

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS: CHARLOTTE PRIDE'S 2020 STONEWALL RESOLUTION

*June 18, 2020*

Last Wednesday, Charlotte Pride [shared our 2020 Stonewall Resolution](#), an annual tradition to remember and honor the Stonewall Riots & Uprising in June 1969. This year, as Black and Brown LGBTQ people continue to face discrimination and violence, we shifted our standard commemorative statement to be a statement of action, and one that centers our Black LGBTQ community.

We continue to stand by the positions and action items in this year's resolution. And we will continue to uplift the voices and concerns of those in our community that are most marginalized.

We have heard the community conversation created in response to the Stonewall Resolution. We knew the resolution would generate an important dialogue about policing and its effects on the lives of Black and LGBTQ people. These conversations and experiences are not only of national concern, but also local, given the long histories and current realities of violence and oppression experienced by Black and LGBTQ people. We hope that people will engage with these conversations honestly, openly, and with deep thought, concern, and care.

As for our role in this continued conversation, we feel it is our responsibility to help answer some of the questions brought to our team since last Wednesday. Please read on for some answers to those questions.

Also, please mark your calendars and join us on Wednesday, June 24 at 6pm for our weekly livestream on our Facebook page, this time focusing on The Legacy of Stonewall when we will have a discussion about our Stonewall Resolution and provide additional clarity and context. We are also planning to participate in other community conversations, both public and with stakeholders.

## QUESTION 1: DOES THIS RESOLUTION MEAN NO POLICE AT PRIDE AT ALL?

No. We are required to employ off-duty officers for our annual event. We will continue to do so, and we will continue to ensure the safety of our attendees through this public security and the use of private security firms where appropriate and necessary.

## **QUESTION 2: WHAT DOES “LESS VISIBLE POLICING” MEAN?**

One of our resolution’s action items is to request that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department make their officers less visible throughout our festival zone and on the parade route. We will be working with CMPD on the exact definitions of this request in 2021 as we approach the next in-person festival and parade.

## **QUESTION 3: POLICE ARE VOLUNTEERING THEIR TIME AT PRIDE. HOW CAN YOU ASK THEM TO CHANGE THEIR PRACTICES?**

Police are not volunteering when you see them on-duty at our festival, parade, or other events. They are being paid by Charlotte Pride. We are required to employ off-duty police officers at our events held in public spaces, like our annual festival and parade. Charlotte Pride paid CMPD \$55,759.50 in 2019.

## **QUESTION 4: I’M LGBTQ AND A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER. AM I WELCOME AT PRIDE?**

Absolutely. All LGBTQ folks are welcome at Pride, in Charlotte or otherwise. Our prohibition applies only to agencies, not individual people.

## **QUESTION 5: WHAT ABOUT AGENCIES THAT HAVE ALREADY MADE POSITIVE CHANGES? WHY WILL THEY NOT BE ABLE TO MARCH IN THE PARADE OR HAVE A VENDOR BOOTH?**

We are incredibly appreciative of law enforcement agencies and other institutions that have begun making positive changes to the systems around them, specifically the creation and furthering of LGBTQ affiliation groups within CMPD and the Mecklenburg County Sheriff’s Office. Our ban on police participation as vendors or parade contingents is meant to draw further attention to the overarching system of policing that disenfranchises Black, Brown, Queer, and Trans communities at a disproportionate rate. As an organization dedicated to serving the most marginalized, we are taking this stance to stand in solidarity with those who experience abuse and mistreatment at the hands of this system. This stance is also intended to hold the entire system accountable, collectively. We look forward to working with our local law enforcement agencies and community organizations to identify ways in which we can make positive and forward-moving change to end systemic racism, white supremacy, and police brutality.

## **QUESTION 6: PRIDE IS A PARTY AND A CELEBRATION; WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH POLICE BRUTALITY?**

Great question! Pride annually recognizes the Stonewall Riots & Uprising of June 1969, where Black, Brown, Queer, and Trans folk refused to be victimized further by police brutality and fought against this during a multi-day riot in New York City. Our annual celebration and event acknowledge the progress we've made and calls for greater equity. Though Pride is a joyous occasion, it is just as much a commemoration to honor those who fought back against legal brutality to get us the rights we celebrate today. Pride is a celebration. Pride is also a protest. Our organization believes we can — and must — do both.

## **QUESTION 7: IS CHARLOTTE PRIDE ANTI-POLICE?**

Pride stands with Black and Brown LGBTQ people who have for centuries been disproportionality targeted and mistreated by government and law enforcement agencies. Charlotte Pride also stands by our LGBTQ officers who are working within the system for reform.

