



# HOW TO CELEBRATE TRANSGENDER EMPLOYEES ON TDOV AND YEAR-ROUND

MARCH 2021

**“Cultivating cultures of belonging requires consistent care, attention, and support. The reward is a thriving environment where everyone can flourish and great work can be done. On TDOV – and every day, we celebrate the lives and accomplishments of the transgender and gender non-conforming community.”**

- Erin Uritus, CEO, Out & Equal





# OVERVIEW

March 31st is the International Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV). **Founded in 2009** by US-based advocate, Rachel Crandall, TDOV serves as a counterbalance to the annual November mourning of those oppressed and lost to anti-transgender bias and violence, **Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR)**. Prior to TDOV's creation, TDOR was the only day of awareness serving to recognize the transgender community.

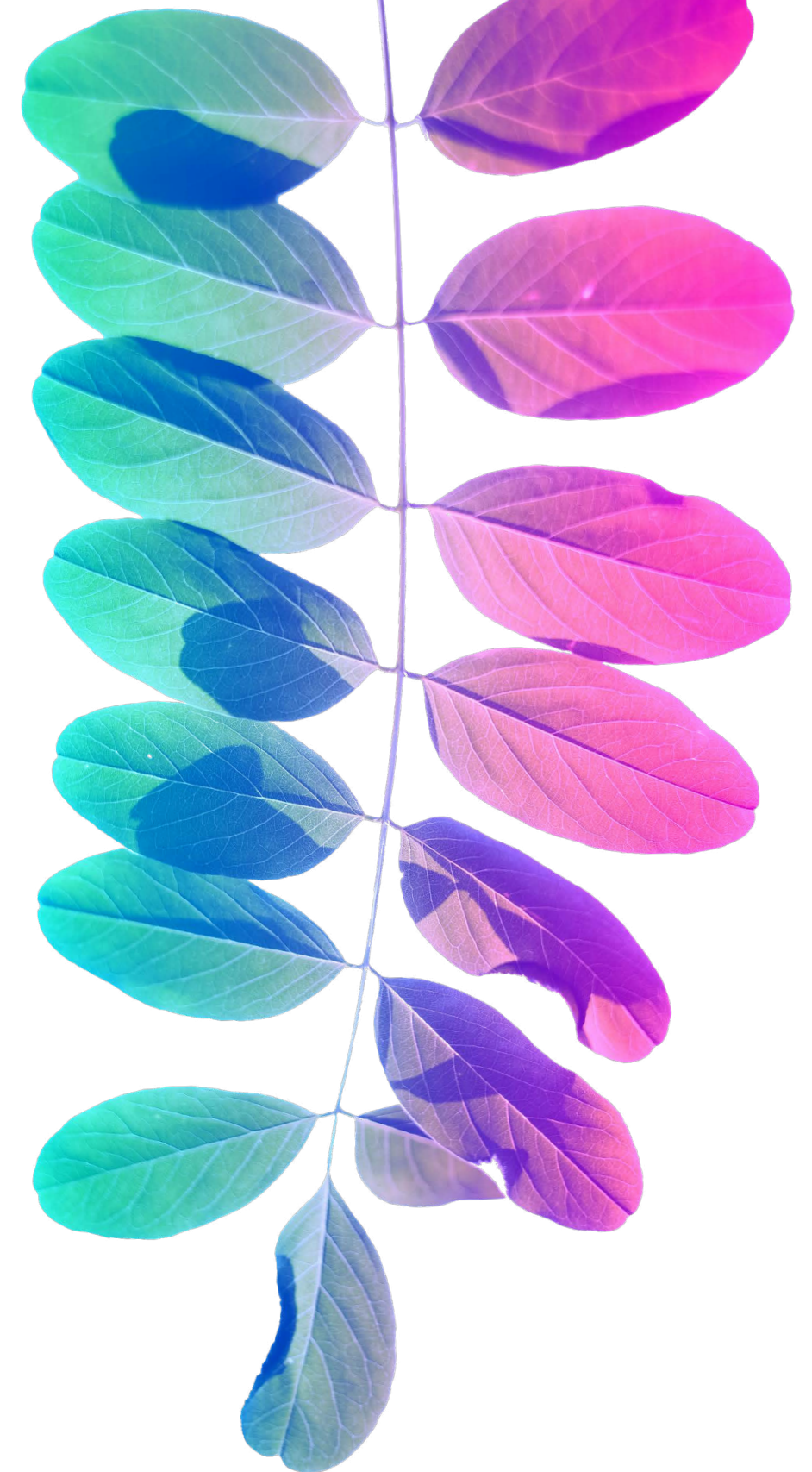
While honoring the lives lost to anti-transgender bias and violence continues to be deeply important, Crandall expressed the added need for a day of concerted celebration for the transgender and gender non-conforming community. TDOV was established to celebrate the accomplishments of transgender and gender non-conforming (transgender/GNC) individuals, create a moment of visibility, raise awareness of the discrimination faced by the community across the globe, and inspire action towards progress.

