

AN EPIDEMIC OF VIOLENCE:

FATAL VIOLENCE AGAINST TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NON- CONFORMING PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2020



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN
FOUNDATION™

FROM ALPHONSO DAVID, HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

“In 2020, at least 37 transgender and gender non-conforming people were victims of fatal violence — more than the Human Rights Campaign has recorded in any other year. This grim milestone proves what we have long known: this violence is an epidemic. Each one of the lives we lost was someone ripped from their family, their friends and their community by an act of senseless violence, often driven by bigotry and transphobia and inflamed by the rhetoric of those who oppose our progress,” said Human Rights Campaign Foundation President Alphonso David.



“We must utilize this moment to not only remember each and every person killed this year, but to also continue taking action to dismantle the culture of violence and stigma that the transgender and gender non-conforming community faces. There are lives on the line, and we must commit with every breath to fight for the change we need.”

IN MEMORIAM



MONICA ROBERTS

HRC mourns the passing of Monica Roberts, founder and editor-in-chief of TransGriot, an influential blog covering issues related to transgender people of color and fatal violence against transgender people. Her work was an invaluable resource for the creation of this report.

Monica was an icon and a trailblazing voice for transgender rights, both in her home state of Texas and around the country. We were deeply saddened to learn of her passing, and offer our most heartfelt condolences to her friends, family and loved ones. For decades, Monica has been a fierce leader — bringing light to the injustice transgender people face, especially Black transgender women. She leaves behind a strong and vital legacy — one that every LGBTQ person and ally should work to honor and advance. Rest in power, Monica, and thank you.

We dedicate this report to her legacy.

ICON

“TRAILBLAZING VOICE FOR TRANSGENDER RIGHTS”

FIERCE LEADER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 INTRODUCTION**
- 3 WHO IS TRANSGENDER OR GENDER NON-CONFORMING?**
- 4 CAUSES OF FATAL VIOLENCE**
- 5 VICTIM IDENTIFICATION**
- 6 IN MEMORIAM: 2020 DEATHS**
- 56 THE EPIDEMIC BY THE NUMBERS**
- 61 IMPORTANT EXISTING AND NEEDED LEGAL PROTECTIONS**
- 64 WHAT CAN WE DO?**
- 65 HRC'S TRANSGENDER JUSTICE INITIATIVE**
- 68 RESOURCES**

INTRODUCTION

At least 37 transgender and gender non-conforming people have been killed in the U.S. since the beginning of 2020.

We say “at least” because the stories detailed in this report very likely undercount the number of transgender and gender non-conforming people who were killed in the United States this year. Although advocates, bloggers and media groups have elevated the epidemic of violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people in the past several years, **data collection is often incomplete or unreliable when it comes to violent and fatal crimes against transgender and gender non-conforming people.** Some victims’ deaths may go unreported, while others may not be identified as transgender or gender non-conforming.

In this report, we shed light on the epidemic of violence taking the lives of transgender and gender non-conforming people. We remember the individuals we lost in 2020 and provide analysis of data we have collected on fatal violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people since 2013 — the year the Federal Bureau of Investigation began reporting on hate crimes motivated by anti-transgender bias. As you will see, that data reveals disturbing trends. Finally, based on these statistics, we provide action items that can help end the violence.

Across the United States, stigma, bias and systemic discrimination heighten the vulnerability of transgender and gender non-conforming people from an early age. Such stigma, bias and discrimination compounds for transgender and gender non-conforming people who

hold multiple marginalized identities. Transgender women and transgender people of color are at elevated risk of fatal violence. Such risk is especially true for Black transgender women, who comprise the vast majority of victims of fatal violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people as they face the daily injustices of racism, sexism and transphobia.

Even in the face of physical danger, hatred and discrimination — sometimes ruthlessly endorsed and enforced by those at the highest level of our government — transgender and gender non-conforming people live courageously and overcome unjust barriers in all corners of our country. For example, more than 20 transgender candidates ran for public office this year. However, until we as a country address and dismantle the barriers faced by transgender and gender non-conforming people, they will continue to face higher rates of discrimination, poverty, homelessness and violence. You can learn more about the multiple intersecting obstacles that transgender and gender non-conforming people face in the U.S. in the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s 2018 report [“Dismantling a Culture of Violence.”](#)

In life, each of the individuals memorialized in this report went to extraordinary lengths to live authentically. In death, we must honor their truth and bravery with action.

WHO IS TRANSGENDER OR GENDER NON-CONFORMING?

For the purpose of this report, we use the phrase “**transgender and gender non-conforming**” to describe a collective community of individuals whose gender identities, expressions and/or lived experiences differ from — and may in fact transcend — what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.

This includes transgender men and women, as well as individuals who are non-binary or gender non-conforming.

As with any language that attempts to succinctly capture the human experience, the usage of these terms and sense of identity among the transgender and gender non-conforming community varies widely. Meanwhile, virtually every culture has its own terminology and differing concepts of gender, including who is considered to be transgender or gender non-conforming. Below is a series of definitions that are critical to know as you read this report.

GENDER IDENTITY: One’s innermost concept of self as man, woman, a blend of both or neither — how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One’s gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH: The sex (male or female) given to a child at birth, most often based on the child’s external anatomy.

TRANSGENDER An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Based on HRC’s analysis of data on youth and adults, there are more than 2 million transgender and non-binary young people and adults in the United States. Someone whose gender identity is aligned with the sex they were assigned at birth is called cisgender.

TRANSGENDER MAN Someone who was assigned female at birth and identifies as a man.

TRANSGENDER WOMAN Someone who was assigned male at birth and identifies as a woman.

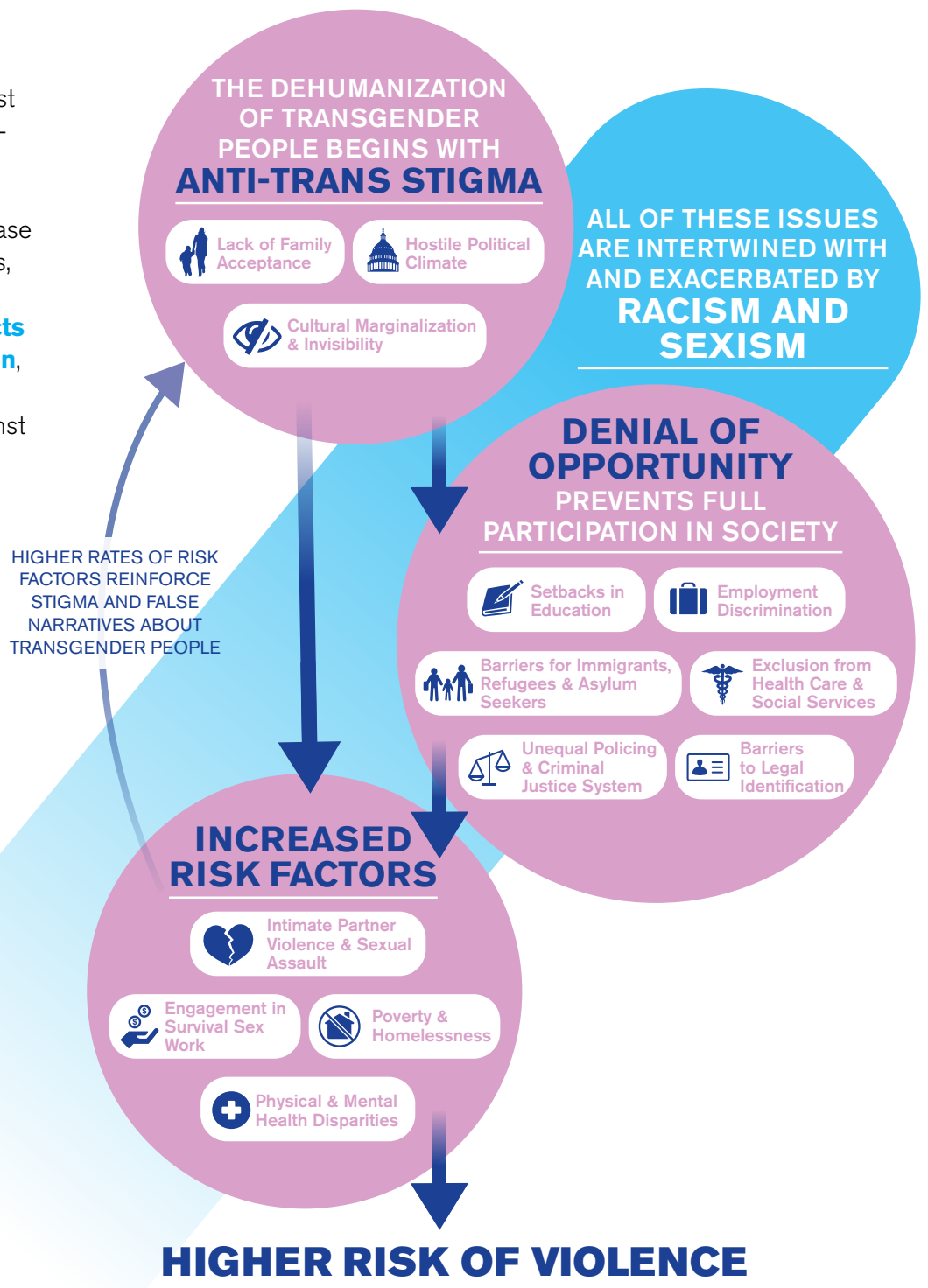
NON-BINARY An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. A non-binary person may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many non-binary people also identify as transgender, not all do. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid.

GENDER NON-CONFORMING Some people are gender non-conforming in expression, which includes their outward presentation and behavior. Any person, regardless of their gender identity, can be gender non-conforming.

TWO-SPIRIT An umbrella term and identity within many indigenous communities that describes people who live within a spectrum of genders, sexual orientations, gender expressions and gender roles.

WHAT LEADS TO FATAL VIOLENCE AGAINST TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING PEOPLE

Since 2013, HRC and other advocates have tracked 202 cases of fatal violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people across 30 states and 113 cities nationwide. Although each case is unique in its circumstances, **we know this epidemic disproportionately impacts Black transgender women**, who comprise 66% of all victims of fatal violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people.



Ending this epidemic requires addressing and eliminating anti-transgender stigma and discrimination across all facets of society **and embracing people of all genders for who they are.** Read the following sections to learn how you can take action to help end the violence.

VICTIM IDENTIFICATION

Violence is [often committed](#) against those who do not present themselves in a way that aligns with their sex assigned at birth. Because of this, we track cases involving the transgender and non-binary community, as well as cases where the individual presented in a gender non-conforming way. Thus, in this report, we use the phrase “transgender or gender non-conforming” to refer to these victims of violence, as it is the most broad and accurate term we can use without being able to directly ask the victim about their gender identity.

We have taken every effort to ensure our memorials reflect the most accurate depiction of each individual's identity, based on their own words, the accounts of loved ones and the ways in which they presented themselves and interacted with the world. Sadly, for some individuals, complete information is unavailable.

