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STREET SHEET



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Ericah S. Walton
@theartsheep 2026

GRIT AGAINST REDLINE

SAM STERLING

Cold bricks of Main Street,
 Shadows stretch past downtown lights,
 Night sky is my roof.
 Bull City's damp wind,
 Rusting leaves on the Tobacco Trail,
 Waiting for the dawn.
 Quiet perseverance,
 Rising with the morning sun,
 Finding my own space.
 Now the key turns home,
 Roots planted in Durham soil,
 Strength from the hard times.

RED ROSE

A single red rose,
 A splash of crimson
 Against dark green,
 The day I met you
 Was the greatest blessing of all.
 Your hair is the color
 Of the aspen leaves
 In the early Fall,
 Your eyes hide the passion
 Of the deep blue sea,
 You're in my thoughts,
 My hopes and dreams,
 You're in every breath I take.

TATIANA LYULKIN

You're my safe place,
 My North Star,
 My Shaman,
 My Healer,
 My Lifeblood.
 My resilient yet gentle red rose,
 A splash of crimson
 Against dark green,
 Your voice is a soft spoken prayer,
 You laugh at my jokes
 And cry
 When you think no one is watching.
 You're one of a kind.

It's getting dark outside,
 We're at home watching TV,
 My single red rose
 Is on the night table by our bed
 In your favorite vase.

The sky is full of stars,
 I allow myself to relax
 And close my eyes,
 In your loving arms
 I find peace.

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COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

The STREET SHEET is a project of the Coalition on Homelessness. The Coalition on Homelessness organizes poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Our organizing is based on extensive peer outreach, and the information gathered directly drives the Coalition's work. We do not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people: they bring their agendas to us.

STREET SHEET STAFF

The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

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Street Sheet is published and distributed on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples. We recognize and honor the ongoing presence and stewardship of the original people of this land. We recognize that homelessness can not truly be ended until this land is returned to its original stewards.



BLAST FROM THE PAST: THE GENDER-NEUTRAL BATHROOM LAW THAT COULD ONLY HAPPEN IN SAN FRANCISCO

JORDAN WASILEWSKI

If you told me when I was a little and in the closet that I would eventually get a first-of-its-kind law passed that would help transgender and disabled people, I would have laughed in your face. However, that is what happened.

In 2015, I was placed into a permanent supportive housing SRO. I spent three months in a unit without a bathroom. Therefore, in order to bathe, I had to go to one of two bathtub rooms on my floor: and in order to use the toilet, I had to use one of two toilet rooms on my floor. Both had gender-specific signage, prompting me to begin a multi-month campaign to get gender-neutral signage—even after I got my own bathroom.

I faced resistance from some residents in monthly tenant meetings whenever I would raise the issue as I continued to grow in my role as a tenant organizer thanks to the Mission SRO Collaborative. In early 2016, the City and state considered laws that would require that all single-use restrooms in places of public accommodations be gender neutral. The City ordinance passed first, then the state law. By the beginning of 2017, all single-use restrooms in California were required to be gender neutral (Fun fact: when the City ordinance passed, I went all over the city and reported bathrooms that were out of compliance to the Department of Building Inspection, much to the annoyance of the inspectors).

But lawmakers left a glaring loophole that could only happen in San Francisco and other major California cities. Because much of our low-income housing stock is made up of SROs without private bathrooms, an entire class of single-use bathrooms was left out.

Tenants living in SROs designated as permanent supportive housing, including the Hartland Hotel where I lived at the time, were somewhat lucky in that many of the restrooms in SROs were made gender neutral by 2017. I was involved with Senior & Disability Action's SRO Workgroup, where someone who was working in permanent supportive housing alerted me to this. However, private hotels apparently didn't

get the memo.

Enter the Del Bex Hotel, a privately run SRO at 2126 Mission Street. I was doing door-to-door outreach with Causa Justa/Just Cause, when I saw that some of the common bathrooms had the jankiest looking gender signs. I looked inside and saw that they were single-use bathrooms. Surreptitiously, I snapped some photos and reported the hotel to the DBI and sent the photos to Carolina Morales, an aide to then-Supervisor Hillary Ronen.

