South

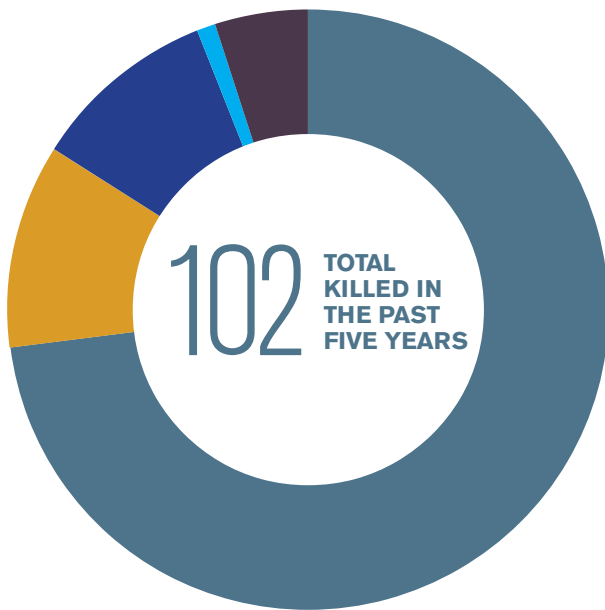
Over the past five years, 55 victims were killed in the South, including 16 of the 25 victims reported so far in 2017. Louisiana, a state which comprises only 1.5 percent of the U.S. population, has alone seen 10 percent of known cases since 2013. Among all regions in the country, the South has the fewest states that currently provide legal protections for LGBTQ people across a wide range of issues, including education, employment, hate crimes, housing and public accommodations.

KNOWN CASES OF FATAL VIOLENCE AGAINST TRANSGENDER PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES **BY GENDER IDENTITY, 2013 - 2017**



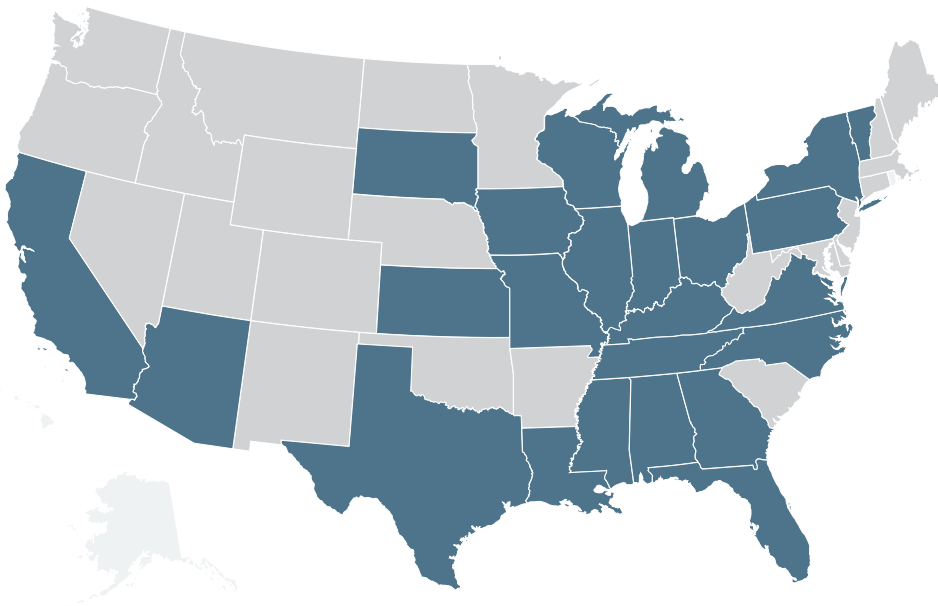
DATA AS OF NOVEMBER 6, 2017. COMPILED BASED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED BY POLICE AND NEWS REPORTS, WHICH MAY NOT ALWAYS BE COMPLETE OR FULLY ACCURATE.

BY RACE / ETHNICITY, 2013 - 2017



COUNT FOR HISPANIC OR LATINX INCLUDES ONE INDIVIDUAL WHO IDENTIFIED AS LATINA AND MIXED RACE.