In most of the stories in this report, law enforcement, media and even loved ones have denied, ignored or intentionally erased or rejected the victims' gender identities — often using the wrong names or pronouns to describe the victims. Using correct identifiers and pronouns isn't just about accuracy — it's about affording all individuals the respect and dignity that everyone deserves, in life and in death. Moreover, in order to end fatal violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people, we must acknowledge the true identities of these victims and address the ways in which societal attitudes regarding their identities may have played a role in their deaths.

When reporting on transgender and gender non-conforming victims, it is incredibly important to refer to them with the correct pronouns and name.

MISGENDERING: Misgendering occurs when someone is referred to using a pronoun or title that is inconsistent with their gender identity. Being misgendered can be hurtful, angering and even distracting — especially for transgender and gender non-conforming people. Accidentally misgendering someone can be embarrassing for both parties, creating tension and leading to communication breakdowns.

DEADNAMING: Deadnaming means calling a transgender or gender non-conforming person by their “deadname,” the name assigned to them at birth, instead of by the name they currently use. Being deadnamed is a harmful and distressing experience for many transgender and gender non-conforming people. Deadnaming by police and media can result in many transgender and gender non-conforming fatalities being unreported or reported inaccurately.

IN MEMORIAM 2020 DEATHS

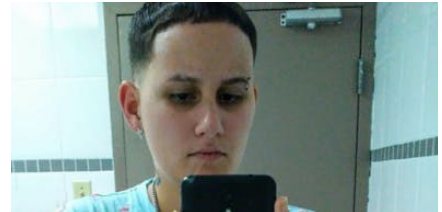
In commemoration of Transgender Day of Remembrance, HRC remembers the lives and mourns the loss of the following individuals:



Dustin Parker
McAlester, Oklahoma



Neulisa Luciano Ruiz
Toa Baja, Puerto Rico



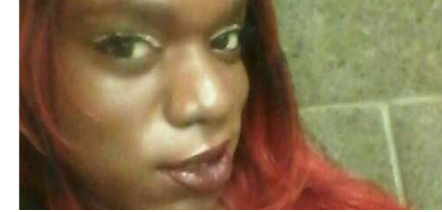
Yampi Méndez Arocho
Moca, Puerto Rico



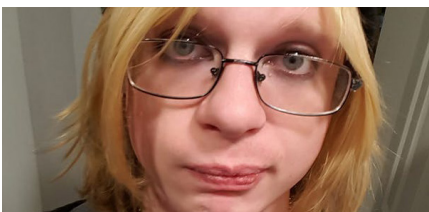
John Scott DeVore a.k.a. Scottlynn Kelly DeVore
Augusta, Georgia



Monika Diamond
Charlotte, North Carolina



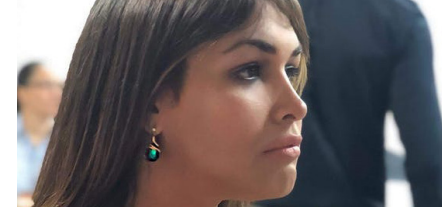
Lexi
Harlem, New York



Johanna Metzger
Baltimore, Maryland



Penélope Díaz Ramírez
Puerto Rico



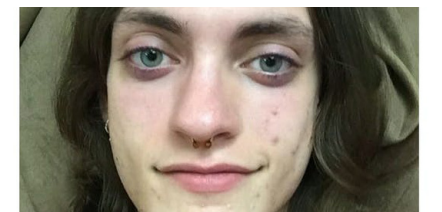
Serena Angelique Velázquez Ramos
Puerto Rico



Layla Pelaez Sánchez
Puerto Rico



Nina Pop
Sikeston, Missouri



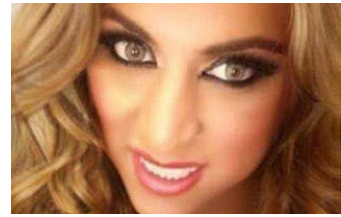
Helle Jae O'Regan
San Antonio, Texas



Jayne Thompson
Mesa County, Colorado



Tony McDade
Tallahassee, Florida



Selena Reyes-Hernandez
Chicago, Illinois



Dominique "Rem'mie" Fells
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Riah Milton
Liberty Township, Ohio



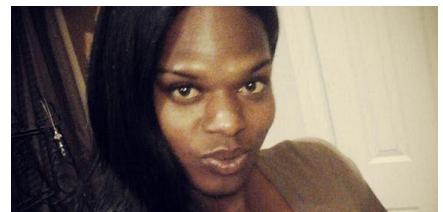
Brian "Egypt" Powers
Akron, Ohio



Brayla Stone
Little Rock, Arkansas



Merci Mack
Dallas, Texas



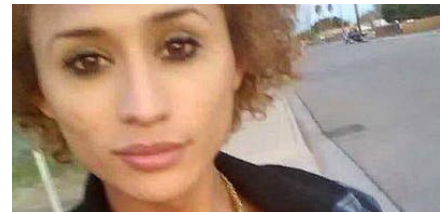
Shaki Peters
Amite City, Louisiana



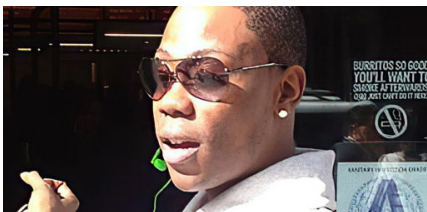
Bree Black
Pompano Beach, Florida



Summer Taylor
Seattle, Washington



Marilyn Cazares
Brawley, California



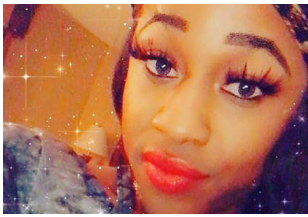
Dior H Ova
Bronx, New York



Queasha D Hardy
Baton Rouge, Louisiana



Aja Raquell Rhone-Spears
Portland, Oregon



Kee Sam
Lafayette, Louisiana



Lea Rayshon Daye
Cleveland, Ohio



Aerrion Burnett
Independence, Missouri



Mia Green
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Michelle Michellyn Ramos Vargas
San Germán, Puerto Rico



Felcya Harris
Augusta, Georgia



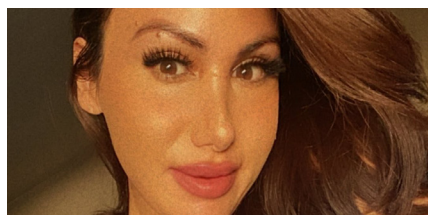
Brooklyn Deshuna
Shreveport, Louisiana



Sara Blackwood
Indianapolis, Indiana



Angel Unique
Memphis, Tennessee



Yunieski Carey Harerra
Miami, Florida



DUSTIN PARKER

McAlester, Oklahoma

Dustin Parker, 25, was a white transgender man who was fatally shot in McAlester, Oklahoma, while working as a taxi driver early on New Year's Day. An arrest has not yet been made.

Parker was a founding member of Oklahomans for Equality-McAlester Chapter: Southeastern Equality, a local LGBTQ organization. Rover Taxi, Parker's employer, said, "Dustin was a steadfast friend, an amazing husband and father and generous to a fault. He loved fiercely, worked tirelessly and took on life with so much hope and enthusiasm that his presence brightened all of our lives."

STEADFAST
HOPE
GENEROUS
ENTHUSIASM

HUMBLE NOBLE



NEULISA LUCIANO RUIZ

Toa Baja, Puerto Rico

Neulisa Luciano Ruiz, a Latinx transgender woman, was fatally shot in Toa Baja, Puerto Rico on February 24. Ruiz appeared to have been targeted by her killers after a social media post claimed a homeless transgender woman was using the women's restroom. Her attackers followed her in a car, filmed the brutal killing and posted it online.

Puerto Rico Governor Wanda Vázquez encouraged anyone with information on the crime to contact local authorities, but no arrests have been made. Members of the community knew Neulisa as "humble" and "noble."



YAMPI MÉNDEZ AROCHO

Moca, Puerto Rico

Yampi Méndez Arocho, a 19 year old Latinx transgender man was fatally shot in Moca, Puerto Rico on March 5 after being assaulted five hours earlier. There is little information available about what happened between the attack and his death. No arrests have been made.

On social media, Arocho shared his love for basketball and the NBA — donning Miami Heat apparel. The biography line on his Facebook reads simply, “Humility Prevails.”

“HUMANITY
PREVAILS”

**“YOU DESERVED
SO MUCH BETTER.
I LOVE YOU.”**



**JOHN SCOTT
DEVORE
A.K.A.
SCOTTLYNN
KELLY
DEVORE**

Augusta, Georgia

Scott Devore was a 51-year-old white gender non-conforming person killed in Augusta, Georgia. Scott also identified as Scottlynn Kelly Devore and appeared to have been presenting as Scottlynn when leaving home for the last time on March 14. A suspect has been arrested in the case and charged with murder.

Devore was loved by many people, and friends and family have been posting remembrances on Facebook. One friend shared, “I miss you so much... it still doesn’t seem real to me. You deserved so much better. I love you.” Many have called Devore “sweet” and “beautiful.” Another friend said Devore was “the best friend anyone could have.”



PAGEANT BUSINESS OWNER COMMUNITY



MONIKA DIAMOND

Charlotte, North Carolina

Monika Diamond, a 34-year-old Black transgender woman and business owner, was killed in Charlotte, North Carolina on March 18. A suspect has been arrested for the shooting and charged with her death.

An active member of Charlotte's LGBTQ community, Diamond was the co-owner and founder of Ncphyne Promotion Company LLC, an event promotion company. She was also the co-CEO of the International Mother of the Year Pageantry System — a pageant that honors LGBTQ mothers.



LEXI

Harlem, New York

Lexi, 33, was a Black transgender woman who was fatally stabbed in Harlem River Park while working as a sex worker. No arrest has been made at this time, though witnesses saw the alleged attacker leave the scene.

“I really looked up to her because of her tolerance and respect,” said Lavonia Brooks, a friend of Lexi. “Lexi had a beautiful heart, she was very gifted.” Brooks also noted that Lexi loved poetry, makeup and fashion.

TOLERANCE
RESPECT
GIFTED

MUSCIAN

**“WE WISH COMFORT TO
THOSE WHOSE LIVES
SHE TOUCHED.”**



JOHANNA METZGER

Baltimore, Maryland

Johanna Metzger, a white transgender woman, was fatally stabbed in Baltimore on April 11. Few details about her death have been publicly released.

Metzger's mother told WMAR that her daughter played several instruments and was a college graduate. In response to her death, Baltimore City LGBTQ Affairs said, “We are heartbroken to report another trans woman has lost her life to violence here in Baltimore. Today, we lift up the name and honor the life of Johanna Metzger. We wish comfort to those whose lives she touched.”



