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**The City of New York  
Community Board 8 Manhattan  
Social Justice Committee  
Monday, May 23, 2022 – 6:30PM  
*This meeting was conducted via Zoom***

*Please note: The resolutions contained in the committee minutes are recommendations submitted by the committee chair to the Community Board. At the monthly full board meeting, the resolutions are discussed and voted upon by all members of Community Board 8 Manhattan.*

**Resolutions for Approval:** Item 1 LGBTQ+ Protections (Unanimous)

**MINUTES**

**CB8 Members Present:** Erica Bersin (Public Member), Sarah Chu, Saundra I. Coleman, Wendy Machaver (Public Member), Rita Popper

**1. Erin Mayo-Adam, Director of the Hunter College LGBTQ Policy Center at Roosevelt House, to discuss "Don't Say Gay" bills and other recent legislation to limit LGBTQ rights**

- a) Dr. Mayo-Adam is a professor in the Political Science Department and the Human Rights Program at Hunter College, CUNY.
- b) She teaches American politics, law and society, and political theory. Her research focuses on social movements, interest groups and public policy, intersectionality, gender and sexuality, and immigration, migration, and labor politics.
- c) Book: *Queer Alliances: How Power Shapes Political Movement Formation* (2020, Stanford University Press).
  - i) The book focuses on the problem of building alliances across and within political movements to aid in struggles to overcome inequality and oppression at the grassroots level.
  - ii) She examines the extent to which groups bridged divisions in the LGBTQ, labor, and immigrant rights movements through the development of coalitions that could aid in struggles for rights. The book draws from an original dataset that consists of participant observations and semi-structured, in-depth interviews with organization leaders, advocates, and politicians.
  - iii) This was the first socio-legal study of coalition-based legal rights advocacy by LGBTQ groups, immigrant groups, labor organizations, and groups that represent communities of color in state settings.
- d) Anti-LGBTQ education laws
  - i) Brief history of anti-LGBTQ Curriculum Laws
    - (1) These laws restrict or prohibit discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity in schools
    - (2) “No Promo Homo” laws are the name given to anti-LGBTQ curriculum laws which included the 1978 Briggs Initiative, a failed California ballot proposition (Proposition 6) that sought termination of teachers who provided LGBTQ inclusive education
      - (a) Anita Bryant, launched the Save Our Children campaign in FL, used a narrative focused on children
      - (b) CA legislator John Briggs focused on terminating teachers.
      - (c) Ultimately, the Briggs Initiative was overturned for being overly broad. In the 1970s, the religious right shifted their anti-LGBTQ rhetoric to portraying gay people as child molesters who focused on indoctrination, bad role modeling, and more recently, “grooming.”
    - (3) Before 2020 there were about 20 such laws introduced across the nation, but in 2022, there were 250 proposals

- ii) Types of curriculum laws (Note: The labels below are those used by academics and people in these fields to characterize various anti-LGBTQ laws):
  - (1) Don't Say Gay
    - (a) These laws prohibit teachers from discussing sexual orientation and gender identity
  - (2) No Promo Homo
    - (a) These laws prohibited comprehensive sexuality and HIV education
  - (3) Anti-Homo
    - (a) Requires teachers to portray homosexuality in a negative manner
  - (4) Promo-Hetero
    - (a) Requires teachers to affirm heterosexuality as the dominant sexual identity
  - (5) Abstinence until marriage
    - (a) Limited sexuality education to not only limiting sexual expression to marriage, but only in the context of a heterosexual relationship
- iii) Through 2021, these laws were dying. Six laws were left on the books and most had been repealed. A renewed focus in 2020 drove states to “stay away from divisive concepts.”
  - (1) Historically, NYC introduced a Children of the Rainbow curriculum for 1st grade after Yusef Hawkins murder in 1989. It was 440 pages long with 3 pages on LGBTQ people. The curriculum met with opposition in NYC - curriculum was shelved
  - (2) In 1996-2016, the federal government focused on funding abstinence only education and marriage, although that focused decreased after the Bush Administration.
  - (3) 2016-today, the Obergefell Supreme Court decision launched an effort by the Christian right to push back against what it perceived as movements that were increasingly moving away from male dominated, heterosexist frames.
  - (4) Bill proposal ballooned across the country, including bathroom bills, bills against gender affirming care, bills prohibiting gender identity recognition, and a ban on trans people in military.
  - (5) In 2020, after losing the White House, the Christian right movement diverted its attention to the states. During COVID closures, there was a renewed focus on education. Parents, angry about COVID limitations, also promoted a rise in anti-trans and anti-BLM education, creating a storm of anti-inclusive education
- iv) FL “Don't Say Gay” law
  - (1) Prohibits classroom discussion and discussion of gender identity in K-3, and “age appropriate” discussions in grades 3-12. Bills like this raise the following problems:
    - (a) “Classroom instruction” and “Age appropriate “ are undefined
    - (b) The laws are enforced through lawsuits
    - (c) It is not clear if the laws extend to sex education, history, any other classes?
    - (d) Are students and teachers prohibited from talking about their families or identities? What about having picture of your family on your desk?
  - (2) It is possible that the law is unconstitutional because they are substantially overbroad and chilling on speech in the same way that the Briggs initiative was found unconstitutional. However, the FL law went into effect before guidance was development for its implementation.
- v) Impact of discriminatory laws
  - (1) Worse mental health outcomes
    - (a) A study by [English et al. \(2022\)](#) found strong associations between structural racism and suicide risk in in high anti-LGBTQ policy states was disproportionately higher for Black male LGBTQ youth.
    - (b) A study by [Raifman et al. \(2018\)](#) found a 46% increase in mental distress among LGB adults in states permitting the denial of services to same-sex couples
    - (c) More research is forthcoming on the impact of anti-curriculum laws
- vi) A 2019 GLSEN National School Climate Survey found that LGBTQ students experienced high rates of harassment and most students don't receive inclusive curriculum. Policy opportunities in New York in terms of inclusive curriculum include:
  - (1) Adopting curricular standards that include LGBTQ+ communities at the state level, similar to those in CA, CO, IL, OR, NJ, NV
  - (2) Data collection of mental health outcomes, discrimination, bullying, etc. of LGBTQ K-12 students in NYC

