

## San Francisco Police Officer's Pride Alliance

584 Castro St. Box 653, San Francisco CA 94114

[sfpoprideralliance@gmail.com](mailto:sfpoprideralliance@gmail.com)



## Press Release

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*The below press release is a joint statement from the San Francisco Police Officers Pride alliance and the LGBTQ+ members of the San Francisco Sheriff's Office (SFSO) and the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD) in response to the San Francisco Pride committee's decision to not allow uniformed LGBTQ+ members of police agencies to march in this year's SF Pride celebration. The LGBTQ+ members of San Francisco's public safety agencies believe that radical inclusivity is a core San Francisco value and are asking that SF Pride reverse its decision.*

Over the past eighteen months, the San Francisco Police Officers Pride Alliance members engaged in conversations with the board of SF Pride in response to the ban on uniformed police officers that was announced in 2020. We shared stories of the courage it took to serve as both a peace officer and a member of the LGBTQ+ community. The board of SF Pride offered only one option: that LGBTQ+ peace officers hang up their uniforms, put them back in the closet, and march in civilian attire.

The San Francisco Pride Committee has asked the LGBTQ+ peace officers to go back in the closet. San Francisco and the San Francisco Pride Parade have always embraced radical inclusivity as one of our core values.

The issues of police hostility are complex, and the modern LGBTQ+ movement was born out of response to police hostility in places like the Compton Cafeteria and the Stonewall Inn.

But that is the reason many of us took this job. We recognized the need for change within these organizations, and much of the time, we have been those

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agents of change. We changed these organizations from within by providing a wider cultural competency that has made San Francisco home to the country's most diverse peace officer organizations.

In 2020, the world and the police profession were forever changed by the brutal and tragic death of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis Police Officer. This led to protests and conversations about police reform, and we all know that work is not yet done. In response, Pride committees in major cities (including San Francisco Pride) questioned the role of officers marching in Pride parades. The board of SF Pride voted to ban the San Francisco Police Officers Pride Alliance, which included the LGBTQ+ peace officers of the San Francisco Police Department, from marching in uniform at Pride.

The board decided to punish LGBTQ+ peace officers for the failings of others. This is its own form of prejudice and further erodes the tenuous relationship between peace officers and the communities we keep safe. This decision ignored the history and accomplishments of LGBTQ+ peace officers, who made the SFPD and the SFSO more inclusive through their bravery and visibility. These officers have saved lives, made the city safer, and helped establish that in San Francisco, a member of the LGBTQ+ peace officer could serve the city in uniform *with pride*.

**Let us be clear: this committee would not order the leather community to wear polyester at the parade. This committee would not order the drag community to wear flannel. But they have told us, peace officers, that if we wear our uniforms, we may not attend.**

For LGBTQ+ officers, this brings us back to a time when we had to hide at work that we were LGBTQ+. Now they ask us to hide the fact of where we work.

We wear a badge in the shape of a star. Our most sacred oath is made upon that badge: to protect and serve. And now they are telling us to hide that very badge.

As LGBTQ+ officers, we represent the diversity that makes this city so great. We are black, white, Asian, and LatinX. We are transgender, non-binary, gay, lesbian, and just plain queer. Some of us have been proudly marching in uniform in Pride for as many as 30 years.

We recognize that the uniform may not represent safety to some, but to many, many others, an LGBTQ+ officer wearing a uniform and a star means hope for a future that includes all of us.

We, the police officers of the San Francisco Police Officers Pride Alliance, stand firm in our decision that we will not be pushed back into the closet. We, the LGBTQ+ deputies of the San Francisco Sheriff's Office, will not hide from anyone who we are. In solidarity with their fellow first responders, the San Francisco Fire Department is standing with our law enforcement partners. Barring a reversal from SF Pride, SFFD will not be marching in the San Francisco Pride Parade.

We stand firm in our commitment to serving our City and our community as representatives of the LGBTQ+ community. We claim our place here as out and proud Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Non-Binary, Queer San Francisco Peace Officers.

The San Francisco Fire Department, Police Department, and Sheriff's Department stand with their LGBTQ+ employees and support their decision to not march in order to take a stand against the discriminatory actions of the board of the SF Pride committee. Our diverse workforces of dedicated public servants should be allowed to express their Pride and share their struggles by marching proudly and in uniform. Their experiences have made and will continue to make San Francisco a more robust and better place.

But please know that while we may not be able to march with our communities, we will still be here, working to keep you safe because that is what we have sworn to do.

By bringing this to the public's attention, we are hopeful that the SF Pride committee will reverse its decision and allow the LGBTQ+ and ally members of the San Francisco public safety agencies to proudly march in uniform with our community in the San Francisco Pride Parade.