



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 17, 2011

NCAVP Endorses the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers; Calls for an End to Violence Against Sex Workers

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs ([NCAVP](#)) stands in solidarity with sex workers and their allies to commemorate the 8th annual International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers, on Saturday, December 17, 2011. NCAVP honors those lives lost to violence against sex workers and recommits to building safety for all people, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected (LGBTQH) sex workers targeted for violence.

NCAVP members know that LGBTQH sex workers are vulnerable to violence and discrimination due to laws and negative societal attitudes toward sex work. Over the past year, NCAVP has documented two suspected homicides of transgender women of color who were engaged in sex work. Shelley Hilliard, 19, of Detroit, Michigan, went missing on October 23rd, 2011. Her dead, burnt body was found roughly two weeks later. A week after Hilliard's body was found, Cassidy Vickers was shot in the chest and killed in Hollywood, California. NCAVP member program [Equality Michigan](#) is also tracking the recent homicide of an unnamed body in an area of Detroit known for sex work. No media reports have been released regarding this homicide.

According to NCAVP's [report](#) *Hate Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and HIV-Affected Communities in the United States in 2010*, 5 of the 12 murdered transgender women, (42%), were reported to have been engaged in sex work at the time of their murder, and 18% of total murder victims participated in sex work overall, all of whom were transgender women. Sex work is illegal in most states, which makes sex workers more vulnerable to violence and less likely to report to the police or community organizations for fear of arrest, abuse, or reprisal. Offenders may select and target sex workers for violence precisely because sex workers are more isolated and less likely to report violence.

In recognition of the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers, NCAVP commits to continue to support survivors of violence who are sex workers by documenting this violence and advocating for political strategies to address and end this violence. NCAVP calls on community members, institutions, and public officials to take immediate action to end violence against sex workers and all marginalized communities.

ACTION STEPS

Participate on December 17th: To get information on local events and ideas about how to commemorate the day, visit [swopusa.org](#).

Prevent: NCAVP encourages communities to create programs, campaigns, and curricula to prevent harassment and violence and to explicitly include violence against sex workers in these initiatives. NCAVP is available to provide support and resources to communities for their violence prevention efforts.

Eliminate Service Barriers: Federal, state, and local governments should eliminate discriminatory policies that prevent sex workers from being able to access violence response services and to ensure that direct service agencies are equipped to provide sex workers who are survivors of violence with the same access to direct services and support as any other survivor. NCAVP is available for support and technical assistance to organizations on working with LGBTQH sex workers around issues of violence.

Research Violence Against Sex Workers: Federal, state, and local governments, schools, universities, researchers, and community organizations should collect and analyze data on the intersections of violence against sex workers and anti-LGBTQH violence to support strategies to address and end this violence.

Support Violence Response Outside the Criminal Legal System: NCAVP recognizes that survivors of violence who are sex workers face extensive barriers to reporting to law enforcement and accessing supportive services. NCAVP calls on community members and organizations to continue to support and develop strategies to respond to violence without relying on the criminal legal system to ensure that survivors who cannot or choose not to report to law enforcement can receive the critical support they need.

Report Violence: NCAVP encourages anyone who has experienced violence to contact a local anti-violence program for support and to document this violence.

Get Involved: Join NCAVP in our efforts to prevent and respond to LGBTQH violence. To learn more about our national advocacy, receive technical assistance or support, or locate an anti-violence program in your area, [contact us](#).

NCAVP works to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence against and within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and HIV-affected (LGBTQH) communities. NCAVP is a national coalition of local member programs, affiliate organizations and individuals who create systemic and social change. NCAVP is a program of the New York City Anti-Violence Project.

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