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TESTIMONY FROM BLACK TRANSGENDER YOUTH SHARED AT CITY COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED LGBTQ POLICE POLICY

NOPD AGREES TO MEET WITH LGBTQ YOUTH BEFORE ADOPTING LGBTQ POLICY

BreakOUT!, an organization dedicated to ending the criminalization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth presented at the New Orleans City Council Criminal Justice Subcommittee meeting today, October 24, 2012.

Courageous youth shared testimony on behalf of members who had been brutalized, targeted, and discriminated against by the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) and were afraid to attend. *BreakOUT!* also attempted to show their video, "We Deserve Better," which details the abuses of the NOPD and gives recommendations for reform. This video was also presented to the NOPD in January 2012 for use in trainings for all NOPD officers in response to a commitment from the NOPD to address brutality and targeting of the LGBTQ community, particularly Black transgender young women.

The Office of the Independent Police Monitor also presented at the meeting about their work with *BreakOUT!* and complaints received from *BreakOUT!*'s youth membership. Two representatives from the NOPD also presented.

In addition to providing the public and Councilmembers with stories documenting police violence, *BreakOUT!* also presented the NOPD with a model policy developed by members themselves. The policy, which is based on policies from other jurisdictions like Washington, D.C. and New York and references many sections of the proposed Consent Decree with the Department of Justice, outlines accountability measures to stop the ongoing abuses faced by the LGBTQ community.

Over 50 people and organizations submitted cards in support of the proposed policy, representing a wide variety of issues and interests, including several organizations that have been committed to criminal justice reform across the City. Organizations represented included members of the Orleans Parish Prison Reform Coalition, the Congress of Day Laborers, Safe Streets Strong Communities, STAND With Dignity, Voice of the Ex-Offender, the Women's Health and Justice Initiative, the New Orleans LGBT Community Center, and INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence. People who spoke in support of the policy included Norris Henderson, Santos Alvarado, and Tulane professor Red Tremmel.

Although Police Superintendent Ronal Serpas did not attend the meeting despite *BreakOUT!*'s invitation, NOPD representatives publicly agreed to meet with *BreakOUT!* prior to adopting any LGBTQ policy.

"Young Black transgirls...are targeted simply by how they are dressed. But what is more disturbing is that they are targeted because walking down the street while being young, Black and transgender is considered a crime." -*BreakOUT!* Member "Anna"