

# Who we are

We are a group of transgender people seeking to create a world in which all of us are free from imprisonment, police violence, racism, and poverty. We do this by building and strengthening community between those of us on the inside and those of us on the outside. Through this newsletter, we aim to support the members of our community who are locked up by sharing resources and information and showcasing our creativity and resilience.

We want your contributions! Please submit artwork, stories about your experiences, complaints, ideas for change, commissary, poetry, thoughts on resources or articles you'd like to see published, anything

**DMV Trans Newsletter**  
**1414 North Capitol St. NW**  
**Washington, DC 20002**

If you want to contribute please include exactly how you want to be credited (if you want to be anonymous or not, or use a nickname, whether it's OK to say the facility you are/were in). Your legal name and ID number will never be used. If you want to subscribe, please also send a letter asking for subscriptions!

# DMV Trans Circulator

Issue 3

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# Legal Updates

We at the DMV Trans Circulator want to send our congratulations to Ophelia De'lonta a correspondent and contributor of ours in Virginia! On Monday, January 28th, Ms. De'lonta won her appeal in her lawsuit against the Virginia Department of Corrections (VDOC). Ms. De'lonta filed suit against the VDOC claiming that prison officials denied her adequate medical treatment in violation of the Eighth Amendment when they refused to allow her to be evaluated for sex reassignment surgery.

After winning her 1999 case against VDOC for refusing to treat her Gender Identity Disorder, Ms. De'lonta was provided with access to hormones and psychological counseling. However since then, she has continuously filed grievances notifying officials of her extreme distress with her treatment team and her imminent urge to self-castrate. In July 2010, Ms. De'lonta was hospitalized following a self-castration attempt. In 2011, De'lonta filed suit against Gene Johnson, the former director of VDOC, as well as numerous VDOC administrators and members of her care team. De'lonta's complaint alleges that, in light of their knowledge of her ongoing risk of self-mutilation, officials' continued denial of consideration for sex reassignment surgery constitutes deliberate indifference to her serious medical need in violation of the Eighth Amendment.

This suit was originally dismissed by the district court, but that decision was overturned by the appeals court January 28th and now Ms. De'lonta can go forward with her case against VDOC. The success of this appeal sets a precedent that prison officials

## Basic Rights Behind Bars

1. Protected from cruel and unusual punishment
2. Free from sexual harassment, abuse, and/or other sex crimes
3. Access to the courts to complain about the prison system/treatment of inmates
4. Medical and mental health care
5. Protections granted under the Americans with Disabilities Act
6. Free from racial segregation unless "necessary" for safety

These are your basic rights behind bars. We want to make sure that you are, at least, having these met. If you feel like these are not being met, please write to us and tell us what is happening/what has happened. We will do everything we can to help you. We are not lawyers, but we do have resources and want to be able to use them.

# Brandi's Bulletin

Being a trans woman does not mean that you are a sexual object. I have been given this opportunity to have a column in this very special to my heart project. My plan is to reach out and encourage you girls and guys as much as I can.

The one thing that I've learned by living the life of a proud trans woman is that there is a very strong disconnect of emotions when it comes to love. There was a time that I thought love was pain. I've put all of my love in all the wrong places and it always turned out to hurt me in a very bad way.

I thought that love equaled sex. How stupid was I.... I think that there is a point where we as women confuse the two, so I had to teach myself that I am not an object and that's that.

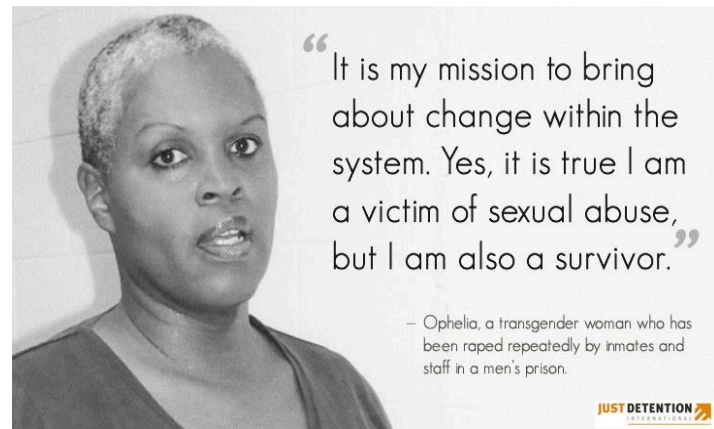
I will not say that it's easy, because I am as human as anyone else and I have the same desires as most people—if not more. It has been so hard for me to cut myself off from those emotions. I find myself being very single in the sense of not being physically connected to anyone. I must tell you that this is not easy, but it's my struggle and I want to use this column to share it with you.

I refuse to be used!

*Brandi's Bulletin is a regular column by one of our founders, Brandi, a self-identified black trans woman.*

cannot arbitrarily refuse to consider sex reassignment surgery for transgender people who are incarcerated. This is a huge victory in the long fight for the rights of transgender prisoners to receive adequate medical care!!

Ms. De'lonta is representing herself in this case and we applaud her for her tireless efforts on behalf of herself and the progress she is making for all transgender people behind bars!! Have any questions about the case or for Ophelia?? Send them our way and we'll send them along to her and publish responses in our newsletter!



We are happy to say that we've received **many** letters this month. We are *not* ignoring you! Responses will be included in *next* month's newsletter! If you have any questions, let us know, but please do not think you are forgotten here!

# What's Goin' on?

This past fall, there have been five different billboards displayed around DC featuring transgender identified individuals, in a campaign called “Transgender and Gender Identity Respect.” All the people in the ads are transgender community members in DC, people of different races, and different identities—there are trans women, trans men, and people who identify as neither. The ads came in response to the violence the transgender community faces in DC and the goal of the billboard campaign to lessen and eventually end that discrimination, by showing that in many cases transgender people are just like everyone else. In this ad, a transgender man says that he “loves the Wharf, listening to jazz at Westminster Church, and playing basketball with other guys.” However, a lot of trans folks say that the Office of Human Rights, which put out this ad, doesn’t actually do anything to address reported incidents of discrimination and violence against trans people. Because of this, some transgender people feel that the billboards don’t represent progress as much as an attempt by the Office of Human Rights to falsely portray D.C. as a trans friendly city without actually doing anything to change its discriminatory policies. For example, the ads don’t address the hardships we face in government offices when we apply for welfare or at the hands of the police when we are targeted for “walking while trans,” and locked up. So some people believe this campaign is just a way to mask the city’s abuse and violence against trans people. That said, some of us still love to see

ourselves represented when we ride public transportation in this city!!

**What do you think? Do you think this is a good thing for DC? Bad thing? We’d love to hear your thoughts!**



Show your support! Spread word of the #TransRespect campaign by photographing this ad and sharing on Twitter.

