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San Francisco to declare country's first Queer and Transgender Asian and Pacific Islanders (QTAPI) Week May 22nd-May 29th

San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously approves resolution by Supervisor Rafael Mandelman supporting the Queer and Trans API community amid a spate of anti-AAPI violence

SAN FRANCISCO — San Francisco became the first city in the country to honor the Queer and Trans API (QTAPI) community with a designated week of celebration and recognition on Tuesday when the San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution by District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman to declare the week of May 22nd through May 29th, 2021 as Queer and Transgender Asian and Pacific Islanders week in San Francisco.

“QTAPI San Franciscans have been shattering glass ceilings and bettering our city for a long time,” said Mandelman who is the only LGBTQ+ member of the Board of Supervisors and represents the Castro District. “Amid a spate of heinous anti-AAPI attacks in San Francisco and around the United States, and with state legislatures across the country targeting the LGBTQ+ community, this will send a strong message of support and solidarity to QTAPI people everywhere. Thank you to the Bay Area QTAPI Coalition for all of their work to create the first ever QTAPI Week here in San Francisco.”

The Bay Area QTAPI Coalition formed in 2017, when Miss GAPA 2016 Juicy Liu saw a need to celebrate Queer identity and bring visibility to QTAPI's during one of the most important times of the year in many Asian cultures, the Lunar New Year. The Coalition's first event, *Enter the Rooster*, was held at Strut in the Castro to celebrate 2017's Year of the Rooster and was followed up in 2018 with *New Year, New Tricks* at Oasis, *When Pigs Fly Over The Moon* at Salesforce Tower in 2019, *Leaping Rats, Hidden Histories* at Origin Night Club in 2020, and *Ox Talks* on Zoom in 2021. This working coalition of many QTAPI organizers and community organizations recognizes their interdependence, collective strength, and power in unity.

In response to the murder of six Asian women in three massage parlors in Atlanta on March 16, 2021, the Bay Area QTAPI coalition mobilized thousands of people for two direct actions – Castro to Chinatown: an LGBTQ+ Solidarity March and Rally Against AAAP hate. The Bay Area QTAPI Coalition conceived of QTAPI Week to celebrate their diversity and strength as a coalition, individually organizing supportive spaces that are not luxury items, but essential spaces for survival. QTAPIs expand these spaces from virtual to in person, and through the formal recognition of QTAPI Week, the coalition celebrates its power.

“Growing up in Plano, Texas, I rarely saw anyone Queer or Trans and Asian or Pacific Islander (QTAPI),” said Michael Nguyen, lead Organizer of QTAPI Week, Chair of GLBTQ+ Asian Pacific Alliance (GAPA) and Co-Founder of the Bay Area QTAPI Coalition. “I am hopeful that QTAPI Week inspires all those in our community, especially our family and allies, to live their

most authentic selves and see our collective strength and resilience in these turbulent times. Like Harvey Milk once said, you gotta give ‘em hope.”

"As a South Asian woman of trans experience, I have often had to navigate out of my cultural identity to ascertain my gender identity," said Anjali Rimi, President of Parivar and Co-Founder of the Bay Area QTAPI Coalition. "I am grateful for the visibility for QTAPI folx in the city of San Francisco and to be able to bring my whole self to this world."

"As May is a month for Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage and June is a month for Pride, both also represent the necessity to recognize that our struggles and liberation are inextricably connected," said Nick Large, one of the founding partners of the Bay Area QTAPI Coalition. "Our QTAPI week is a proclamation not only that we will take up space, but also that we will not allow ourselves to be under voiced and have our diverse community ignored as a monolith. A racist model minority narrative dictates that we are all worker bees, void of individuality and material differences. It hides that Pacific Islanders in our community experience the highest rates of homelessness in the country, that refugees with no connection to their government listed country of origin are being deported, and that Chinatown has one of the highest rates of poverty in the city, in addition to a strong documented history of queer nightlife and refuge. Instead of shrinking ourselves, we choose in this moment to expand ourselves."

The resolution details the rich history of San Francisco QTAPI community leaders like Margaret Chung, the first American surgeon of Chinese descent who wore "mannish attire" and had several romantic relationships with women, and Vince Crisostomo, a gay Chamorro HIV-activist who became the first publicly out HIV-positive Pacific Islander at World AIDS Day in 1991. It also shares the history of important organizations that were formed by and for the QTAPI community like the Gay Asian Support Group, Asian American Feminists, and the Gay Asian Pacific Alliance, now the GLBTQ+ Asian Pacific Alliance (GAPA), to create QTAPI connectivity, power and access to essential services like health care.

"Thank you to the city for making public the value of queer and trans Asians and Pacific Islanders," said Dr. Amy Sueyoshi, Dean of the College of Ethnic Studies and Professor of Race and Resistance Studies and Sexuality Studies at San Francisco State University. "Let us devote at least one week to explicitly declaring to queer and trans API folks that they are seen and loved. As we celebrate this recognition however, it is simultaneously a charge for us to continue to better serve queer and trans BIPOC across San Francisco if not the larger Bay Area. In a racialized economy that privileges heterosexuality, queer and trans BIPOC in particular face economic insecurity, even for those in the middle class."

The Bay Area QTAPI Coalition and Supervisor Rafael Mandelman will kick-off QTAPI Week this Saturday, May 22nd, with a press conference at 11am in Jane Warner Plaza in the Castro District. Community chats will be held that weekend online, focusing on combating anti-AAPI hate crimes and the power of allyship with communities of color on May 22nd as well as API Equality Northern California's (APIENC) launch of the Queer Asian and Pacific Islanders Cis Allies Project (QAPICAP) on May 23rd, an intergenerational project to unlearn and end transphobia within our LGBTQ+ Asian and Pacific Islander community. During the week, the community and allies are invited to the GAPA Membership meeting on Monday, May 24th from

7:30pm-9pm, focusing on GAPA's actions in the face of anti-AAPI hate and preparing for GAPA Runway, the annual pageant extravaganza showcasing QTAPI talent and identity. The Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area (AABA) LGBTQ Committee will present a conversation with community activists online on May 26th from 6pm-7:30pm where Drag Activist Juicy Liu will sit down with Harvard Professor and LGBTQ+ legal scholar, Alexander Chen. Additional support groups and online meetings will hold space for our Queer and Transgender Asian and Pacific Islander communities, sponsored by the San Francisco Community Health Center.

The closing celebration of QTAPI Week will happen on Saturday, May 29th, with a solidarity dance party in the parking lot on 18th Street and Collingwood in the Castro District from 11am to 4pm. Headlined by reigning Miss GAPA, Mocha Fapalatte, with appearances by Miss GAPA 2000 Chi Chi La Woo and Miss GAPA 2017 Ehra Amaya, emcees Estée Longah & Kristi Yummykochi of the Rice Rockettes, San Francisco's only all-API drag troupe, and DJs Confetti Canon and Chico Chi will help unite our intersectional AAAP and LGBTQ+ communities in solidarity and celebration to bring much QTAPI light and love and show the world the power and resilience of QTAPI community.

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