BY STATE, 2013 - 2017



ALABAMA	2
ARIZONA	2
CALIFORNIA	10
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	1
FLORIDA	6
GEORGIA	7
IOWA	1
ILLINOIS	3
INDIANA	1
KANSAS	1
KENTUCKY	1
LOUISIANA	10
MARYLAND	7
MICHIGAN	4
MISSOURI	4
MISSISSIPPI	2
NORTH CAROLINA	3
NEW JERSEY	1
NEW YORK	4
OHIO	8
PENNSYLVANIA	5
SOUTH DAKOTA	1
TENNESSEE	2
TEXAS	9
VIRGINIA	5
VERMONT	1
WISCONSIN	1

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TOTAL U.S. 102

ADDRESSING ANTI-TRANSGENDER VIOLENCE

DISMANTLING A HISTORY OF DISCRIMINATION AND SYSTEMIC BARRIERS

While every story highlighted in this report is unique and tragic, they all also reflect a legacy of intolerance, hate and discrimination that transgender people must navigate and surmount every day. Anti-transgender violence doesn't occur in a vacuum; it is often a result of a culture that devalues the lives and dignity of LGBTQ people. Indeed, in many states, anti-transgender bias is ingrained and systematically enforced in nearly all aspects of life, including in laws and government agencies, schools, housing, health care and employment.

For too many in our country and throughout the world, the impact of transphobia can be further compounded by racism, sexism and heterosexism. Intersectional identities and the systemic barriers associated with them can limit opportunities for transgender women of color in particular, while simultaneously

putting them at risk of severe violence.

As a result, many of the most vulnerable transgender people in our society face barriers to accessing basic needs. Especially in states and areas where anti-discrimination laws do not exist or are simply not enforced, they may be unable to find gainful employment, obtain stable housing, or access health care services.

The sections below detail the ways in which discriminatory policies and practices deny dignity to transgender people, and, in many cases, implicitly or explicitly endorse their status as second-class citizens. Dismantling these barriers — in policy as well as in society at large — are key steps to addressing anti-transgender violence.

UNRESPONSIVE AND DISRESPECTFUL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Only 16 states plus the District of Columbia currently have laws that address hate or bias crimes based on gender identity

Inequities in the existing justice system continue to lead transgender people to mistrust or eschew the very systems supposedly designated to protect them. Many transgender people, and especially people of color, avoid interaction with law enforcement because they fear harassment, intimidation or incarceration — even when they themselves are victims of crime. Nearly half of Black and Latinx transgender people who have interacted with the police [report](#) receiving disrespectful treatment or harassment from officers.

The lack of respect afforded toward transgender people by many law enforcement officers and other officials may have root causes that go far beyond any individual law enforcement agency, but they are also apparent in many of the stories in this report. Many victims are misgendered in initial and even subsequent police reports. Other times, prosecutors refuse to investigate or charge their murders as hate crimes, even when bias may have been a factor in their deaths. And in three of the cases this year — Sean Ryan Hake, Kiwi Herring and Scout Schultz — the individuals perished in fatal altercations with police officers, in instances where witnesses and family members have questioned the use of deadly force.

UNEMPLOYMENT, JOB DISCRIMINATION AND POVERTY

Nearly one third of transgender people live in poverty, many relying on the underground economy and lacking access to health care and stable housing

Transgender people are four times as likely to live in extreme poverty, with even higher rates for people of color. The unemployment rate among transgender people is double the national rate.

Only 20 states and the District of Columbia prohibit workplace discrimination based on gender identity. Consequently, nine in 10 transgender people who are

employed report experiencing harassment at work. Nearly a third say that have been fired, denied a promotion, or experienced mistreatment by an employer because they are transgender or gender non-conforming.

Unemployment and poverty go hand in hand with access to health care or stable housing, which may result in unaddressed mental and physical health conditions. Many of those living in poverty rely on the underground economy to survive, including sex work, drug sales and other currently criminalized work. One in five transgender people report having participated in these activities for income at some point in their lives. These dangerous situations may put transgender people at a higher risk of police harassment, sexual assault and fatal violence.

