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**Broad Coalition of LGBT Community Organizations Oppose Metropolitan Police
Department Plan to Restructure Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit**

Groups object to flaws and inadequacies found throughout new GLLU training program for affiliate officers.

Washington, DC – Today a broad coalition of DC’s LGBT community groups stand together to express our severe disappointment with the Metropolitan Police Department’s ill-conceived plan to restructure the Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit (GLLU). MPD Chief Cathy Lanier is poised to call this initiative a success, but we are unfortunately quite skeptical. An award-winning unit has been effectively dismantled without meaningful input from the very community that unit serves. Lanier is quick to point out that she and her staff have held meetings with community members to discuss their plans, but she fails to mention that not one critique of her plan was accepted.

In spite of repeated requests, MPD has not been able to say how many officers will serve GLLU full-time (there is currently only one, with three on full-time leave), whether GLLU will again have a full-time sergeant, or how new affiliated officers will be effectively coordinated to both respond to LGBT issues and learn and share best practices. Many members of our communities have had exceptionally negative experiences with police, while others have enjoyed quite positive interactions – these latter advances have often been credited to GLLU’s outreach work both within and outside the MPD. Thus to upend this unit without seeking real community input calls into question MPD’s self-stated claim to serve our communities. We look forward to MPD demonstrating its willingness to act in good faith to work with us in both cleaning up the fallout from this hasty restructuring program and in making additional progress in other areas.

Moreover, community members have been largely shut out of the process to develop the training course for GLLU’s new affiliate officers, which concluded last Friday. Lanier has boasted that 32 hours of classroom training have been provided to these officers. However, only 2 of those hours featured any discussion whatsoever of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues. The MPD promised to share its training curriculum with community representatives at a meeting on October 22, yet failed to do so. At that same meeting, organizations were promised an invitation to suggest reading materials, case studies and specific modules for the training program. Finally, the Chief stated under oath at a City Council Hearing on November 20 that she would share the curriculum for the training with the LGBT community and incorporate their feedback. There was absolutely no follow-up to this invitation, despite repeated requests by LGBT community organizations. Last week, some LGBT community leaders were invited to speak at the training session (for 10-15 minutes each). They were given less than two days and asked to prepare outlines of their presentations before attending. This left no time for any real

preparation, and only allowed for a few minutes of time for community members – almost entirely volunteers – to present anything at all.

In addition, individuals who were able to sit in on the training are deeply concerned about numerous errors of omission and commission that will seriously endanger DC's LGBT communities. Specific concerns include:

- Failure to consult with the LGBT community to foster confidence and gather community input to inform the training,
- Failure to follow through on the commitment to have stand-alone GLLU training for at least half a day – instead, training was limited to less than two hours, and with combined attendees from both the GLLU and the Latino Liaison Unit;
- Failure to provide culturally competent training for officers on how to sensitively approach and manage specific needs for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and gender non-conforming individuals;
- Failure to include in the curriculum any discussion of the distinction between sexual orientation and gender identity;
- Failure to discuss the need to actively curtail profiling trans individuals as criminals;
- Failure to address domestic violence situations, which make up 82 percent of GLLU's caseload, until after training was well underway, which converted what limited LGBT Domestic Violence training there was into a mopping-up exercise;
- Failure to provide guidance and training on how to appropriately track and record hate crimes related to an individual's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression;
- Failure to address strategies on how to ensure a supportive workplace for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender affiliate officers and those performing LGBT liaison duties;
- Failure to develop a public education plan aimed at encouraging community members to report homophobic and transphobic violence and crimes;
- Failure to encourage affiliate officers to attend significant LGBT events to promote visibility and develop strong and meaningful relationships between police and LGBT community members.

There is a critical need for a more comprehensive LGBT training program to be provided before new affiliate officers are certified as GLLU members – a training program that is developed in partnership with the LGBT community. This includes intensive field training with existing GLLU officers, and in-depth classroom training that covers the range of safety, discrimination, and access to justice issues that LGBT individuals face across this city. We also feel strongly that we need answers to the key questions on the size, structure, and responsibilities of the GLLU moving forward. We hope that MPD acts quickly to demonstrate a genuine commitment to community safety, and cooperates with concerned individuals and organizations to address its flawed GLLU restructuring program.

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