The DBI closed the report because the ordinance only covered places of public accommodation, not common bathrooms in SROs. That prompted Ronen's office to take up legislation to close that loophole.

Around the same time, the Board of Supervisors considered me for a seat on the SRO Task Force, a city advisory body dealing with these issues. I was appointed in May 2017, and in my first meeting I mostly kept quiet and watched and learned as the commission discussed pending legislation prohibiting shower timers in SROs. When we got around to discussing future meeting topics, I said that since our next meeting was during Pride Month, we should discuss expanding the gender-neutral restroom ordinance to include SRO restrooms.

Rosemary Bosque, the task force chair, obliged, and it was placed on the June meeting's agenda. That day, I dressed in trans colors and it felt really good to be able to have the trans community on the agenda. I spoke about my experience in my SRO, the fact that the Del Bex Hotel had gender-specific signage, and why this is important for the community. Sadly, no audio recording exists, but I do remember Matthew Luton from DBI presenting on how amending the building code is a process, but I reminded him that we had already identified a Supervisor as a sponsor and that we would go through whatever it needed to go through to make it come true. I then made a motion to send a letter to the Board of Supervisors in support. It passed 6-3, with Bruce Burge (landlord), Sam Patel (landlord) and Dan Jordan (tenant) voting against. I was elated, but still it

felt like a Pyrrhic victory because any San Francisco government body in 2017 should be unanimous on trans rights.

The legislation underwent a nearly five-month long drafting process with the City Attorney's office. As impatient I was, I managed to focus on bringing a true tenant-centered agenda to the task force. I graduated from the Mission SRO Collaborative's leadership academy and was awarded the Volunteer of the Year at the Harvey Milk Club Gayla.

But by November, it was showtime, as the legislation finally came back, and I actually got to see it before Ronen, who introduced it at the Board of Supervisors on December 5. The legislation was under a 30-day rule, and would go before the Youth Commission, which approved it unanimously, the SRO Task Force—whose meeting I got to chair—the Building Inspection Commission, which also approved it unanimously, and then to the Board's Land Use and Transportation Committee on January 29, 2018.

That was a beautiful day for the transgender community in San Francisco. While only a few people spoke during public comment, we had the right people getting behind the lectern, including two immigrant trans women I organized with in the Mission Collaborative, a Collaborative staffer, as well as representatives from the Youth Commission, the Mayor's Office on Transgender Initiatives, Citizens United Against Violence, the Transgender Cultural District, Housing Rights Committee, Chinatown Community Development Center, SRO Families, and Senior & Disability Action, among others. Although I was a little miffed at Supervisor Ahsha Safa'i misgendering me, I was happy to see the committee pass it unanimously.

One week later at the full Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Malia Cohen gave a great speech about how gender neutral bathrooms have been a success and the world still keeps turning. The board passed the ordinance unanimously.

After that, I pitched an idea to Clair

Farley of the Office of Transgender Initiatives: I proposed that Mayor Mark Farrell stage a signing ceremony and illuminate City Hall in trans colors. On the night of February 13, a few hours after its final passage and on the eve of a Valentine's Day signing ceremony, City Hall was awash in light blue, pink and white. The next day was the signing ceremony, in which I got a pen from the mayor as he signed it into law. I remember it was also the birthday of one of Ronen's interns, and the celebrations ended up merging as we went to her office.

At the SRO Task Force meeting the following day, task force chair Bosque brought in a copy of the Bay Area Reporter, which had the signing ceremony on Page One, and invited me to say a few words. I mostly said that I was glad this passed, so I could focus on nuts-and-bolts issues before leading a discussion on a less sexy topic: bed bugs. Later, I would once again report the Del Bex Hotel, which abated the bed bug issue on the first day of Pride Month, 2018.

I would serve on the SRO Task Force for another year and a half before it disbanded, but not before beginning to push through another big legislative project: bringing rents down to 30% of income in all permanent supportive housing with the #30RightNow campaign.

