

RIVERSIDE COUNTY NOW NEWS



JUNE 2023

President's Message

June is LGBTQIA+ Pride Month. LGBTQIA+ Pride Month is currently celebrated each year in the month of June to honor the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan. The Stonewall Uprising was a tipping point for the Gay Liberation Movement in the US. The first Pride March in New York City was held on June 28, 1970, on the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising and had 3000-5000 people in attendance. Today, in New York City alone, millions come to march and there are thousand more marches across the US.

For those of us who were not alive in 1969, you must be wondering what the Stonewall Uprising was.

The Stonewall Uprising was a series of events between police and the LGBTQIA+ protestors that stretched over six days. The Stonewall Inn was one of the most popular gay bars in New York City. Throughout the state, it was illegal to serve alcohol to a gay person until 1966, and in 1969 homosexuality was still considered a criminal offense. This led many gay bars to operate without a liquor license, which were regularly subjected to raids and police brutality. The Stonewall Inn was operated by the Mafia and as long as profits were being made, they could care less about the atrocities against their patrons. Plainclothes officer showed up to raid the place on June 28, 1969, with a warrant in hand, authorizing them to investigate illegal sale of alcohol. They interrogated the patrons and the employees. The employees and cross-dressers were most visible and most vulnerable to be arrested. One of the officers ordered all cross-dressers to be arrested. The news of the raid spread across the city like a wildfire and a large crowd started gathering outside and this upheaval continued for six straight days. The community came together and sent a strong message. A message that is still being delivered fifty-four years later.

Just like any other fight, be it women's rights or the injustices against people of color, we cannot get complacent.

We must continue to speak up and protect our LGBTQIA+ brothers and sisters.

In 2023, there has been an immense uptick in anti-trans bills being introduced across the states, threatening trans people's rights to receive basic healthcare, education, legal recognition, and the right to publicly exist. So, there is much need for the community to show up. Please get involved in your local clubs, show up to City Council and School Board meetings, where this topic is up for debate and stand up for what is right!

City Council & School Board Meetings

The attacks on the underserved communities, including the LGBTQIA+ community are very much alive in the local city council meetings as well as school board meetings.

In January 2023, Temecula city councilmembers Jessica Alexander, James Stewart and Brenden Kalfus voted against declaring citywide proclamations that celebrate the cultural diversity, arguing that the 'inclusionary' decrees actually 'exclude people' which included Pride Month.

Temecula Valley and Murrieta Valley School Boards have rejected state of the art textbooks, for Social Studies and AP History, recommended by the faculty, who spent months evaluating the best options for their students and now the students and faculty are left in limbo for next school year. Some of the excuses heard were Trump being portrayed poorly in the textbook, or the mention of Harvey Milk, who was a visionary and human rights leader and who became one of the first openly gay elected official in the US.

In closing, this is where we are in 2023 and much work needs to be done!

Please JOIN US in our MOVEMENT!

And please continue to support us:

<https://riversidecountynow.com/donate/>

Calendar of Events

**June 29 - RC NOW Monthly Zoom Meeting
Celebrating Pride Month LGBTQIA+
roundtable with Lauren Andrade, DJ Josh
Auras, and Katie Wehus**

