

RESOLUTION NO. 143 OF 2021

A RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE NOVEMBER 20, 2021 AS TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE IN THE CITY OF SHREVEPORT HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE TRANSGENDER PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES WERE LOST IN ACTS OF ANTI-TRANSGENDER VIOLENCE, AND TO OTHERWISE PROVIDE WITH RESPECT THERETO.

COUNCILMEMBER: LEVETTE FULLER

WHEREAS, Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) is an annual observance on November 20th that honors the memory of transgender people around the world whose lives have been lost to anti-transgender violence; and

WHEREAS, in 1998 Rita Hester, a transgender black woman was murdered, and her murder has yet to be solved; and

WHEREAS, the following year Gwendolyn Ann Smith created the first Transgender Day of Remembrance in honor of Rita Hester and other transgender people who had lost their lives to violence; and

WHEREAS, the annual event provides a forum for transgender communities and allies to raise awareness of the threat of violence faced by gender variant people and the persistence of prejudice felt by the transgender community; and

WHEREAS, many communities organize events and activities to create and promote visibility of anti-transgender violence to stakeholders such as police, the media, and elected officials; and

WHEREAS, the Shreveport City Council recognizes that transgender members of our society are disproportionately affected by hate crimes and violence, and experience myriad challenges in their daily lives, including discrimination, disproportionately high levels of unemployment, and limited access to health care; and

WHEREAS, according to the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), in 2019, advocates tracked at least 25 deaths of transgender or gender non-conforming people in the United States due to fatal violence, the majority of whom were black transgender women; and

WHEREAS, fatal violence disproportionately affects transgender women of color, who comprised 91% of all anti-transgender homicides in 2019, 68% of which were in the South; and

WHEREAS, Brooklyn DeShauna Smith, a transgender black woman, was murdered in Shreveport on October 7, 2020 at only 20 years old, her murder remains unsolved; and

WHEREAS, Vontashia Bell, a transgender black woman, was murdered in Shreveport on August 30, 2018 at only 18 years old, she was misgendered by the media and her murder remains unsolved; and

WHEREAS, in 2013 three transgender black women were murdered in a two month span, Valerie or Ms. Val McKinney on July 12, 2013, Terry Golston on September 6, 2013, and Freddy Henderson on September 11, 2013, they were dead named and referred to as cross dressers by the media and all except Terry Golston's murder remain unsolved; and

WHEREAS, 82% of victims of fatal anti-transgender violence since 2013 were killed in states without gender identity inclusive hate crimes protections in place at their time of death; and

WHEREAS, transgender and gender non-conforming people in Louisiana are not explicitly protected from discrimination in employment, housing, education and public spaces at the State level and while Louisiana does include sexual orientation as a protected characteristic in its hate crimes law, it does not include gender identity; and

WHEREAS, according to the HRC at least 34 transgender or gender non-conforming people have been fatally shot or killed by other violent means in 2020; and

WHEREAS, since HRC began tracking this data in 2013, advocates have never seen such a high number at this point in the year; and

WHEREAS, as is too often the case in the reporting of anti-transgender violence, many of these victims are misgendered in local police statements and media reports, indicating that the number of transgender victims of violence and murder is likely far higher than what is officially reported; and

WHEREAS, at least 80% of all victims have been clearly misgendered by the media or by law enforcement; and

WHEREAS around the world, countries outlaw transgender people living as their authentic selves; and

WHEREAS, despite the challenges faced by the transgender community, by observing the Transgender Day of Remembrance, the Shreveport City Council recognizes, admires, and celebrates the growing awareness and acceptance of transgender people in Shreveport and across the nation; and

WHEREAS, on Transgender Day of Remembrance we honor and commemorate the strength, commitment, and remarkably immense efforts of those working to secure full and equal civil rights for all people, regardless of gender identity or expression.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Shreveport, acting in due, regular, and legal session convened, that the City Council hereby honors the memory of the transgender people whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence and recognizes November 20, 2021 as Transgender Day of Remembrance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if any provision or item of this Resolution or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items, or applications and to this end, the provisions of this Resolution are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all resolution or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM:

City Attorney's Office