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**FORGE ATTENDS HISTORIC WHITE HOUSE CONVENING TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST TRANSGENDER PEOPLE
MEETING IN HONOR OF TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE ON 11/20****Washington, D.C.**

Wearing a button with the image of slain Milwaukee transwoman Chanel Larkin, FORGE Policy and Program Director Loree Cook-Daniels participated in an historic briefing convened by the White House on November 16, 2011 to give transgender anti-violence advocates the opportunity to speak to key Administration officials about the widespread violence against transgender people and strategies for addressing it.

The meeting, convened in honor of November 20 Transgender Day of Remembrance, was facilitated by Mara Keisling, Executive Director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, who was joined by representatives from eight other organizations. According to Keisling, "the White House convening this meeting at all, let alone this week in honor of the Day of Remembrance, says a lot about the President's commitment to making America safer and better for transgender people." Transgender Day of Remembrance founder Gwen Smith opened the meeting by sharing stories of three people murdered due to anti-transgender prejudice, including the killing of 16-month-old Roy Antonio Jones III by his mother's live-in boyfriend who told police he was trying to make the infant act like a boy instead of a girl.

The Administration was represented by policy experts from a range of agencies in at least three Departments with jurisdiction over anti-violence programs. Topics covered included crime data collection, cultural competency for law enforcement, and ensuring that federal and federally-funded anti-violence programs and policies are transgender-inclusive. Special focus was given to violence against youth, homeless trans people and other marginalized individuals within the transgender community.

Cook-Daniels shared with federal officials unpublished data from an ongoing FORGE survey that demonstrates the wide prevalence of various kinds of interpersonal violence facing the transgender community, and told stories of transgender victims who had been turned away from and/or been mistreated by government-funded victim services. As part of the discussion around the need for cultural competency training for professionals who serve transgender victims of crime, she also outlined interim survey results of the top concerns transgender violence victims have when contemplating whether or not to seek services. Cook-Daniels also brought to the Administration's awareness a consensus report on the health needs of transgender people that concluded that violence and murder prevention is the highest United States trans health priority.(1)

All community participants stressed that the burden of violence falls on different parts of the transgender community more heavily, being deeply impacted by other demographic components such as age, race, sexual orientation, poverty, employment and other forms of discrimination, access to health care and many other factors. A special focus was on Washington, D.C., currently the city with the most documented anti-transgender murders. Cook-Daniels reports, "Administration officials were extremely attentive, asked good questions, and seemed eager to keep the conversation going after the meeting's end. I'm confident this is only the start of what should be a very fruitful conversation about how the federal government can better address the epidemic of violence against us."

(1) Xavier, et al (2004). "An Overview of U.S. Trans Health Priorities: A Report by the Eliminating Disparities Working Group" available at <http://transequality.org/PDFs/HealthPriorities.pdf>