

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON
PROCLAMATION NO. _____**

**Proclaiming October 11, 2012 as National Coming Out Day in Multnomah County,
Oregon**

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- a. National Coming Out Day is recognized internationally as a day of self affirmation and awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) issues, observed on October 11 by members of the LGBTQ community, their families, friends, and allies.
- b. National Coming Out Day was founded in 1988 to celebrate the second National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights in 1987, in which 500,000 people marched on our Nation's Capital to raise awareness of and garner support for the LGBTQ community.
- c. Coming out, which is the public self-acknowledgement of belonging to the LGBTQ community, is recognized by many as a significant life experience. It is a turning point from the loneliness and self-denial of concealing one's identity to the fulfillment of being true to one's self to claim dignity, empowerment and self respect, as well as the tolerance and support from others that is deserved by all.
- d. For students throughout Multnomah County, coming out can be particularly daunting in light of bullying and harassment occurring in schools and on social media platforms. The 2011 National School Climate Survey conducted by the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN) found that nationally, over 80% of LGBT students ages 13-20 reported being verbally harassed and over 55% experienced electronic harassment.
- e. The study found that the inclusion of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA) and LGBT-inclusive curriculum in schools have positive impacts in reducing homophobic remarks and feelings of insecurity among LGBT student by nearly 20%. Organizations working in Multnomah County towards creating accepting and supportive schools and communities for all students including the Oregon Safe Schools & Communities Coalition, Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), the Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network, and the Q Center.

- f. Multnomah County affirms its commitment as an ally in creating and maintaining an environment in which everyone is respected and valued by championing diversity and inclusion, adhering to an antidiscrimination policy that includes protections for LGBTQ employees, and by establishing the Office of Diversity and Equity that oversees several employee resource groups, including Prism for LGBTQ and allied employees.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Proclaims:

October 11, 2012, as National Coming Out Day in Multnomah County, Oregon, in recognition of the courage it takes to come out, as well as the importance of respect for the diversity and dignity of all LGBTQ community members and employees of Multnomah County.

ADOPTED this 11th day of October, 2012.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

Jeff Cogen, Chair

SUBMITTED BY: Commissioner Loretta Smith, District 2