

The Grapevine: A Southern Trans Report Explores Transgender Experiences in the South

By
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ATLANTA, GA, May 14, 2019 – Today, Transgender Law Center and Southerners On New Ground (SONG), through their joint TLC@SONG program, released the findings of their 2017 survey of transgender, nonbinary and gender nonconforming (TGNC) Southerners. [*The Grapevine: A Southern Trans Report*](#) paints a stark picture of the challenges facing TGNC folks, as well as the creativity, generosity, and resilience sustaining these communities. TGNC people experience high rates of discrimination and violence and have long been lacking in the resources, scholarship, and research to combat these issues.

“As a Black trans woman in the South, I’m personally all too familiar with the findings laid out today,” said Kayla Gore, the Southern Regional Organizer for TLC@SONG. “The one constant through the widespread discrimination we face is our ability to support and rely on each other, which is why it’s incredibly powerful to have data created by and for trans and gender nonconforming people living in the South. Trans Southerners like me can use the Grapevine Report as proof of our lived experiences as we advocate for the resources, services, and solutions our communities need.”

The report details findings from the Grapevine Survey, conducted throughout 2017, of 135 TGNC people across thirteen Southern states. Challenges with health care emerged as a core common experience, tied to issues of violence and economic conditions. In the words of one respondent from New Orleans, Louisiana, “I cannot stress more how important and nonexistent basic health care is.” Issues of incarceration, police violence, deportation, and detention also ranked as high priorities for respondents. 52 percent of participants of color reported experiencing high levels of violence by law enforcement. 72 percent of respondents reported an income of \$45,000 or less, and the combination of violence, economic instability, and inaccessibility of health care create dire circumstances for trans Southerners.

When asked about everyday resistance, respondents’ reliance on other trans people and ties to trans community shone through as a sustaining aspect of Southern trans life. This points to a clear path for effecting change: directly supporting the leadership and resilience of TGNC Southerners.

The Grapevine: A Southern Trans Report can be accessed here: <https://transgenderlawcenter.org/grapevine>.

Transgender Law Center (TLC) is the largest national trans-led organization advocating self-determination for all people. Grounded in legal expertise and committed to racial justice, TLC employs a variety of community-driven strategies to keep transgender and gender nonconforming people alive, thriving, and fighting for liberation. transgenderlawcenter.org

Southerners on New Ground (SONG) is a regional Queer Liberation organization made up of Black people, people of color, immigrants, undocumented people, people with disabilities, working class and rural and small town, LGBTQ people in the South. We believe that we are bound together by a shared desire for ourselves, each other, and our communities to survive and thrive. We believe that Community Organizing is the best way for us to build collective power and transform the South.