

**San Francisco Police Officer's Pride Alliance**  
584 Castro St. Box 653, San Francisco CA 94114  
sfpdpridealliance@gmail.com



**June 1, 2022**  
**Response to Erroneous Articles**  
**Regarding Police and Pride**

*The San Francisco Police Officers Pride alliance, the LGBTQ+ members of the San Francisco Sheriff's Office (SFSO), and the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD) stand in solidarity with Mayor London Breed. They will not participate in this year's San Francisco Pride Parade unless the San Francisco Pride Board of Directors reverses its decision to exclude our Police Department and Sheriff's Department members from marching in the parade in uniform.*

*The LGBTQ+ members of San Francisco's public safety agencies believe that radical inclusivity is a core San Francisco value and are asking that the 10-member SF Pride Board of Directors reverse its decision. Their next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 8 at 7 pm.*

Over the past week, many news outlets, elected officials, and social media posts expressed views and opinions on our stand down to what we collectively view as discrimination towards LGBTQ+ uniformed public servants. Although many maintain professional journalistic standards, some of the coverage fails to explore both sides of the issue. Instead, they employ a speculative approach that fails to review available information. Your LGBTQ+ uniformed public servants, many of whom have taken an active part in the LGBTQ+ movement of the past fifty years, are part of the change and are part of this community. Coverage of this type embraces political expediency at the cost of the truth. In this case, the truth is the courage that it took for LGBTQ+ members to put on uniforms and change the system from within.

Many peace officers support the Black Lives Matter movement and many work for Police Reform both within and outside their organizations. These reforms are accomplished through transparent discussions by community leaders and the public servants entrusted with their protection. During the George Floyd protests and demonstrations, many Law Enforcement Officers marched and took a knee in solidarity with their community. The keyword here is PEER, as LGBTQ+ officers affect change, despite the risks they face from both their fellow officers and the community. In doing so, they have become a beacon of change.

Imagine a world with no LGBTQ+ public servants whose presence alone forces the change. Imagine the LGQTB+ youth who want to help be the change and see the unwritten message here in San Francisco that it's NOT okay to be what you want to be. In effect, this dictum forces LGBTQ+ officers into a different closet, where they are forced to hide another aspect of their identity from the community.

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The SF Pride Committee and certain elected officials have referenced the demonstration at the 2019 Pride. What is missing in this narrative is the fact that the Pride Organizers have not admitted that they requested that the SF Police remove protestors so that the Parade could move on. They have blamed the police for the very task they gave them. What is missing is the fact that the Department of Police Accountability completed a fair and neutral investigation and determined that it had found no evidence of police wrongdoing.

The SF Pride Committee and certain elected officials have claimed that we can leave our public safety careers as a career is a choice, and for that reason, we should not march. They are shaming us for the courage that it took to fight from within.

The SF Pride Committee and certain elected officials have claimed that we only want to march to get paid overtime. This is false. LGBTQ+ officers march voluntarily and without compensation because we believe in our pride, even when we faced harassment from our co-workers and prejudice from certain community members

As a result of open, equal, transparent discussions, San Diego Pride and Public Safety teams agreed collectively to allow Uniformed LGBTQ+ Law Enforcement personnel to march in their Pride parade.

It is urgent to correct some misinformation, propagated by such sources as two articles from the Chronicle where, again, the two reporters did not reach out to any of the affinity groups or departments for an equal, transparent, and balanced coverage. The article authored by Nuala Bishari did not include one quote from any first responder. The article written by Justin Phillips did not include one quote from any first responder. Neither writer noted that all of the officers who have spoken with the Pride Committee are LGBTQ+ members of the community.

Here are some misstated facts and the actual truths:

**Myth:** “Law enforcement, firefighters, Mayor London Breed, and openly gay District Six Supervisor Matt Dorsey, who previously served as the Police Department’s lead spokesperson, all said they would boycott the 52nd annual event because of it.”

**Fact:** No one used the word boycott. Boycott implies choice. The San Francisco Police Officers Pride Alliance stated they would not march if they were not allowed to march in uniform, in the spirit of radical inclusivity and honoring the right won by officers decades ago. The Sheriffs, Firefighters, Mayor Breed, and Supervisor Dorsey chose to stand up for the values of San Francisco and not march unless the ban on officers marching in uniform was lifted.

**Myth:** “Despite a years-long national effort to create more distance between the LGBTQ community and a fraternal order that doesn’t have a history of treating queer people justly.”

**Fact:** This isn’t about a fraternal order. This is not a secret society but rather this is about LGBTQ+ officers who wish nothing more than to celebrate pride with their community and be allowed to march in uniform, identifying themselves as servants of the community. Our presence within these law enforcement organizations demonstrates the change from the organizations responsible for Compton’s Cafeteria and Stonewall. LGBTQ+ officers have served long careers to ensure that such events never happen again.

**Myth:**” While San Francisco Pride announced its police uniform ban in 2020.”

**Fact:** SF Pride did not announce a police uniform ban; they proclaimed a ban that specifically targeted the LGBTQ+ officers of the San Francisco Police Officers Pride Alliance. The 2020 press release stated: “We have concluded that in 2021 we cannot welcome the participation of the San Francisco Police Department’s Pride Alliance” These are LGBTQ+ members of our community, affecting change for our present and future safety and equality.

**Myth:** The actions push back against power structures, like police, that have historically mistreated marginalized communities.

**Fact:** These actions only perpetuate a divide. They serve to make LGBTQ+ officers into scapegoats for actions taken by the very people they have sworn to protect. These bans also reinforce what some around the nation still believe, that LGBTQ+ people do not belong in law enforcement and should never be allowed to serve openly. There are still states where officers, deputies, and firefighters can be fired for being LGBTQ+; there are still public safety officers here in San Francisco afraid to come out due to the stigma, now being exacerbated by the SF-Pride committees’ decision.

**Truth:** anti-LGBTQ+ hysteria is resurgent in some states, shaping school curricula and legislation.

**The Whole Truth:** The exclusion of uniformed LGBTQ+ officers from Pride sends the signal that LGBTQ+ people don’t belong in law enforcement. The exclusion encourages discrimination against LGBTQ+ people.

**Myth:** Even the SFPD lacked a policy requiring officers to refer to transgender, gender variant, and gender nonbinary individuals by their preferred pronouns until 2018.

**Fact:** The SFPD had policy going back to as early as 2005. In 2018 the department moved the policy from one that had to be renewed every two years to a permanent department general order, the first of its kind and one that serves as a template for departments around the country.

We, the LGBTQ+ members of Police, Fire, Sheriff, and Allied agencies, have seen the impacts of underrepresentation. We have seen the effects of being a PEER for those in need, who we reflect inside our uniform as the same. We also have seen the trauma inflicted upon our LGBTQ+ public servants and their families as they are being shunned and discriminated against by certain elected officials, community groups, and committees without acknowledging requests to have a transparent conversation.

We thank the Public who have shared their views and opinions, both supportive and opposed, as this is the communication we all need. We have seen support from members of the Human Rights Commission, community members, the Mayor, and several elected officials. We ask that you base your own decision on facts, progress, and the inclusiveness that has made this community so strong.