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### **For Immediate Release: DA Celebrates National Coming Out Day, Announces LGBTQ+ Task Force**

**(Dallas, Texas)** – The Dallas County District Attorney's Office is proud to come out and formally announce the formation of its LGBTQ+ Task Force. The task force is comprised of over 25 members of the DA's office, including prosecutors from all divisions, victim advocates, and support staff. Early initiatives include office-wide training on LGBTQ+ cultural competency and developing approaches for how to name transgender victims and defendants in criminal indictments.

"We recognize that the stress of coming to the criminal courthouse can be compounded by worrying whether your case is being treated differently due to your LGBTQ+ status," said Phillip Clark, an Assistant District Attorney who serves as the DA's LGBTQ+ Community Liaison. "In response, we convened this task force to take a hard look at how our office and the justice system operate, identify where they fail this part of our community, and develop solutions that provide parity and equality - while maintaining the integrity of the cases. It starts with respect and education."

The task force has been meeting since July and is underway on multiple projects, both within the office and out in the community. Internally, members also serve as an informative resource for prosecutors and investigators who may have a question about an LGBTQ+ related thread in a case, trial, or investigation.

DA John Creuzot notes the LGBTQ+ Task Force complements another initiative he started upon taking office. "We are tackling head-on the rash of violence against LGBTQ+ people across Dallas County by assigning those cases to a small team of specialized prosecutors. The Task Force supports those prosecutors indirectly in various ways – but just as importantly, their work supports LGBTQ+ citizens directly by making sure they are respected and heard in this office," he said. "I am proud that so many of my colleagues stepped forward to help – and I am proud that many of them are not LGBTQ+, but joined because they saw the need."