

# NCAVP ALERT



National Advocacy  
for Local LGBTQH Communities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## NCAVP and Allied LGBTQ Organizations Stand in Solidarity with CeCe McDonald; Drop the Charges, Self-Defense is Not Murder

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs ([NCAVP](#)) and allied lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) organizations stand in solidarity with CeCe McDonald, a young African American transgender woman [violently attacked](#) by a group of people in a racist and transphobic hate violence incident in June 2011 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Despite being the survivor of this incident of violence, CeCe McDonald was the only person arrested. Hennepin County Attorney Michael Freeman has charged McDonald with two counts of **second-degree murder** for acting in self-defense and allegedly fatally stabbing one of her attackers. Hennepin County has dropped murder charges in [three similar cases](#) where people have acted in self-defense. NCAVP and our allies add our support to the public outcry to drop the charges against CeCe McDonald.

Transgender women of color face severe and deadly hate violence in the United States. NCAVP has responded to **three murders of transgender women in the month of April alone**. NCAVP's most recent [report](#), *Hate Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Communities in the United States in 2010*, documented 27 anti-LGBTQH murders, the second highest yearly total ever recorded by the coalition. **Transgender women made up 44% of the 27 reported hate murders in 2010, while representing only 11% of total survivors and victims.** Transgender people represented a higher proportion of hate violence survivors with serious injuries (11.8%) as compared to non-transgender men (6.2%) or non-transgender women (1.3%).

The report also showed that transgender people and people of color were the least likely to receive medical attention, and that transgender people of color reported higher rates of negative law enforcement experiences. NCAVP members know that transgender survivors of violence often face biased and discriminatory treatment from law enforcement, courts, and other first responders. **We are concerned that McDonald could be facing discriminatory charges based on her transgender identity.** While we do not have all the details about this incident, our experience tells us to strongly advocate that Hennepin County consider CeCe McDonald as acting in self-defense.

NCAVP does not condone violence and expresses our condolences that a life has been lost in this incident. However, self-defense is not murder, and McDonald should not face murder charges for acting to defend her own life in a racist, transphobic assault. Charging McDonald with murder while other non-transgender people have not been charged by Hennepin County in similar cases where defendants were acting in self-defense highlights the potential differential treatment placed on McDonald because she is transgender. Furthermore, in a society where violence against transgender people is all too often condoned, ignored, and unsolved, charging McDonald with murder minimizes transphobic violence and reinforces a transphobic culture.

NCAVP and our allies call for Hennepin County to drop the charges against CeCe McDonald and for community members, anti-violence organizations, and public officials to take immediate action to support survivors of transphobic violence.

## **ACTION STEPS**

**Sign the Petition:** Join [Change.org](https://www.change.org) in calling on County Attorney Michael Freeman to honor his commitment, in his words "to serve all of our citizens with understanding, dignity, and respect" by **dropping the charges against CeCe McDonald.**

**Report Violence:** NCAVP encourages anyone who has experienced violence to contact a local anti-violence program. For help locating an anti-violence program in your area, please [contact us.](#)

**Get involved:** Join NCAVP in our efforts to prevent and respond to LGBTQH violence. [Contact us](#) to learn more.

*NCAVP works to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence against and within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and HIV-affected (LGBTQH) communities. NCAVP is a national coalition of local member programs, affiliate organizations and individuals who create systemic and social change. NCAVP is a program of the [New York City Anti-Violence Project.](#)*

## **Signatories:**

*AIDS Foundation of Chicago*

*FIERCE*

*HIV Prevention Justice Alliance*

*National Center for Lesbian Rights*

*National Center for Transgender Equality*

*National Coalition for LGBT Health*

*National Gay and Lesbian Task Force*

*National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance*

*PFLAG National*

*Queers for Economic Justice*

*Red Umbrella Project*

*Sex Workers Outreach Project of New York City*

*Sylvia Rivera Law Project*

*Transgender Law Center*

*Trans Women's Anti-Violence Project*