Visibility—in the workplace and beyond—plays a key role in shaping the narrative that individuals can be both successful and their authentic selves simultaneously.

**“Visibility sends the powerful message: You belong here. You can make it, because I made it, too.”** — O&E CEO Erin Uritus

For transgender/GNC individuals, TDOV is an opportunity to shape this narrative and share their own stories—stories which shed light on the diverse transgender community, on its worthiness of dignity, and on the fact that transgender/GNC people continue to **thrive** despite daily stigma and a society which too often tells them that they don't belong.

**Please note:** The language used to describe this community is fluid. While we're using “transgender and gender non-conforming” throughout this document, it bears mention that in many circumstances, including many locations outside of the United States, these terms may not encompass the full range of identities and in some places the term “gender diverse” is more common.



# THE FACTS

The Williams Institute currently estimates that there are nearly 1.4 million transgender people living in the United States. However, it is difficult to accurately measure the size of the transgender/GNC community because most federal records, like the US Census for example, do not collect comprehensive data on gender identity. Because of this and the continued existence of stigma around transgender identity, current metrics can conflict and likely underestimate the true count of transgender/GNC individuals in the country. For example, according to GLAAD's 2017 Accelerating Acceptance report, **upwards of 3% of the US population is transgender.**

What research does concretely indicate is that younger generations identify as transgender/GNC at higher rates than older generations.

## **12% of Millennials identify as transgender/GNC**

which is double the percentage of those who identify as transgender/GNC in Generation X. As younger generations demonstrate a higher level of familiarity and comfort level with gender-neutral terms, US society as a whole has increasingly embraced the transgender/GNC community.



A 2019 study by Ipsos found that

**nearly half of Americans see gender on a spectrum rather than as a binary**

and a full sixth of respondents know someone who is transgender.

Millennials—members of a generation marked by open-mindedness, inclusive values, and higher rates of LGBTQ identity—now represent the largest share of the US labor force, while members of Generation Z are poised to be the most diverse and gender-fluid generation yet.

Paralleling broader increased societal support of, and familiarity with the transgender community in the US, recent studies demonstrate higher levels of support for transgender/GNC inclusivity in the workplace.

**A 2018 Harris Poll survey commissioned by Out & Equal and Witeck Communications** found that 74% of respondents believe that employers should learn and use employees' pronouns and chosen names\* in the workplace. Furthermore, 65% of respondents agree that employers should intervene when an employee regularly misuses a co-worker's pronouns and chosen name, while 58% believe that regular misuse is a form of workplace harassment.

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*\*Many transgender/GNC individuals choose to go by a name that is different than the name given to them at birth. A chosen name may be different than the name indicated on official records.*



## TRANSGENDER VISIBILITY AND BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

For employers, TDOV presents a vital opportunity to engage employees and the community in conversations and programming elevating transgender stories, demonstrating support for the community, and raising awareness of the key issues faced by transgender/GNC individuals in the workplace.

Over the years, businesses have increasingly aimed to support and elevate the transgender community in both internal and external operations. In 2019, **over 200 major companies** filed an amicus brief in support of sexual orientation and gender identity nondiscrimination protections for workers. **In response to the Trump Administration's attempt to erase transgender non-discrimination protections in 2018, nearly 180 businesses** joined the **Business Statement for Transgender Equality**, a coalition established to rebuke the Administration's anti-trans actions and to call for full equality for transgender/GNC individuals.

In addition to campaigns like these, businesses across the globe continue to take important steps to ensure their workplace culture, policies, and procedures instill a sense of belonging in their transgender/GNC employees. In fact, **The Human Rights Campaign's 2021 Corporate Equality Index (CEI)** reveals that 94% of Fortune 500 employers include gender identity as a protected characteristic in non-discrimination policies. Additionally, out of the 1,142 businesses that participated in the 2021 CEI, 91% of them have transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits and over half have adopted gender transition guidelines for employees.