PENÉLOPE DÍAZ RAMÍREZ

Puerto Rico

Penélope Díaz Ramírez, a 31 year old Latinx transgender woman, was killed in Puerto Rico on April 13. There are few publicly available details about her case.

“Trans people deserve to live in peace, equality and freedom. Enough of so much hatred,” said Ivana Fred of Coalition for the Search for Equity, a local LGBTQ group.

PEACE
EQUALITY
FREEDOM



SERENA ANGELIQUE VELÁZQUEZ RAMOS

Puerto Rico

Serena Angelique Velázquez Ramos, a 32 year old Latinx transgender woman, was killed in Puerto Rico on April 21 while vacationing away from her home in Queens, New York. Ramos was killed alongside Layla Pelaez Sánchez, 21. Two men were charged under federal hate crimes law for Ramos and Sánchez's deaths.

She loved her pets, two cats and a dog. She also had a passion for exploring her spiritual side through tarot card readings; she maintained a YouTube channel where she taught audiences about her passion. Loved ones mourned her death, calling her "full of life," a "happy person" and a "sincere friend."

“FULL OF LIFE”
HAPPY
“SINCERE FRIEND”

PEACE EQUALITY FREEDOM



LAYLA PELAEZ SÁNCHEZ

Puerto Rico

Layla Pelaez Sánchez, a 21 year old Latinx transgender woman, was killed in Puerto Rico on April 21. She was killed alongside Serena Angelique Velázquez Ramos, 32. Two men were charged under federal hate crimes law for Ramos and Sánchez's deaths.

Sánchez had recently moved to the island, and was living in the Tejas neighborhood in Las Piedras.

FAMILY HOME

“EVERYONE LOVED HER”



NINA POP

Sikeston, Missouri

Nina Pop, a 28 year old Black transgender woman, was fatally stabbed in Sikeston, Missouri, on May 3. A suspect has been arrested and charged with second degree murder. The suspect is awaiting trial.

Pop shared on Facebook her love for her family and home. Pop's family, friends and community mourn her loss, and shared on Facebook that “everyone loved” her.



HELLE JAE O'REGAN

San Antonio, Texas

Helle Jae O'Regan, a 20 year old white transgender woman, was fatally stabbed in San Antonio on May 6 while working at her job in a local barbershop. A suspect has been arrested and charged with her death.

O'Regan was proud of her transgender identity. On Trans Day of Visibility, she posted on Instagram: "I was looking at the pictures I used to take before I transitioned versus now and it made me realize I'm way happier than I used to be. I love myself now. Thank you to everyone who's ever supported me and to anyone who hasn't I hope you come around. I'm happy and proud to be myself."

PROUD
HAPPY
SUPPORTED



JAYNE THOMPSON

Mesa County, Colorado

Jayne Thompson, a 33 year old white transgender woman, was killed in Mesa County, Colorado, on May 9. Twenty-first Judicial District Attorney Dan Rubinstein announced that no charges would be filed for Thompson's death. She was killed by Colorado State Patrol trooper Jason Wade, making her the second known transgender or gender non-conforming person to be killed by law enforcement in 2020 after Tony McDade.

Thompson lived in Brisbee, Arizona in a small community populated by artists and worked at Quarry Bisbee, a punk bar. Her close friend Samwel Leopardi said, "I hope that people realize that she was very thoroughly loved and cared for. There was a lot more than met the eye."

“LOVED AND
CARED FOR”

“A LOT MORE THAN
MET THE EYE”

BIG HEART UPLIFT

“TONY THE TIGER”



TONY MCDADE

Tallahassee, Florida

Tony McDade, a 38 year old Black transgender man, was fatally shot in Tallahassee on May 27. McDade was allegedly killed by police in an incident that was recorded on video.

McDade used the nickname “Tony the Tiger” with friends. He was a Gemini. His loved ones mourned his death online, saying “You have such a big heart... Just your energy would lift my spirits.” Another friend said, “The bond that we all held from the #Feds2TheFree some people will never understand but when you tired, you tired. I can only thank God for letting us hear your voice one last time and you saying you love us.”

PEACE EQUALITY FREEDOM

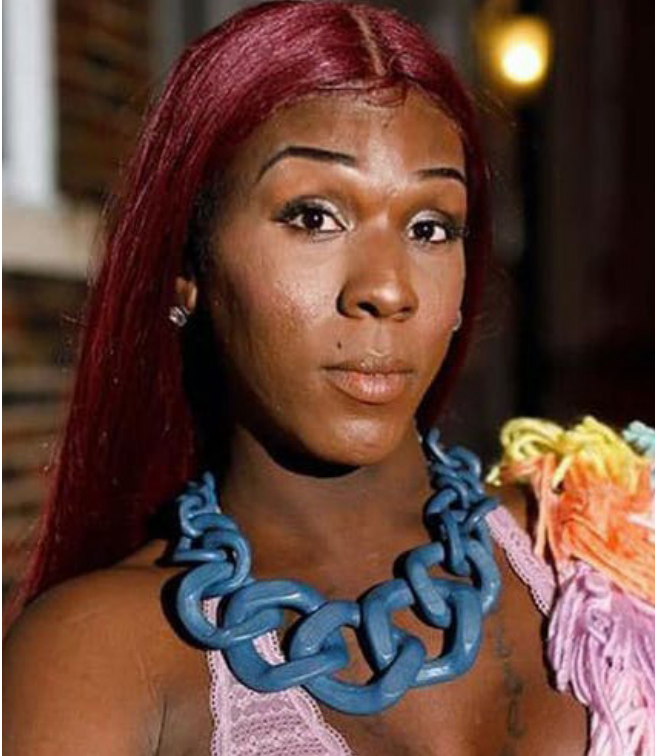


SELENA REYES- HERNANDEZ

Chicago, Illinois

Selena Reyes-Hernandez, a 37 year old Black transgender woman, was shot to death in Chicago on May 31 after telling her assailant she was trans. A suspect has been arrested and charged with murder.

Unfortunately, attempts by the media to reach her family have so far been unsuccessful, and details about Reyes-Hernandez's life and loved ones are not yet known.



DOMINIQUE “REM'MIE” FELLS

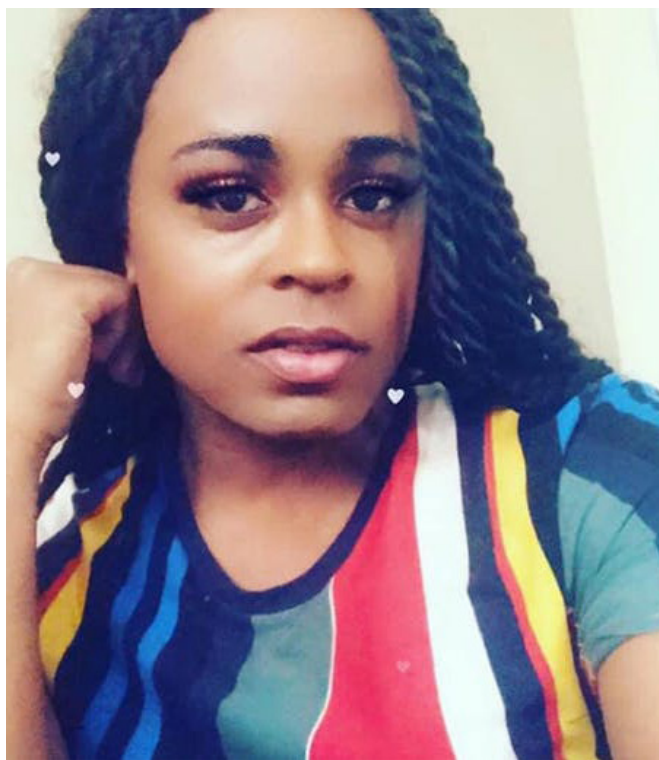
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dominique “Rem'mie” Fells, a young Black transgender woman, was fatally stabbed in Philadelphia on June 9. Police have arrested a suspect in her death.

Fells was a student at William Penn Performing Arts Institute in New York in 2010. Her former teacher said, “I knew Dominique as a sometimes brash, sometimes shy teenager. At 17, her self-possession was already remarkable. Looking through my camera lens to set up a shot, I would notice Dominique engaged in careful observation of her surroundings, as if sketching out the map of her future. She bristled with energy and creativity.”

CREATIVE
ENERGETIC
“SKETCHING OUT THE
MAP OF HER FUTURE”

RESILIENT OPTIMISTIC “LOVING SISTER AND AUNT”



RIAH MILTON

Liberty Township, Ohio

Riah Milton, a 25 year old Black transgender woman, was murdered in Liberty Township, Ohio on June 9. Three suspects have been arrested and charged in connection with Milton's death.

Milton worked as a home health aide and studied at the University of Cincinnati. She was a loving sister and aunt, often posting photos of her family. In March, she posted the status “Never been scared to struggle. Imma get it eventually” — a comment highlighting her resilience and optimism as a person facing a transphobic, misogynistic and racist society.



BRIAN **“EGYPT”** **POWERS**

Akron, Ohio

Brian “Egypt” Powers, a 43 year old Black transgender person, was fatally shot in Akron, Ohio, on June 13. His killer remains at large and his family believes he may have been a victim of a hate crime due to his gender expression. Those with information are urged to contact the Akron Police Department at 330-375-2490. Tips may be submitted anonymously.

According to family, Powers was a good Christian person who loved to cook and who brought warmth and life to everyone he met. As a child, he dreamed of becoming a backup dancer for Janet Jackson or Paula Abdul. He worked at a local catering company and is remembered for wearing long, colorful “unicorn” braids.

**GOOD CHRISTIAN
LOVED TO COOK
“BROUGHT WARMTH
AND LIFE TO
EVERYONE HE MET”**

HOPE DREAMS

“JUST BEGINNING TO
LIVE HER LIFE”



BRAYLA **STONE**

Little Rock, Arkansas

Brayla Stone, a 17 year old Black transgender girl, was fatally shot in Little Rock, Arkansas, on June 25. A suspect has been arrested and charged with her death.

“Brayla Stone was a child. A child, just beginning to live her life. A child of trans experience. A Black girl. A person who had hopes and dreams, plans and community,” said Tori Cooper, Human Rights Campaign Director of Community Engagement for the Transgender Justice Initiative.



MERCI MACK

Dallas, Texas

Merci Mack, a 22 year old Black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Dallas on June 30. A suspect has been arrested and charged with her death.

Mack shared that she liked baking cookies at home. She loved relaxing in the jacuzzi. Recently, she posted about how excited she was to return to her job at a local restaurant, which had been closed due to COVID-19. Mack's loved ones have taken to social media to mourn her death, remembering her as "beautiful" and a "friend."

BEAUTIFUL
A FRIEND

INDEPENDENT LOYAL

“FULL OF LAUGHTER AND
ABUNDANCE OF LIFE”



SHAKI PETERS

Amite City, Louisiana

Shaki Peters, a 32 year old Black transgender woman, was murdered in Amite City, Louisiana on July 1. Two people have been arrested and charged in connection with her death.

