

Racism, Congressional Hearings, and GLBT Politics: Stop Excluding African Americans

By Marti Abernathy

Published November 3, 2009 | Updated March 31, 2026

https://www.transadvocate.com/racism-and-glb-t-politics-stop-excluding-african-americans_n_1945.htm

Abstract

On November 5th, 2009, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee will hold hearings on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). The hearings will take place in a city where over half of its citizens are African American. According to the Washington D.C. Transgender Needs Assessment Survey performed in 2000, only 58 percent of transgender [...]

Article

[Figure] Enda

On November 5th, 2009, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee will hold hearings on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). The hearings will take place in a city where over half of its citizens are African American. According to the Washington D.C. Transgender Needs Assessment Survey performed in 2000, only 58 percent of transgender respondents in Washington D.C. were employed, 29% reported no annual source of income, 31% reported that their annual income was under \$10,000, and 15% reported that they lost a job due to employment discrimination.

I'm sure the folks over at Transgender Health Empowerment could help find a suitable speaker. Their website states:

"Transgender Health Empowerment, Inc. (T.H.E.) was originally founded in 1996 by transgenders for transgenders. Initially, T.H.E. operated as an African American focused, non-profit, community-based organization to address the housing, employment, health care, and disease prevention needs of transgender clients. In 2003, T.H.E. received its IRS designation as a 501-c-3 organization, primarily for the purpose of serving these same populations."

"Based on more than a decade of experience, T.H.E. is uniquely positioned to positively reach and serve diverse TGLB populations. Since its inception, the agency has grown from a handful of volunteers to an organization of highly dedicated, culturally competent staff with a wealth of experience in serving the needs of our clients. Our successful track record in providing supportive housing, health promotion, disease prevention, and related programs not only continues to positively impact the lives of the populations we serve, but also contributes to a steadily increasing number of partner agencies that are sensitive to the needs of transgender, gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals."

and T.H.E. is super close! It's only a 4 minute drive from the Capitol building!

[Figure] endmap

And if someone from T.H.E isn't available, they might try contacting Earline Budd. In 2007, the National Black Justice Coalition profiled her in their Black History Month profiles. They said of Earline:

"Earline Budd is a 48 year old transgender woman fighting to make a difference in the lives of all transgender women. She is a founding member and former Executive Director of Transgender Health Empowerment, Inc. (THE).

THE was created in 1996 and serves as one of the most important transgender service providers in the Washington DC Metropolitan area.

Earline is a Drop-In Center Coordinator for the "Tyra Hunter's Drop-In Center" at Transgender Health Empowerment, Inc. The project specifically serves at risk transgender people by providing extensive HIV prevention interventions. This is a six month demonstration project with the hopes of continuing into the future.

Earline began her advocacy in 1989 and has continued to feverishly fight for social justice. She is also a nationally renowned motivational speaker and a dedicated advocate who joyfully serves all in need.

Earline is a native Washingtonian. She has dedicated her time to helping others, especially in the area of HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and homelessness. She is also a noted LGBT activist in the Washington, DC Metro area."

Between the needs survey and the Transgender Day of Remembrance website, it's obvious that transgender African Americans are impacted heavily by discrimination. It's time for those who put together the hearings to recognize this fact and have a member of the African American transgender community speak before Congress. There is no excuse, other than racism.

Suggested citation

Marti Abernathy. "Racism, Congressional Hearings, and GLBT Politics: Stop Excluding African Americans." TransAdvocate, November 3, 2009.
https://www.transadvocate.com/racism-and-glb-t-politics-stop-excluding-african-americans_n_1945.htm