Trans Mobilization

National Trans Visibility March participants said it's important for the trans community to come together at this time—not only to share resources but also to find strength and joy in solidarity.

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"Policies have been passed to erase our existence," said the Reverend Carmarion D. Anderson-Harvey, a Black transgender activist and minister from Birmingham, Alabama. "Yet here we are, standing firm in our truth. We as a community have abundant power."

Her fiery words marked the climax of an empowerment session that took place during the sixth annual National Trans Visibility March (NTVM) in Washington, DC, June 5 to 8. This year's NTVM program drew roughly 5,500 partipants from all over the country at a time when the Trump administration has launched an unprecedented volley of attacks at trans people—leaving them both reeling and doubly resolved to fight back.

"We knew we couldn't do business as usual this year," said Dr. Elijah Nicholas, NTVM's lead strategy director. In addition to an empowerment and wellness day, this year's program featured a policy and safety summit, which included a legislative policy working session, panels on travel safety, a press conference with the Associated Press and more.

Nicholas said the policy summit showed him "how we move together in community and solidarity." The following day about 25 trans activists and advocates convened at the O'Neil Institute for National and Global Health Law to draft a strategy blueprint titled "Legacy in Motion." "It's going to be the way forward, so we assure that we never get to this place again," said Nicholas.



Dr. Elijah Nichola, lead strategy director for this year's NTVM, and NTVM founder Marissa Miller pose together on the National Mall near the Washington Monument.Pavni Guharoy

Marissa Miller, who founded NTVM and is living openly with HIV, said the blueprint would be akin to the foundational Denver Principles drafted by people with AIDS at a conference in 1983 that demanded that people with AIDS be at the center of any policy decisions made about them.

“This is the first convening of our community on a national and global level,” she said. Ultimately, the discussion was “about how we have to come together to make change.”

On Sunday, June 8, NTVM participants convened at the headquarters of the Human Rights Campaign, the nation’s largest LGBTQ rights and advocacy group, and marched to the International Rally + March on Washington for Freedom, which was taking place on the National Mall in front of the Lincoln Memorial.

Arianna Lint, a trans Latina living openly with HIV, founder of Arianna’s Center, and the Latina strategy director for this year’s NTVM, spoke to POZ about the overlap in attacks on the trans community and the current administration’s current and planned cuts to an array of funding streams serving people living with HIV, including Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funding and, crucially, Medicaid, which serves about 40% of Americans with HIV. She noted that about 26% of trans women in the United States are living with HIV. “A lot of us could end up without access to services,” she said.

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