**June 24 Pride Stage featuring DJ Josh
Auras Downtown Santa Ana 12pm - 10pm**

**June 30 - Corona-Norco Pride Night
5:30pm - 10 pm Circle City Banquet Room**

**June 30- July 2- National NOW Conference
We Won't Stop: Organizing Until Equity for
All!**

Doubletree by Hilton, Crystal City, Virginia

**July 27 - RC NOW Monthly Zoom Meeting
Details TBA**

Legislation: AB 1314 and AB 957

NOW Week of Action

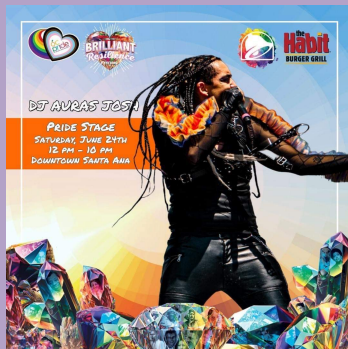
Legislation can be a two-edged sword as we have all seen. In 2023 Riverside County made headlines when assemblymember Bill Essayli (R) Co-authored AB 1314, the bill that would have permitted and urged school staff to send home parental notification of a gender not aligning with that assigned at birth. Furthermore, it would need to happen in 3 days. THANKFULLY, this failed, massively. It never stood a chance, here in California. But it did give fuel to some of the darker minds in our vast and varied county. In Temecula and other parts there is an ongoing and not quiet war of gender and books. In both cases the war cry is "SAVE THE KIDS"

That's where Assembly Bill 957 comes into play. Its specific setting is the family courts. It is largely made up of a series of clerical fixes, but it also includes very important items about the wellbeing of a child. First, it uses the divorce portion for not only a chance to change a last name, as is most common, but also first name, as well as gender. Later, after much has been struck out of the bill it will be replacing it goes on to say this about custody determination:

(6) A parent's affirmation of the child's gender identity ***because it is in the best interest of the child to affirm their gender identity.***

AB 1314 and AB 957 were introduced around the same time. They, honestly, both had a hard road ahead of them. One went very hard to the right and made it clear they wanted out and label every trans child they see, before they were ready to make that very personal declaration, regardless of their safety. The other wanted to protect those same children in their most vulnerable spaces, in a court setting that is very nervous about too much change too fast. The world is changing, and the legislation continues to be progressive in California, but we can't rest yet.

-Maya Rodriguez



Tuesday, June 20: Social Media Blitz

- Change your profile picture to the Keep Abortion Legal.
- Tweet, and/or post a visual on your social media platform of choice illustrating your support for abortion rights.
 - [Tweets to use today.](#)
- Use this hashtag on your social posts: **#WeekofActionNOW2023**

Wednesday, June 21: Lobby Day

- Visit or contact your state and federal representative to advocate for abortion rights.
- If you want to join NOW on the Hill, please [use this form](#) to sign up and we'll get the details out to you.

Thursday, June 22: Persuasive Writing

- Consult the website some writing tips to persuade your audience for letters to the editor, emails to your congressional member, blogs and opinion pieces, and social media posts.

Friday, June 23: Continue the Resistance

- Volunteer to be an abortion center escort.
- Donate to national abortion assistance funds.

[Abortion Finder](#): AbortionFinder.org features the most comprehensive directory of trusted (and verified) abortion service providers and assistance resources in the United States.

[Abortion Funds](#): The National Network of Abortion Funds builds power with members to remove financial and logistical barriers to abortion access by centering people who have abortions and organizing at the intersections of racial, economic, and reproductive justice.

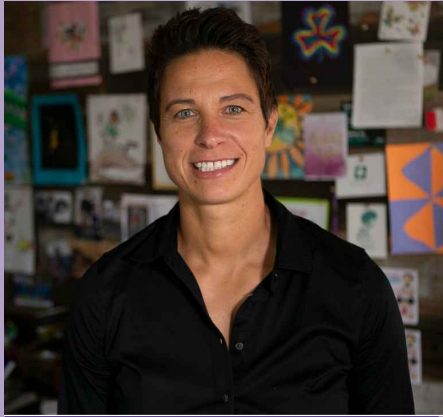
Saturday, June 24th, and additional dates

Women's March

- Women's March | [Day of Action](#)
- Women's March | [Rallies Across the Country](#)

Lauren Andrade

How this firefighter mama transformed the Orange County Fire Authority



It had been three and a half weeks since I had my son Luke, and I was preparing to return to work as a firefighter at the OC Fire Authority. I had never been away from work that long—after ten days I start to feel antsy and as though I am lacking purpose. This time was different. All I wanted to do was hold my baby and not let go. My partner assured me that Luke was going to be ok, and I knew there were no better hands for him to be in than hers. I grabbed some breakfast and coffee and ran out the door.

I had recently transferred to a new fire station—a move that came with additional responsibilities. There was a lot to learn, which was perfect, because I wanted to stay as busy as possible to keep my mind off missing my son. As soon as I got to the station, the tones went off, indicating that there was a call. There was an explosion at a school, cause undetermined; we had 60 seconds to get dressed and go.

