



RECLAIM PRIDE COALITION STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

On June 28th, 2020, The [Reclaim Pride Coalition \(RPC\)](#), a New York-based activist group which advocates for LGBTQ+ rights, will hold the Queer Liberation March for Trans and Queer Black Lives, in solidarity with the movements to defund, disarm, dismantle and abolish the NYPD, and police nationwide.

RPC is inspired by, and stands with, the historic, Black-led, young protest movement that has taken to the streets here in NYC, across the nation, and worldwide in the wake of the police and carceral state murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Layleen Polanco and many others. In solidarity with Black Trans communities we mourn the violent deaths of Riah Milton, Dominique “Rem’mie” Fells, Nina Pop and countless others, and demand effective community interventions and responses to protect Black Trans lives.

As an immediate first step, RPC demands that Mayor de Blasio and the NYC City Council make significant cuts to the NYPD’s 6 billion dollar budget. We are in solidarity with organizers like Mariame Kaba and other abolitionists in several US cities in calling for a fifty-percent reduction in the NYPD as well as a fifty percent reduction in police officers, with the funds going to Black led organizations and community support and services. Community organizations and leaders in communities of color have been demanding these changes for decades.

We join them in demanding a dismantling and reimagining of community safety that incorporates the tenets of Transformative Justice and Restorative Justice. We join them in resisting reformist solutions that will only further entrench the existing system that is rife with racial inequity and racist intent. Black America has already endured a lack of safe and sustainable housing, equal access to quality education, and healthcare equity; but now faces the exacerbation of all of these community stressors, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Massive budget cuts to law enforcement are a necessary starting point that would free up funds for marginalized communities which are currently being denied funding for vital services like housing, healthcare, and education. These funds could help to mitigate the wave of homelessness that is imminent, given Governor Cuomo’s refusal to cancel rent, which is already disproportionately impacting Black and Brown communities.

“Politicians of both parties have repeatedly suggested superficial reforms such as body cameras, “new” rules (like banning chokeholds), training, and diversity hires. But as we have repeatedly seen, these measures completely fail to reduce the murder and brutalization of Black people--police turn body cameras off, and ignore rules and trainings with the complete support of powerful police unions, and even having more Black and Brown officers on police forces has made little difference,” said Francesca Barjon, an organizer with RPC. “It is time that we, as a society, recognize the essential nature of the police as an oppressive institution leveraged

against the poor and marginalized from its earliest days of functioning as slave catchers in the South and crushing workers movements in the North to its current, heavily militarized, community occupying, and brutally violent form. This history of organized, state-sanctioned oppression has long enveloped LGBTQ+ communities, especially Black and Brown transgender women. Police brutality against Black LGBTQ+ New Yorkers, particularly Black transgender women, has not improved since the 1969 Stonewall Uprising against the NYPD. It is time we stop trying to reform the police and realize that the policing system must be defunded and dismantled. It must be reimaged and redesigned to form a new system that does not oppress and violate the most vulnerable members of our society, but is instead rooted in community and justice.”

While all Black people are at constant risk of police brutality and murder, we as queer and trans activists recognize that Black Trans, Gender Non-Conforming, and Non Binary people, especially Black Trans Women, are faced with the intersection of vicious state and societal racism, transphobia, misogyny, and classism. This month marks the one year anniversary of the death of Layleen Xtravaganza Cubiletta Polanco, an Afro-Latinx Trans Woman, who was held at Rikers Island on minor charges after she was unable to post \$500 for bail. Corrections officers failed to seek critically needed medical attention for her seizure condition for an hour and a half after Layleen suffered the seizure which led to her death.

“Last year Black Trans Media was at Reclaim Pride's inaugural march, where, on stage, I denounced the NYPD, as they have historically been a source of violence in our communities. As a Black Trans woman who grew up in BedStuy, Brooklyn I know first hand what police violence feels like and looks like everyday, and the terror they cause. We denounce the violence against Black LGBT people in our communities and the gentrification of the West Village, Harlem and other places that have historically been home to Black LGBT people. We march in honor of Black Trans and Queer folks who were killed in our city: Islan Nettles in Harlem; Marc Carson, shot in the village; Mx. Bostick, a Black trans masculine person in Chelsea; Yahira Nesby in Brooklyn; Layleen Polanco on Rikers Island; and Lexi Ms.Noxema, a Black trans woman killed uptown during the pandemic whose name has not been said in any local or national conversations. Shame on Mayor de Blasio, NYC Council, DHS, HASA, NYCHA, the MTA, the DOH, and the DOC for the neglect that has led to the discrimination, harm and deaths of LGBT people, especially LGBT people of color, in NYC. We demand immediate resources for Black TGNC people in NYC specifically safe and sustainable housing for black trans people. We also call for accountability from the organizations, agencies and systems that have not shown up for us - that have pushed and shut us out sometimes even using the police to silence us.” - Olympia Sudan, Co-Director of Black Trans Media

As queer activists who have benefited for years from the activism and vision of such revolutionaries as Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, Miss Major, and countless others, we deeply feel the duty to help amplify and center the voices of the Black and Trans revolutionaries who are stepping up to provide leadership today. We know that queer and trans liberation is

inextricably tied to racial justice; we march as a call to action in solidarity with Black LGBTQ+ People.

The June 28, 2020 Queer Liberation March for Trans and Queer Black Lives will not have a permit nor will RPC communicate with or negotiate with NYPD. RPC is in consultation with health experts and will have PPE and hand sanitizer on hand on the day of the March, as well as trained marshals who will encourage social distancing. The March will also be livestreamed for those unable, for health or other reasons, to attend.

Website: www.reclaimpridenyc.org

Facebook: [@QueerMarch](https://www.facebook.com/QueerMarch)

Twitter: [@QueerMarch](https://twitter.com/QueerMarch)

Instagram: [@QueerMarch](https://www.instagram.com/QueerMarch)

Reclaim Pride Coalition (RPC) is a New York City-based group comprised of LGBTQ+ activists in alliance with dozens of grassroots community groups, nationally and internationally. In June 2019, to mark the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising, RPC mobilized more than 45,000 people to recreate the original 1970 Gay Pride march route uptown from Stonewall to Central Park. This March, the Queer Liberation March, was a people's protest march without corporate funding, corporate floats, or a police contingent.