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Murders of Gender Non-Conforming Youth Documented in New Report
~ Masculine Aggression Key Underlying Factor of Violence ~
~Unprecedented Coalition of Human and Civil Rights Organizations Join Forces to Fight
Epidemic~

WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 14, 2006) – Over the past 10 years, more than 50 young people aged 30 and under were violently murdered by assailants who targeted them because they did not fit stereotypes for masculinity or femininity. The Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GenderPAC) today released the groundbreaking human rights report “50 Under 30: Masculinity and the War on America’s Youth” documenting this tide of murderous violence and the key demographics of its victims and their assailants.

The report reveals a unique vulnerability at the intersection of age, race, and gender non-conformity that makes a fatal assault exponentially more likely. “While many youth who don’t fit gender stereotypes for masculinity or femininity face harassment or bullying, when it comes to gender-based murder the victims are specific and consistent,” said Riki Wilchins, GenderPAC Executive Director.

“These victims tended to share the same characteristics: they were mostly Black or Latina, were biologically male and presenting with some degree of femininity, and were killed by other young males in attacks of extraordinary and often multiple acts of violence,” added Wilchins.

The report has spurred a new coalition of civil and human rights organizations including Amnesty International (USA), Global Rights, Human Rights Campaign, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, National Organization for Women, International Lesbian and Gay Human Rights Commission, Safe Schools Coalition, National Education Association’s Health Information Network and the US Human Rights Network. These organizations are joining together in educating the public and calling upon policy-makers and law enforcement officials to address the underlying cause of gender-based violence.

“Aggression and violence have become acceptable ways of policing gender performance and punishing the transgression of gender boundaries in American culture. These deaths were often the result of young men using lethal violence to enforce standards of masculinity on other young males who didn’t meet cultural expectations of masculinity - especially when they were transgender or gay,” said Dr. Michael Kimmel, professor of sociology at Stony Brook University and author who has received international recognition for his work on men and masculinity.

In recognition of December 10 International Human Rights Day, the report will be distributed to more than 100 governmental and non-governmental agencies focused on human and civil rights, and a copy is being formally presented to the Organization for American State’s Inter-American

Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) of which the United States is a member. The IACHR investigates human rights abuses in the North and South America.

Murders that were classified as hate crimes were solved nearly one-and-a-half times more often than those that were not; yet 72% of the cases in the report were not so classified, although most suffered extremely violent deaths combining stabbing, beating, strangling and shooting. 54% of the deaths remain unsolved, as compared with 31% for all homicides nationally.

The annual FBI's Hate Crimes Statistics report documents assaults motivated by race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or disability. While it does not track murders based on victim's gender identity or expression, if it did, the murders in this report would outweigh every other category except race.

“We must stand together and do whatever it takes to stop this kind of hate on our children. There is no word for the grief a mother has to endure. As Solomon said, ‘Justice will only be achieved when those who are not injured by crime feel as indignant as those who are,’” shared Queen Washington, mother of Stephanie Thomas (19), of Washington D.C. who was murdered in 2002.

The report is available online at www.gpac.org to assist reporters and policy-makers in identifying victims from their regions. A press conference will be held at 10am today at the National Press Club and will feature, Riki Wilchins; Queen Washington; Brett A. Parson, Sergeant, Washington D.C. Metropolitan Police Department Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit (GLLU); and Mark K. Bromley, Director of External Relations and Policy for Global Rights.

About GenderPAC

The Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GenderPAC) works to ensure that classrooms, communities, and workplaces are safe places for every person regardless of whether they fit stereotypes for masculinity and femininity. For more information visit www.gpac.org.

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