

Women's March 2017

An Overwhelming Success

What Can I Do Now?

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The Women's March on January 21st 2017 brought out 4,876,700 demonstrators in 673 marches in all fifty states and in eighty countries around the world. It was a women's march that promoted the traditional women's movement issues such as equal pay for equal work, women's healthcare, reproductive rights, healthcare for all, maternity leave, and all the related issues of housing, education, childcare, human rights, free press, workers' rights, freedom of religion and so on. It was not an anti-Trump rally but it was in favor of everything Trump is against and it was also planned for the day after the Trump inauguration.

The Trump team cannot understand why 4.8 million people came out to protest after Donald Trump's inauguration. There weren't demonstrations anything like that after the inaugurations of Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton, George W. Bush or Obama. So, what was the problem? Let us count the ways:

- 1) Trump launched a demagogic campaign fabricating threats, stoking fears and offering to solve those fears by HIS personal strengths. In an effort to destroy the basis of civil discourse and statesmanship he vowed to do away with "political correctness" and then let loose a torrent of misogyny, bigotry, vulgarity and incendiary hate speech.
- 2) His was a campaign based on insults, lies and an authoritarian discourse.
- 3) He maintained a white supremacist sub-text that was clearly understood by the KKK, the Alt-Right as well as by every minority group in the country.
- 4) He openly incited violence.
- 5) His inflammatory rhetoric emboldened bigots across the country and the incidence of hate crimes against minorities shot up.
- 6) He called for the Russians to hack the Democratic National Committee and whether it was on his orders or not, they did and they released that information through Wikileaks to Trump's election advantage.

Simply put, 4.8 million people came out after Trump's inauguration as this was not an election between a Republican and a Democrat. It was an election between demagoguery and democracy. The demonstration was in defense of democracy and a wide platform of women's issues.

The incapacity to think scientifically left the Trump campaign arguing against "verifiable facts" with their "unsubstantiated beliefs." In the Nazi era, it was said, "If you repeat a lie often enough, people will believe it, and you will even come to believe it yourself." And so, we heard over and over, Obama was not born in the US, Obama is Muslim, the Affordable Care Act is a disaster, Sen. John McCain is a loser, Mexicans are rapists, Climate Change is a Chinese hoax, Russia did not hack the DNC and so on. Without access to critical thinking, or even basic logic, Trump and his team connected the dots in the same way all conspiracy theorists do. But just because you can connect the dots does not mean the dots are connected.

The Women's March of 2017 was the largest political demonstration in world history. Some have asked if it was a "moment" or a "movement." To turn it into a movement every individual must ask, "What can I do now to contribute to this movement?" Here are a few ideas but perhaps you have others.

1. Vote – Register to vote, stay informed of the issues, vote locally, vote in state elections and vote in national elections.
2. Protest – Go to rallies and marches, protest non-violently and let your voice be heard.
3. Sign petitions in defense of democracy.
4. Write to your elected officials through the internet or standard mail. Let them know what you are thinking and let them know that the whole world is watching. Write letters to the editor, blogs, books, articles or whatever. Share your thoughts and opinions. The great educator, John Dewey, wrote, "Democracy has to be born anew every

generation, and education is its midwife.” It’s time again for our generation to defend democracy so it can be born anew!

5. Call your elected officials and let them know your opinions.

6. Run for political office – The news broadcaster Wes “Scoop” Nisker used to say at the end of his broadcasts “If you don’t like the news, go out and make some of your own.” If you have the skills and the desire, run for political office.

7. Contribute financially to the political party of your choice, or to Moveon.org, ACLU, NAACP, UNHCR, etc.

8. Mobilize with political and/or civil society groups.

9. Make creative signs, buttons, slogans – “Make America Think Again,” “Ikea has better cabinets,” “Love Trumps Hate”

10. Contribute your time, effort and skills to key political issues and candidates for the 2017, 2018 and 2020 elections.

11. Support marginalized and threatened groups – Muslims, Mexicans, women, Gold Star Families, etc.

12. No single person can do everything nor will he or she even be effective at trying to do everything. Look to your work skills, education, experience, talents, hobbies, social skills and personal connections. Then, think of creative ways to engage them in the service of this national emergency. Think globally, act locally. Think big picture, work on the little picture. A janitor at Nasa once spoke with justifiable pride about doing his part to put a man on the moon. There is no work that is insignificant in the service of a great project or great movement. Poetry, posters, songs, articles, videos, documentaries, research can all be enlisted in the battle against this threat to democracy. If you are good at handling social media, get creative and get involved. Harness your legal, accounting, information technology, medical, academic, research, writing or translation skills to this group effort to save our country from demagoguery and cultural deterioration. It is in all of our hands and in each of our hands.

13. Read and understand the Constitution

14. When communicating in support of your cause do not use hyperbole use accurate and referenced facts and data. Be precise.

15. We cannot win through the expression of condemnation, frustration and rage, for that can only serve as part of the emotion that drives us. We must be driven primarily by our deep values and beliefs without compromise. We must win through the expression of an inspirational vision and a meaningful truth, through intelligent approaches that solve the problems and conflicts of the day, through making presumed enemies into our friends, and through meeting confrontation with steadfast firmness. All of this must be embraced every moment of every day or we are lost.

“For evil to succeed, all it needs is for good men (and women) to do nothing”. ----- Martin Luther King, Jr.

