



The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

Thank you for your incredible leadership and seeing our state through the COVID-19 crisis. The bold and decisive actions that you have taken have saved lives and established California as an example of how to meet this moment for the rest of the nation. We wish you, your family and your staff health and safety, especially during these trying times.

We write to you as leaders of LGBTQ+ and allied nonprofit organizations in urgent need of financial support in order to survive this crisis. The economic fallout from COVID-19 has upended our budgets by forcing us to cancel fundraising events and preventing us from completing reimbursement-based grant deliverables that require face-to-face interaction and outreach. Meanwhile, many of our generous sponsors and donors have been impacted by the crisis themselves and are no longer in a position to support our work financially. Our work on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community — a community disproportionately at risk of the worst medical, financial, employment, and social impacts of COVID-19 — is imperiled by this crisis and the lack of a targeted comprehensive funding response.

LGBTQ+ people already experience greater disparities in health and well-being compared to the general public. These disparities include higher rates of HIV and cancer that can lead to compromised immune systems, higher rates of tobacco use and smoking, barriers to healthcare access and — for the more than three million LGBTQ+ elders living in the United States — widespread social isolation and a hesitancy to reach out to health and other care providers. As widely reported, people of color and low-income communities are among the most vulnerable to the health impacts of COVID-19 and are experiencing fatalities that are multiples of the general public. LGBTQ+ people who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color experience intersecting forms of discrimination and barriers to care. LGBTQ+ people are facing high levels of unemployment and economic hardship because they are overrepresented in sectors of the economy hardest hit by the crisis. For example, more than a third of the adult LGBTQ+ population are employed in food service, hospitals, education, retail, and the gig economy. Even before the COVID-19 crisis, one-third of transgender people could not afford regular and preventative health care and were three times more likely to experience unemployment than the general public.

Our organizations provide critical social safety net services for LGBTQ+ people, including LGBTQ+ people within communities of color, people living with or affected by HIV, people with disabilities, immigrant communities, people experiencing homelessness and food insecurity, and others disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. We serve the most marginalized in our communities, including transgender, nonbinary, gender-nonconforming, and intersex people. We provide food and housing assistance, job search assistance, health care services, mental health support, suicide prevention, HIV screening and treatment, and legal and small business assistance.

Many of us provide critical LGBTQ+ community infrastructure by advancing LGBTQ+ civil rights and social justice through community education, advocacy, leadership development, and the arts. We are on the front lines of Census engagement in hard-to-count communities. We educate health care workers, teachers, law enforcement, and employers to be LGBTQ+ culturally competent. We work with schools to invest in safe and supportive learning environments for LGBTQ+ students. We provide services to LGBTQ+ and all immigrants. We preserve the spirit of the LGBTQ+ community for future generations by archiving its history and fostering its art. We are helping our community to heal from the devastating effects of decades of tobacco marketing specifically targeting the LGBTQ+ community. We stand guard against hate crimes, domestic violence, racism, and disenfranchisement. This infrastructure, which supports the LGBTQ+ community and the communities to which we belong, organizations that have been built over decades, must not be lost.

Our work varies but has a common goal: to secure the health and well-being of LGBTQ+ Californians and the diverse communities to which we belong — communities that have been and continue to be underserved and marginalized.

We know you share this goal. Growing up in San Francisco, and later serving as the City and County's mayor, you've witnessed firsthand the devastation of the HIV/AIDS crisis, as well as the long term impacts of discrimination, violence and injustice experienced by our community. Throughout your career, you have worked in partnership with us to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people.

As you explained during your April 9 press conference, in relation to LGBTQ+ youth in particular, "[t]he state of California bears a unique responsibility to do more and better than any other part of the nation to address those needs..." You later recognized, rightly so, that LGBTQ+ nonprofits and community centers will bear the brunt of crisis response for our community.