Peters' friend Nathalie Nia Faulk said, "Shaki was a very independent person and very loyal to her friends. She was full of laughter and an abundance of life."



BREE BLACK

Pompano Beach, Florida

Bree Black, a 27 year old Black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Pompano Beach, Florida, on July 3. Broward County Sheriff's Office is offering an \$8000 reward for information regarding Black's murder. People with information may contact Detective Louis Bonhomme at (954)-321-4377. Those who wish to remain anonymous may contact Broward Crime Stoppers at (954)-493-TIPS (8477) or online at BrowardCrimeStoppers.org.

"These killings are being fueled by the deadly combination of racism and transphobia, and they must cease. We must come together as a community and demand justice for those who were taken from us," said Tori Cooper, Human Rights Campaign Director of Community Engagement for the Transgender Justice Initiative.

**“COME TOGETHER
AS A COMMUNITY”
DEMAND
JUSTICE**

ACTIVIST

“A BLINDING LIGHT IN AN OTHERWISE DARK WORLD”



SUMMER TAYLOR

Seattle, Washington

Summer Taylor, a white non-binary person, died after a car drove into a crowd of protesters in Seattle on July 4. Taylor was participating in the Black Femme March in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and against police brutality. The driver has been arrested and charged with vehicular homicide.

Taylor worked full time at Urban Animal veterinary hospital. After Taylor's death, friends, coworkers and activists flooded their social media with tributes. One friend described them as “a blinding light in an otherwise dark world.” A coworker noted that Taylor had been a frequent presence at the protests, saying, “Summer has been there since Day One standing up for Black lives. Staying out all day and night, while still working full time taking care of animals. Summer talked to me about the protests, and how incredible it was to be a part of something so huge. A part of history.”



MARILYN CAZARES

Brawley, California

Marilyn Cazares, a Latinx transgender woman, was killed in Brawley, California. The Brawley Police Department urges anyone with information on this case to contact Detective Sergeant Jesse Rotner at (760)-351-7777.

Cazares' aunt Mindy Garcia said she "loved to sing and dance" and "never bothered anyone." On Twitter, community members are remembering Cazares, who was known in the community for her colorful clothing. Her cousin — who notes that Cazares continued to use her birth name with family — reflected on a memory of her cousin "jamming out to Billie Jean like the badass queen she was" while in the car.

“LOVED TO SING
AND DANCE”
COLORFUL
CLOTHING

LOVED FASHION PERSONAL SHOPPER



DIOR H OVA

Bronx, New York

Dior H Ova, a 32 year old Black transgender woman, who sometimes went by the name Tiffany Harris, was fatally stabbed on July 26. A suspect has been arrested and charged with her death.

According to her Facebook, Ova loved fashion — listing her career as a personal shopper and posting photos with luxury fashion brands that she loved. She also enjoyed watching TV dramas, such as “Desperate Housewives,” “Nip/Tuck” and “Sex and the City.” She noted her hometown as Kingston, Jamaica.



QUEASHA D HARDY

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Queasha D Hardy, a 22 year old Black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on July 27. There is an ongoing investigation, and anyone with information about what happened is asked to call Baton Rouge Police Department's Violent Crimes Unit at (225)-389-4869 or Crime Stoppers at (225)-344-7867.

Hardy, a hairstylist, was extremely loved by her community. On Facebook, many, many loved ones of Hardy shared memories of their time together. One person posted a video of Hardy dancing spontaneously with friends. Another friend remembered Hardy doing her hair and the joy she felt at "looking fly for [her] baby shower." Others describe her as loyal, loving, "always smiling," "the life of all parties" and "truly one of a kind."

“ALWAYS SMILING”
LOYAL
“ONE OF A KIND”

CLOSE TO FAMILY ADVOCATE



AJA RAQUELL RHONE- SPEARS

Portland, Oregon

Aja Raquell Rhone-Spears, a 32 year old Black transgender woman, who sometimes used the name Rocky Rhone, was fatally stabbed in Portland, Oregon, on July 28. Anyone with information in Rhone-Spears' killing is urged to contact Detective Brad Clifton of the Portland Police Bureau at (503)-823-0696 or Brad.Clifton@portlandoregon.gov, or Detective Mike Greenlee at (503)-823-0871 or Michael.Greenlee@portlandoregon.gov.

According to her Facebook, Rhone-Spears was incredibly close to her family, posting photos with her father and playful statuses related to conversations she had with family members about cooking. She called out instances of racial injustice, especially violence by police, and advocated for a world free from white supremacy.



KEE SAM

Lafayette, Louisiana

Kee Sam, a 24 year old Black transgender woman, was killed in Lafayette, Louisiana, on August 12. While the investigation is ongoing, a suspect has been indicted in connection with the shooting.

Friends have posted memories of Kee Sam on her Instagram page, commenting with heartfelt messages including “this can’t be real,” “I will miss you... you know you in my heart forever” and “rest in love.”

“I WILL MISS YOU”
“IN MY HEART
FOREVER”

DANCE FASHION

“SHE JUST WANTED
TO BE HERSELF”



LEA RAYSHON DAYE

Cleveland, Ohio

Lea Rayshon Daye, 28, was a transgender woman who died in Cuyahoga County Jail in Cleveland, Ohio, on August 30. Before her death, Lea left a letter to her mother detailing the horrible conditions she experienced in the jail.

Lea enjoyed dancing, fashion and spending time with her family. She worked at a local homeless shelter and aspired to be a model. Her aunt said, “We always liked to go out and get cocktails. She liked her crop-tops. She liked to be pretty. And she just wanted to be herself. She didn’t want to be judged.”



AERRION BURNETT

Independence, Missouri

Aerrion Burnett, a 37 year old Black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Independence, Missouri, on September 19. The Independence Police Department is asking anyone with information about the crime to call its tips hotline at (816)-474-TIPS.

Burnett's family and friends held a vigil the day after her death, releasing balloons in her honor and sharing memories of her. "She was a goddess," said her friend Korea Kelly. "If you wanted to have a good day, you need to smile, Aerrion was the person you wanted by your side." Another friend remembered her as the "life of the party." Members of Burnett's family also called for justice. "Enough is enough," said a cousin of Burnett's. "Stop taking our lives. Lives matter. You can't get them back, and it hurts so many people."

“LIFE OF
THE PARTY”
“SHE WAS
A GODDESS”



MIA GREEN

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Mia Green, a 29 year old Black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Philadelphia on September 28. A suspect has been arrested and charged with her death.

Friends remembered Green on social media, with one writing, “Her smile was so perfect and so contagious. She made me laugh.” Another said that she was “such a sweet spirit.” Others shared that her death was “heartbreaking,” and called for justice.

“SUCH A
SWEET SPIRIT”

“HER SMILE WAS
SO PERFECT AND
CONTAGIOUS”

“STUDYING TO BECOME A NURSE”



MICHELLE MICHELLYN RAMOS VARGAS

San Germán, Puerto Rico

Michelle Michellyn Ramos Vargas was fatally shot in San Germán, Puerto Rico on September 30. Vargas, who was in her mid-30s, was studying to become a nurse at Ponce Paramedical College.



FELYCYA HARRIS

Augusta, Georgia

Felycya Harris, a 33 year old Black transgender woman, was found fatally shot in Augusta, Georgia on October 3. Her death has been ruled a homicide, but a suspect has yet to be confirmed.

Harris' death cut short a life full of promise. She was an interior decorator and ran her own company. She enjoyed lending her eye to improve the surroundings of others and made others feel comfortable in their own space. She said she could do "just about anything with decorating," which she learned from her late grandmother. Friends remember Harris, stating "That laugh. The smile — the smiles. The talks. The arguments. The attitudes. Everybody is going to remember who Felycya Harris is." Based on her social media posts, she enjoyed dance, fashion and style, had a bright sense of humor and was full of life.

INTERIOR DECORATOR
FULL OF LIFE
BRIGHT SENSE
OF HUMOR

“GENUINELY
A GOOD
PERSON”



BROOKLYN **DESHUNA**

Shreveport, Louisiana

Brooklyn Deshuna, a 20 year old Black transgender woman, was found fatally shot in Shreveport, Louisiana on October 7. Her death has been ruled a homicide, but a suspect has yet to be confirmed.

Deshuna attended Bossier Parish Community College and studied cosmetology. Friends are remembering her on social media, with one friend saying that she was “genuinely a good person.” Another said, “You didn’t deserve this... I’m heartbroken.” Friends and family are also calling for justice.



SARA BLACKWOOD

Indianapolis, Indiana

Sara Blackwood, 39, was fatally shot in Indianapolis on October 11. Her death has been ruled a homicide, but a suspect has not been identified.

Blackwood enjoyed playing video games, including RPGs, and was a fan of the show “My Little Pony,” sharing many images, art and memes from the show on her Facebook page. Friends remembered her on social media, with one friend sharing that the situation was “devastating.” Another friend shared, “She always had a place in my heart. Still does and I don’t see that ever changing.”

**“SHE ALWAYS
HAS A PLACE
IN MY HEART”**

“VERY
FUNNY”
“SUCH A BRIGHT PERSON
WITH A POSITIVE SPIRIT”



ANGEL UNIQUE

Memphis, Tennessee

Angel Unique, whom some reports identify as Angel Haynes, was a 25 year old Black transgender woman who was fatally shot in Memphis, Tennessee on October 25.

Unique was a licensed cosmetologist. On October 30, Angel's friends and family held a vigil to remember her, where they lit candles that spelled her name and released balloons. Friends and family also shared their memories. "Everybody that knew Angel, knew that she was very funny, very nice to everybody she met," said her friend Shinese Weddle in a video for ABC 24, a local news station in Memphis. A member of Angel's family remembered her on Facebook as "such a bright person [with] a positive spirit."



YUNIESKI CAREY HARRERA

Miami, Florida

Yuneski Carey Harerra, 39, also known as Yuni Carey, was a 39-year-old Latina transgender woman who was killed in Miami, Florida on November 17 as the result of a stabbing. A suspect who identified as her husband confessed to the killing and has been taken into custody.

Herrera was a model, performer, dancer and activist who was well-known and loved by the LGBTQ community in Miami. She was proud of her Cuban heritage. Herrera's friend Raul Griffith as saying, "Besides being strikingly beautiful, she was kind and she was good and she cared as much about others as she would about herself. She was a very special person for many people."

Arianna Lint, founder of Arianna's Center, a transgender community center in South Florida, described Herrera as "amazing" and "sweet." Over the summer, Herrera posted on Facebook, "I just need to be me and be here. A True Queen inspires all over the world with her legacy and experiences... I make my [own] dreams."

MODEL
DANCER
PERFORMER

AMAZING

"SHE WAS A VERY
SPECIAL PERSON
FOR MANY PEOPLE"

OTHER DEATHS IN 2020

HRC is deeply concerned about three other fatal incidents in 2020 that we are following closely. For each of these individuals, HRC calls for further investigation into the causes of their deaths, including whether discriminatory bias toward transgender or gender non-conforming people played a motivating factor.



