



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PHOENIX PRIDE STATEMENT REGARDING PLANNED PROTESTS AT 2017 PRIDE PARADE

PHOENIX — Justin Owen, Executive Director of Phoenix Pride, has issued the following statement in response to planned protests by immigrants' rights activists at the 2017 Phoenix Pride Parade on Sunday, April 2, in downtown Phoenix:

“The annual Phoenix Pride Festival and Pride Parade serve as a community celebration to recognize the pride we have in our Phoenix LGBTQ community and to celebrate the advancements we have made in gaining rights, acceptance and standing in our city, our state and our country.

“In recent years, we have joined together to revel in the national recognition of same-sex marriage, to rejoice in the defeat of dangerous and discriminatory policies like Arizona Senate Bill 1062, and to recognize the granting of equal rights protections in housing, employment and public accommodations by the City of Phoenix. While we continue to fight the injustices that exist in our society, it is important to take stock of advancements we've made and to celebrate the victories that we have achieved together.

“We are aware that there are still many causes that need attention, and we always stand willing to work with members of our community to end oppression and injustice of any kind and against any individual or group. The purpose of the Pride Festival and Parade is to honor our past, celebrate our

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present and look to our future, while providing the Phoenix LGBTQ community with a safe place to gather and enjoy.

“Our first priority is always the safety and security of those who attend the Pride Festival and Parade, either as parade participants or as spectators, as well as those who attend the festival as guests. We are absolutely committed to this principle and cannot afford to condone any behavior that might disrupt the festivities in a way that could endanger anyone’s safety or security.

“As we do every year, we are working with our public safety partners at the City of Phoenix to insure a safe event for all who attend. Interference with the parade route, or direct disruption of the parade or festival, will not be permitted, as a matter of safety for the public.

“We have tremendous pride in the protest history of our movement, and as always, we will welcome peaceful protests by those who wish to express their concerns about any issues of social justice. We ask our friends, neighbors and all fellow Phoenicians to respect our need to maintain safety, and to carry out any protest activities with respect and dignity and to not endanger themselves or any other members of the public.

“We anticipate a wonderful Pride weekend, and will look forward to resuming our normal business – including meeting with any members of the community who have concerns they wish us to hear – beginning on Monday.

“As always, we express our appreciation for the support and assistance of the Phoenix civic, business and resident communities who make Phoenix Pride both possible and successful.”

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