- (3) Encourage use of “Hidden Voices” curriculum supplement in NYC, developed by NYC Department of Education, Museum of the City of New York, the NY Public Library, NY Historical society, and the National Archives

**Q&A (summarized for brevity)**

Q: In Israel, there is a zero tolerance bullying policy in schools. What about NYC?

Dr. Erin Mayo-Adams (EMA): Comprehensive anti-bullying curriculum is required to be implemented but only 25% of students were aware of policy. While we have the curriculum, there are problems with training and implementation.

Q: Where and how are people to report bullying incidents? Teacher, employees, students?

EMA: Not as familiar with reporting. Often students tell a teacher then it moves up the system.

Q: What about discrimination? We still see this in housing and medical care.

EMA: NYC Human Rights Commission enforces anti-discrimination policy. If you experience discrimination, you can file a complaint with the commission and an attorney will look into the law on your behalf. Most places don't have this.

Q: What can we do to help?

EMA: Push for the implementation of existing policies and push for data collection. Being aware of if curriculum is available in your school. NYC is very progressive in comparison to the rest of the country.

Q: There is currently a blood donation shortage. What about the law that restricts GB men from donating blood?

EMA: It is still federal law and it has been in place since the 80s.

Q: As a parent, what would a curriculum look like for 1st or 2nd grade?

EMA: In the K-3 setting, it's not sex education. It focuses on diversity of families, including single parents, adopted, LGBTQ families, and respecting people who are different. In more advanced grades, the curriculum includes American history such as Stonewall and the work of activists in addition to the curriculum. Fully inclusive curriculums are important because they include everyone and don't leave holes. Education is a solution to the rise in hate crimes. Even if you have a comprehensive bill, then someone wants to pull something out, and you have anti-discrimination laws, legislators can always change them. The best way to protect communities is through constitutional amendments which are difficult to pass. This is an ongoing struggle. Fully inclusive curriculum laws help, but don't guarantee protections when a group becomes disfavored.

Q: Is there legislation pending in NYS?

EMA: Every session, someone proposes inclusive laws, but usually not fully inclusive. There is still a lot of opposition and policymakers are concerned that pushing fully inclusive laws will change the balance of power because the bills are divisive.

Q: Who is supporting these anti-LGBTQ laws?

EMA: Powerful religious institutions, powerful conservative donors who want to see a have the vision of a traditional family that they have. A lot of these efforts are aimed at building a base in 2022 for the upcoming general election.

**Resolution:**

**WHEREAS**, there has been a dangerous proliferation of laws passed around the country that restrict LGBTQ rights and dignity,

**WHEREAS**, LGBTQ children experience discrimination, harassment, and bullying because of their sexual, gender, and other intersectional identities,

**WHEREAS**, research has demonstrated that anti-LGBTQ policies harm the mental health of LGBTQ people and has a serious disparate impact on Black male youth,

**WHEREAS**, education is one of the upstream tools that lays the foundation for future generations of people who embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion,

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, Community Board 8 Manhattan urges the City of New York to implement the following policies:

1. Adopt curricular standards that include LGBTQ+ communities at the state level, similar to those in CA, CO, IL, OR, NJ, and NV
2. Implement data collection of mental health outcomes, discrimination, bullying, etc. of LGBTQ K-12 students in NYC
3. Encourage use of “Hidden Voices” curriculum supplement in NYC, developed by NYC Department of Education, Museum of the City of New York, the NY Public Library, NY Historical society, and the National Archives

**Motion made by Rita Popper**

**Motion Passes (5-0-0).** Chu, Coleman, Popper, Bersin (public member), and Machever (public member)

**2. Old Business - None**

**3. New Business**

- Rita Popper suggested meeting on the correlation between media depictions and criminalization of communities.
- The committee discussed the recent subway shooting and the stigmatization of mental health in connection with events of violence.

**This meeting was adjourned at 8:04pm**

*Saundrea I. Coleman and Sarah Chu, Co-Chairs*