Ashley Moore
Newark, New Jersey



Tatiana Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Draya McCarty
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

PEACE
EQUALITY
FREEDOM



ASHLEY MOORE

Newark, New Jersey

Ashley Moore, 26, was found dead in Newark, New Jersey on April 1. The Newark Police Department ruled her death a suicide, but significant questions arose about her death. At the urging of Moore's mother and local activists, the case has been reopened by the police department in connection with the county's Homicide Task Force.

"Ashley loved people," said her mother. Moore worked as a chef at One World Trade Center.

“ASHLEY
LOVED
PEOPLE”

“PRETTIEST SMILE” “BUNDLE OF JOY”



TATIANA HALL

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Tatiana Hall, 22, was found dead in Philadelphia on June 29. Details surrounding her death are unclear, but a coroner’s report claims it was due to accidental drug use. Hall’s family and friends have disputed this account, claiming she was not a drug user and that they suspect foul play.

Hall’s close relative Mariah Hope said Hall was like a sister to her, and had “the prettiest smile.” Katrina Parker, another loved one, viewed Hall as a daughter and her “bundle of joy.” Both are seeking justice and hope Hall finds peace.



DRAYA MCCARTY

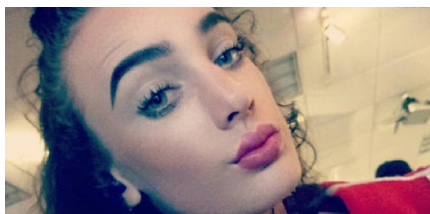
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Draya McCarty, 28, was found dead in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on July 4. An investigation is ongoing, but her death has not yet been ruled a homicide.

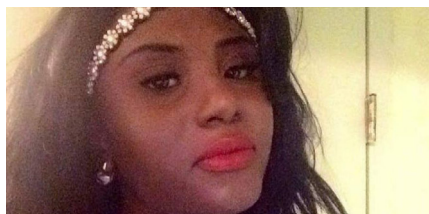
PEACE
EQUALITY
FREEDOM

UPDATES ON 2019 DEATHS

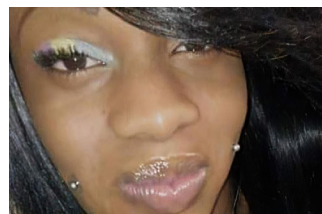
After HRC's 2019 report was published, four more transgender or gender non-conforming people were killed. The total number of recorded incidents of fatal violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people between 2013-2019 increased from 161 to 165. Below are memorials and updates on the additional individuals who lost their lives in 2019.



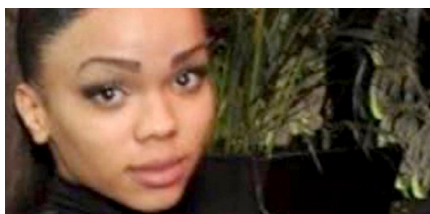
Nikki Kuhnhausen
Vancouver, Washington



Yahira Nesby
New York, New York



Mia Penny
Washington, D.C.



Layleen Cubilette-Polanco
New York, New York

PEACE
EQUALITY
FREEDOM

“GORGEOUS”
“BEAUTIFUL
SOUL”

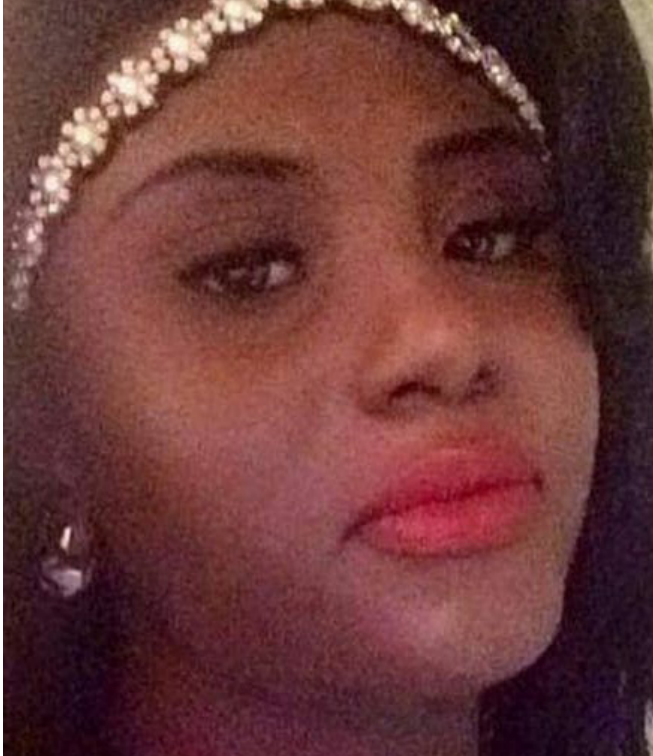


NIKKI KUHNHAUSEN

Vancouver, Washington

Nikki Kuhnhausen, 17, was found dead near Larch Mountain in Washington state on December 7, 2019 after being missing since June. A suspect has been arrested and charged with her death.

Kuhnhausen enjoyed sharing videos of her dancing and singing on her Facebook, and she often posted memes to entertain her friends. Her loved ones took to social media to mourn her passing. “[Y]ou my dear didn’t deserve this ... rest with God now,” someone shared. Others have called her “gorgeous” and “a beautiful soul.”



YAHIRA NESBY

New York, New York

Yahira Nesby, 33, was fatally shot in New York on December 19, 2019. Nesby, a Black transgender woman, was a beloved member of the New York ball scene and a member of House Chanel. The New York Police Department released surveillance video of a suspect, but no arrests have been made.

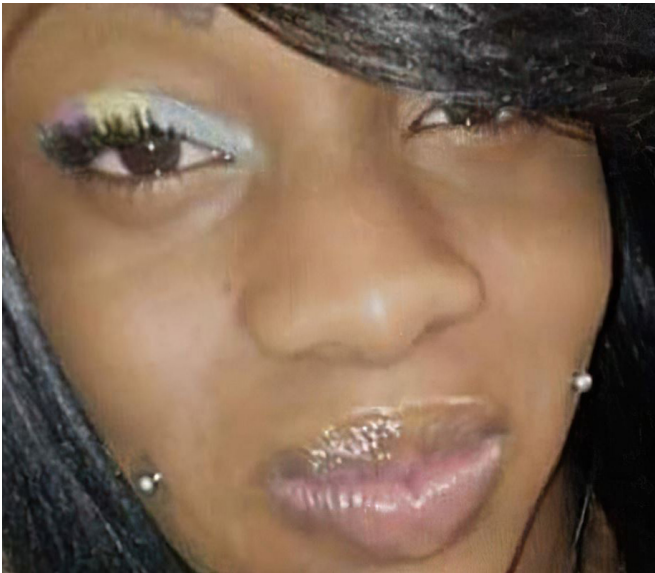
Nesby was a religious woman who often shared videos and powerful words on faith on her social media profiles. Her friends and family commented on social media about her death, calling Nesby “a good spirit” and “genuinely good people.” One friend said, “Every time [Nesby was] around [she] put a smile on my face and others.”

“A GOOD SPIRIT”

FAITH

“SHE PUT A SMILE
ON MY FACE”

“LIKE A BEST
FRIEND”
“VERY LOVABLE”

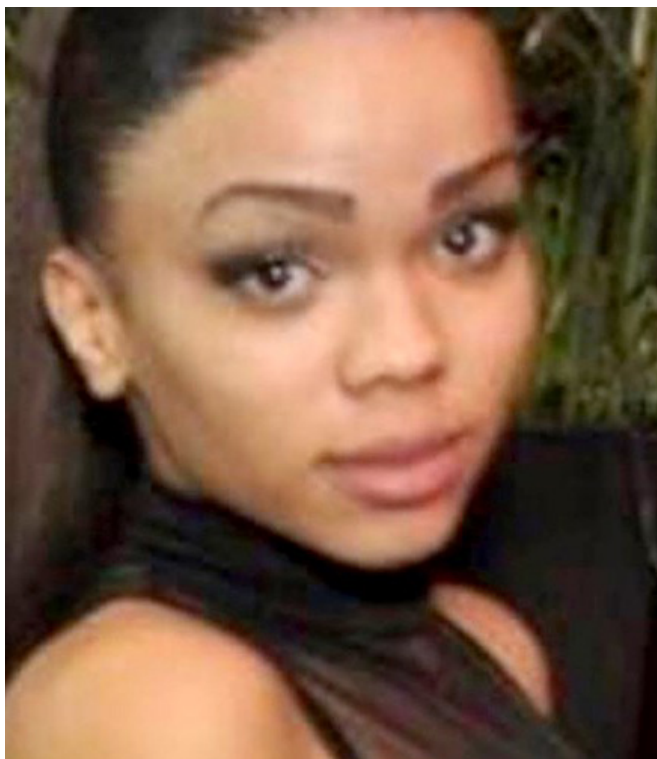


MIA PENNY

Washington, D.C.

Mia Penny, a transgender woman, was fatally shot in Washington, D.C. on December 29, 2019. After an exchange of gunfire between a suspect and two security guards at a vacant apartment building, the suspect fled and the case remains unsolved.

Penny's mother, Tasha Penny, said Mia was "like a best friend" and "very lovable."



LAYLEEN CUBILETTE- POLANCO

New York, New York

Layleen Cubilette-Polanco, 27, was an AfroLatinx transgender woman found dead in a solitary confinement cell at Riker’s Island in New York City on June 7, 2019. Since our 2019 report, New York City has reached a \$5.9 million settlement with Polanco’s family, the largest ever for an inmate’s death at Riker’s Island. Prosecutors declined to pursue criminal charges in connection with the case, but a report from New York’s Board of Correction found several failures that likely contributed to Polanco’s death. Polanco’s sister, Melania Brown, said the settlement was “just the beginning of justice” and that she hopes the settlement “makes a powerful statement that Black trans lives do matter and that we need a change moving forward.”

Polanco was also known as Layleen Xtravaganza, and was a member of the House of Xtravaganza ballroom community. Indya Moore, the star of FX’s “Pose” and a fellow member of the house of Xtravaganza said on Instagram, “I knew Layleen growing up. I remember desiring to be beautiful like her. She was cool, and funny too, like all of us she had dreams of escaping poverty and the misery of social ostracization.”

COOL
FUNNY
LAYLEEN
XTRAVAGANZA

BEAUTIFUL “DID NOT DIE IN VAIN”



JENNIFER LAUDE

Olongapo, Philippines

In September 2020, Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte granted U.S. Marine Joseph Pemberton an absolute pardon for the murder of Jennifer Laude, a 26-year-old Filipina transgender woman. Laude was killed on October 11, 2014 in Olongapo, the Philippines. Pemberton was convicted of Laude's homicide on December 1, 2015. During his trial, Pemberton admitted to assaulting Laude after discovering that she was transgender. President Duterte's pardon of Pemberton reignited global outrage over Laude's death.

