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TILTT

Trans Individuals Living Their Truth
c/o Cheryl C. Courtney-Evans
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Website: www.TILTT.org

February 19, 2013

Dear Alex Wan and City Council:

As a transgender resident of Atlanta since 1979, upon hearing about the proposed Banishment Ordinance for the City of Atlanta, I felt it imperative to give voice to my misgivings about and opposition to such an action.

The transgender community is already a marginalized one in the City of Atlanta. We have faced discrimination and been shut out of housing and employment opportunities, as well as fallen victim to profiling, “revolving door justice” and jailing around a “prostitution problem”. Now Atlanta Chief of Police Turner has allowed the vociferous complaints of a relatively few (and perhaps well-connected) Midtown residents convince him to develop this ordinance that will not solve this problem, but exacerbate it.

Already transgenders fall prey to a myriad of allegations that are untrue of our community, simply because they are viewed in negative terms as ‘different’ from the mainstream. Witness the reports in May of this year, by 11Alive and WSB-TV, that there is “increased violence among crossdressing prostitutes in Midtown”. And of course, everyone was ready to accept that fact as true. However, the Atlanta Police Department’s own commander of the vice unit, Lt. Scott Kreher, said there is no evidence of prostitute gangs or increased violence. He says “the only violence I see is when citizens approach prostitutes and try to challenge them...” (*as reported by the GA Voice, May 17, 2012*). And of course, this ‘challenging’ can happen to transgenders at any time (sex worker, or not) and they seemingly have no voice here in Atlanta because the worst is always believed before the actual.

Consider what you’d be doing with this ordinance. You’d be throwing money at the problem via increased manpower and hours to achieve arrests, prosecutions and overcrowded jailing. You’d only move the ‘problem’ somewhere else for a period of time; of course, this may not necessarily be so...people who feel they have nothing to lose may still risk arrest for survival. Additionally, there seems to be no thought as to where any fines levied would come from if these individuals have no jobs.

Tilting The World Toward Change



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The city would be better served to *invest* in creating and implementing a transitional housing and job training/placement program to provide an alternative to these individuals who at present are left with none. It can only be a “win-win” situation to follow a progressive path that would provide the city of Atlanta with taxpaying, productive citizens, rather than the tax-draining, bureaucratic headache this ordinance would be.

I’m sure TILTT, Inc., as well as other transgender servicing organizations in Atlanta would be pleased to work with the city to create such a program.

Sincerely yours,

Cheryl C. Courtney-Evans

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