Eight years have passed, there have been many comings and goings, but this trans woman is still advocating for permanent supportive housing and SRO tenants. I hope one day my first legislative project becomes archaic, as everybody has their own gender-neutral restroom in their home. This is important as there are several permanent supportive housing sites with multi-stall common restrooms, which are exempt under this law. But until then, the law stands with pride. ■

Jordan Wasilewski (she/they) is a long-term permanent supportive housing and SRO tenant advocate, former commissioner and affordability activist. You may follow her at @sfphsro on Instagram

PRICE OF PREJUDICE: WHAT IS LOST WHEN WE REJECT TRANS IDENTITY

BY MONTEQUE POPE-LEBEAU
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED BY THE TENDERLOIN VOICE

“What are you?”

These are words that another person felt they could say to me. I don’t know why they thought that was OK. Maybe it was the same reasoning that drove doctors to “treat” the “illness” of my gender, ravaging my body when I was an adolescent so many years ago. I still carry the injuries.

Countless others have had similar experiences that they didn’t deserve.

In nature, diversity is the norm. The animal kingdom features a wide array of spectrums, and humans are no exception. In fact, many scientists and medical professionals regard gender as a spectrum that includes transgender and nonbinary individuals. While this type of variety is incredible, it can evoke fear in some.

There are also those who are prejudiced against trans individuals, and who struggle to understand them because their true identity often remains unseen, obscured behind an appearance that it doesn’t entirely match. That’s unlike heterosexuals, bisexuals, lesbians and others who can more easily wear their identities for others to see. This should not matter. What should matter is the person’s character.

Trans individuals are remarkable because they possess an authentic sense of self within. While some end up medically transitioning their outward selves, others may choose not to or face challenges that prevent them from doing so, yet they embrace their true identities.

Just like I have.

IDENTITY, DENIED

Reflecting on my own experiences, I was once a carefree child, blessed with a loving family and an incredible single mother who treated me as her most cherished jewel. I faced no suffering or hardship. I was athletic, skateboarding, snowboarding, climbing, hiking and running. My mother often remarked that witnessing me was akin to watching “poetry in motion.” I relished the sensation of running barefoot on wet sand; it felt liberating.

My mother, a medical professional, home-schooled me and introduced me to the world of books and travel, expanding my knowledge and empathy for different cultures and nations. Life was wonderful.

My gender assigned at birth was female. When I reached puberty, my body began changing, becoming more outwardly male. I embraced it. I developed into a strong and handsome figure, resembling a muscular football player. My mother assured me that what was happening was perfectly natural, and in some cultures I would be revered as a healer or spiritual leader. She provided me with resources to deepen my

understanding and checked in with my feelings regularly.

However, when my mother sought medical advice to ensure I was healthy, the nightmare began. The doctors decided my hormones were the enemy. They didn’t care that I liked who I was becoming, and treated me with a rigid medical approach, attempting to “correct” what they believed was wrong and force femininity back onto me. Yet, I was already who I was meant to be — there was no need for correction.

For nine years, I took the drugs they told me to, and that were supposed to reset my gender. My mother would later find out that these drugs were not thoroughly tested for cases like mine — administered for so long, to a young, developing body and mind. The long-term effects were devastating. The medication caused brain damage. I went from being a 4.0 honors student to a shadow of myself, unable to care for myself or communicate with others. I lost many talents, including my ability to play music and speak foreign languages. My mind felt blank, like a wiped hard drive.

My courageous mother, initially intimidated by the doctors’ warnings, ultimately conducted her own research and discovered the truth about the medication, and she took me off it. With her support and patience, and with therapy, I began to recover and gain strength. But I was forever changed and haunted by lingering side effects.

I am thankful that the doctors only medicated me and stopped short of surgery, which would have altered me in even more and irreversible ways. I’m also thankful that today trans people generally have more treatment options than I had and access to more doctors who are kind and understanding.

However, these and other societal improvements are now being threatened by fear.

MAPPING A COMMUNITY’S WOUNDS

LGBTQ+ youths today face heightened risks of mental health injury and suicide due to mistreatment and inadequate access to appropriate medical care. The Trevor Project, a nonprofit organization specializing in crisis intervention for LGBTQ+ people under age 25, documented these trends in its recent, first-of-its-kind longitudinal study, which followed more than 1,600 participants from September 2023 through March 2025. The study found that anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation all rose in the first year of observation. The situation was worse for trans people.

