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Transgender Advocacy Group Calls Upon Authorities to Fully Investigate Transgender Woman's Death as a Possible Hate Crime

Lateisha Green's Death Highlights Need for Comprehensive Hate Crimes Legislation

NEW YORK, NEW YORK -- The Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund [TLDEF] calls upon the Syracuse [N.Y.] Police Department and Onondaga County District Attorney William Fitzpatrick to fully investigate the death of Lateisha Green, 22, whose legal name was Moses Cannon, as a possible hate crime. Green, who was transgender and lived as a woman, was shot and killed outside a house party in Syracuse on Friday, Nov. 14. Local media reports indicate Dwight R. DeLee, 20, allegedly shot Green because he thought she was gay.

"Lateisha's senseless death demonstrates the increased risk of violence transgender people face," TLDEF executive director Michael Silverman said. "The Syracuse Police Department and District Attorney Fitzpatrick must fully investigate this crime and file all appropriate charges - including hate crimes charges - against the assailant."

Green's death comes as activists around the world gather to honor those killed because of their gender identity and expression on the Transgender Day of Remembrance, Nov. 20. Green's death also comes less than two weeks after Duanna Johnson was found dead in Memphis. A surveillance video captured a police officer beating Johnson, who was also transgender, and spraying her with mace inside the booking area of a local jail earlier this year as a colleague held her to the floor. The Memphis Police Department fired the two officers after a local television station broadcast the video.

Johnson and Green's untimely deaths highlight the need to implement comprehensive hate crimes protections for transgender people. New York State law includes sexual orientation as a hate crimes category, but does not include gender identity or gender expression. "Transgender people face discrimination and violence in communities across the country," Silverman said. "These two tragic deaths highlight the need for local, state and federal lawmakers to enact comprehensive hate crimes legislation to protect some of society's most vulnerable members."

Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund is committed to ending discrimination based upon gender identity and expression, and to achieving equality for transgender people through public education, test-case litigation, direct legal services, community organizing and public policy efforts.