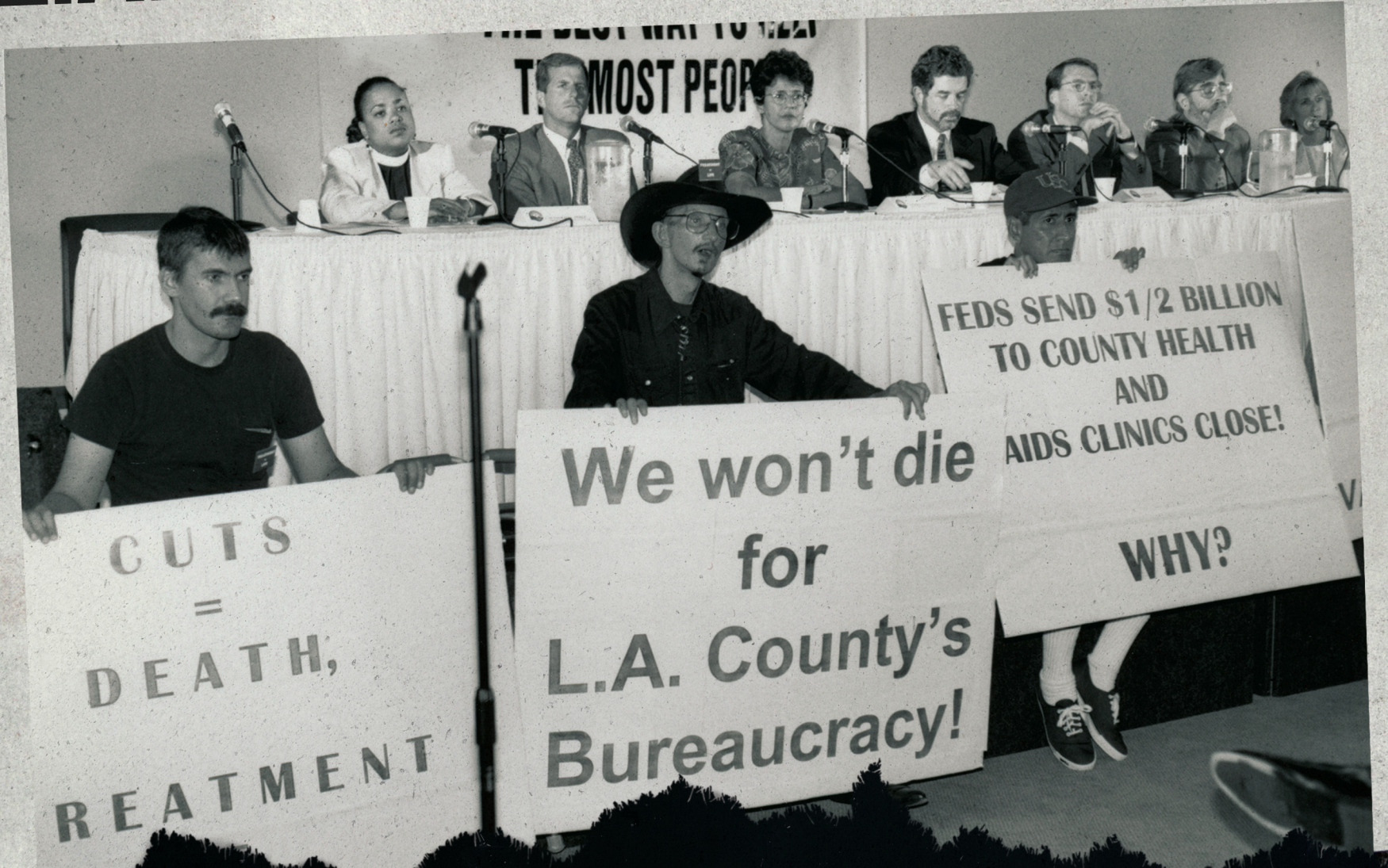


L.A. County Protest, 1997

L.A. COUNTY FAILS GAY MEN



AGAIN

L.A. COUNTY HAS A 41-YEAR HISTORY OF NEGLECT OF GAY MEN'S HEALTH.

At the start of AIDS, the then conservative majority of the Board of Supervisors took no action to address the epidemic. AIDS patients routinely died in the hallways of the county hospitals. Then Supervisor Mike Antonovich said that the way to deal with AIDS was for gays to turn straight.

AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) and ACT UP had to fight tooth and nail to get an AIDS ward in the county hospital or AIDS hospices to care for the dying.

As federal help finally started arriving in 1990 the county tried to grab all of the money for itself. The community resisted and a vibrant network of community clinics was born, led by AHF.

THE COUNTY'S DIVIDE AND CONQUER TACTICS SET COMMUNITY GROUPS AGAINST ONE ANOTHER WHILE THE COUNTY REWARDED ITS "FRIENDS" AND PUNISHED ITS "ENEMIES".

The AIDS office used various administrative means to harass community groups in a discriminatory fashion.

Vast disparities existed between funding for white middle class areas and poor people of color communities.

THE AIDS OFFICE TOOK OVER STD CONTROL AND SINCE THEN RATES HAVE SOARED. PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICES SUCH AS CONTACT TRACING HAVE DISAPPEARED AND FUNDING IS SEVERELY LIMITED.

Monkeypox appeared among gay men in May and nothing was done for two months.

There is a clear failure of leadership that has led to the rampant rise of diseases.

PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH IS A SACRED TRUST.