“Transgender and nonbinary (TGNB) youth and participants ages 13 to 17 reported the poorest mental health outcomes and represented the highest risk for suicide,” according to the Trevor

Project. “TGNB youth were nearly twice as likely to report anxiety (70% vs. 42%) and suicidal ideation (53% vs. 28%) compared to cisgender peers, a pattern that persisted a year later.”

Of course, it’s not just youth; trans people of all ages suffer, with many facing abuse, violence, or even death.

“Transgender women and men had higher rates of violent victimization (86.1 and 107.5 per 1,000 people, respectively) than cisgender women and men (23.7 and 19.8 per 1,000 people respectively),” according to a study by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, which analyzed 2017 and 2018 data.

These aren’t just passing, dismissable trends. This is a matter of life and death.

WE ARE ALL BUTTERFLIES

Trans individuals are talented, creative, and intelligent members of society. Some have served in the military, while others lead corporations or work as engineers or scientists. They are extraordinary people who have navigated extraordinary challenges. Trans people are our neighbors, community leaders, and friends.

There are both admirable and less favorable individuals among trans people, just as there are in other groups and the broader population. There is nothing inherently frightening about trans people. As Franklin D. Roosevelt famously stated, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

For society to evolve and thrive, we must accept all its members, including trans individuals, for who they are — not who we wish them to be. We must recognize that trans individuals seek the freedom to live their lives authentically, and we should not try to stop them.

We are all butterflies, enduring our own struggles, as my mother taught me. It is through these struggles that we gain strength. If you crack open the chrysalis before a butterfly is ready, it will fall and perish. But if left to struggle, the butterfly emerges stronger and capable of flight.

My own struggles made me the person I am proud to be today. Likewise, we all must keep challenging ourselves to be better — to be open toward the people we don’t easily understand. It will be a difficult struggle. But it will make us all strong, together. ■

Monteque Pope-Le Beau is a poet, artist and founder of Dreamweaverarts. They use art as a catalyst for change, drawing from personal experiences, including overcoming illness. Their brand, “Circles of Enlightenment,” promotes community well-being. This piece originally ran in The Tenderloin Voice.

FROM TOWN HALLS TO POSTCARDS, BUDGET ADVOCACY MOBILIZES LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

TJ JOHNSTON

Some 250 people gathered inside North Light Court at San Francisco City Hall on May 12 to deliver about 1,500 postcards to Mayor Daniel Lurie, urging him to restore \$100 million in proposed cuts to the upcoming City budget, including LGBTQ+, HIV and homeless services, among others.

The cards were strung together and held by members of the People's Budget Coalition, who chanted and marched in procession up the stairs to the doors of Lurie's office, where one of his staff stood by to receive the band of deliverers.

The cards bore handwritten messages from community members who had attended seven town halls organized by the People's Budget Coalition, a collective of 150 community-based organizations, nonprofits, labor unions and assorted advocacy groups.

Among these missives was one from Paul Aguilar. A member of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation's HIV Advocacy Network read off Aguilar's message on his behalf.

"I was told at 25 years old that I had five years," Aguilar had written. "This year, I will be 63. This would have never happened without San Francisco's HIV care and prevention network. It's because of these programs and services that I am still here today, celebrating my 63rd birthday."

June is also Pride Month in San Francisco, and it's when the mayor's office traditionally announces its proposed City budget. Then, City government spends the rest of the month wrestling with budgetary details in public meetings, hearing from people who live and work in the city, negotiating with City officials, and presenting the mayor with a final fiscal plan for the next two years.

For Anya Worley-Ziegmann, a coordinator for the coalition, the action got the campaign to preserve safety net services and avert layoffs off to a strong start. Worley-Ziegmann's coalition is asking Lurie to preserve funding and generate new revenue. "It was amazing," they said in an Instagram video. "It was fantastic. It was one of the biggest actions we've ever had ahead of June ever. The bottom line

is no cuts."

An equity analysis from the People's Budget Coalition finds that LGBTQ+ people risk losing \$6 million in funding for critical programs in Lurie's proposed service cuts, while transgender and gender-nonconforming people could lose \$2 million, and those who use HIV/AIDS services \$5.4 million. These cuts represent a 23% reduction in trans-specific services and almost 20% in HIV services.

