POZ Awards 2022 / Best Reason to Keep Acting Up

Read about the nominees, then scroll down to vote for your favorite!

October 1, 2022

VOTING IS CLOSED

Welcome to the 7th Annual POZ Awards, spotlighting the best representatives of HIV in media and culture.

The POZ editorial staff selects the nominees, but POZ readers choose the winners.

Eligible nominees were active or were presented, published or produced between October 1, 2021, and September 30, 2022.

BEST REASON TO KEEP ACTING UP

HIV Criminalization

Acquiring a virus should not be a crime, but 35 states still have laws on the books that criminalize HIV. These laws were implemented during the early days of the AIDS epidemic, designed to discourage high-risk behavior and promote safer sex options. They were also written at a time when little was known about HIV and there were no treatments available. In the current age of PrEP, PEP and the fact that people living with HIV on successful treatment have zero risk of transmitting the virus (Undetectable Equals Untransmittable!), the only reason laws criminalizing people living with HIV exist is to promote fear and stigma. They must be abolished.

The Right to Choose

Texas led the way, Arizona recently followed, Roe vs. Wade has been overturned and, if South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham has his way, abortion will be banned nationwide. Roughly one in every four women in the United States will have an abortion by age 45, according to an analysis published in the American Journal of Public Health. Anti-abortionists make the case that they are about protecting the rights of the unborn, but the reality is that curbing abortion rights is more about controlling the poor, minority and immigrant populations who have fewer choices to begin with. The majority of the country is in favor of the right to choose, and we need to continue fighting to make sure that every person who desires access to abortion has that access.

Transgender Rights

Sadly, so far this year, over 30 transgender people have been reported killed by violent means in the United States. Transgender, nonbinary and gender-nonconforming people continue to be among the most vulnerable humans in our community, and we need to keep fighting for their protection, their health care, their right to work and housing and their right to happiness.

Monkeypox

The recent outbreak of the monkeypox virus and the disastrous way the government has handled its spread and the rollout of vaccines horribly echoes the way it handled HIV in the early days. Members of our community stood up and showed up, shared information with one another, refrained from activities that might cause transmission and helped take care of one another. But like HIV and COVID-19, the monkeypox crisis isn’t over, and we need to take care of ourselves and one another and keep on pushing our local and national leaders to do better.

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