We got to the school and the walls were blown out. A huge water heater had exploded but fortunately no one was injured or killed. While we were dealing with the explosion, I could feel under my uniform that my breasts were getting hard, and it was time to pump.

Once we got back to the station, I tried to figure out the best place to get this done. First and foremost, I wanted to be discreet and not in anyone's way. I decided the restroom would be my best bet. There was electricity, a table and sink—I got this! At any moment we could get another call. I needed to get this milk out of me.

The fire station had two restrooms that were both multi-user, rather than one men's restroom and one women's restroom. I entered the multi-user restroom and locked the door. I couldn't find a chair, so I sat on the sink. There was a radio playing Metallica, and the lighting was so bright it reminded me of being in a dental office. I took off my shirt and started hooking up my pump. I felt so exposed, but I was going to make this happen.

While I was pumping, someone tried to come into the restroom. The door slammed against the lock, and I felt a surge of adrenaline rush through my body. I felt so vulnerable with my shirt off, and I was hoping this machine would just hurry up. Five minutes later, someone tried to come in again. I remember wondering if the surge of stress hormones would affect my breast milk negatively. I finally finished and put my milk in my bag. Mission accomplished—but that really sucked. And I was going to need to pump again every two hours.

This process was so stressful because there was no designated women's restroom or lactation room—around 25% of fire stations in the OC do not have a dedicated women's restroom. I often think what would happen if you went to a restaurant, and there was no women's restroom. People would be outraged and there would be a lawsuit within the first week. But in the fire service, it is commonplace. Oftentimes, after fighting a fire, the women wait until the men finish showering to use the bathroom, marinating in carcinogens from the fire.

Gender discrimination in fire departments is evidenced by the structure of the stations themselves—no women's restrooms, no lactation room, and equipment and uniforms made for men's bodies. The fire station was not built with women in mind, because the assumption for decades has been that only men were firefighters. This remains true across the country: the U.S. Department of Labor reports that only 4% of firefighters are women. The statistic is even lower in the OC, where only 2% of firefighters are women. Even as women's participation in other male-dominated industries has seen a steady rise, firefighting has remained stagnant. This reflects a multitude of problems from recruitment and hiring, to discrimination and harassment, to the lack of spaces like women's restrooms and lactation rooms.

I decided that there had to be a better way. Firefighter mamas should be considered part of the fire family, too. I worked in collaboration with the ACLU SoCal to educate management on the applicable laws and the importance of creating designated lactation rooms and separate women's restrooms in all fire stations. OCFA authorized the building and designation of lactation rooms and women's restrooms in every fire station in the county, and I served as the auditor to guide the fire authority on how to achieve this goal.

Today, OCFA is one of the first fire departments in the country to put a lactation room in all 77 of its fire stations. We still have a long way to go to ensure that firefighting is a safe, healthy, and welcoming job for women, but building rooms for people to pump breastmilk is a huge step in the right direction.

Source: www.aclusocal.org/en/firefighter-mama

How to Effectively Support the LGBTQIA+ Community in a Society Filled with Hate

By Christel Reyna

As allies and supporters of the LGBTQIA+ community, it's our responsibility to stand up and advocate for equal rights and opportunities for those who identify themselves within this community. However, in a society that still struggles with accepting people who choose to live outside society's norms, this can be challenging, and in some cases, dangerous. The LGBTQIA+ community needs us, now more than ever, to stand up against hate and support those who may feel marginalized and vulnerable.

Let's discuss some effective ways on how you can support the LGBTQIA+ community and how you can be an active ally and promote equality.

Educate yourself: The first step in being a supportive ally is to educate yourself and understand the issues that affect the LGBTQIA+ community, especially Trans individuals. Start by reading, listening to, and watching content that centers around the voices of the LGBTQIA+ community. Take the initiative to learn more about transphobia and how it can negatively impact Trans people's lives.