This year, a projected deficit of \$1.5 billion—the equivalent of the budget's General Fund—is prompting Lurie to ask most departments for cuts. But the People's Budget Coalition is asking Lurie not only to restore funding but to increase funding in order to sustain these vital services.

HOW THE PIE IS SLICED

Since April, the coalition has been raising the alarm in its town hall meetings focused on specific communities, including residents in four supervisorial districts, immigrants and their families, women and members of the LGBTQ+ community. The April 29 town hall at the San Francisco LGBT Center drew at least 50 people to the center's Rainbow Room.

Worley-Ziegmann began this meeting, as they did with others, with a Martin Luther King Jr. quote on budgets being moral documents. For a fun exercise, they called on audience members to approach the stage and create their own hypothetical city budgets. From large glass jars, the volunteers randomly drew ping-pong balls symbolizing the five categories that comprise the budget: community health, human welfare,

culture and recreation, public works and administration, and public protection. Each volunteer weighted some categories, such as community health and human welfare, over others.

Worley then contrasted the budgets from the exercise with the actual budget. Public protection—meaning police and sheriff's deputies—leads all other categories, accounting for 36% of the budget. Law enforcement's slice of the pie is comparable to community health and human welfare's combined.

Another slide with a pie chart representing the coalition's preferred budget shows human welfare at almost double of its current level and public protection receiving just one-third.

"The elephant in the room is where actually the money is going," Worley-Ziegmann told the audience. "The people are always gaslighted about how much goes to public protection."

LGBTQ+ HEALTH

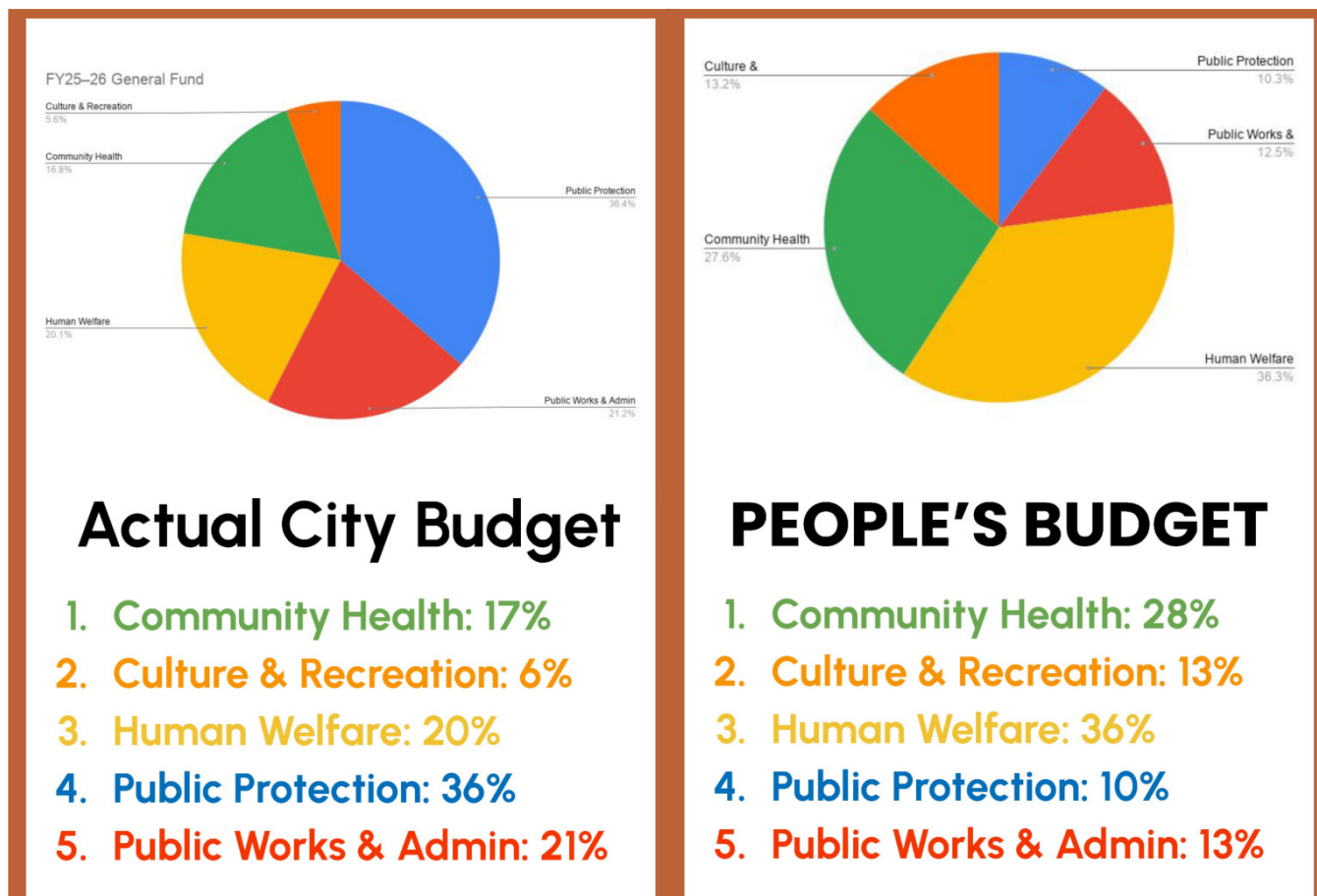
San Francisco's potential loss of public funding can be traced to federal government cuts under Donald Trump's One Big, Beautiful Act. The cutting of public health monies, especially for HIV services, leaves members of several intersecting communities at risk, Ande Stone of the HIV Advocacy Network said at the town hall.

