



## **Statement from Washington State LGBTQ Commission on Protests and Arrests at Cal Anderson Park in Seattle, WA**

Olympia, WA, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 - On Saturday, May 24th, at Cal Anderson Park in Seattle, Washington, a notoriously hateful group was permitted by the City of Seattle's Parks and Recreation Department to hold a rally focused on promoting anti-2SLGBTQIA+ ideology. The rally was met by counterprotestors who showed up to stand in support of themselves and their 2SLGBTQIA+ siblings and community members. By the end of the day, 23 individuals were arrested, with videos and images posted on social media of Seattle Police Department (SPD) engaging in various escalation tactics to control counterprotestors and 2SLGBTQIA+ community members alleging violence at the hands of the police.

The Washington State LGBTQ Commission recognizes the pain, fear, and outrage many are feeling in the wake of this incident. We are deeply concerned by the tactics of intimidation targeting queer and trans communities, both from the initial event that was permitted to occur at the park and from SPD's handling of 2SLGBTQIA+ counterprotestors. Anti-2SLGBTQIA+ mobilization and political violence has tripled since 2020 and continues to rise, according to ACLED data.<sup>1</sup> Public spaces, and certainly those with such vibrant 2SLGBTQIA+ history like Cal Anderson Park, must remain safe for all Washingtonians – especially those whose identities are under attack.

The historical context in which SPD chose to take these actions must be examined. There has long-been discrimination towards the 2SLGBTQIA+ community coming from law enforcement. According to the Williams Institute, 6% of LGBQ people report being stopped by the police in a public space, compared to 1% of the general population; many of these encounters are documented in places like parks.<sup>2</sup>

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These disparities were made starkly visible this past weekend, as 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals were disproportionately policed during the protest at Cal Anderson Park. This incident, occurring just one day before the fifth anniversary of George Floyd's murder, underscores the urgency of addressing systemic patterns of policing that disproportionately impact 2SLGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities.

While, as a state-level Commission, we do not oversee or advise city-level responses, we stand firmly with the Seattle LGBTQ Commission in their call for an independent investigation into SPD's use of force as well as a review of Seattle Parks and Recreation permitting policies. As the most populated city in Washington, Seattle often acts as a beacon and example for other cities in the state to follow - we expect and insist that the City of Seattle understands this responsibility and will put the safety of their communities first. We stand with 2SLGBTQIA+ Seattleites and affirm their right to exist, to gather, and to live without fear. We call on all levels of government to center safety, uphold human dignity, and reject efforts to sow fear or division.

*"What happened at Cal Anderson Park was a violent failure of the public. The Seattle Police Department chose to protect hate and punish those who showed up for community care. Pride began with people who were criminalized for defending their right to exist. That spirit continues today. I urge King County residents to demand real accountability, support grassroots safety efforts, and make it clear that there is no place for state-sanctioned violence against 2SLGBTQIA+ people."*

*- Commissioner Ebo Barton (Seattle)*

In solidarity,  
Washington State LGBTQ Commission



1. <https://acleddata.com/2022/11/23/update-fact-sheet-anti-lgbt-mobilization-in-the-united-states/>
2. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/policing-lgbq-people/>