



Excluding Transgender People Isn't Politics, It's Bullying

Tom Duane condemns excluding trans people, reminding us trans leaders built the movement and that solidarity, not bullying, saves lives.

January 9, 2026 By [Tom Duane](#)

I never questioned that I'm a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, even before I came out publicly decades ago. Moreover, from observing how the queer community took care of and fought for one another, I knew that when I did come out, this diverse queer community would be waiting for me. This community would be ready, willing and able to embrace me no matter what. I would be safe. I always thought we would stand together no matter what, fighting discrimination, and yes, violence, too. Of course, there might be slight differences in opinion regarding tactics, timing, etc., however, we'd all be in it together, with the common goal being equality.

Recently, I've been shocked and enraged to see in print and on social media—and I don't believe anyone can help but to notice this terrible trend during these incredibly challenging, frightening times—that some are actively advocating to exclude trans people from the LGBTQIA+ community.

"Why do we have to carry those people? Why are transgender people part of our community?", too many say. I can't believe I am hearing these phrases and others like them from within our own marginalized group. Those voices may as well be coming from Trump supporters! Perhaps they are.

Maybe these voices have always been there and I've only just noticed them, but the volume on that shrill chorus has certainly been turned up. I've seen it proposed that the letters that describe our community should only be LGB, leaving out the T (and I guess that goes for QIA+ too). I know the percentage of folks that feel that way is small, but it's a dangerous minority. And fuck them.

Transgender people have always been in our movement. Need I remind anyone that the Stonewall revolution was launched by transgender/non-binary vanguards of courage: [Stormé DeLarverie](#), Marsha P. Johnson, and Sylvia Rivera to name just a few? Back in the early days, the cause was called "The Gay Liberation Movement," "Gay" being the umbrella term that included all of us outcasts. Marsha herself famously said, "Darling, I want my gay rights now!"

Wake up! Transgender people are less socially accepted and have far higher rates of rejection, discrimination, and worst of all, violence against them than cis lesbian, gay, or bisexual people. When wrongheaded factions of the queer movement flirt with excluding others, it feeds the very

stigmas that make trans lives harder in daily reality.

When it comes to HIV, trans people are more vulnerable. The Human Rights Campaign reports that trans people, especially transgender women of color, have much higher rates of HIV than their cis counterparts.

We as a queer community know first-hand what it's like to be discriminated against. Every single one of us has felt the sting of being shunned, discounted, bullied, some being victims/survivors of violence. This is absolutely true for those of us living with HIV. For us to turn around and bully anyone else is cruel and unnecessary. But members of our own community? Intolerable.

They may try to dress it up as politics or patriotism, but it's still bullying people. Just as it's wrong when the Trump administration is a bully to queers, it's especially despicable for the queer community to bully our own.

We are responsible for each other, and no one gets left behind.

The LGBTQIA+ community that I believed in and fought so hard for is a beacon of hope for all of those who are afraid to come out, whose families don't accept them, who think that they're all alone. We can't let that hope be extinguished or even dimmed because of ignorance, fear, and bigotry.