**In advance of International Transgender Day of Visibility, we are elevating five actions employers can take to support transgender/GNC community members. It is most meaningful when these actions are engaged in year-round and not only on this date:**



- 1. ENSURE YOUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REFLECT YOUR VALUES**
- 2. UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUR TRANSGENDER/GNC COLLEAGUES**
- 3. INVEST IN TRANSGENDER/GNC LEADERSHIP**
- 4. ELEVATE THE TRANSGENDER/GNC COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR**
- 5. VOICE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE TRANSGENDER/GNC COMMUNITY**

# 1. ENSURE YOUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REFLECT YOUR VALUES

One of the very first steps in the journey to support transgender/GNC inclusion is to ensure that foundational elements within your company reflect values of inclusion. Here is a simple checklist to ensure your company meets baseline standards for transgender/GNC inclusion on a policy and procedural level:

- **Include “gender identity and expression” in the list of protected characteristics** in your company’s non-discrimination protections and in your company’s anti-harassment policies. After the landmark Supreme Court ruling last summer, employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity is now illegal in every state in the country.
- **Provide LGBTQ cultural competency training** which increases your staff’s understanding of gender identity and expression, issues affecting transgender/GNC employees, and how to demonstrate respect towards the community.
- **Have a comprehensive policy and gender transition guidelines in place for transitioning employees and guidance for their managers.**
- **Use the name and pronouns** indicated by your transgender/GNC employees and ensure there are mechanisms in place to recognize this on all administrative records.
- **Include pronouns in email signatures** and introduce yourself with your own pronouns to promote greater cultural awareness and inclusivity.
- **Examine and update existing documents, policies, and procedures** to remove gender-specific language and/or include options beyond male and female. This includes expanding options for self-identifying sexual orientation and gender identity on internal forms and surveys.
- **Provide gender-neutral restrooms and/or single stall restrooms** to ensure gender non-conforming people have access to facilities.
- **Allow employees to access the gender-segregated facilities** corresponding to the gender with which they identify.
- **Provide healthcare coverage that is inclusive of transgender/GNC employees.**

These are just a few of the ways your company can build a foundation of transgender/GNC inclusivity in the workplace. For additional recommendations, contact Out & Equal at [hello@outandequal.org](mailto:hello@outandequal.org).



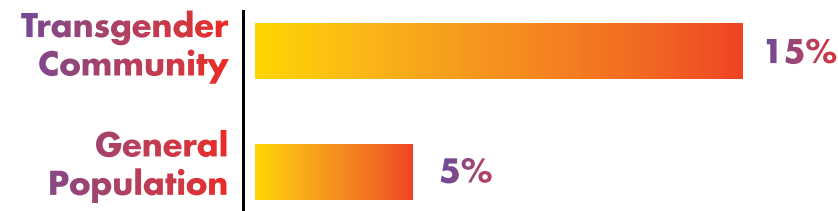
# 2. UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUR TRANSGENDER/GNC COLLEAGUES

In order to support and elevate transgender/GNC voices, it is important to possess an awareness of the issues faced by the community.

Continued stigma creates significant barriers to employment itself—the **unemployment rate for the transgender community is 15% compared to 5% of the general population**. Furthermore, according to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, **30% of transgender employees who held a job in the last year reported being fired**, subjected to harassment, or denied a promotion due to their gender identity.

Anti-LGBTQ state legislatures continue to rapidly push forward bills targeting transgender/GNC people. In **29 states, there are no laws protecting people from discrimination** on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in many key areas of life. Moreover, advocates are currently tracking over 200 state bills targeting LGBTQ Americans, and - especially transgender youth. These bills ban transgender youth from participating in sports, stop doctors from providing gender affirmation treatment, or otherwise target this community.

### US Unemployment Rate



**30%**  
**OF TRANSGENDER  
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Fortunately, there has been progress as well. In 2020, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. This means that employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity is illegal in every state in the country for the first time in history. However, the LGBTQ community still lacks federal civil rights protections in housing, public accommodations, credit, education, federally funded programs, and more.

The bill that would provide those protections, the Equality Act, is closer than ever to becoming law. In February 2021, the House of Representatives passed the Equality Act with bipartisan support and the Senate is expected to vote on the bill in the coming months. If passed in the Senate, President Biden has already pledged to sign the Equality Act into law. Broad support for the bill continues to build as **more than 380 major companies** now support the Equality Act.

