



TPI Statement Concerning Anti-Trans Violence in Dallas

All of us at Trans Pride Initiative (TPI) offer our deepest condolences to not only the friends and family of those affected by anti-trans violence in Dallas, but to all trans and gender diverse persons impacted by the violence, the often problematic reporting, and the excuses by officials and agencies trying to disavow their responsibilities for encouraging and even participating in violence against our community. Our thoughts are with not only the persons receiving significant attention at this time, but also the many others who have endured or succumbed to individual and societal violence perpetrated against our large and diverse and beautifully enduring and fierce trans family.

Disappointing Reactions to the Recent Assaults and Murders

At TPI, we have watched the various responses to the violence, some of which suggest actions are driven as much by agendas that have little to do with support for the trans community. Many do not appear indicative of genuine work to address anti-trans violence. This includes advocacy organizations, but more importantly it includes the extremely poor responses by municipal and county departments, both recent and historical, that have brought us to the current situation. Too often, those claiming to have our “best interests” call for easy-to-define conventional solutions that eschew the critical thought and analysis required to develop and implement long-term endeavors that are needed to foster necessary social change. The Dallas police have provided the worst examples of narcissistic self-serving responses.

Simplistic reactive solutions only satisfy the quest for a spotlight, applications for funding to pad the pockets of “leaders” interested in maintaining their paychecks, agencies performing for the press, and media clickbait to enhance advertising revenues—all won by feeding off the lives and deaths of trans persons, especially those most marginalized in our society by race, by lack of opportunity, and by a near complete failure of social services providers to support trans persons in need of assistance.

The Dallas Trans Justice Campaign

To bring greater attention to these deeper issues, TPI is developing our Dallas Trans Justice Campaign.

In 2018, TPI began assisting a young Latinx trans woman facing false charges from a Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) staff member. When charges were finally filed by the District Attorney’s office in February 2019—unbelievably, the District Attorney charged her with a first



degree felony – we developed our “Justice for Estrella” project to support her and work to get the charges dropped. Estrella will soon have a full dismissal.

Recognizing that the state-perpetrated violence Estrella was subjected to was not due to the bigotry of a single person, but that this person’s actions, the resulting arrest, and **her mistreatment by every government agency that interacted with her** were the result of anti-trans bigotry built into the culture and daily operations of these agencies, we designed the project to also address that systemic harm. “Bad apple” and “bad actor” solutions are nothing but scapegoating by agencies seeking to avoid accountability for their systemic encouragement and support of violence against marginalized persons. Justice for Estrella identified some of those organizations and called for specific changes we feel may begin to address known issues harming trans persons.

After yet more violence has come to light, the Justice for Estrella project, with Estrella’s backing, is now being converted to a broader initiative, the Dallas Trans Justice Campaign, a long-term project to continue and expand TPI’s efforts to bring pressure on multiple local agencies and departments to take accountability for their failures to address violence against trans persons.

A partial list of the entities that participate in the promotion of violence against trans persons includes but is not limited to:

- ▼ Dallas Police Department, Dallas Police Chief U. Reneé Hall.
- ▼ Dallas County Sheriff’s Department, Dallas County Sheriff Marian Brown.
- ▼ Dallas Area Rapid Transit, DART President/Executive Director Gary C. Thomas.
- ▼ DART Police, DART Police Chief J. D. Spiller.
- ▼ Dallas County District Attorney John Creuzot.
- ▼ Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance, MDHA President and CEO Carl Falconer.
- ▼ Parkland Hospital, Parkland CEO Frederick P. Cerise.

And we note in general the following:

- ▼ Social services providers that fail to hold their own staff, as well as other entities to which they refer clients, accountable to violence against trans persons.
- ▼ The City of Dallas and its Mayor and City Council for their failure to sufficiently address hiring and employment discrimination, harassment of trans persons in public spaces, and housing and shelter discrimination, as well as other problems.



- ▼ City of Plano, Mayor Harry LaRosiliere, for trans exclusionary "nondiscrimination" policy and the Gay Inc (particularly and especially the Human Rights Campaign) and Trans Inc organizations that supported it.

Continuing Our Work With Integrity and Dedication

TPI will take on this work to the extent that our capacity allows as an extension of our efforts to promote transformative justice, to oppose hate crimes enhancement, to oppose violent and restrictive immigration policy, and to stand against increases in police power and the prison industrial complex. All of these we strongly believe cause long-term harm for our communities and our families.

We hold these values as core beliefs necessary for our well being and indeed our very survival. We have maintained our core beliefs even when it has meant we are ostracized from the trans and queer organizations with more power, and when it has meant giving up opportunities for funding; we will continue to maintain our core beliefs and oppose those efforts that we feel cause harm to our community. Maintaining our integrity is foremost.

TPI already does significant work to support some of the most marginalized persons in the Dallas area and across Texas, and we routinely put in efforts well beyond personal capacities to meet demand for our advocacy. We could do so much more with additional involvement. If you are willing to help build out our committees, develop and carry out projects, or serve on our board or as an organization officer in positions that are needed to maintain our legal status, please contact us. But if TPI is not of interest or not to your liking, get involved elsewhere. There are many ways to build community, so find what resonates with you and above all else, get involved. Our trans family needs you. We all need you.