

# MEDIA RELEASE



National Advocacy  
for Local LGBTQH Communities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 30, 2014

## LGBTQ Allied Organizations Alarmed by Trend of Prosecution of Survivors for Self-Defense; Call for National Advocacy and Charges to be Dropped Against LGBTQ Survivors for Defending Themselves

We, the undersigned allied lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) organizations are deeply concerned by the national trend of prosecuting survivors of anti-LGBTQ hate violence for defending themselves. Currently **Eisha Love**, a young African American transgender woman, who was [violently attacked](#) by a group of people in a transphobic hate violence incident in her own neighborhood, is facing first degree attempted murder charges for defending herself from this attack. Eisha was the only person arrested. Eisha is currently being held by the Cook County department of Corrections in Chicago.

This case comes immediately after the sentencing of [Luke O'Donovan](#), a White queer man from Atlanta, Georgia, who was recently charged with five counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon as well as one count of attempted murder for himself against a group of homophobic attackers at a party. Luke accepted a plea deal and will be serving a two year prison sentence, in addition to eight years of probation and banishment from the state of Georgia. [Nate Mancha](#), a gay man of color, is on trial right now facing attempted murder charges for purported self-defense during an incident earlier this year in Colorado.

In 2012, [CeCe McDonald](#), a transgender African American woman was sentenced to 41 months and served 19 months in Minnesota for defending herself against a racist and transphobic hate violence attack. In a now infamous case in 2006, the [New Jersey four](#), a group of four African American lesbians were sentenced to prison terms of up to eleven years for defending themselves against a physical attack by a man who physically accosted them and threatened to sexually assault them.

LGBTQ communities face severe and deadly violence in the United States. NCAVP's most recent national [report](#) documented 18 hate violence homicides in 2013. Transgender women of color in particular face disproportionately severe violence in the United States. **Transgender women made up 72% of the 18 homicides in 2013 while transgender women of color represented 67% of those homicide victims.** Additionally, [there have been seven](#) homicides of transgender women of color in recent months. In addition, according to a [survey](#) and report by Lambda Legal, LGBTQ individuals, especially LGBTQ people of color, low income LGBTQ people, and transgender and gender non-conforming people experience police misconduct, hostile police attitudes, police harassment and assault, false accusations, and false arrests at alarming rates. Given this alarming reality, LGBTQ people who defend themselves from violence are often fighting for their lives. In a society where violence against LGBTQ people is all too often condoned, ignored, and unsolved, prosecuting survivors for self-defense minimizes anti-LGBTQ violence and reinforces a transphobic, homophobic, and biphobic culture.

LGBTQ communities know that LGBTQ survivors of hate violence, particularly transgender women and LGBTQ people of color, often face biased and discriminatory treatment from law enforcement, courts, and other first responders. **We are concerned that these survivors may be facing discriminatory charges based on their identities.**

NCAVP and our allies call for the charges against Eisha Love and Nate Mancha to be dropped, and for community members, anti-violence organizations, and public officials to take immediate action to support survivors of anti-LGBTQ violence.

## **ACTION STEPS**

**Sign the Petition:** Join [Change.org](https://www.change.org) in calling on Cook County to drop the charges against Eisha Love.

**Support Nate Mancha:** To learn how you can support the campaign to have the charges against Nate dropped visit [www.justice4nate.com](http://www.justice4nate.com).

**Support Luke O'Donovan:** To learn how you can support Luke O'Donovan during his incarceration, visit [letlukego.wordpress.com](http://letlukego.wordpress.com).

**Report Violence:** If you experience violence contact a local anti-violence program for support. For help locating an anti-violence program in your area, please [contact us](#).

If you are a member of the media, please contact:

Sue Yacka, Communications Director, New York City Anti-Violence Project; [syacka@avp.org](mailto:syacka@avp.org) or 212.714.1184

Signatories:

BreakOUT!

Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization (BRAVO)

Center on Halsted

Colorado Anti-Violence Project

Community United Against Violence

Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals

DC Trans Coalition

Equality Michigan

Family Equality Council

FIERCE!

FORGE

Fox Valley/Oshkosh Anti-Violence Project

Gay and Lesbians Opposing Violence

Gender Justice Nevada

GLAAD

Illinois Accountability Initiative

Kansas City Anti-Violence Project

Long Island GLBT Services Network

Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth

Long Island GLBT Community Center

Los Angeles LGBT Center

Montrose Center

National Black Justice Coalition

National Center for Transgender Equality

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs

National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce

National Minority AIDS Council

New York City Anti-Violence Project

Oregon Anti-Violence Project

Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders – Long Island  
Sojourner House  
Streetwise and Safe  
The Network/ La Red  
Trans Pride Initiative  
Transgender Law Center  
Virginia Anti-Violence Project  
Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance  
Western New York Anti-Violence Project  
Wingspan Anti-Violence Project