

A Million Thanks to Organizers and Marchers – Women Made History!

January 24, 2017

NOW activists are still thrilled and energized by the overwhelming turnout – not only for the Women’s March on Washington – but the impressive marches that took place in hundreds of cities and towns across the U.S. and around the world. The Washington March attendance was estimated at over half million and a rough total for all marchers in the U.S. ran as high as upwards of three million – declared the largest gathering of protest marchers in U.S. history.

Making March History - In D.C., Metro officials announced that the March day ridership was the second busiest day in the Washington subway system’s history, with 1,001,613 trips (compare this with Trump’s Inauguration Day’s recorded 570,557 trips). Of course, there could have been many more than the 500,000 attendees at the D.C. event and it certainly felt like closer to a million for those of us who participated. The crowd was such that police were encouraging the waves of incoming marchers to fill side streets. The crowd was so large, it was impossible for most marchers to get anywhere near the stage on Independence Avenue where members of Congress, actors and VIPs spoke for nearly five hours.

In Chicago a stunning success where the crowd was estimated at more than 250,000, the event had to be closed down because the marchers were so tightly packed they could not move. A quarter of a million New Yorkers filled 42nd Street, but observers said that the total could be as high as 400,000 as more marchers came in successive waves. In Boston, 175,000 gathered at Boston Common. In Los Angeles, an astounding 750,000 marchers packed the streets along a route from Pershing Square to City Hall. Scores of smaller marches took place in other parts of the larger L.A. metropolitan area, plus 50 other locations throughout California. At the NOW office we received email messages from members and supporters in smaller communities expressing surprise and pride that many thousands more than expected turned out in protest.

Hear Our Message - All marches and rallies everywhere were reported peaceful except for the exuberance of marchers who had something to say out loud about Donald Trump and about their passion for women’s rights, human rights, feminism, reproductive rights, LGBTQIA rights, the Affordable Care Act, immigrants, gender equality, racial justice and other favored causes. Some criticized the new president for attacks on Muslims, on climate change, on Mexicans and lack of respect for persons with disabilities and his inclination to grab women’s sex organs. A few noted the president’s evident conflicts of interest, non-disclosure of his taxes, and what they believe is his intention to use the office of president for personal financial gain.

Thousands of creative, funny, critical, sarcastic and compelling messages covered signs everywhere. Quite few hailed the new “Re-sisterhood.” Others noted that “You Can’t Comb-over Misogyny” and “Nasty Women United,” “Keep Your Hands Off My Private Parts,” “Protect *Roe v. Wade*,” “Save the Affordable Care Act,” “Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire,” “Love Trumps Hate,” “America Will Not Be Defined by the Malice of Donald Trump,” and many other novel messages. In D.C. piles of these signs were left on

the Ellipse south of the White House with the idea that Trump's people would see how marchers felt about the new administration.

Amazing Response from Around the World - What was immensely gratifying was the response around the world: 673 cities in 70 countries, including a gathering of 30 people in Antarctica!. From London, to Tel Aviv, Moscow, Paris, Tokyo, Sydney – all declared their sisterhood with U.S. women in their advocacy for women's equal rights and opposition to Trump's misogyny. Many more in other countries catching on a bit late want to stage their own women's marches. In sum, it is an amazing uprising of a global women's consciousness that can be pivotal for change to bring about women's equal rights, full reproductive health and rights, access to education and economic opportunities. (For more about the marches and rallies here in the U.S. and around the world, check out the articles linked at the end of this article.)

Thanks to Everyone Who Helped - A special thanks should go to activists who helped plan and organize local marches, to all those who called and emailed friends and family urging them to attend, to those who volunteered to distribute signs and gather signatures at the marches, and to the millions who marched or rallied and sent women's messages loud and clear. Your work made the marches around the country a tremendous success, increased NOW's visibility and expanded our network of feminist activists. Together we will move forward as an unstoppable force for women's equality.

Our Commitment to Post-March Activism

The serious work begins now with a dedicated grassroots outpouring to protect and advance the gains women in the United States have made over the last half century. Here is what we must do:

- Re-commit to oppose any repeal or further undermining of women's abortion rights and access to contraception and a restoration of full access to reproductive health care services in every community.
- Oppose any Trump administration effort to defund women's health clinics, to de-fund domestic and sexual violence assistance programs, and other critical human needs programs that support low- and moderate income families.
- Exert pressure on members of Congress who would repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) without an orderly transition to an improved, more affordable health insurance plan that provides the same (or better) guarantees and coverage that the ACA currently provides.
- Fight any law or policy that reduces equal access to education and limits girls' and women's economic opportunities, including laws and policies that weaken policies against sexual harassment and sexual assault.
- Continue to promote equal pay through new laws and to seek full ratification of an Equal Rights Amendment.
- Work in concert with communities of color to end discrimination and abusive treatment and to improve educational and economic opportunities.

- Oppose all efforts to undermine these vital programs than benefit more than 100 million women, men and children by communicating directly with members of Congress about the need to protect and expand Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.
- Protect LGBTQIA equality gains and work to achieve comprehensive non-discrimination policies and laws.
- Help identify and recruit feminist candidates for all levels of public office; encourage and support them in their campaigns for election. We must overturn the conservative Republican majorities that control legislatures in two-thirds of the states and Congress.
- Seek to turn those lawmakers out of office who vote to defund these critical programs and work to elect lawmakers who will advocate for equal rights, for women's reproductive health care, for programs that lift up economic well-being of low- and moderate-income families, and who support our feminist principles.
- Oppose restrictive voter ID laws, initiatives that limit the number polling places, early voting and other efforts undertaken by conservative activists to limit votes by persons of color, women, students, low-income individuals and others who face challenges in obtaining photo IDs or getting to the polls.

A Sampling of News Articles about the Historic Marches

Women's March on Washington – A Sea of Pink-Hatted Protesters Vow to Resist Donald Trump,

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/womens-march-on-washington-a-sea-of-pink-hatted-protesters-vow-to-resist-donald-trump/2017/01/21/ae4def62-dfdf-11e6-acdf-14da832ae861_story.html?utm_term=.1b34ef7bb729

A Record Show of Solidarity and Resistance at the Women's March on Washington,

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/a-record-show-of-solidarity-and-resistance-at-the-womens-march-on-washington/2017/01/22/1f16f453-89e4-4924-8938-d0b1ff1010c9_story.html?utm_term=.7e512e2bad32

Women's March – New York City,

<http://heavy.com/news/2017/01/womens-march-new-york-city-nyc-photos-videos-of-how-many-people-attended-crowd-size-pictures-tweets/>

Women's March on Washington, Boston and Around the World,

<http://www.bu.edu/today/2017/womens-march-on-washington-boston-womens-march-for-america/>

Women's March In Los Angeles Draws and Estimated 750,000,

<http://www.dailynews.com/general-news/20170121/womens-march-los-angeles-draws-estimated-750k-this-is-what-we-do-as-americans>

Chicago Women's March – More Than 250,000 people, Majority of Them Women on the Move Against Trump and Trumpism,

<http://www.countercurrents.org/2017/01/24/chicago-womens-march-more-than-250000-people-majority-of-them-women-on-the-move-against-trump-and-trumpism/>

Worldwide People Rally in Support of Women's March on Washington,

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/worldwide-people-rally-in-support-of-womens-march-on-washington/2017/01/21/bc232bd8-de69-11e6-8902-610fe486791c_story.html?utm_term=.f87f2cc0c38f