Stone pointed out that although HIV and sexually transmitted infection rates might be waning in San Francisco, HIV prevention points and health access points would bear the brunt of cuts. That would impact Latine, Black, Asian-Pacific Islander people, as well as youth, queer and trans folk, and people who use drugs, he added.

"When Trump is defunding health-care and attacking our communities, we need San Francisco leaders to stand with us," Stone said. "Our City leaders, instead of protecting us, are digging the knife even deeper with local cuts to the same programs being cut at the federal level."

Harm reduction and substance use treatment programs are

continues on p7...



“I COULD SEE PIECES OF THE PUZZLE BUT NOT THE BIG PICTURE”

Lea's transition began four years ago. After more than four decades, it had become clear to her what had been bubbling under the surface all that time. She offers insights into her own development and society's responsibility towards members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

ADRIANE DIETRICH

Trott-war: I'm very excited to hear what you have to say. Before we get started, a simple but very important question: How are you?

Lea: I'm doing well! A lot has changed since back then. Above all, a lot of things have settled; four years ago, it was all new and different. I still didn't know where all this was going to take me. I still don't know, of course, but I have the feeling that I'm very much on the right track.

A lot of it probably has to do with the hormonal changes. When I started taking hormones, I didn't notice anything at first. At a check-up three months later, they doubled the dose, and then I really felt a big change! I became calmer, more balanced and saw things differently from how I had before.

I had to deal with emotional turbulence, a bit like during puberty. Now that I'm suppressing the testosterone with testosterone blockers and adding oestrogen, I'm also seeing the physical effects of female puberty.

Do you think the hormones are what makes all the difference?

They play an important role, yes. But my family's needs and demands are changing too, for example. My children are getting older. And there's been another development in my job situation – a big change, but in the positive sense. I have to say, I was very hesitant before changing jobs, but I was introduced in an uncomplicated way. It was clear from the beginning that I'm a “she”, and no-one had a problem with that. The team is also very young – and then it's just not a thing.

How do people react to you now? How is it with your colleagues?

I can take the application process for my new job as an example. I mentioned being trans because my status hasn't been changed officially yet, so some of my documents are still under my old name.

I'd come out while still with my former employer. I prepared it in

great detail and talked to people individually to find out how they would react and what questions would come up. Then I wrote a text explaining everything and shared it internally, with examples, videos and all sorts, to also say, “Hey, this isn't something I've made up!”

It's something that affects a lot of people. In my view, this thorough preparation was one of the reasons I was so well accepted. Visually, I hadn't yet changed at all. I already had long hair – and then I just shaved off my beard. That was the only change. I then started very carefully with new clothes. What I wear now is also more cautiously feminine.