DENYING IDENTITY

Many states place undue barriers on transgender people who seek to obtain identity documents that accurately reflect their gender identity, including requiring a court order or documented medical certification

From daily transportation to air travel, housing to health care, and education to employment, government-issued identification is critical for almost every aspect of life. However, transgender people face significant barriers to obtaining accurate identity documents. Some states bar individuals from changing the gender marker on documents,

or may have stringent rules such as requiring medically certified sex reassignment surgery to allow a change. Applicants also may risk facing discrimination or mistreatment by agency employees when going in person to apply for new papers. As a result, many transgender people are often forced to use and present documents that do not match their gender identity. This may place them at risk for assault or harassment, as well as being denied access to services or entry to public accommodations.

In the United States, only Oregon and the District of Columbia issue non-binary gender 'X' state IDs and driver's licenses without requiring a doctor's note for the applicant. This designation will be also available for California residents beginning in 2019, while other states such as Washington and New York are considering similar legislation. Elsewhere in the world, Canada and New Zealand are the only two countries to allow a third gender option when issuing passports. Although progress in this regard in recent months has been encouraging, the vast majority of transgender people in the United States and around the world continue to face problems when traveling and presenting documentation for many facets of life.

EXCLUSION FROM HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES

One in four transgender people report having avoided medical care in the past year out of fear of being disrespected or mistreated

Transgender and gender non-conforming people are especially vulnerable when it comes to access to health care, including finding doctors who affirm and respect their identities. Many experience discrimination by medical providers, while others may simply struggle to find physicians who are sufficiently knowledgeable in transgender-specific health care. The District of Columbia is currently the only place in the United States that requires health care providers to receive LGBTQ cultural competency training.

Many transgender people — including many of those living in poverty — are uninsured. Repeated attempts to dismantle or weaken the Affordable Care Act put the lives of many LGBTQ people at risk, some of whom have coverage for the first time because of the policy.

Thirty percent of transgender people surveyed have experienced homelessness at some point during their lifetime, including a staggering 51 percent of black transgender women. Among those who have tried to use homeless shelters, many report being expelled or denied access, while others avoided shelters altogether because

they feared mistreatment or harassment due to their gender identity. When staying in shelters, transgender people often report having to dress or present as the wrong gender, usually out of fear for their own safety or because they are forced to by staff.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

It is estimated that as many as 50 percent of transgender people will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetimes

Sexual assault, physical or emotional abuse, and other forms of intimate partner violence (also called domestic violence) can have a devastating impact on any person, but transgender people face elevated risks and challenges when grappling with these problems. As detailed above, transgender people often may face discrimination from law enforcement, medical providers and other service providers. They may be hesitant to seek help, or fear losing their privacy within care settings. Others may be excluded from shelters or emergency housing facilities that may be segregated by gender and refuse to intake transgender individuals. At least one victim of anti-transgender fatal violence in 2017 was killed by an intimate partner, and that number is likely higher because details on suspects and motives for several cases remain unknown.

SETBACKS FOR YOUTH

Forty percent of homeless youth are LGBTQ, most of whom faced familial rejection for who they are

Too many gender-expansive youth — which includes those who are transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming, among other identities — face unjust obstacles from a young age, which can result in devastating consequences.

At school, approximately four in ten report being excluded by peers, verbally harassed, or called names involving anti-LGBTQ slurs. In their hometowns, less than 10 percent describe their community as being “very accepting” of LGBTQ people. And at home, more than a quarter cite lack of family acceptance as the biggest problem facing their lives. Just 43 percent report having an adult family member who they could turn to if they felt worried or sad.

The sum of these negative factors subjects gender-expansive youth to a host of unique challenges and risks at far greater rates than their non-LGBTQ counterparts. Parents struggling to accept their child's identity may be urged or misled to subject them to dangerous and ineffective ‘conversion therapy,’ which can lead to lasting trauma. A disproportionately high 40 percent of homeless youth in America identify as LGBTQ, with a large majority citing familial rejection as a major factor leading to their homelessness. With the deck stacked against them, a heartbreaking four out of 10 transgender adults report having attempted suicide, the majority having done so before age 25.

