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## **Montrose Center Applauds Supreme Court Ruling Guaranteeing Non-Discrimination in Employment for LGBTQ+ Individuals**

Over fifty years ago, our movement for equality began at the Stonewall Inn as community members fought against the same police brutality and discrimination that many LGBTQ+ individuals still face to this very day. Today's historic Supreme Court ruling is a monumental step forward in ending that discrimination, and we are extremely heartened by the 6-3 decision declaring that employees cannot be fired on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

"The Supreme Court's ruling is absolutely amazing, especially considering it was 6-3," said Ann J. Robison, PhD, Executive Director of the Montrose Center. "This ends workplace discrimination facing the LGBTQ community and we are encouraged by how this may impact recent executive orders on housing and healthcare. Each of these decisions that come out solidifies how the majority of people in America think and feel, and this ruling removes several barriers for LGBTQ people who can now live their lives like everyone else."

However, there are still huge inequities that have yet to be addressed within our society. Our community still faces much discrimination in education, housing, credit, health care, public accommodations, federal programs, and more. Further, this victory cannot fully be appreciated while the Black community continues to perish at the hands of police brutality and gender violence. Just this past week, we lost two of our Black trans community members—Dominique "Rem'mie" Fells and Riah Milton—and we can't help but wonder how their stories might've been changed with the protection granted by the Supreme Court today.

We also mourn Aimee Stephens, who passed in May, and Don Zarda, who passed in 2014, awaiting this very decision. They paved the way for us all with their strength and resilience and we thank them both for being the heroes our community needed.

Robison continued, "Additionally, just because the Supreme Court has come out so unequivocally against discrimination, there will still be employers and individuals who do not support today's ruling and will make the implementation of transgender and gay rights difficult."

Today's decision will be a catalyst in affirming further protections for our community, and it will serve as a beacon of light for all marginalized communities signaling that change is coming.

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### **THE MONTROSE CENTER**

Established in 1978 as a safe and affirming place for lesbian and gay Houstonians to receive counseling, the Montrose Center has emerged as one of the nation's leading full-service LGBTQ centers. Although

counseling remains at the heart of what we do, services have expanded to meet the changing needs of our diverse community. These services include substance abuse treatment, support and advocacy for LGBTQ survivors of violent crimes, care and assistance for people with HIV/AIDS, free community wellness programs and activities, and programs for our community's most vulnerable and isolated—youth and seniors. We sit at the center of the LGBTQ community and serve as a gathering place for LGBTQ organizations and groups. The Montrose Center is a United Way Agency.