The cultural landscape is also changing. Recent polls show that **7 in 10 Americans support** nondiscrimination protections for the LGBTQ community – across party lines, religious affiliation, location, and more. Additionally, **83% of all voters** support President Biden’s executive actions prohibiting workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.



Given the evolving state of LGBTQ workplace equality, it is important for employers to support consistent awareness of the legal landscape and issues faced by transgender/GNC employees by regularly reviewing and updating trainings, educational materials, and employee handbooks—especially for hiring managers, customer/client-facing staff, and supervisors.



### 3. INVEST IN TRANSGENDER/GNC LEADERSHIP

Employers can continue to celebrate and recognize the transgender community year-round by considering the ways they can support and develop transgender/GNC leadership. Due to persistent stigma, transgender/GNC employees are often denied promotion or leadership opportunities. In fact, **according to the 2015 US Transgender Survey**, 49% of the individuals who were denied a promotion believed that this was explicitly due to their gender identity or expression while 77% of all respondents went to great lengths to avoid discrimination in the workplace, including refraining from seeking a promotion or raise. Companies should ensure that they are not only protecting their transgender/GNC employees from discrimination but are also promoting professional growth and cultivating the transgender/GNC leaders within the organization.

Focused support, professional development, and mentorship opportunities are just a few of the ways in which employers can ensure transgender/GNC employees are represented in senior leadership positions.



Employee resource groups can be effective mechanisms to facilitate mentorship programs that pair senior employees with junior employees in order to expand leadership opportunities. **Reverse mentoring** also provides useful opportunities for junior LGBTQ staff members to engage with more senior staff. The goal of reverse mentoring is to help senior staff to better understand barriers faced by LGBTQ employees in the workplace and beyond. As a whole, mentorship programs promote visibility, leadership skills, and new relationships and opportunities for staff.



## 4. ELEVATE THE TRANSGENDER/ GNC COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

It is important to cultivate a workplace culture that values and embraces authenticity while encouraging an intersectional appreciation of all team members. By highlighting transgender/GNC narratives in programming and communications throughout the year, companies can continue to build awareness of the issues faced by transgender/GNC individuals, as well as instill a sense of belonging.

### **Here are a few examples of these tactics:**

- Regularly highlight transgender/GNC issues in ERG programming, particularly those concerning transgender/GNC people of color.
- Partner with and support local transgender/GNC-led organizations on events and community initiatives.
- Tell transgender stories in internal and external media campaigns and initiatives.
- Disseminate internal messaging from senior leadership that asserts the importance of transgender inclusion and recognizes the contributions of transgender community.