RESISTING ATTACKS FROM ABOVE: TRANSGENDER INJUSTICE IN 2017

Although anti-transgender discrimination has been codified and enforced for decades, in 2017 transgender people face an unprecedented intensity of attacks from those in power at the highest levels of government. President Trump and his administration have both directly and indirectly exacerbated existing injustices long endured by transgender Americans, while encouraging intolerant lawmakers to push an onslaught of discriminatory legislation at federal, state and local levels.

Together, these dangerous efforts send the message to many Americans that transgender people are undeserving of dignity and fairness. Moreover, they contribute to a toxic environment that puts too many of our most vulnerable citizens at risk for fatal violence.

THESE UNJUST AND DELIBERATE ATTACKS INCLUDE:

- **Transgender Military Ban:** On July 26, President Trump announced that his administration would ban transgender individuals from serving in the U.S. Armed Forces A Pentagon directive, issued August 25, reverses the Obama administration's decision in 2016 to allow openly transgender people to enlist and ordered a study on how to address the status of the approximately 15,000 current transgender service members. Numerous high ranking retired military leaders, former cabinet members, and both Republican and Democratic members of Congress have come out in opposition to the ban.
- **Discriminatory 'Bathroom Bills':** Several states have sought to deny transgender people the right and dignity to use restrooms appropriate for their gender. In the 2017 legislative session, 16 states introduced such legislation, which would threaten the basic rights of transgender individuals. Five states — Florida, Iowa, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Texas — have also introduced or passed legislation in 2017 that would prevent municipalities from adopting local non-discrimination ordinances based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Three states have passed similar municipal preemption laws: Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee.
- **Rescission of Protections for Transgender Students:** On February 22, the Departments of Justice of

Education withdrew guidance issued by the Obama administration regarding protections for transgender students under federal law, including guidance regarding sex-segregated facilities in public schools. The administration has made clear that it will not fully enforce federal law to protect transgender students, putting them at greater risk. The Department of Education also recently rescinded Obama-era Title IX guidance for sexual assault on college and university campuses. Sexual assault and intimate partner violence disproportionately impact transgender and other LGBTQ people.

▪ **Anti-Transgender**

Nominees: President Trump has nominated several political appointees who have expressed vehemently anti-LGBTQ sentiments. Jeff Mateer, a nominee for federal judgeship in Texas, has called transgender children part of “Satan’s plan.” Openly anti-LGBTQ bloggers John Bush and Damien Schiff have been nominated and confirmed to lifetime positions as federal judges. Well-known anti-transgender activist Bethany Kozma, who has said that transgender access to facilities would “embolden” sexual predators, has been appointed to serve as the Senior Advisor to the Office of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment at the U.S. Agency for International Development. These and other openly transphobic appointees will lay the groundwork for

anti-LGBTQ court rulings and policies during their tenures.

▪ **Endorsing Workplace**

Discrimination: On July 26, the Justice Department filed an amicus brief arguing that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 does not protect employees from workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation. Attorney General Jeff Sessions also determined in an October 4 memo that existing law does not provide protection based on gender identity. The Department’s position is inconsistent with rulings from the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) that make clear that sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination are forms of sex discrimination prohibited under federal law. While this policy change does not itself change the law, it will be the stance of the Justice Department moving forward, which means that the administration will not enforce federal law to provide employment protections for LGBTQ people.

▪ **Use of ‘Religious Freedom’ to Legalize Anti-LGBTQ**

Discrimination: On October 6, Attorney General Jeff Sessions issued a directive that may allow employers and organizations to claim broad exemptions from non-discrimination laws on the basis of religious objections, even when these exemptions conflict with existing anti-discrimination laws. This license to discriminate places LGBTQ individuals at risk in a variety of areas, including health care (e.g., spousal benefits or transgender-

related care), access to public accommodations, employment, or the ability to adopt or foster children if federally funded organizations cite religious beliefs to discriminate against same-sex or transgender parents.

TAKE ACTION!

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

In this unprecedented time of action and resistance, we must work to protect transgender people and safeguard our communities from violence and injustice. Doing so requires cultural change and policy solutions that affirm and embrace transgender people.

Under the Obama administration, transgender people received unprecedented support from the federal government, including greater inclusion in areas such as health care, employment and education. These advances are now under assault under the current administration, which appears determined to undermine LGBTQ rights wherever possible.

