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Transgender Advocacy Group Calls Upon Lawmakers to Pass Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act

Plea Comes on the Heels of the Tragic Death of Lateisha Green in Syracuse on Nov. 14

NEW YORK - In response to the tragic murder of Lateisha Green earlier this month, the Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund calls upon Albany lawmakers to pass the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act [GENDA], which would add gender identity and expression to the state's hate crimes law.

This plea comes after Dwight R. DeLee, 20, allegedly shot and killed Green, 22, a transgender woman, outside a house party in Syracuse on Nov. 14 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. "Lawmakers have an obligation to send a powerful message to their fellow New Yorkers that hate crimes based on gender identity and expression will not be tolerated in our state."

Assemblyman Dick Gottfried [D-Manhattan] and state Sen. Tom Duane [D-Manhattan] first introduced GENDA in 2003. A poll conducted by Global Strategy Group in May found 78 percent of New York voters surveyed support GENDA. The Assembly passed GENDA last year, while former Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno [R-Saratoga Springs] refused to bring the bill to the floor for a vote. Democrats now control the Senate and Gov. David Paterson has said he will sign the bill into law once it crosses his desk.

"Hate crimes based on gender identity and expression are a serious concern for New Yorkers across the state," Silverman continued. "We look forward to working with lawmakers in Albany to ensure passage of this vitally important piece of legislation."

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.