Laude and her case were remembered in the 2018 documentary *Call her Ganda*. Julita Cabillan, Laude's mother, used to call her “ganda,” Tagalog for beautiful. Luade's friend said, “Her death exposed the truth about gender-based violence. Jennifer Laude did not die in vain.” She is survived by her fiance Marc Sueselbeck.

THE EPIDEMIC BY THE NUMBERS

Since January 2013, HRC and other advocates have recorded at least 202 transgender and gender non-conforming individuals who were victims of fatal violence in the U.S. In 2020, we recorded 37 fatalities at the time of publication, the highest number we've tracked thus far in a single year.

It is important to remember that this analysis is not exhaustive nor definitive, but simply provides a snapshot into the landscape of fatal violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people. That being said, this data provides us with one of many useful tools in fighting for justice for transgender and gender non-conforming people across the U.S. and combatting violence against them.

Throughout this section, we say “at least” for most statistics. Fatal violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people is often reported inaccurately and insufficiently. Victims are consistently misgendered, and crimes against them are consistently underreported.

BLACK TRANSGENDER WOMEN CRITICALLY IMPACTED

Fatal violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people disproportionately affects transgender women, people of color, young people and people in the South. At least 157 victims of fatal violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people since 2013 were transgender women of color (78%). Black transgender women were critically impacted, representing two-thirds (66%) of all known victims since 2013.

MOST VICTIMS ARE WOMEN

In the past eight years of data, we have found that nearly nine in ten victims were transgender women. Since 2013, at least **170 transgender women (84% of victims)** were victims of fatal violence, as well as:

- **Twelve transgender men**
- **Fourteen non-binary, gender non-conforming or queer people, and**
- **One Two-Spirit person**

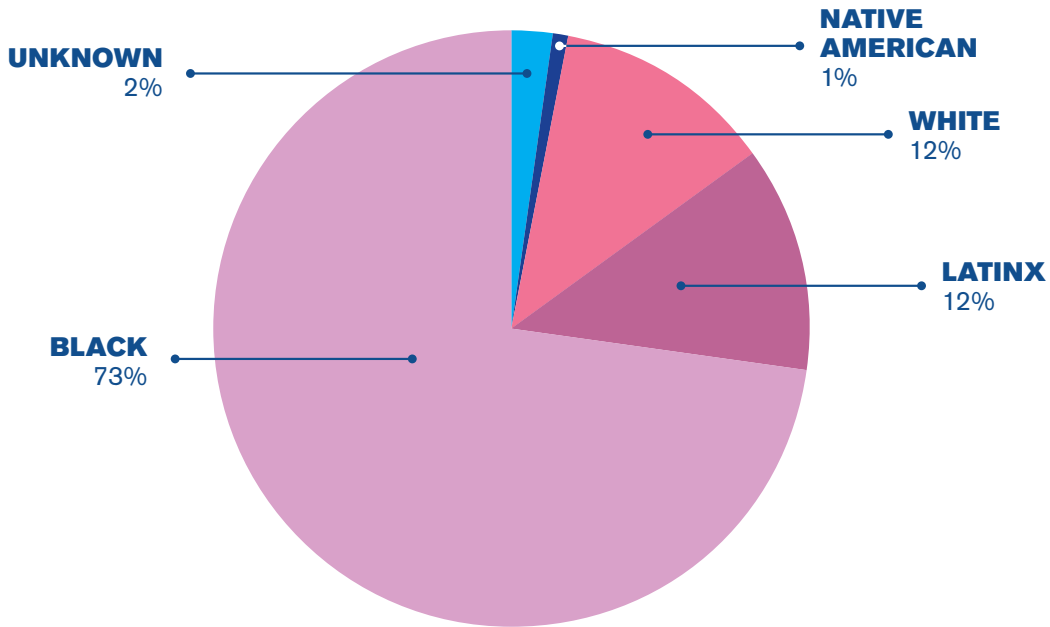
HRC was unable to confirm the gender of five victims with available information.

In 2020, at least 30 victims were transgender women, of which 22 were Black transgender women. Additionally, at least 3 were transgender men, 3 were non-binary or gender non-conforming.

MOST VICTIMS ARE PEOPLE OF COLOR

Fatal violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people disproportionately affects people of color. Since 2013, at least **85% of victims of violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people were people of color.** In 2020, 22 victims were Black and 7 were Latinx, of which 25 total were Black or Latinx women.

MOST VICTIMS TO FATAL ANTI-TRANS VIOLENCE ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 40



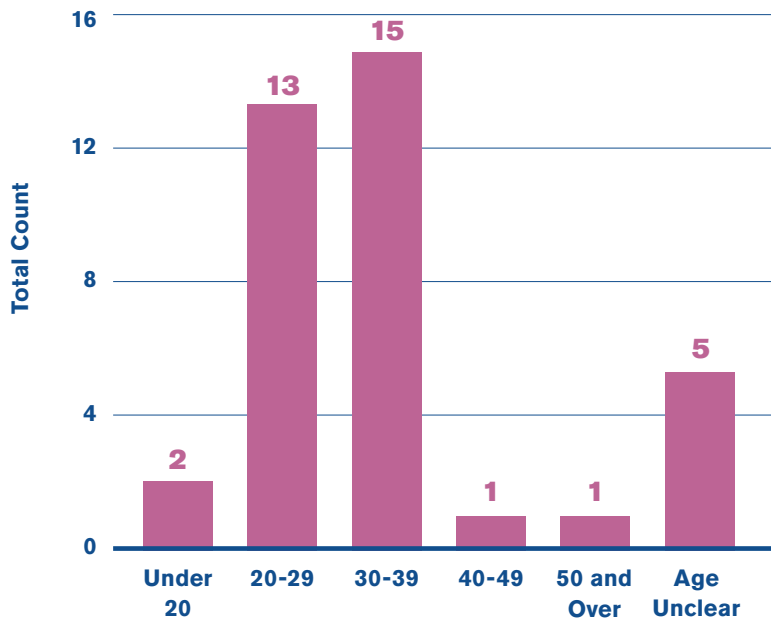
VICTIMS ARE OFTEN YOUNGER AND SOMETIMES EVEN MINORS

Since 2013, victims of known fatal violence were anywhere from age 16 to 66, with more than three-quarters (76%) of victims age 35 or under. Seven of them were minors.

- **More than three-quarters (76%) of victims were age 35 or under**
- **One in ten victims were under the age of 21**
- **7 victims were minors**

Victims tracked in 2020 so far have been between the ages of 17 and 51. Twenty-four of the victims were 35 years of age and under. One victim was a minor.

MOST VICTIMS TO FATAL ANTI-TRANS VIOLENCE ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 35

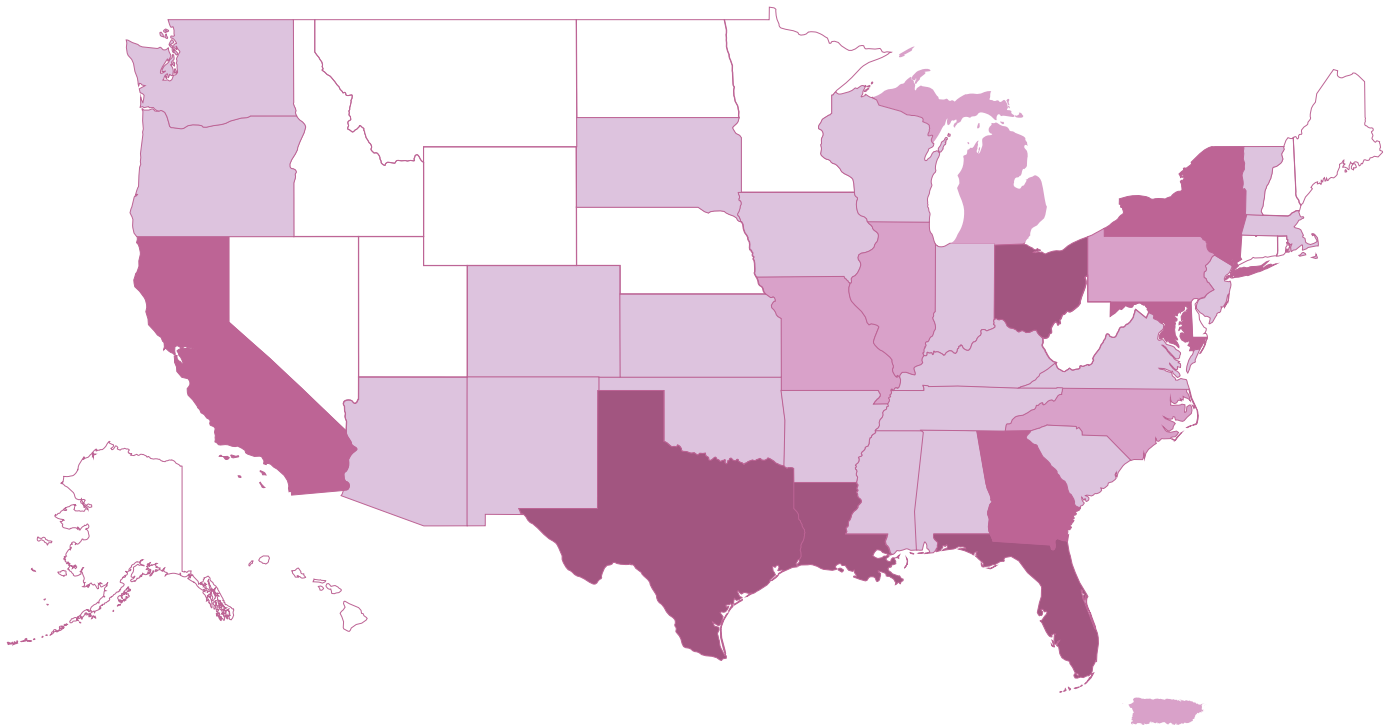


FATAL VIOLENCE IMPACTS CITIES AND STATES NATIONWIDE

Since 2013, HRC and advocates have tracked more than 200 cases of fatal violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people nationwide, spanning across 113 cities and towns in 33 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Fatalities in 2020 so far have been reported among 18 states and Puerto Rico across 32 cities and towns. Most deaths so far this year have been in Puerto Rico (six total), followed by four in Louisiana. Additionally, there have been two deaths each in Florida, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas and one death each in Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee and Washington.