Now is the time stand together to defend and protect the most vulnerable members of our society. As individuals and supporters of equality and fairness, we ask you to:

- **Educate yourself, your families, friends and**

colleagues about the violence and discrimination that transgender people face. We must commit to changing hearts and minds and to challenge transphobia wherever we see it. When we allow those around us to treat transgender people as less worthy of love, acceptance and support, we are complicit in a system that continues to punish and devalue people simply for being themselves.

- **Count yourself on the side of justice and oppose hateful measures against transgender people in your community and state.** Join us in the fight for equality and against discrimination. Register to vote. Be informed about ballot initiatives. Attend and participate in community meetings and debates. Support candidates that support the rights and dignity of every person. Contact your elected officials and urge them to vote for equality. Run for office. Volunteer and serve on boards and commissions working to

abolish discrimination and build a more inclusive community. Be vocal and outspoken in your support of the transgender community.

- **Get to know transgender people, if you don't already.** When appropriate and safe, share their brave stories with others around you. In recent years, there has been a significant uptick in the number of Americans who personally know or work with someone who is transgender. Personally knowing someone who is transgender makes a person much more likely to view transgender people favorably and support critical laws and protections for transgender. By being a visible friend and ally of transgender people, you also show others around you that you stand with transgender people and their right to live openly and safely.

Anti-transgender violence is a complex problem. Its risk factors and causes touch upon some of society's most

challenging issues. Although we do not yet know all of the solutions to this crisis, many of them are within reach. We must work together with a greater sense of urgency to make them a reality.

▪ **Enhance Law Enforcement Response and Training**

by encouraging local law enforcement agencies to initiate policies that govern interactions with transgender and gender non-conforming people. This may include awareness and education training that cover how officers can better serve these populations, including understanding the unique challenges that transgender people may face in their communities. Police officers in every community must be provided guidance on how to better serve and interact with transgender people and victims, as well as the unique dangers they face. They must also be trained to correctly identify bias-motivated crimes based on gender identity or sexual orientation, including cases that containing overlapping and intersecting bias motivations. In addition, authorities in every state must ensure the full and swift investigation of all open cases of homicides against transgender victims.

▪ **Improve Data Collection and Reporting.** We must call on local law enforcement leaders to make data reporting a priority, and make certain that all crimes where there is evidence of prejudice are reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. City

and county residents can call on local elected officials to ensure that law enforcement prioritizes reporting. Data that better reflects the true scope of anti-transgender violence will help make the case for funding and expanding programs that can address this issue in our communities.

▪ **Make Schools More Welcoming and Safe.**

We must oppose the Trump administration's decision to no longer protect the rights of transgender students to use restrooms and facilities concordant with their gender identity in public schools. However, in lieu of federal action, there is still much we can do in our local communities to ensure gender-expansive youth feel loved and supported. Individually, we can partner with local school district leaders, educators, parent groups, education advocates and youth-serving professionals to make schools and learning spaces safe for all students, and make cultural competency training tools easily accessible and available to teachers so that they can create inclusive and welcoming environments in their individual classrooms.

▪ **Expand Health Care Coverage for Transgender People**

by prohibiting discrimination against transgender patients in private insurance and Medicaid. All public employees should have the opportunity to receive transgender-inclusive health care. Health plan exclusions on necessary transition-related care should be eliminated, and

medical provider networks must have both the medical expertise and cultural competency to care for and treat transgender clients. Health care professionals must increase their skills to provide welcoming, appropriate and culturally competent care. And in order to ensure a foundation of transgender competence for the next generation of health care providers, medical schools must implement the Association of American Medical Colleges' curricula to address health care disparities facing transgender people.

▪ **Development Better Employment Opportunities.**

States and municipal governments must pass non-discrimination protections in employment that include gender identity and sexual orientation. But we all must also do our part to help make places of work safe and affirming for our transgender employees and colleagues. First steps can include establishing internal company non-discrimination policies and providing transgender inclusive health benefits, in addition to cultural competency training and expanded recruiting and hiring practices that allow transgender individuals to succeed.