I feel good the way I am, and that's the most important thing. Of course, I'd like to be seen as a trans woman, and I don't kid myself that people perceive me as a cis woman. 90% of people aren't even aware that trans people exist, so I can't really expect to be seen as a woman. But most of the people I have direct contact with seem to think I'm a pretty nice person.

How do strangers react to you in public?

How I'm perceived in public is a totally different matter. What I've learned from all these processes is that you should see people as human beings. Don't stare at people you don't know! We all do that very subconsciously. But now, I myself get stared at the whole time, especially on public transport. I generally just keep reading or doing whatever I usually do when I'm out and about.

We communicate a lot visually. If I'd had my coming out at a conservative company with conservative customers, it would have been a catastrophe! Germany is a long way from employing trans people in service roles as a matter of course.

How do you see your role in relation to your children and, for example, their school environment?

Not much has changed there as I'm still the person I always was. My children don't see

me any differently. They were still relatively young when I explained it to them. At school, I communicated very quickly and openly, so it wasn't ever a big deal there, either. Fortunately, it's a very open school.

Do you think the children will question the idea of a “father role” one day?

No, I don't think so. They don't know any different. I don't know what they'd be missing. Of course, there's a difference if a child has two mothers, or two fathers. But it's also different if they're brought up by a single parent, and no-one questions that. How can a child say what's more important? A child doesn't know if there's something missing, because if you're not aware of something, you don't miss it. It's like when I'm asked what it's like to be trans. Then I say, “No idea. I don't know what it's like to be cis.”

I like being the person I am. I like being trans and I'm happy with how it's turned out, in spite of everything, even though, for a long time, I didn't know what was going on, and the 40 years were really hard. It's because of those 40 years that I'm here now. It was a journey that led to a goal.

These days, there are many initiatives and organisations that support trans people. Do you see them as important?

With regard to queer children and teens, I think it's important to have organisations and points of contact so that questions can be answered properly from the start. They don't immediately advise having gender-affirming surgery, as some might imagine. These are places that offer advice on topics that still aren't covered sufficiently in the mainstream.

The witch hunts by populist groups are totally unfounded. We're already beginning to see that trans and queer people in the U.S. can expect reprisals. I think it's awful and I'm very concerned. Trans and queer people don't do any harm and should be able to live how they want.

Do we still need more education around this?

Definitely! That's very important! I do what I can, such as giving this interview. Just to be clear: I am what I am because this is how I came into the world, not because I suddenly wanted to live like a woman. It's natural. When I was trying to live like a man, it felt wrong.

It's important that people who completely reject otherness understand that you don't actively decide to be trans or have an illness that can be healed. People need to get informed. It's a shame that many are ignorant and uninterested.

It's important to educate them, but of course that can only happen if they're open to it. It's a difficult thing to do. It's still crucial that even more people in this situation tell their stories, because that's the only way others can really grasp it. The media also needs to be more sensitive about this issue. Well-meant articles often only make a half-hearted attempt at informing people, or get it completely wrong. If it says, “He's now a woman!”, that's simply not true. Because as a trans woman you're born a woman.

People also tell me I'm harming my children. But it would do so much more damage if I kept following the “fixed idea” of living as a man. Unfortunately, I'm often made to feel that I'm strange and not made for this world. These days, we live in a society in which physical differences between men and women are pretty much irrelevant – in theory! In practice, women are still treated as the “weaker” sex.

Of course, we can't bring in a pluralistic society from one day to the next, or even within 10 years. But we're actually on the right track at the moment. Unfortunately, not everything went as well as it could have with the new Self-Determination Act – but at least it was a step in the right direction. ■

Translated from German by Jane Eggers

Courtesy of Trott-war / INSP.ngo

BUDGET ADVOCACY MOBILIZES LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

continued from page 5...

vulnerable, Stone later said in an interview with Street Sheet.

“Our communities have always stepped up in moments of crisis,” Stone said. “This shouldn’t be on our community alone.”

SF AS A TRANS SANCTUARY?

As director of a local government outfit called the Office of Transgender Initiatives, Honey Mahogany runs an agency whose priorities include advocacy, proposing policies and putting them into effect, and a project to end homelessness among trans people. She told the town hall audience that her agency also collects data on sexual orientation and gender identity among San Franciscans, but it’s also working to keep funding for services and preserve trans rights.