Use your voice: Use your privilege and position of power to amplify the voices of those who are being silenced. Speak up when you hear someone making homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic comments or jokes. Don't be afraid to correct people and explain why these comments are hurtful and damaging. When you speak up, you help show others that this behavior is unacceptable and that there is a need for change.

Show up and support: Join local LGBTQIA+ events and organizations. Attend rallies, protests, and events that are advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights. Listen to the experiences of people who identify themselves within this community and show up for them. Additionally, make an effort to use their preferred name and pronouns or avoiding misgendering them.

Donate and support LGBTQIA+ community organizations: LGBTQIA+ communities face high levels of discrimination, harassment, and violence. One way to provide support is by donating to organizations dedicated to uplifting voices and putting forth efforts to encourage legislation to protect rights. These groups are working to promote policies and provide necessary services that the LGBTQIA+ community may need.

Vote for policies that promote equality: Supporting the LGBTQIA+ community may involve supporting policies that protect and promote their rights. Vote for politicians that support LGBTQIA+ rights and for policies that promote equality in healthcare, housing, education, and employment. When you vote, you're contributing to the creation of an inclusive society that uplifts and values all identities and orientations.

The fight for equality never ends, and allies and supporters can play an essential role in helping the LGBTQIA+ community feel safe, heard, and supported. By educating yourself and using your platform, attending events, and supporting organizations that promote inclusivity, advocating for equal rights, and donating, you're contributing to a society that accepts everyone and that celebrates diversity. Remember, standing up and supporting the LGBTQIA+ community is not an option but a responsibility for all of us who believe in love and equality.

**If you are or know
a transgender person who needs
but can't afford a
GENDER-AFFIRMING SURGERY**



**is now accepting grant applications
through August 15, 2023.**

To support their work, please visit:
<https://jimcollinsfoundation.org/donate/>

LGBTQIA+ Resource Guide

LGBTQ+ Center of Riverside County:
<https://www.rivcocenter.org/>

LGBTQ+ Support Riverside County

Free Peer Chat Website - Take My Hand:
<https://takemyhand.co/>

RUHS- Behavioral Health Consumer Affairs:
<http://www.rcdmh.org/ca> Phone: 951-955-7161

The Trevor Project:
<http://www.thetrevorproject.org> Phone: 866-488-7386

Trans Lifeline: <http://www.translifeline.org/>
Phone: 877-565-8860

TruEvolution: <http://www.truevolution.org/>
Phone: 951-888-1346

UCR LGBT Resource center: <https://out.ucr.edu/>

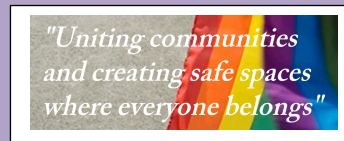
Mental Health

Eating Disorders: www.withinhealth.org Phone: 1866-523-2912

Sexual Abuse – www.helpingsurvivors.org

Drug Addiction -
<https://www.drugwatch.com/health/lgbtq/#mental-health-and-suicide>

C.A.S.A - Center Against Sexual Assault of
Southwest Riverside County www.swcasa.org
Phone: 951-652-8300 951-652-0944



Ally Organizations

PFLAG - Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays

PFLAG Riverside

<https://pflag.org/chapter/riverside/>
3847 Terracina Dr.
RIVERSIDE, CA 92506 (951) 500-6904
pflag_riversideca@yahoo.com

PFLAG Temecula Valley

Multiple Support Groups
1(877) 99-PFLAG (1.877.997.3524)
PHONE NUMBER: (951) 878-8052
MEETING ADDRESS: 41000 MAIN STREET, TEMECULA, CA 92590
MAILING ADDRESS: 40335, WINCHESTER RD E308, TEMECULA CA 92591
<http://pflagtemecula.org/>

PFLAG Palm Springs

<https://pflag.org/chapter/palm-springs-desert-communities/>
(760) 202-4430
info@pspflag.org

Equity on Fire

Support Lauren Andrade's Foundation in their mission To advocate for an all-inclusive Fire Service without systemic discrimination and harassment.

Donate: <https://equityonfire.org/>
Click to follow on Instagram:

