

# Embracing our LGBTQx Community

[portside.portofportland.online/2021/06/pride-month-2021](https://portside.portofportland.online/2021/06/pride-month-2021)

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*By Dan Blaufus (he/him), Chief Legal Officer and Executive Sponsor of the Port's LGBTQx & Friends employee resource group (ERG)*

Why does the Port of Portland celebrate Pride Month? For many of us, that answer is personal. We either identify as LGBTQIA2S+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit) or we have friends or family who are part of this diverse community. I'm in that latter category, with dear friends and beloved family members who are part of the community. I've witnessed their struggles for acceptance and equality and I am motivated to do what I can to create an inclusive workplace and community.

As an organization with inclusion as one of our core values, the Port celebrates Pride Month because we believe it's essential to create a space where everyone feels like they can be their full, authentic selves. I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve as executive sponsor of the

**LGBTQx & Friends employee resource group**, who will be celebrating all month with stories and education.

Again this year, the Port of Portland logo at our headquarter building – which travelers see on the left as they drive into PDX – will greet you with a rainbow background in honor of Pride Month. Our Fire and Police departments have designed Pride t-shirts and are donating the money they raise to nonprofits that support queer and underrepresented youth. And all month long, colleagues will share stories about their personal connections to Pride.

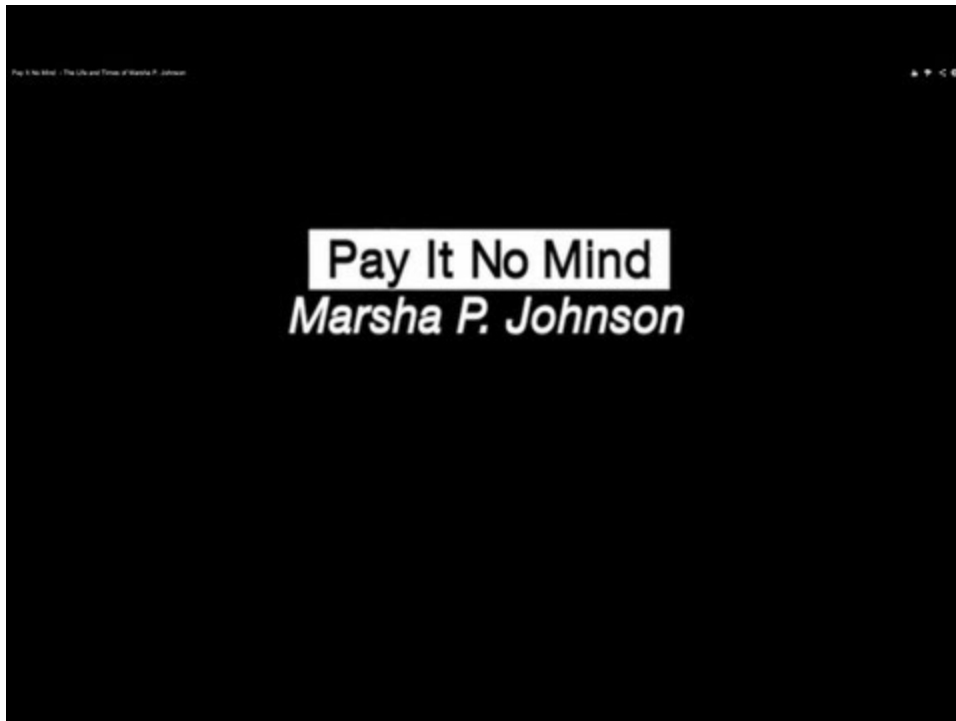


We'll also spend time reflecting on the progress that has been made to support LGBTQIA2S+ rights. Six years ago, on June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of same-sex marriage – declaring that states can't deny marriage licenses to same-sex couples and must recognize same-sex couples' existing marriages. And just last year, on June 15, 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that the Civil Rights Act protects gay, lesbian and trans employees from discrimination.

While this progress brings me a lot of hope, the last year has provided reminder after reminder that civil rights are still not applied equally. In addition to 2021 marking five years since the **Orlando Pulse nightclub shooting**, an unprecedented number of anti-LGBTQx measures are sweeping through state legislatures across the country. In fact, 2021 is on the cusp of **becoming the worst year for anti-LGBTQIA2S+ legislation** in recent history.

Among the groups at the center of proposed legislation is the transgender community. Trans individuals – and in particular trans people of color – continue to struggle for justice and equality. If we open our hearts and minds to the realities and experiences of the trans community, we can become strong allies and vocal supporters.

In that spirit, and to remind us of Pride Month's origins, employees will watch and discuss **"Pay It No Mind: The Life and Times of Marsha P. Johnson,"** a documentary about the complex life and tragic, unexplained death of Marsha Johnson – one of the leaders of the Stonewall Riots that sparked the gay rights movement in 1969. My hope is that viewing the film will help us see the humanity and authentic personhood of Marsha Johnson and better understand the intersection of racial justice and gay and trans rights.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/rjN9W2KstqE>

This last year has been hard. The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a lot from all of us, but it cannot take our pride. And at its core, Pride Month is about celebration, acceptance and understanding. My hope is that **allies** take this time to better understand all that their colleagues and friends have been through and choose to create an environment where everyone can freely and openly live their truths.