A 2023 study by the office estimates that 3% to 4% of adults in San Francisco identify as trans, though Mahogany said she believes the true number is twice as many.

Transgender Initiative data also shows that queer and gender-diverse people access City services at 10 to 20 times the rate of the general population, with 9% of the homeless population in 2024 identifying as trans or gender-diverse, more than double the rate in 2022.

San Francisco declared itself a sanctuary city for trans people in a 2024 resolution, but Trump’s America has turned transgender identity into a flashpoint in a culture war. Since 2021, when Trump began his second term, 767 anti-trans bills were introduced in state legislatures. Thirty-four of those have passed, including restrictions on gender-affirming healthcare and bans on military benefits for trans veterans. Mass migration of trans folk from their home states led the Lemkin Institute to issue its third “red flag” warning for trans genocide on the U.S. in March.

As pushback against this climate of transphobia, Mahogany said her office is exploring adding teeth to the sanctuary resolution by making it a legally binding ordinance and reinstating a gender inclusion policy requirement for all City employees. It’s also seeking to preserve \$12 mil-



lion in trans services.

Impact on trans community

Among these services impacted include the Miss Major Alexander L. Lee TGIJP Black Trans Cultural Center funded by the Mayor’s Office on Housing and Community Development. The removal of \$350,000 from TGIJP’s job training and economic development program would leave 30 low-income, transgender and gender-nonconforming people without employment services. The program also offers emergency housing, healthcare and other critical services.

Without these services, TGIJP CEO Janetta Johnson said, the lives of TGIJP’s clients would be jeopardized.

“Transgender people deserve to live in safety in this city,” Johnson said. “It’s egregious that these cuts target some of the most vulnerable and marginalized communities in San Francisco for even less support than we receive already. This budget degrades public safety by slashing the programs that prevent homelessness and increase the stability, safety and health of our city. These cuts are also the fiscally irresponsible choice—these crucial programs are cheaper than emergency services that are required without them.”

ALTERNATIVES TO SERVICE CUTS

As dire as the forecast might be, advocates say that there’s still a few ways out of cutting City services—particularly by replenishing federal

dollars from Trump’s budget.

At press time, San Francisco voters can decide whether to approve the Overpaid CEO Tax, which appears on the June 2 primary ballot as Proposition D. If it passes, companies that pay their executives at 100 times the rate of median employees must pay an increased rate on gross receipts. It could replenish up to \$300 million in the General Fund, but for it to take effect, Prop. D must pass, then garner more votes than a competing measure, Prop. C. Also, if passed, the tax kicks in 10 days after the Board of Supervisors certifies the votes.

The City could also draw down some of its federal and state risk reserves to reduce damage to healthcare services. The City reports its current balance as \$453 million.

The City could also free up \$96 million by adjusting its business tax litigation reserve. Through legal settlements in the last fiscal year with corporations such as Airbnb, Microsoft and General Motors, the City added \$100 million to its General Fund. But it did so under a formula that presumes 100% of total liability. Historically, the City Controller would hold just 75%, and reverting to that formula would add that \$96 million to the General Fund.

Also, the City Controller could do the same for property tax appeals of both residential and commercial properties. If the Controller’s Office kept just 75% of liabilities, the City would save \$108 million. ■

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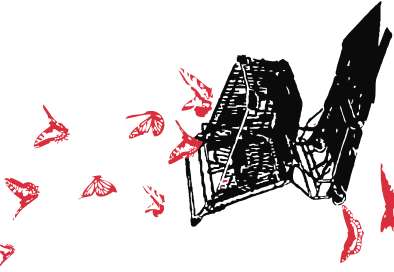
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FIRE WITHIN

A FILM BY
LAETITIA JACQUART & CORINNE SULLIVAN

Unhoused in San Francisco, Dawn and Tony find solace with Miss Terry and Rev Harry who facilitate support groups at Glide Memorial Church. They challenge them to overcome the hurdles of their situations and stand up for their community. The film weaves together their intimate stories of resilience and their fight to reclaim their place in society.