Many of us are in near-term jeopardy of needing to close our doors. Many, who were already just barely getting by with razor-thin margins, have been forced to lay off or furlough staff, leaving them without the security of a job or health insurance — a devastating decision to be forced to make during a public health crisis. Others have had to cut expenses to the bone and reduce staff salaries while asking our employees to work harder to meet this moment and support our community in this time of great need.

Unfortunately, despite the announcement of federal support, dollars are slow to reach people on the ground, and their allocation is plagued by dysfunction, uncertainty, and inequitable distribution. The Small Business Administration (SBA) loan application process is chaotic, the stimulus is insufficient, and, for most of us, aid still has not arrived. Many nonprofit organizations, although ready to do so, have not been able to submit applications for the Paycheck Protection Program or the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program because many of the largest commercial banks and the SBA have not been equipped to accept applications, even as the money appears to be running out.

We deeply appreciate the heroic steps that you have taken to meet this moment, **but immediate infusions of financial support to nonprofits are needed** to ensure the LGBTQ+ community's health and well-being and the survival of critical LGBTQ+ community organizations. Not only do our organizations provide safety net services and societal infrastructure, but we are employers as well, and the COVID-19 crisis is threatening our contributions in every way.

As the state receives money through the CARES Act, we implore you to provide immediate and targeted funding for LGBTQ+ nonprofit organizations of all kinds. California is a beacon of hope for LGBTQ+ people across the nation, but without emergency assistance for LGBTQ+ nonprofits and allied community partners, all our advancements are in jeopardy. Our expertise is invaluable, and our mission-

driven programs are irreplaceable assets, particularly in times of crisis. An investment in our organizations now is an investment in a fairer, more just, and healthier future for California.

Our work is far from done, but we need your help now to continue it.

Thank you for your attention to this request and the conviction with which you express support for the LGBTQ+ community. We eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,



Rick Chavez Zbur
Executive Director
Equality California

Joined by the following LGBTQ+ and allied nonprofit organizations and their leaders:

APIs for Civic Empowerment-EF, Timmy Lu, Executive Director

Access Support Network, David Kilburn, Executive Director

AMAAD Institute, Gerald Garth, Director of Policy and Operations

APAIT, a division of Special Service for Groups, Inc., Jury Candelario, MSW, Division Director

API Equality-LA, Tracy Zhao, Executive Director

APLA Health, Craig E. Thompson, Chief Executive Officer

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - CA, Liza Chu, CA Policy Manager

Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council, Manjusha P. Kulkarni, Esq., Executive Director

BAYMEC Community Foundation, Ken Yeager, Executive Director

Bienestar Human Services, Robert Contreras, President & CEO

Billy DeFrank LGBTQ+ Community Center, Gabrielle Antolovich, Board President

Black AIDS Institute, Maximillian Boykin, Policy and Organizing Manager

Cal Voices, Poshi Walker, LGBTQ Program Director

California LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network, Amanda McAllister-Wallner, Director

California National Organization for Women, Kolieka Seigle, President

The Center for Sexuality & Gender Diversity, Bakersfield CA, Jan Hefner, Executive Director

CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers, Denise Spivak, Interim CEO

Changeist, Mario Fedelin, CEO

Christopher Street West | LA Pride, Madonna Cacciatore, Executive Director

COLORS LGBTQ Youth Counseling Services, Cynthia Ruffin, Community Outreach & Recruitment Director, Fundraiser

County of San Diego LGBTQ & Allies Employee Resource Group, Ben Parmentier, Chair

Courage California, Raquel Parra, Policy Manager

David Bohnett Foundation, Michael Fleming, Executive Director

Desert AIDS Project, Carl Baker, Director of Legal & Legislative Affairs

Dignity and Power Now, Lamia El Sadek, Managing Director

Diversionsary Theatre, Matt M. Morrow, Executive Artistic Director

The Diversity Center of Santa Cruz County, Sharon Papo, Executive Director

Divine Truth Unity Fellowship/Rainbow Pride Youth Alliance, Rev Benita Ramsey, Executive Director

