

## Bamby Salcedo's Testimony

Primero que nada, quiero dar gracias a mi creador, mi poder superior por darme la oportunidad de estar con vida un día más. También quiero honrar la tierra en la cual estamos aquí hoy en día y pedir permiso a la gente Natcotchtank y Piscataway que me permitan decir mis palabras en su tierra.

Greetings everyone, I know that it was hard for some of you to understand what I just said, but it is customary for me that before I speak, I acknowledge my creator for allowing me to breathe one more day. I also honored the land where we are standing today, and I asked permission from the Natcotchtank and the Piscataway peoples to allow me to speak on their land today.

I am humbly grateful to be in your presence today. Thank you, Chairwoman Maloney and members of this committee, for allowing me to share my experience, strength, and hope with you today.

My name is Bamby Salcedo, and I am a very privileged Trans Latina Woman who has the honor to be the president and the CEO of The TransLatin@ Coalition. A national advocacy organization based in Los Angeles that also provides social support and lifesaving services to

trans, gender non-conforming, and intersex people. I also serve as a board member of the ERA Coalition.

My experience is that of a person who has had the opportunity to survive many horrible experiences simply for being who I am, a Trans Woman who is Latina, an immigrant, someone who has overcome constant discrimination, multiple sexual assaults, homelessness, drug addiction, including overdoses and left for dead in alleys, I spent over fourteen years of my life incarcerated, I have been chased out of neighborhoods and beaten, I had to do sex work as means to survive, I have had guns pointed into my head, I committed multiple suicide attempts, I experienced all of this because I was pushed by our society because there were no laws or protections against discrimination to protect people like me. I can honestly say that I have survived things that you probably are not able to imagine. But what is most unfortunate is that the same issues that I have endured and overcome, many members of my community are experiencing today all across the country, even in California, which is the state that has the most inclusive legislation to protect trans people.

2021 will be a record number of murders in the trans community. I have seen many of my friends die, I have organized more funerals than celebrations in my community. All of this is because we have no national

legislation that will serve as protection for all people. I know that you are probably going to say, "what about the Equality Act?" The truth is that the Equality Act does not look at all of the intersections that cross my life and will not provide constitutional equality. For example, I am glad that my friend Monica Ramirez started Latina Equal Pay Day, which we are acknowledging with sadness today. As a Trans Latina Woman, the pay gap is enormous! The discrimination that we experience while trying to get employment and in the workplace is rampant. The Equality Act would not support other trans women and me obtaining employment and being compensated and valued equally for our work. The Equal Rights Amendment will help ensure no discrimination against all peoples, poor, indigenous, Black, Trans, Women ALL PEOPLES!

My strength is that I get to share with you who I am and what I have overcome, and how people have uplifted me and supported me to heal my wounds, which, unfortunately, our government has failed to do. My strength is that I speak to you with my truth because my truth is my power.

My hope is that you understand the opportunity that we have in this moment and time, that you understand that The Equal Rights Amendment is what our nation needs right now to heal the intergenerational wounds generated

against the most marginalized. I hope you open your hearts and minds and do the humane thing to do, to ensure that all peoples, not only those who are like me, have the rights that we deserve. That we get to be acknowledged as the human beings that we are, that we are given some dignity and that we honor the work of many people who have tried for more than five decades to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. We have an excellent opportunity to support all peoples and not just some. While I support the Equality Act and its passage, the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment Nationally needs to happen. I hope to get to see the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment in my lifetime; every day I am afraid that I can be killed simply because I am a trans woman. I ask that you see that there is no time like the one we have today. That we do not continue to see divisions, nor continue to fuel messages that say some people are more deserving than others, but rather that we see that people in this country need to be protected and valued and that you use your power to ensure the affirmation of the Equal Rights Amendment. There is no time like the present and the time to act favorably about the Equal Rights Amendment is now. Please be on the right side of history. Only you can do that for yourself and many people who depend on you to do what is humane. I am sure that generations to come will see then who are the people who understood what human and civil rights are, who used their power for the betterment of all peoples. Today is a historic day, and

I want for you to ask yourselves...*Do I want to be on the right side of history?* I hope your conscience answers yes, you do! I invite you to reimagine a new world, a world of constitutional equity, equality and freedom for all!

Thank you so much for the opportunity to be in your presence today.