

Thursday August 26th

Mayor Adrian Fenty,

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Members of the Districts LGBT Community gathered today to discuss both the recent increase in violence against the LGBT Community and mark the anniversaries of the deaths of Na Na Boo Mack and Tyra Hunter. In light of this continuing history of violence against members of our community, we seek your immediate attention to fully restore the staffing levels of the GLLU, to six full-time officers. Further, we ask that the unit be lead by a full-time officer devoted to these duties with the authority to report directly to Chief Lanier. It is our hope that a restored GLLU will serve as a more effective liaison between the LGBT community and MPD. This request is punctuated by the series of recent physical and sexual assaults, including the tragic homicide of Delando King, but it is by no means a reaction to it. Rather, we make this request because we believe that recent organizational changes to the GLLU have rendered it less effective as a resource to both the community it seeks to protect and MPD.

Mayor Fenty, 85 percent of all bias-related crime in our city is levied against members of the LGBT community, roughly 5 times the National average when compared with similar statistics compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Members of DC's LGBT community, specifically gay men and transgendered individuals are being targeted for violence. These crimes – and the underlying issues within our city reinforcing the biases which lead to a culture and climate of violence – can no longer be ignored. These issues require more attention than the response that is afforded as a part-time collateral duty. This is by no means a criticism of the men and women staffing the GLLU, either core or affiliate officers, but a recognition that to address this issue dedicated staff resources are necessary. It is also clear that the nature of these violent attacks are increasingly brazen and brutal. To illustrate, Mr. King was stabbed an alarming 30 times, with 5 stab wounds inflicted to the heart. Elsewhere, a gay man was recently chased by a mob of 15 young men and women before being beaten and a transgender woman was sexually assaulted near Dupont Circle. You see, members of the District's LGBT community are being murdered and targeted for violence based solely upon innate, immutable

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characteristics. These deplorable acts require a strong response to acknowledge the problem and address the issue.

We applaud the work of Detectives Wise and Nasr, particularly for engaging GLLU officers and the LGBT community. Without question, it is our hope that their quick action will help bring justice in Mr. King's brutal death. Additionally, we do appreciate Chief Lanier's responsiveness when we raise concerns directly with her. However, we remain concerned that the response does not address the underlying problems with the organizational structure of the GLLU. Recently, community groups were asked to join representatives from the SLU to meet and discuss additional outreach efforts. While we appreciate the engagement, this request highlights our problems with the current incarnation of the GLLU, characterized by inconsistent, piecemeal responses and inadequate staff resources. The issues that create the culture of violence, hatred, and self loathing these crimes illustrate are complex and require more than the resources of volunteer organizations. They require the weight and authority of law enforcement engaged with the community in a focused, coordinated, and consistent effort. Having affiliate officers trained to recognize and respond to LGBT crimes in every district is admirable in intent. In practice however, not having officers dedicated to the GLLU full-time has led to, in our opinion, diminished effectiveness in recognizing and responding to bias crimes. We ask that you fully restore staffing to the GLLU and grant the officer in charge with direct reporting to Chief Lanier.

In sum, the problem is real, the needs of the community are urgent, and a solution requires your leadership and immediate action.

Thank you for your attention to our request; we eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,

The DC Center for the LGBT Community,

The DC Transgender Coalition

Gay and Lesbian Activist Alliance

Gays and Lesbians Opposing Violence (GLOV)

Gertrude Stein Democratic Club

The GLBT Latino History Project

Helping our Brothers and Sisters

Latinas/Latinos en Accione

SAGE Metro DC

Transgender Health Empowerment

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