



Black and Brown

WORKERS COLLECTIVE

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This is a formal response from the Black and Brown Workers Collective to the letter addressing demands from the office of LGBT Affairs and the director of that office Nellie Fitzpatrick.

Dear Nellie Fitzpatrick,

While we appreciate the acknowledgement of our work and the ways that it has and is continuing to inform governmental bodies, this was not the purpose of our action. It was in community with the People. Nellie, your record speaks for itself. You have consistently missed the mark when it comes to serving the needs of Black and Brown *LGBTQ* community members in the gayborhood. Your office's response comes at an opportune time as you are releasing this statement after Darryl DePiano, owner of **Icandy** was caught on audio using the n-word. The reality is it took a white gay man using the n-word for you to move swiftly in action. With that in mind, we would like to respond to your letter.

First, we are going to respond to your denial to compensate community members who advise the office of *LGBTQ* Affairs on issues of racism in the gayborhood. We are not asking for an explanation for why things exist as they currently exist. We are demanding that a change be made in how things currently stand to provide the necessary support and respect for Black and Brown labor. The same labor this country was built upon and continues to profit from. Your gratitude for the labor that is provided to you does nothing to better the racial inequities that exist in the office of *LGBTQ* Affairs and in the broader community. Your gratitude does nothing to change the quality of life for Black and Brown *LGBTQ* people. Thus, we maintain our originally stated demand, "that the office of *LGBTQ* Affairs compensate Black and Brown *LGBTQIA* community members who are advising the office on issues of racism in the gayborhood." That is our stated final position.

Acts of Black and Brown resistance to oppression does not ask for acknowledgement from allies. Accolades from you or your office does not stop anti-blackness from perpetuating itself. Intentional dismantling of oppressive systems does.

Your anti-Black failures have been (to name a few):

- Supporting the invitation of an *LGBTQ* police organization to be Grand Marshal at Philadelphia Pride
- Failure to name intersectionality and anti-blackness in *LGBTQ* spaces until now
- Advocacy for white community members from your office has been stellar, while your advocacy for Black and Brown community has been less than adequate
- Failure to engage Black and Brown *LGBTQ* youth, who are most impacted by issues of oppression in the gayborhood

Your ability to redirect the responsibility for your position as *LGBTQ* Community Liaison to Black and Brown *LGBTQ* people further highlights one of the most effective ways to maintain white supremacy--the refusal to be accountable. The hard truth is that you are no different from Darryl DePiano, owner of **lcandy**. The only difference is that his implicit biases became overt and got caught on audio recording. Yours exists right below the surface. So, no we will not be directing our call for accountability to Philly Black Pride. The burden of accountability rests with you. While we have read your letter in its entirety, as Black and Brown *LGBTQ* people our expertise--which is rooted in our lived experiences--dictate that you are simply upholding the status quo.

Nellie, you need to resign from your position and therefore create space for someone who can engage the community around transformative intersectional work towards disrupting cycles of oppression.

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