▪ **Pass Non-Discrimination Protections such as the Equality Act,**

which would update our nation's civil rights laws to give transgender people significant legal recourse if they experience discrimination in matters of employment, housing, public spaces and services, federally funded programs, credit, jury service

and education. We must also pass these non-discrimination protections at the state and local level.

- **Adopt Common-Sense Gun Violence Prevention Measures**, including limiting access to assault-style rifles, expanding background checks, and limiting the ability of those with a history of domestic abuse to access guns.
- **Increase Trans Leadership and Visibility.** Protecting and standing with transgender people must also involve elevating their voices and seeking their leadership when tackling critical issues facing their community, including fatal violence. Greater visibility of trans leaders in all institutions — including politics, entertainment, media, sports and nonprofits — can help create further opportunities for transgender people and simultaneously erode stigma.

These calls to action are only starting points in the fight to end the violence that transgender people — particularly young women of color — face. Unfortunately, our work is nowhere close to being finished. The victims whose stories are featured in this report are only but a fraction of the transgender people who have lost their lives to violence, neglect and suicide.

As members of and allies to the LGBTQ community, we must work every day to change hearts and minds and to challenge transphobia wherever we see

it. When we allow those around us — and those in power — to treat transgender people in ways that suggest they are less worthy of love, acceptance and support, we are complicit in a system that continues to punish and devalue people simply for being different. As this report shows, the consequences of that kind of marginalization can be devastating.

There is no simple answer to stopping violence against transgender people and there are daunting intersectional issues to overcome. But that cannot be an excuse for inaction. The time is now to stand together with transgender people and raise awareness of the unjust challenges they face, including the threat of fatal violence. Our work will not — and must not — end until all members of our communities are treated with fairness, dignity and respect.

A GLOBAL CRISIS

SINCE 2008, MORE THAN 2,300 TRANSGENDER AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED WORLD-WIDE, MOST OF THEM UNDER THE AGE OF 30

Hundreds of transgender people are killed around the world each year. And, just as it is in the United States, countless hate-motivated murders go unreported by communities, families, governments and the press. Figures released by the Transgender Europe Trans Murder Monitoring project charted the killings of more than 2,300 transgender and other non-binary people between 2008 and 2016. These accounts — which are likely undercounted and rely on a network of local organizations monitoring deaths across various languages -- span nearly 70 countries on every continent. Central and South America make up nearly 80 percent of reported killings. Similar to the United States, most victims were under the age 30. Sixty-four percent were thought to be sex workers.

Transgender, gender non-conforming and other LGBTQ people the world over face daunting challenges, both under the law and in their daily lives. They are often unable to obtain identity documents that accurately reflect their name and gender. In some countries, they are coerced to undergo involuntary medical procedures such as forced sterilization. Many are denied freedoms of movement, speech, expression, assembly and other freedoms. Others may face arbitrary arrest, detainment and physical and sexual assault. Some may feel unsafe even in their own homes and communities. In the face of such dangers, many are forced to conceal or hide their identities.

Especially in light of an Administration that appears reluctant to defend LGBTQ and other human rights abuses abroad, we as Americans must stand with our fellow transgender siblings around the world, by elevating their stories and supporting the work of local NGOs and advocacy groups.

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ABOUT THE HRC FOUNDATION

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation improves the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people by working to increase understanding and encourage the adoption of LGBTQ-inclusive policies and practices.

We build support for LGBTQ people among families and friends, co-workers and employers, pastors and parishioners, doctors and teachers, neighbors, and the general public. Through the following programs and projects, we are enhancing the lived experiences of LGBTQ people and their families, as we change hearts and minds across America and around the globe.

The HRC Foundation is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.



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As the largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer Americans, the Human Rights Campaign represents a force of more than 3 million members and supporters nationwide — all committed to making HRC's vision a reality.

HRC envisions a world where lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people are embraced as full members of society at home, at work and in every community.

To learn more about HRC's efforts, visit hrc.org/Transgender.



Trans People of Color Coalition (TPOCC) is the only national social justice organization that promotes the interests of Trans People of Color. TPOCC envisions a world where trans people of color can live and work in safety, where health and economic equity are basic rights, and we are celebrated for our visibility and leadership in our workplaces, homes, and communities.