

Transgender Leaders Donna Rose and Jamison Green Resign from HRC Business Council

The only transgender members of the Human Rights Campaign Business Council, Donna Rose and Jamison Green, announced their resignations on Tuesday November 27 in response to recent HRC policy decisions regarding ENDA. They released the following joint statement:

An Open Letter To:

Daryl Herrschaft, Director, HRC Workplace Project,
Staff of the HRC Workplace Project,
Members of the HRC Business Council,
Joe Solmonese, E.D., Human Rights Campaign (HRC),
Members of the HRC Board of Directors,
Members of the Transgender Community:

It has been an honor and a privilege for both of us to serve on the Human Rights Campaign Business Council. Since joining the Business Council in 2002 we have both played active roles in advancing workplace equality, providing education, guidance and leadership, and ensuring that workplaces in America are fair for ALL employees. Our collective work has been at the forefront of the successes that HRC has enjoyed in recent years, has affected the daily lives of GLBT employees throughout this country in profound and substantive ways, and is a continuing source of pride for us both.

Rather than rest on past achievements, the Business Council continues to develop critical new initiatives to support transgender employees. We are working to raise the bar on the Corporate Equality Index. We are planning to revise and re-publish the booklet *Transgender In the Workplace: A Tool For Managers*. We are planning a Female-to-Male educational DVD. We have been working on insurance issues affecting transgender employees. Never before have so many important efforts for transgender workers been underway and we are both heavily involved in all of them. That is why the decision we are announcing today is an extremely difficult one.

Recent HRC policy decisions – to actively support a version of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) that excludes our transgender brothers and sisters as well as gender-variant lesbian, gay, and bisexual people – have placed us in an untenable position. On November 8, the day after the ENDA vote in the House of Representatives, we requested an opportunity to meet personally with HRC President Joe Solmonese to share our concerns and to discuss HRC's strategy for addressing recent legislative shortcomings before making a decision to stay or go. As the only transgender representatives on the Business Council our community expects us to have some influence, or at least to receive the courtesy of a consultation. Almost 3 weeks have passed since that request and we have heard nothing in response. This lack of response speaks volumes, so we feel compelled to take this stand today.

We are announcing our resignations from the HRC Business Council, effective immediately. Considering recent broken promises, the lack of credibility that HRC has with the transgender community at large, and HRC's apparent lack of commitment to healing the breach it has caused, we find it impossible to maintain an effective working relationship with the organization.

We have truly enjoyed working with the amazing group of corporate leaders who comprise the Business Council. We thank Daryl Herrschaft, Eric Bloem, Samir Luther, and the rest of the Workplace Project team for their steadfast support, their passion for full equality and inclusion, and their friendship. We are extremely disappointed that HRC legislative decisions have contradicted Business Council efforts to enact only fully-inclusive policies and that we must leave the important work we have been planning unfinished. But principles are not for compromise, so today we do what we feel we must.

The need for education on transgender issues in this country has never been greater or more apparent. In addition, a significant learning from recent events is that, while alliances are necessary, valuable, and often crucial, the transgender community cannot rely excessively on others for success and must assert greater control over its own destiny. Our resignation from the Business Council in no way diminishes our commitment either to the transgender community or to ensuring that workplaces have access to professional training, support and guidance on transgender issues. Rather, it provides new challenges and opportunities.

Since we cannot in good conscience continue these critical efforts in the name of HRC through its Business Council, we will be forming an organization whose sole purpose is to provide ongoing education on transgender issues for businesses, governmental agencies, NGOs, and educational institutions. Our Transgender Education Partnership – *TransEducate.com* – will be a platform from which we can engage community leaders, develop tools and publications, and establish partnerships with like-minded organizations to work for ALL gender-variant people everywhere.

Although it saddens us to say good-bye to our colleagues on the Business Council we are energized by our vision of the future. We look forward to being a pre-eminent voice in the ongoing effort to provide education about the transgender community. We look forward to the day when the LGBT community can address its issues with a unified voice, and without diminishing *any* of its constituents. And, we look forward to a day when gender-variance is appreciated as ordinary and non-threatening, and education on these topics will no longer be necessary.

In Solidarity for Equality,

Jamison Green and Donna Rose

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