



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1487

Resolution recognizing November 20th annually as Transgender Day of Remembrance and March 31st annually as Transgender Day of Visibility in the City of New York.

By the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams) and Council Members Kallos, Rosenthal, D. Diaz, Gibson and Van Bramer

Whereas, Transgender (“trans”) and gender nonconforming people face stigma, often rooted in ignorance and politically-motivated attacks on gender identity and expression, on a daily basis; and

Whereas, This stigma erects barriers in nearly every facet of life, denying trans and gender nonconforming people the equal opportunity to succeed and be accepted as their true selves; and

Whereas, Not only does anti-trans stigma have a long-term impact on mental health and economic and housing stability of trans and gender nonconforming people-especially if they experience familial rejection and isolation from social support systems-but it has also fueled an epidemic of anti-trans fatal violence that disproportionately impacts trans women of color, who comprise approximately four in five of all anti-trans homicide victims; and

Whereas, In 1999, trans advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith held a vigil to honor the memory of Rita Hester, a well-known Black trans woman in Boston’s trans and Black LGBTQ+ communities, who was brutally murdered on November 28, 1998, two days before her 35th birthday, and whose murder remains unsolved; and

Whereas, Now, the Transgender Day of Remembrance is observed annually on November 20th, to honor the memory of trans and gender nonconforming people whose lives were lost in acts of anti-trans violence; and

Whereas, On March 31, 2009, in response to the lack of positive recognition of trans people by the

cisgender lesbian, gay and bisexual community, trans activist Rachel Crandall started the International Transgender Day of Visibility to bring trans and gender nonconforming people together and celebrate their contributions to society, as well as raise awareness of discrimination faced by trans and gender non-conforming people; and

Whereas, Now celebrated internationally, the International Transgender Day of Visibility is very meaningful to the trans and gender nonconforming community, acknowledging the courage it takes to live openly and authentically, and validating their experiences; and

Whereas, Trans and gender nonconforming people face significant cultural, economic and legal challenges; according to the 2015 United States Transgender Survey (USTS), the largest survey examining the experiences of trans people in the U.S., 18 percent of respondents in New York State were unemployed and 37 percent were living in poverty; and

Whereas, The USTS also found rampant employment, workplace, education, housing, and health care-related discrimination, including harassment and violence, among respondents in New York State, as well as mistreatment, assault and harassment by police; inequitable treatment and harassment in places of public accommodation; homelessness and issues with obtaining identity documents, accessing shelters and using public restrooms; and

Whereas, According to the Human Rights Campaign, at least 34 trans or gender nonconforming people, the majority of whom were Black and Latinx, have been murdered in 2020, which is the highest number of deaths as of November 2020; and

Whereas, Black and Latinx drag queens and trans people played significant roles in many of the early milestones of the gay rights movement; and

Whereas, The Stonewall riots, a series of demonstrations against gay oppression following the June 27,

1969 police raid of the Stonewall Inn, a Greenwich Village gay bar and dance club, have become the defining origin story of the modern global LGBTQ+ rights movement; and

Whereas, While it is still disputed who first pushed back against the police, sparking the Stonewall riots, there is widespread consensus that trans rights activists, Marsha P. Johnson and Zazu Nova Queen of Sex, both Black trans women, along with Jackie Hormona, a gay youth experiencing homelessness, were among the first; and

Whereas, On June 14, 2020, an estimated 15,000 people, all dressed in white, gathered at the Brooklyn Museum and silently marched down Eastern Parkway to Fort Greene Park, to demand justice for Riah Milton and Dominique “Rem’mie” Fells, two recent victims of anti-Black, anti-trans violence, in the largest ever trans rights demonstration, now known as the Brooklyn Liberation March; and

Whereas, Inspired by the 1917 NAACP-organized Silent March, drag queens West Dakota and Merrie Cherry conceived the Brooklyn Liberation March as a safe space for Black trans people who felt that attending the police killing of George Floyd-sparked demonstrations against police brutality would put them in danger; and

Whereas, New York State is home to more than 50,000 trans people, per a June 2016 Williams Institute report, who deserve to no longer live in fear or feel invisible; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York recognizes November 20th annually as Transgender Day of Remembrance and March 31st annually as Transgender Day of Visibility in the City of New York.

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11/16/2020
CGR