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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
2:15 P.M. PDT, June 11, 2009

ESF APPLAUDS CHASTITY BONO'S GENDER TRANSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Bono, the child of Sonny and Cher, began the transition process from a female to a male this year

SAN DIEGO, CA — The Empowering Spirits Foundation (ESF), a national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights organization, applauded today Chastity Bono's announcement that he's in the process of transitioning from a female to a male. Bono, son of the renowned entertainers Sonny and Cher, began the transition process earlier this year at the age of 40.

"ESF commends Chaz Bono for having the strength to publicly announce his transition, and to live his life true to himself," said A. Latham Staples, Executive Director of the Empowering Spirits Foundation. "We know this decision wasn't taken without much thought. ESF hopes Bono's strength in this transition will serve as an example for individuals struggling with their own sexual orientations or gender identities."

In light of the news ESF sent a formal invitation to Bono to participate in Freedom Jubilee, ESF's national service event to be held October 11, 2009, in conjunction with National Coming Out Day.

"Bono has long been a positive figure in the LGBT civil rights movement," said Staples. "Freedom Jubilee is a time for every one of different orientations and identities to come together in celebration of equality for all, and give back to the community. We couldn't ask for a more positive and better example than Bono to help shed light on discrimination attributed to the LGBT community."

ESF wishes Bono much success on the rest of the transition and calls on the media and public to reserve gossip, and allow Bono to share his story, in his own words, at his time of choosing.

About the Empowering Spirits Foundation

The Empowering Spirits Foundation is a grassroots based civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality. ESF members engage in service-oriented activities in communities typically opposed to equal rights. It is our hope that in working side-by-side with our non-LGBT neighbors, they may come to see similarities rather than differences, hope rather than failure, strength rather than weakness. Additionally, the Empowering Spirits Foundation sponsors legislation, lobbies legislators, develops community awareness, collaborates with other coalitions, and empowers individuals and organizations to engage in the political process for equality.

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