STATE AND TERRITORY OF FATALITIES (2013-PRESENT)



AL	3	KY	1	OK	2
AR	1	LA	17	OR	3
AZ	2	MA	1	PA	9
CA	12	MD	12	PR	6
CO	1	MI	5	SC	4
DC	3	MO	8	SD	1
FL	20	MS	3	TN	3
GA	10	NC	6	TX	18
IA	1	NJ	1	VA	4
IL	6	NM	2	VT	1
IN	2	NY	10	WA	2
KS	2	OH	15	WI	1

**LEAST
DEATHS**
1



**GREATEST
DEATHS**
20

LEGEND

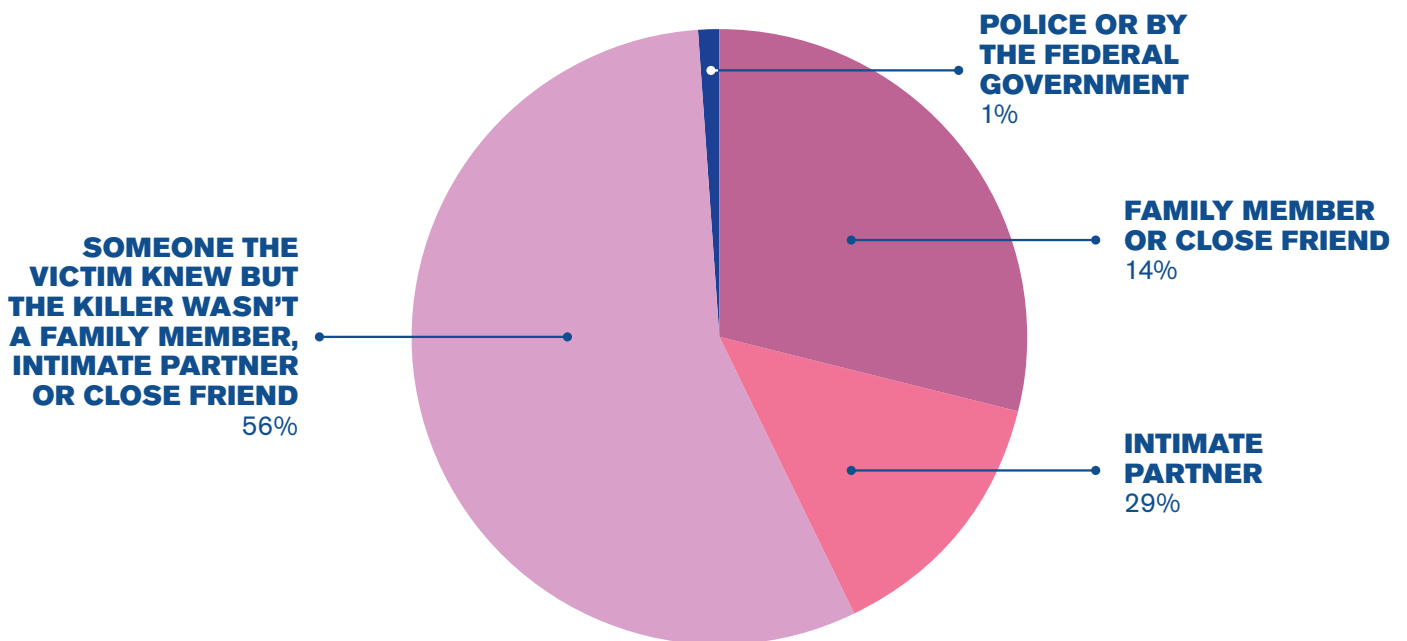
GUNS INVOLVED IN MOST INCIDENTS

Gun violence is a major contributing factor to the number of fatalities against transgender and gender non-conforming people. **Since 2013, more than two-thirds of our recorded fatalities involved a firearm.** In 2020, at least 17 of 37 fatalities so far have involved a firearm/gun violence.

INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE IS A SIGNIFICANT CAUSE OF DEATH

Interpersonal violence accounts for a significant number of fatalities against transgender and gender non-conforming people. In 2020, approximately seven in ten transgender and gender non-conforming people killed as a result of fatal violence were killed by an acquaintance, friend, family member or intimate partner. Unfortunately, the relationship of the victim to the killer is still unknown for close to one-third (30%) of all known cases. This means that anywhere from 44% to 74% of victims since 2013 were violently killed by someone they knew, including intimate partners, family members, friends, peers and acquaintances.

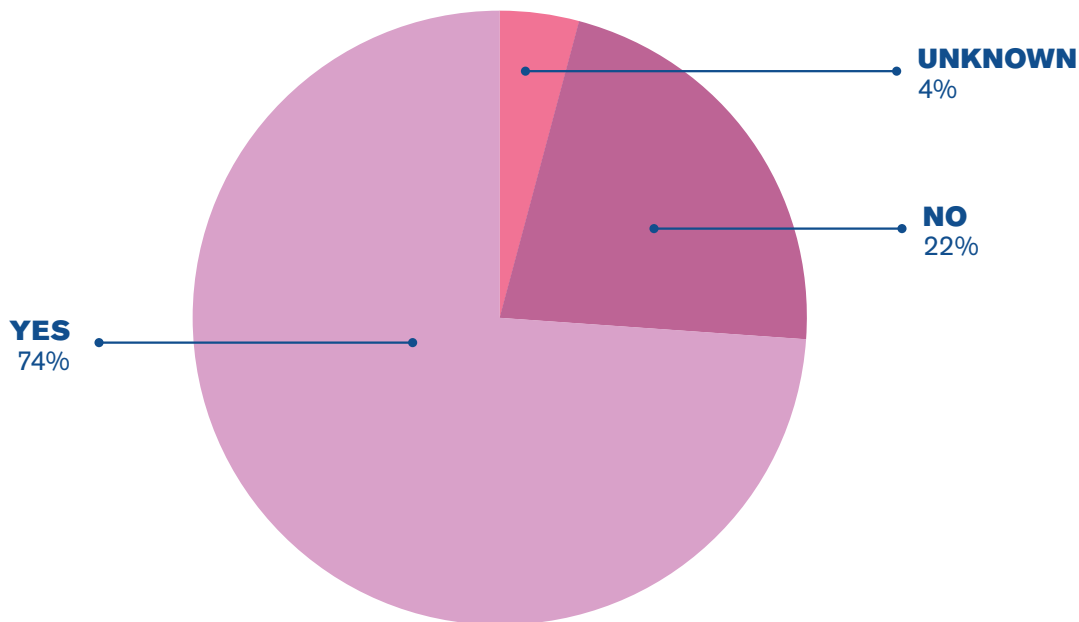
PERCENT OF FATAL ANTI-TRANS VIOLENCE BY INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS (2013 – 2020)



MISGENDERING OF VICTIMS IS PREVALENT

Far too many transgender and gender non-conforming victims are misgendered after death. Since 2013, roughly three-quarters (74% to 78%) of fatalities were initially misgendered by the media and/or police or criminal justice system. While this misgendering is extremely disrespectful, it also impedes investigations and data collection. At least 21 of the 37 fatalities in 2020 were initially misgendered by the media and/or police.

PERCENT OF VICTIMS WHO WERE INITIALLY MISGENDERED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT AND/OR MEDIA (2013 – 2020)



FEW ANTI-TRANSGENDER MURDERS REFLECTED IN ANNUAL FBI STATISTICS

Like HRC, the FBI has tracked gender identity motivated hate crime data since 2013, with 2019 being the most recent year of data available. Even though HRC has tracked 165 fatalities from 2013 to 2019, some of which were bias-motivated, **FBI data reflects only two anti-transgender murders/negligent homicides during the period.** While not every incident of fatal violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people tracked by HRC is an anti-transgender homicide, the gulf between the FBI statistics and HRC's data is alarming and likely results in part from non-reporting, underreporting, or inaccurate reporting by state and municipal law enforcement agencies to the FBI.

IMPORTANT EXISTING AND NEEDED LEGAL PROTECTIONS

Although there are a few existing legal protections for transgender and gender non-conforming people, this violence cannot be stemmed until the rights of transgender and gender non-conforming people are fully realized and our systems are reformed to address the epidemic and its root causes.

EXISTING LEGAL PROTECTIONS

Violence Against Women Act

The Violence Against Women Act is also pivotal to protecting transgender and gender non-conforming people. This legislation, signed into law 26 years ago, has helped reduce domestic violence and sexual assault and has provided victims and survivors critical lifeline services. Since 2013, the law expressly prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, making it easier for LGBTQ people to receive services.

Matthew Shepard & James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act

The historic Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act was signed into law just over 11 years ago. This landmark legislation added actual or perceived gender identity to federal hate crime protections for the first time, along with gender, sexual orientation and disability. It also required the FBI to track statistics based on gender identity and gender and enabled the U.S. Department of Justice to assist state and local jurisdictions with investigating and prosecuting violent bias-motivated crimes.

Bostock Decision & State Laws

In June of this year, the Supreme Court of the United States issued a decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia* that makes it clear that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is prohibited under the federal employment non-discrimination law known as Title VII. This is a landmark decision that has implications that will eventually reach federal civil rights laws forbidding discrimination in education, health care, housing and several other areas. Importantly, *Bostock* does not reach some vital areas like public spaces and services, nor does it apply to federally-funded programs since sex-based federal protections do not currently exist in these areas. It is imperative that officials continue to advance pro-equality legislation at the state level, including in employment, to end the patchwork of non-discrimination laws and to explicitly protect LGBTQ people in every area of life.

Name and Gender Marker Updates on Identification Documents

Transgender and non-binary people who are unable to obtain identity documents that correctly reflect their name and gender identity frequently experience violence and discrimination. Inaccurate identity documents can also out transgender individuals at their places of work, while searching for places to live or in public spaces, potentially leading to harassment and discrimination. Fortunately, numerous states have laws or policies that facilitate name and gender marker updates on both driver's licenses and birth certificates, including Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Washington, and the District of Columbia. Additionally, a growing number of states also allow for non-binary gender marker designations on driver's licenses and/or birth certificates.

NEEDED LEGAL PROTECTIONS

Equality Act & State Nondiscrimination Laws

Despite significant steps forward, LGBTQ Americans lack basic explicit non-discrimination protections in states across the country. The patchwork nature of current laws leaves millions of people subject to uncertainty and potential discrimination that impacts their safety, their families and their day-to-day lives. The Equality Act would provide consistent and explicit non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ people across key areas of life, including employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs and jury service. The Equality Act passed in the U.S. House of Representatives in May 2019. In order to become law, it must pass both chambers of Congress and be signed into law by the president.

LGBTQ Panic Defense

In the vast majority of states, there are no laws expressly banning perpetrators of violent crimes from asserting the victim's sexual orientation or gender identity as a so-called "panic defense." This "panic defense" allows a criminal defendant to argue in court that their discovery of the victim's sexual orientation or gender identity caused the defendant's violent reaction, potentially leading to a reduced charge or sentence. When used in a case of violence against a transgender or gender non-conforming person, this is often colloquially called a "trans panic defense." Thankfully, in recent years a number of states have enacted bans, including California, Illinois, Rhode Island, Nevada, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey, New York and Washington. The passage of such legislation will help to end the legitimization of violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people and ensure that victims obtain equal justice.

Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act

Although we know that hate crimes continue to be a pervasive problem—particularly bias-motivated crimes based on gender identity—we are far from understanding its full extent. Because reporting hate crimes to the FBI is purely voluntary under federal law, the actual number of hate crimes across the country is much larger than FBI statistics indicate. Additionally, a number of other barriers often contribute to the underreporting of hate crimes, including distrust between targeted communities and law enforcement and uncertainty about law enforcement responses. The federal Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act would promote higher quality federal hate crimes data collection, incentivize state hotlines that assist victims who might otherwise be reluctant to report hate crimes, and encourage local policies on identifying, investigating and reporting hate crimes.

Addressing the Policing Crisis

Congress should adopt legislative reforms that address over-policing and police brutality, misconduct and harassment affecting Black people throughout the nation. These reforms should minimally include implementing a strong federal use of force standard; banning chokeholds and similar excessive force maneuvers; prohibiting racial profiling and requiring robust data collection on police-community encounters; banning federal programs that militarize law enforcement; eliminating no-knock warrants; amending existing federal laws to permit prosecutors to successfully hold law enforcement accountable for the deprivation of civil rights and civil liberties; developing a national public database of officers who engage in misconduct; and ending qualified immunity which prevents police from being held legally accountable when they break the law. Congress should swiftly pass the Justice in Policing Act of 2020 which reflects many of these core priorities.

Decriminalization of Sex Work

The criminalization of consensual sex work poses a serious threat to public health and increases violence in LGBTQ communities. Laws criminalizing sex work disproportionately punish the poor, Black and Brown women, transgender women, and those living at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities. States and the federal government should repeal laws that make consensual sex work illegal and should instead focus on providing critical services and protections for those who engage in transactional sex work as a means of survival.

Data Collection

Because gender identity is not included in most government data collection efforts, transgender and gender non-conforming individuals remain largely invisible to the local, state and federal officials charged with ensuring their health, safety and wellbeing. Currently, no state or the federal government has a comprehensive law that requires all government data collection efforts to include gender identity data alongside other demographic data. Congress should swiftly pass the federal LGBTQ Data Inclusion Act to help ensure that transgender and gender non-conforming people are counted when vital funding, policy and programmatic decisions are made.

Name and Gender Marker Updates on Identification Documents

While a number of states have modernized their laws to remove unnecessary barriers to correcting an individual's name and gender marker on identity documents, many have not and some are actively seeking to prohibit transgender and non-binary people from obtaining identity documents that accurately reflect who they are. These restrictive laws place transgender and gender non-conforming people at increased risk of discrimination, harassment and violence. States should ensure that the process for updating names and gender markers on both driver's licenses and birth certificates is free of unnecessary and restrictive requirements. Moreover, state-issued identification documents and federal documents like passports should include a non-binary gender marker designation.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

ELIMINATE STIGMA AGAINST TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING PEOPLE.

Stigma against transgender and gender non-conforming people can take many forms, including lack of acceptance by friends and family, a hostile political climate and negative stereotypes or lack of representation in pop culture and the media. All of these factors lead to their dehumanization and increase their risk of experiencing violence. Reject transphobic language and have conversations with those around you who may need to learn more.

USE THE CORRECT NAMES AND PRONOUNS FOR TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING PEOPLE, IN LIFE AND DEATH.

Using a transgender or gender non-conforming person's chosen name and pronouns is a sign of respect and inclusion. It signals that their identity is valid, even after death. When police and media reports use the correct names and pronouns of the deceased, it also helps with recording important demographic data and shedding light on the issue of violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people.

SUPPORT LAWS AND POLICIES THAT PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION BASED ON GENDER IDENTITY.

Too often, transgender and gender non-conforming people lack explicit protections from discrimination. By including gender identity in non-discrimination policies, we can ensure transgender and gender non-conforming people feel safe in their jobs, in public accommodations and in their daily lives.

UPLIFT TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING VOICES.

Increased representation of transgender and gender non-conforming people allows them to share their stories authentically to wider audiences. This increases tolerance in society as more and more people can recognize transgender and gender non-conforming people as important parts of the communities.

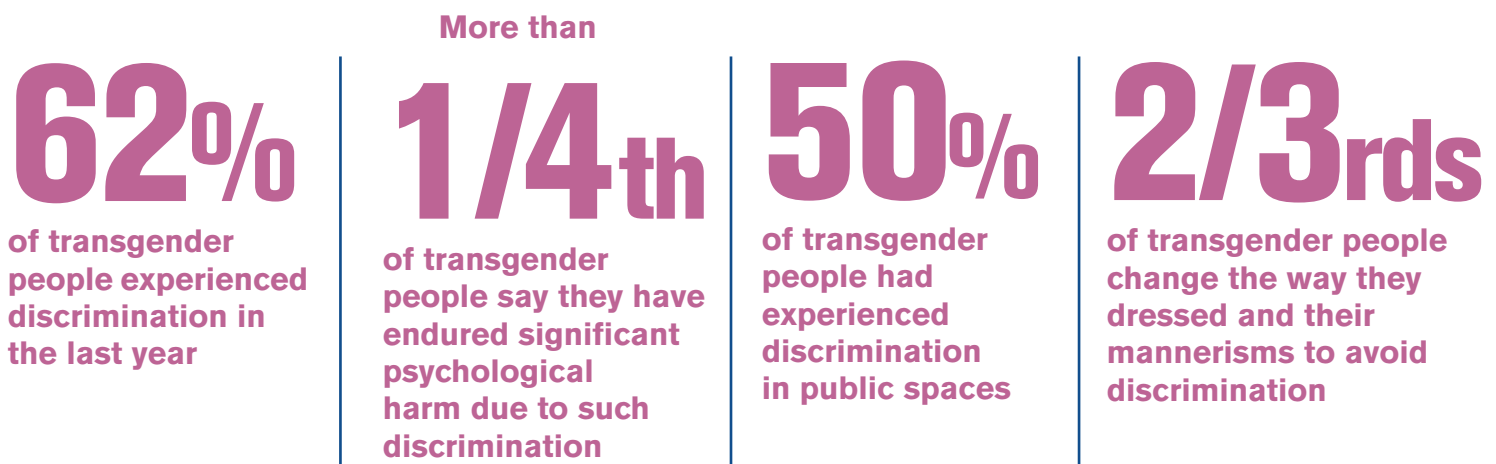
BUILD INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES IN EDUCATION, THE WORKFORCE, HEALTH CARE AND OTHER PARTS OF OUR SOCIETY.

We need to ensure our communities have access to training and support to create environments where transgender and gender non-conforming people experience a community of belonging. By including transgender and gender non-conforming people in all aspects of society, we can eliminate marginalization and reduce instances of violence.

HRC'S TRANSGENDER JUSTICE INITIATIVE

HRC Foundation's Transgender Justice Initiative was launched in 2019 to dismantle unjust systemic barriers to transgender empowerment and help end the epidemic of violence faced by transgender people by addressing the root causes of the physical danger, hatred and discrimination faced by transgender people in the United States.

A 2020 [study](#) conducted by the Center for American Progress shows that transgender people continue to face discrimination and marginalization in society.



The Transgender Justice Initiative addresses the socioeconomic barriers faced by transgender people by focusing on four pillars:

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

[HRC's Corporate Equality Index](#) has reshaped the workforce for transgender people and created an environment where more and more transgender people have policies designed to protect them from workplace bias - but far too many still can't access pathways to employment. Through a multi-state initiative, HRC is collaborating with corporate America, community-based organizations and TransCanWork to address the employment gap through virtual training and career fairs in major cities.

INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF TRANS-FOCUSED AND TRANS-LED ORGANIZATIONS

While the number of trans-focused and trans-led organizations is increasing, they are often limited in scope, capacity and technical operational expertise. Large majorities report needing organizational development training - including finding and responding to funding opportunities, budgeting and financial management, staff management and media training. Through two professional development programs created with and by community - [ELEVATE](#) and [ACTIVATE](#) - the Transgender Justice Initiative increases the leadership skills of transgender non-profit leaders.

INCREASING COMMUNITY PUBLIC SAFETY

There is an urgent crisis of public safety in the transgender community and local community leaders – including government officials and private industry stakeholders – must respond as such. From housing to healthcare to law enforcement, municipal leaders can exert significant influence to direct resources and attention where they are most needed. We work with municipal leaders in over 50 cities nationwide and engage directly with community activists to advance solutions tailored to each community.

Most recently the Transgender Justice Initiative hosted a national summit for LGBTQ municipal liaisons and allied city officials to gather and learn about the most critical issues facing the community as well as the first Transgender Justice & Advocacy Summit, an effort to bring community stakeholders together to solve safety challenges in the Atlanta area. The Transgender Justice Initiative also partnered with Minneapolis City Council Vice President Andrea Jenkins, the first openly Black transgender woman elected to public office in the United States, to launch a “Pledge to End Violence Against Black and Brown Transgender Women.” The Pledge asks state and local elected leaders to recognize and take action to end the epidemic of fatal violence against transgender and gender non-conforming people, especially Black and Brown transgender women.

HUMANIZING THE LIVES OF BLACK AND BROWN TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

To end stigma and increase acceptance, the public needs to be educated much more robustly than they are today. This work must be rooted in the real stories of transgender and gender non-conforming people, especially transgender people of color. The Transgender Justice Initiative creates strategic communications campaigns to advance the national conversation about this epidemic of violence. This includes a [public service announcement campaign](#) in collaboration with WarnerMedia to lift up the voices and stories of transgender and gender non-conforming people in homes across the country.

FROM TORI COOPER, HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR THE TRANSGENDER JUSTICE INITIATIVE

“In 2020, we’ve seen the highest number of transgender and gender non-conforming people killed in a single year since we began tracking these deaths in 2013. These deaths are a tragedy and show an appalling trend of violence, especially against Black trans women. This horrific violence is fueled by racism, toxic masculinity, misogyny and transphobia. We need everyone to join us in empowering transgender leaders, building safer, stronger communities and reducing stigma. We cannot rest until all transgender and gender non-conforming people can live our lives safely as our full selves.”



**“WE CANNOT REST UNTIL ALL
TRANSGENDER AND GENDER
NON-CONFORMING PEOPLE
CAN LIVE OUR LIVES SAFELY”
AS OUR FULL SELVES.”**

RESOURCES

- [2015 U.S. Transgender Survey \(National Center for Transgender Equality\)](#)
- [Understanding the Transgender Community](#)
- [Dismantling a Culture of Violence](#)
- [Being an LGBTQ Ally Guide](#)
- [See Each Other. Save Trans Lives.](#)
- [2018 Gender-Expansive Youth Report](#)
- [Project THRIVE: A National Campaign to Support LGBTQ Youth](#)
- [Transgender Media Reporting Guide](#)
- [Coming Out: Living Authentically as Transgender or Non-Binary](#)
- [Other Transgender Resources by HRC](#)



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN
FOUNDATIONTM