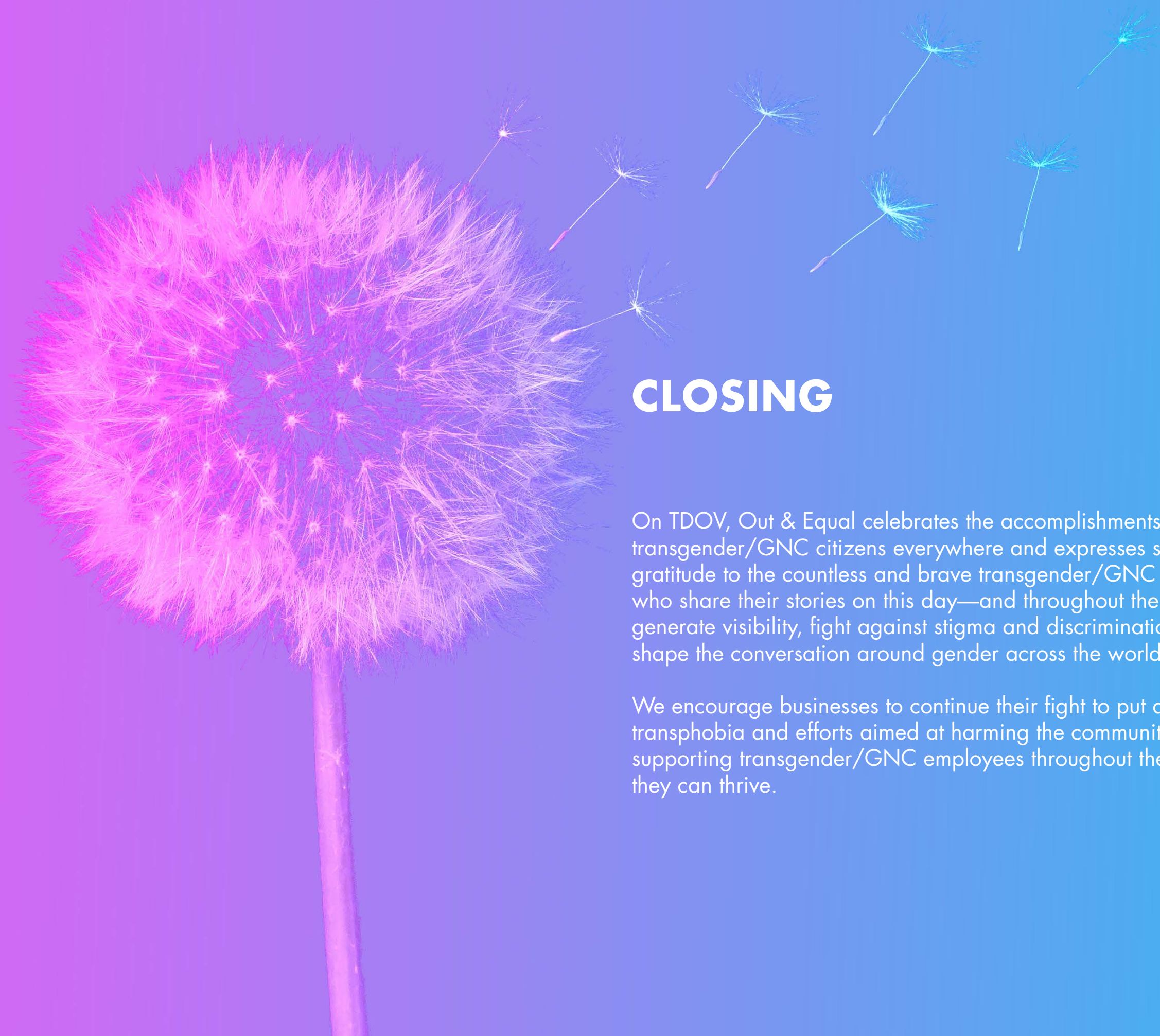


## 5. VOICE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE TRANSGENDER/GNC COMMUNITY

Because opposition to transgender/GNC inclusion is an ever-present reality, opportunities regularly surface for companies to voice their support for the transgender/GNC community throughout the year. This is especially true when public policy issues arise on the federal, state, and local level.

Employers can voice support of the transgender/GNC community by making public statements, signing onto amicus briefs on legal cases concerning LGBTQ issues, and joining important initiatives like the **Business Statement for Transgender Equality**. For example, **more than 200 major corporations signed a “friend of the court” brief in support of LGBTQ workers**, which was filed with the US Supreme Court in the successful case that established federal workplace nondiscrimination protections based on gender identity and sexual orientation. Efforts like these play a key role in shaping the national discussion around transgender inclusion and can ensure your transgender/GNC employees feel supported at work.





## CLOSING

On TDOV, Out & Equal celebrates the accomplishments of transgender/GNC citizens everywhere and expresses sincere gratitude to the countless and brave transgender/GNC advocates who share their stories on this day—and throughout the year—to generate visibility, fight against stigma and discrimination, and shape the conversation around gender across the world.

We encourage businesses to continue their fight to put an end to transphobia and efforts aimed at harming the community, while supporting transgender/GNC employees throughout the year so that they can thrive.



# OUT & EQUAL'S TDOV SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

Use the graphics and language below as a starting point for your social media engagement on TDOV.

## Sample Language for Social Media

"On this #TransDayOfVisibility, [company name] celebrates the bravery and resilience of our transgender and gender non-conforming employees, customers and the entire transgender community. At our company, we value full inclusion, belonging and LGBTQ equality for everyone. #TDOV"

"Today, [company name] stands with the transgender community for #TransDayOfVisibility. [company name] encourages our employees to bring their full selves to work every day and celebrate the diversity that makes us who we are. #TDOV"

"Today, [company name] stands with the transgender community for #TransDayofVisilibility. Transgender and gender non-conforming people belong in the workplace, they are here and they are thriving. #TDOV"

## Hashtags

#TDOV - #TransDayOfVisibility - #WontBeErased - #ProtectTransKids - #TransRightsAreHumanRights - #WhatsYourPronoun



# SOCIAL GRAPHICS







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