



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jessica Ramos

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JESSICA RAMOS March 17, 2022

| ISSUE: **TGNC WELLNESS & EQUITY FUND**

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### **Transgender advocates, allies and elected officials held a Rally at Diversity Plaza to call on Albany to establish a \$15 Million Dollar Statewide Transgender Wellness and Equity Fund in the FY2023 Budget**

*Queens, NY* - Building on a historic \$1 million dollar allocation in the Senate One House budget, a coalition of Transgender advocates, allies and elected officials advocated for a fully funded statewide Transgender Wellness and Equity Fund. Following in the footsteps of California's \$13 million dollar fund, the NYS Transgender Wellness and Equity Fund will uproot decades of unequal distribution of funding by investing in trans-specific, affirming, and competent services.

The Transgender Wellness and Equity Fund will enable an unprecedented investment in New York's Transgender and gender expansive communities – providing tailored services, expanding organizational capacities, and resourcing tangible initiatives geared towards empowering the Transgender and Gender Nonbinary community and improving our health and wellness outcomes. A 2018 report by Funders for LGBTQ Issues, found that the TGNC community only receives \$.04 of every \$100 awarded to LGBTQ causes.

Meanwhile, the economic crisis precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic has had an especially adverse impact on Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming (TGNC) individuals who were already struggling before the pandemic. What is more, racism, transphobia, and xenophobia are public health crises that continue to deepen economic disparities among our communities and perpetuate cycles of criminalization, unemployment, mental and physical health disparities and homelessness. A report by the National Center for Transgender Equality conducted in 2015, found that 18% of Transgender respondents in New York, were unemployed and 37% were living in poverty.

“Our TGNC community is being attacked nationwide. They are often the first to experience discrimination resulting in homelessness, lack of proper healthcare, and workplace harassment. Yet, by the time current funding makes it to the groups providing services, it is woefully insufficient. It’s time for New York State to prioritize funding specifically for the needs of TGNC folks and create a dedicated fund to service their needs,” **said Assemblymember Catalina Cruz.**

“Across systems and issues, we see the disparities that exist for our transgender and gender non-conforming community. While I am glad that we have appropriated money in our budget resolutions for LGBT services and programming it is time that we prioritize the T in the LGBT community. Transgender New Yorkers deserve a separate allocation of resources that is for them and decided by them. We urge our leadership to include a \$15 million allocation for a Transgender Equity and Wellness Fund in the enacted state budget,” **said Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas.**

“As states across the country pass laws that make trans people and their families less safe, New York State can use this budget to reject that bigotry. Investing in the TGNC Wellness & Equity Fund is a commitment that puts a dollar amount to our values and recognizes that TGNC people are the experts in building their own solutions. We were able to get \$1 million in the Senate one-house budget, which is historic, but still insufficient. I urge our leaders to expand the funding” **said State Senator Jessica Ramos (D, WF - SD13).**

“It’s unfortunate that the State would invest \$1 Billion dollars in a stadium and another \$1 billion for potholes, yet transgender New Yorkers and Trans serving organizations continue to fight for crumbs. During this Transgender History Month, we’re asking our leaders in Albany to end the decades of disinvestment and invest in us now,” **said Elisa Crespo, Executive Director of the NEW Pride Agenda.**

“We call on our Governor and State legislators to ensure that this year’s budget dollars are allocated to support a TGNC Wellness & Equity Fund. We are at a pivotal and dangerous moment in our country, and New York state has the opportunity to send an important message about who we are and what we value. Uplifting TGNC people by providing the opportunity for more life-saving, affirming resources and services through a dedicated fund would demonstrate a commitment to supporting thousands of New Yorkers,” **said Trevon Mayers, Senior Director of Advocacy & Community Engagement, The LGBT Community Center.**

“For a state that is the birthplace of the LGBTQ Rights movement, establishing a fund to protect our most vulnerable New Yorkers is the right thing to do, at the right time. With anti-trans legislation being introduced in statehouses across the country, New York once again must lead by example,” **said Sean Coleman, Executive Director of Destination Tomorrow.**

“The time is now. New York state has the most progressive diverse law makers in its history. A pledge to save black and brown TGNC lives with equity, resources and opportunities gives us hope to live another day,” **said TS Candii, Executive Director of Black Trans Nation.**