## **QUESTION 8: HOW WILL YOU HANDLE PROTESTORS?**

The off-duty officers at each year's festival and parade rarely intervene or respond to the presence of anti-LGBTQ protesters. In fact, there's not much police can do about protesters, who are exercising their First Amendment right to protest. Past actions to control intimidation by protesters has been handled almost exclusively by Charlotte Pride organizers, volunteers, or community members, not the police. In years past, when protesters showed up in greater numbers, our organization even created a special peacekeepers volunteer unit. You may have heard the protest phrase and chant, "Who Keeps Us Safe? We Keep Us Safe!" That's exactly what Charlotte Pride, its volunteers, and community members have done when police have refrained from intervening in instances of harassment and intimidation by protesters.

## **QUESTION 9: BUT I'VE NEVER HAD A BAD EXPERIENCE WITH A COP. WHY ARE WE PUNISHING THE GOOD COPS IN ADDITION TO THE "BAD APPLES"?**

We are so glad for each and every person who has not had negative interactions with law enforcement. We wish this was a reality for every member of our

community, but it is not. (See the question below for resources linking to individual testimonies and other data informing our position).

Our position is not directed toward any individual police or law enforcement officer, irrespective of their status as a “good cop” or a “bad apple”; it simply reflects the reality of an overarching, institutional problem. Since the problem is institutional, the solution — and efforts to demand it and seek accountability for it — must therefore be institutional.

Policies and actions taken by us and many other groups across this country have created much needed dialogue and change. We know that we alone cannot make the changes we are asking for, and our position is meant to stress just how seriously we believe this issue should be taken by the institutions who have the power to make these changes.

## **QUESTION 10: HOW DID YOU ARRIVE AT THIS CONCLUSION OF BARRING POLICE AGENCY PARTICIPATION FROM THE FESTIVAL AND PARADE? WHAT EVIDENCE DID YOU USE?**

To inform our decision, we took to heart the personal testimonies of members of our community locally, and we looked at larger studies and data from national sources. We also consulted the actions and steps taken by other LGBTQ and Pride organizations around the country; several have taken actions very similar to ours.

While it is relatively easy to find direct evidence, video recordings, discussions, and reports of police brutality and other negative experiences with policing generally, as well as that experienced by LGBTQ people, we want to directly point you to a handful of academic resources that contain personal testimonies and first-hand experiences:

- [“Police Brutality and Why it is an LGBTQ Issue”](#) (Fusion Magazine, Kent State University) — Contains personal testimony and experience by a genderqueer person
- [“Unjust: How the Broken Criminal Justice System Fails LGBT People of Color”](#) (Center for American Progress, Movement Advancement Project, et al, 2016) — Contains several pieces of individual testimony regarding personal experiences with law enforcement and the criminal justice system
- [“‘So Much for Protect and Serve’: Queer Male Survivors’ Perceptions of Negative Police Experiences”](#) (Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 2020) — Research paper containing the direct personal testimonials and

experiences by queer men and their interactions with law enforcement agencies

You can also review these following surveys and reports and see a fuller picture of the available data:

- [“Protected and Served?” A Report on Policing and the LGBTQ Community](#) (Lambda Legal, 2012)
- [U.S. Trans Survey](#) (National Center for Trans Equality, 2015) — In particular, please see an overview of findings on interactions with police on pages 12 and 13 of the Executive Summary
  - [North Carolina Specific Report from the U.S. Trans Survey](#)
- [“Failing to Protect and Serve: Police Department Policies Towards Transgender People”](#) (National Center for Trans Equality, 2019)
  - [Charlotte Specific CMPD Scorecard](#)
- [“Stonewalled : Police abuse and misconduct against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the U.S.”](#) (Amnesty International, 2005)
- [Statement on Policing and the LGBTQ Community to the U.S. House Judiciary Committee Oversight Hearing](#), September 19, 2019, from National LGBT HIV Criminal Justice Working Group, Lambda Legal, and National Center for Transgender Equality
- [“Police and the Criminalization of LGBTQ People”](#) (The Cambridge Handbook of Policing in the United States, 2019)
- [“Gender, Sexuality, and 21st Century Policing: Protecting the Rights of the LGBTQ+ Community”](#) (U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2017) – See in particular Section 1 outlining data on LGBTQ experiences and interactions with law enforcement
- [“How policing perpetuates the marginalization of LGBTQ youth”](#) (University of California, Riverside, 2020)
- [“There’s No Such Thing as ‘Consensual Sex’ When a Person Is in Police Custody”](#)(ACLU, 2018) – Provides general context on sexual assault and abuse in police custody, an experience discussed in the U.S. Trans Survey.