Abstract: This resolution expresses the Cornell University Assembly’s recognition of the 21st Transgender Day of Remembrance which took place on Friday, November 20th, 2020. The bill also seeks to ensure that the names of all the transgender and gender queer people who died from violence in the United States this year and all future years are documented in our record. The resolution affirms the University Assembly’s support for protecting the rights and safety of LGBTQIA+ Cornellians. Finally, the resolution establishes the LGBTQIA+ Facilitator to the University Assembly, who will be elected from the voting membership to serve as the primary point of contact between LGBTQIA+ community groups and the University Assembly.

Whereas, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) describes Transgender Day of Remembrance as, “An annual observance on November 20th that honors the memory of the transgender people whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence,”

Whereas, Transgender Day of Remembrance dates back to a 1999 vigil led by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith to honor the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman killed the year prior,

Whereas, during 2020, the Transgender Murder Monitoring (TMM) project found 350 reported murders of trans and gender-diverse people,

Whereas, a majority of the murders found by the TMM were reported in Brazil, Mexico, and the United States, representing 237 of the 350 murders, and a 6% increase in reported murders from 2019,

Whereas, between 2008 and the present, the TMM has found 3,664 reported cases of murder caused by anti-transgender violence spanning 75 different countries and territories across the globe,

Whereas, the average age of the transgender people who were murdered in 2020 was just 31 years old, the youngest victim was 15,
Whereas, the Human Rights Campaign recognizes the murders of 37 transgender individuals in the United States during 2020, the most of any year since the organization began keeping track in 2013,

Whereas, of the over 200 known murders across the country documented by the Human Rights Campaign, two-thirds of the victims were transgender women of color and 60% of the total murders involved the presence of a firearm,

Whereas, victims of anti-transgender violence are disproportionately transgender women of color,

Whereas, The FBI has noted an uptick in gender-based hate crimes in 2019,

Whereas, nearly three out of every four cases of anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes are committed against transgender women,

Whereas, the National Center for Transgender Equality states that one in four transgender people have faced a bias-driven assault,

Whereas, transgender people experience heightened rates of family and intimate partner violence, and sexual assault,

Whereas, transgender people are more likely to be revictimized when reporting physical or sexual assault,

Whereas, the Anti-Violence Project reports that transgender people are 3.7 times more likely to be victims of police violence, with higher rates amongst black and brown transgender women,

Whereas, more than one-fifth of transgender people who had interacted with the police reported police harassment, amongst black transgender people this number jumps to almost two-fifths,

Whereas, violence against trans people frequently goes unreported or underreported and the previously mentioned statistics most likely do not fully encapsulate the gravity of the problem,

Whereas, anti-trans violence occurs in New York State and acts of anti-trans discrimination and harassment occur on Cornell’s campus,

Whereas, the Cornell University Assembly first formally recognized Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 24th, 2020,

Whereas, LGBTQIA+ Cornellians have specific needs that differ from the general Cornell community,
Whereas, LGBTQIA+ voices are traditionally underrepresented in all forms of governance,

Be it therefore resolved, the Cornell University Assembly acknowledges the passing of Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20th, 2020,

Be it further resolved, the University Assembly pledges to recognize and commemorate all future Transgender Days of Remembrance through a reading of the names of the transgender people who were murdered within the United States that year,

Be it further resolved, the Chair of the Assembly is encouraged to read the names at the beginning of the public meeting closest to November 20th and all the names read should be recognized in the meeting minutes,

Be it further resolved, the Cornell University Assembly will affirm its commitment to fighting for the rights and safety of transgender and genderqueer Cornellians,

Be it further resolved, the Cornell University Assembly will commit to actively working with LGBTQIA+ student and employee groups through creating the position, “LGBTQIA+ Facilitator to the University Assembly”,

Be it further resolved, the LGBTQIA+ Facilitator to the University Assembly shall be a non-officer role and is separate from liaisons listed within Section 6.1 of the Assembly bylaws,

Be it further resolved, the LGBTQIA+ Facilitator to the University Assembly will be elected from the general membership of the Assembly during the first organizational meeting,

Be it further resolved, in the event that no one runs for the position or the LGBTQIA+ Facilitator to the University Assembly is otherwise vacant at any point after the first organizational meeting, the Chair of the Assembly shall appoint someone from the general membership of the Assembly to fill the role,

Be it further resolved, the LGBTQIA+ Facilitator to the University Assembly will be charged with maintaining constant communication and cooperation with LGBTQIA+ undergraduate student, graduate and professional student, staff, and faculty groups,

Be it finally resolved, the LGBTQIA+ Facilitator to the University Assembly will present updates to the Assembly at least once a month during a regularly scheduled meeting.