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PRIDE FOR THE PEOPLE – BOSTON RESPONDS TO BOSTON PRIDE’S THREAT OF LEGAL ACTION

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Casey Dooley, Chair of Black Pride (resigned), caseyorangecurl@gmail.com, 617-939-6902

Henry Paquin, Entertainment Chair (resigned), Henry.paquin@gmail.com, 617-792-3823

Jo Trigilio, Boston Pride Communications Team (resigned), Boston Pride Grand Marshal 2018, Dyke March Executive Organizing Committee 2000-2014, jotrig55@gmail.com, 617-605-1956

URL: pride4thepeople.org

[Boston Pride Board's Letter](#)

For the past two months, the reaction of the Boston Pride Board to the community calling it out for yet another racist, sexist, transphobic, or white-centered incident is all too familiar: the board says it will do better, then retreats to its bunker and waits for the firestorm to die. Last month, on August 11, 2020, the board briefly emerged from its bunker, not to engage in meaningful dialogue with the community or the grassroots organization, Boston Pride for the People, but instead to threaten the group with legal action.

Boston Pride issued a cease and desist letter to Boston Pride for the People and to a related organization, Boston Black Pride, accusing both groups for allegedly violating the “Boston Pride” service mark by using “Boston Pride” and “Black Pride”.

With respect to use of “Boston Pride For The People”, the letter states, “your use of that name to identify your group, even with the added suffix of “for the people”, is a direct infringement of our rights...our attorneys have advised us that continued use for that purpose could subject you to legal sanctions and financial penalties.” Addressing the use of “Boston Black Pride”, the letter states, “We see that some former volunteers have been posting and appearing under the “Boston Black Pride” label and logo, which originated with us a number of years ago, is prominently displayed on our website and is creating the same kind of confusion.”

Boston Pride for the People was founded by members of the resigned volunteer workforce of Boston Pride and LGBTQ+ community leaders of color in response to the Boston Pride’s board persistent failure to proactively address their issues of racism and white privilege within the organization and failure to center on the lives and voices of Black People, Trans People, Indigenous People, and People of Color. The Boston Pride Board has a long history of poor and tense relationships with the Greater Boston’s communities of Queer & Trans Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (QTBIPOC). At the 2016 Pride Parade, Black Lives Matters issued six demands that were ignored by the board and have yet to be addressed. Most recently, the Boston Pride Board removed “#blacklivesmatter” from a statement condemning unjust, racist police violence, rewrote portions of the statement, and posted it without consulting the communications team or the Chair of Black Pride. The resulting public backlash and loss of trust in the board’s leadership impelled members of the volunteer workforce, including the chair of Black Pride, the communications team, and community members to propose a plan that called for the resignation of the entire board and transition to a diverse board that would represent and advocate for the Greater Boston QTBIPOC community.

In response to the legal threat by the board, Boston Pride for the People immediately changed its name so that it could concentrate its efforts on the Boston Pride Board's stark and audacious display of institutionalized white privilege and power. Their egregious claim to own "Black Pride" ironically stems from their six board members, none of whom identify as Black, and none of whom have filed papers to enlist Boston Black Pride as a nonprofit organization. After over 80% of its volunteer work force's resignation and the outcry for racial justice from the LGBTQ+ community, the frivolity of a legal threat not only misses the bigger picture but refuses to confront it. The former chair of Black Pride, Casey Dooley, after three years of struggling with white-centeredness, microaggressions, and under-resourcing, has decided to take Black Pride back to the community.

Failing the QTBIPOC community for decades is a clear failure of leadership, and the time has come for real change. The majority of its own volunteer workforce no longer trusts the Boston Pride leadership. The community has had enough of a white-centered pride. Pride belongs to the community, and Black Pride belongs to the Black LGBTQ+ community, not the six people who are holding it hostage. Click [here](#) to join or support the movement.