El/La Para Trans Latinas, Nicole Santamaria, Executive Director

Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC), Tavae Samuelu, Executive Director

Equality Federation, Rebecca Isaacs, Executive Director

Eureka Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Michael Weiss, President

Face to Face/Sonoma County AIDS Network, Sara Brewer, Executive Director

Family Equality, The Rev. Stan J. Sloan, CEO

Fijate Bien/MPact Global Action for Gay Men's Health and Rights, Angel C Fabian, MD, MNA, Advocacy Coordinator

Foundation for The AIDS Monument, Tony Valenzuela, Executive Director

Fresno Barrios Unidos, Ashley Crystal Rojas, Executive Director

The Gala Pride and Diversity Center, Michelle Call, Executive Director

GAPA, Building QTAPI Community since 1988, Michael Trung Nguyen, Chair

Gender Health SF, Jenna Rapues, Program Director

Gender Justice LA, Ezak Perez, Executive Director

Gender Spectrum, Liam Day, Interim Executive Director

Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network, Ginna Brelsord, Co-Executive Director

GLIDE, Wesley Saver, Policy Manager

GLSEN, Eliza Byard, Executive Director

Harm Reduction Coalition of San Diego County, Tara Stamos-Buesig, Founder, Executive Director

Highways Performance Space & Gallery, Leo Garcia, Executive Director

Human Rights Campaign, Alphonso David, President

Imperial Valley LGBT Resource Center, Rosa Diaz, CEO

Instituto Familiar de La Raza, Inc., Estela Reyes Garcia, Executive Director

Intersex & Genderqueer Recognition Project, Addison Rose Vincent, Executive Director

Invisible Men, Luckie Alexander, Founder

It Gets Better Project, Brian Wenke, Executive Director

JWCH Institute, Al Ballesteros, CEO

Korean Community Center of the East Bay, Pysay Phinith, Program Director

La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians Rainbow of Truth Circle Avellaka Program, Wendy Schlater, Director

Lambda Archives of San Diego, Nicole Verdes, Board President

Lambda Democratic Club of Contra Costa County, Devin Murphy, President

Lambda Legal, Kevin Jennings, CEO

Larkin Street Youth Services, Marnie Regen, Director of Public Funding

Latino Equality Alliance, Eddie Martinez, Executive Director

The Lavender Effect, Andrew P Sacher, Founder/Director

Lavender Library, Elena Carrillo, President

The LGBT Asylum Project, Okan Sengun, Executive Director

The LGBT Community Center of the Desert, Mike Thompson, CEO

The LGBTQ Center Long Beach, Porter Gilberg, Executive Director

LGBTQ Center OC, Peg Corley, Executive Director

LGBTQ Connection (a program of On The Move), Ian Stanley Posadas, Program Director

LGBTQ Victory Institute, Mayor Annise Parker, President & CEO

Liberty Hill Foundation, Shane Murphy Goldsmith, President & CEO

Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, Marquita Yvette Thomas, Executive Director

Los Angeles LGBT Center, Lorri Jean, CEO

LYRIC (Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center), Jodi L. Schwartz, Executive Director

Mental Health America of San Diego County, Daphyne Watson, MSW, Executive Director

Merced LGBTQ Alliance, Zachery Alec Coston, Treasurer

Metropolitan Community Church of San Diego, Caedmon D. Grace, Minister of Congregational Life

NAPAFASA, Myron Dean Quon, Esq., Executive Director

NARAL Pro-Choice California, Shannon Hovis, Director

National Center for Lesbian Rights, Imani Rupert-Gordon, Executive Director

National Center for Transgender Equality, Mara Keisling, Executive Director

National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund, Rea Carey, Executive Director

NorCal OUTreach Project - Redding's LGBTQ+ Center, Christopher Diamond, Board President

Oakland LGBTQ Community Ctr., Joe Hawkins, CEO

Oasis Legal Services, Caroline Roberts, Executive Director

ONE Archives Foundation, Jennifer C. Gregg, Executive Director

Openhouse, Karyn Skultety, Executive Director

Orange County Equality Coalition, Felicity Figueroa, Co-Chair

Our Family Coalition, Sam Ames, Interim Executive Director

Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, Erin Uritus, CEO

Pacific Center for Human Growth, Michelle Gonzalez, Executive Director

Parivar Bay Area, Akshaya Natarajan, Board Member

Peace Over Violence, Patti Giggans, Executive Director/CEO

PFLAG National, Brian K. Bond, Executive Director

PFLAG San Diego County, Tiffany Gonzalez, President

PFLAG Santa Cruz County, Neal Savage, President

Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California, Jodi Hicks, President/CEO

Positive Images, Jessica Carroll, Director

Positive Women's Network-USA, Kelly Flannery, Legal Fellow

Queer Humboldt, Todd Larsen, President

Queer Trans Faculty and Staff at California State University at Sacramento, Evan S Hibbard, Assistant Professor

Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project - QWOCMAP, Madeleine Lim, Founding Executive/Artistic Director

Queer Youth Task Force of Santa Cruz County, Stuart Rosenstein, Director

Radiant Health Centers, Philip Yaeger, CEO

Sacramento Area S.T.O.P. Hepatitis Task-Force, Paul Sousa, Buprenorphine Program Supervisor-Public Health Specialist

Sacramento LGBT Community Center, David Heitstuman, CEO

SAGE, Michael Adams, CEO

San Diego County LGBTQ Latinx Coalition, Ady Huertas, Co Chair

San Diego Gay Men's Chorus, Jeff Heine, Executive Director

The San Diego LGBT Community Center, Caroline Dessert, CEO

San Diego Pride, Fernando Z. López, Executive Director

San Diego Women's Chorus, Linda Morrow, President, Board of Directors, SDWC

San Fernando Valley LGBT Community Center, Renato Lira, Executive Director

San Francisco AIDS Foundation, Joe Hollendonner, MSW, Chief Executive Officer

San Francisco Community Health Center, Lance Toma, Chief Executive Officer

San Francisco Pride, Fred Lopez, Executive Director

San Joaquin Pride Center, Cymone A Reyes, Executive Director

San Mateo County Pride Center, Francisco Sapp, Program Director

SF LGBT Center, Roberto Ordenana, Deputy Executive Director

SIREN, Maricela Gutierrez, Executive Director

SLO Bangers Syringe Exchange and Overdose Prevention Program, Lois Petty, Site Manager, Volunteer Coordinator

Solano Pride Center, Jonathan Cook, Executive Director

Somos Familia, Maritza Martinez, Executive Director

Sonoma County Pride, Christopher Kren-Mora, Director of Marketing & Technology

The Source LGBT+ Center, Brian Poth, Executive Director

St. James Infirmary, Anita O'Shea, Deputy Director

St. Mark's UMC San Diego, Jeri Newell-Davis, Minister

Still Bisexual, Nicole Kristal, President

TGIJP, John McKinley, Director of Housing and Supportive Services

Trans Can Work, Allison VanKuiken, Executive Director

TransFamily Support Services, Kathie Moehlig, Executive Director

The TransLatin@ Coalition, Bamby Salcedo, President & CEO

The Trevor Project, Amit Paley, CEO & Executive Director

TurnOut, Jack Beck, Executive Director

UCLA LGBTQ Campus Resource Center, Andy Cofino, Director

Valley Community Healthcare, Kevin Weiler, LGBTQ Services Director

The Wall Las Memorias, Richard L. Zaldivar, Executive Director

The Women's Building, Tania Estrada, Programs Director

CC: Senate pro Tempore Toni G. Atkins
Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
Senator Scott Wiener, Chair, LGBTQ Legislative Caucus
Assemblymember Todd Gloria, Vice-Chair, LGBTQ Legislative Caucus
Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes
Assemblymember Susan Eggman
Senator Cathleen Galgiani
Assemblymember Evan Low