



# COMMUNIQUE

## 1180 MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN WASHINGTON WOMEN'S MARCH MAKING HISTORY

By Marci Rosenblum, Local 1180 Communications Director

**“Women, if the soul of the nation is to be saved, I believe that you must become its soul,” said Coretta Scott King long before an estimated half million women descended on Washington D.C. in what has now become a history-making march on the Capital.**

It wasn't only in Washington, D.C. that women took to the streets en masse, however. On January 21, 2017, more than five million women worldwide marched in protest of a newly-elected president who they claim ran the most blatantly misogynistic presidential campaign in recent history. His victory also has sparked an epic war on women's rights in Congress, something women will not tolerate.

“We're women. We're proud. We're strong. And we represent half of the world's population,” said 1180 First Vice President Gina Strickland, who joined with a hundred other 1180 members who traveled together to Washington for the march. “We cannot let #45 (as Donald Trump is now often referred) continue to try and rule with an iron fist and take away rights we have worked so hard to secure.”

The march was billed by organizers as a nonpartisan opportunity for people to “stand together in solidarity with our partners and children for the protection of our rights, our safety, our health, and our families — recognizing that our vibrant and diverse communities are the strength of our country.”

If a march of this magnitude seemed to come together in record time, that's because it did. The idea for this mass mobilization of activists and protestors began forming on November 8, 2016, as Election Day returns poured in. A Hawaiian grandmother and retired attorney named Teresa Shook created a Facebook event page inviting women to gather to protest in D.C. on inauguration weekend. When she went to sleep that night, she had about 40 RSVPs. But when she awoke early the next morning, 10,000 people thought it was a brilliant idea and said they would be there, too. Simultaneously, Bob Bland, founder of a New York fashion incubator and an advocate for domestic manufacturing, had a similar idea. She also posted about it on Facebook. The two women found out about

each other, collaborated on their ideas, and were joined by a dozen other women who wanted to make the march a reality.

Thanks to the help of social media, the Women's March idea spread like wildfire and in record time. By January 20, 2017, more than 222,000 people said they would be joining their sisters, daughters, mothers, aunts and friends in Washington, D.C. The numbers only climbed from there. On January 16, 2017, Fox News reported that authorities were expecting a crowd of almost 500,000 people.

And that's the official count of marchers. According to crowd scientists (who knew there was such a thing), the Women's March was roughly three times the size of the audience at Trump's inauguration.

In case you are inclined to believe “alternative facts” as provided by the Trump Administration, think again. That half million estimate was in line with one given by a city official who said that march participation likely even surpassed half a million, according to The Associated Press.

“It's not surprising that the number of marchers was significantly more than the estimated attendance at Donald Trump's inauguration ceremony the previous day,” Strickland said. “People come out for what's important.”

While it was called the Women's March on Washington, it wasn't only those of the female gender who descended on the Capital. All anti-Trump Americans, including men and boys, came out to show support. March organizers said the protest was not anti-Trump, however, but rather pro-woman, and plenty of the male gender were willing to support women, and even wear pink to do so. Thousands of men walked side by side with women, reinforcing what they came to stand for.

“Women of all ages, religions, races, and nationalities, along with men who support us, needed to send the new president a strong message and that we did,” said Gloria Middleton, CWA Local 1180's Secretary-Treasurer. “While our backgrounds might all be different, we all have one thing in common when we agree that a country led by Trump endangers our freedoms. We need to fight for those rights that aren't even neces-

sarily traditional 'women's rights' such as the rights of immigrants, health care, African-Americans, the right to choose, and law enforcement accountability."

If you're a woman in America, there is no doubt you probably feel personally affected by at least one of these struggles. After all, women's rights are human rights, and who's not in favor of human rights?

The worldwide rallies were aimed at Donald Trump in large part due to statements and positions attributed to him regarded as anti-women and quite offensive. During the presidential campaign, the thrice-married Trump was accused of making crude sexual comments about women and groping a dozen women. In addition to complaints about misogyny, the crowd ripped Trump for his policies on abortion, diversity, and climate change, just to list a few of the many.

The Women's March on Washington ranked among the largest single-day political demonstrations in U.S. history, along with protests in the 1960s and '70s opposing the Vietnam War. After the marches, officials who organized them reported that 673 marches took place worldwide. One common refrain heard throughout the day at most marches was "Build Bridges, Not Walls," referencing Trump's plan to build a wall on the border of Mexico and the United States.

Following the march, the organizers posted a five-page document that includes their values and principles:

- Women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights
- Gender justice is racial justice is economic justice
- Women deserve to live full and healthy lives, free of violence against our bodies
- It is our moral imperative to dismantle the gender and racial inequities within the criminal justice system
- We believe in reproductive freedom
- We believe in gender justice
- We believe in an economy powered by transparency, accountability, security, and equity
- We believe in equal pay for equal work and the right of all women to be paid equitably
- Women of color carry the heaviest burden in the global and domestic economic landscape, particularly in the care economy
- We believe that all workers — including domestic and farm workers — must have the right to organize and fight for a living minimum wage, and that unions and other labor associations are critical to a healthy and thriving economy

- Civil rights are our birthright
- It is time for an all-inclusive Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

"Women can do anything men can do and we need to be treated as such," Strickland said. "We fight fires, patrol the streets, fix cars, drive trucks, unplug toilets, and pilot airplanes. We are as effective in the board room as we are in raising children. We are entitled to equal opportunity, equal rights, and equal pay. We need to have control of our bodies and our own futures. That's why this women's march was, and still is, so important."

If #45 believes in his own words of making America great again, then returning women to foregone times of the Civil Rights movement and criminalized abortions, is just not an option.

Women are just plain tired of double standards. Hillary Clinton earns three million more votes than Donald Trump and still loses the election. Women earn 80 cents on the dollar compared to men, and women of color earn even less than that. And probably worst of all is that women have only 19 percent Congressional representation, yet it's the other 81 percent who will be determining the future of women.

That's why advancing a specific policy agenda — expanding family leave, ending racial profiling, maintaining or broadening access to abortion and birth control, and equal pay for equal jobs, among other issues — is so crucial at this time.

In a published report on [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org), Terry O'Neill, president of the National Organization for Women, said, "It's not a march about Trump the man,. It's a march about women's rights that are very much imperiled by the policies [President Trump] appears headed for."

No matter how hard women fight back, however, getting Republicans on board might not be so easy, as they control both legislative chambers and the governor's office in 24 states. "That is why, to a large extent, women's organizations are playing defense as they prepare for legislative battles around the country in 2017," the report said.

"This march was a show of force," Strickland said. "I know there are a lot of women who actually voted for Trump, but look how many came out against him. If we let ourselves return to the times of sweeping women under the carpet, then we have no one to blame but ourselves."

While there were literally hundreds of different signs being carried throughout the march, there is one that seemed to sum it all up the best. "I can't believe I still have to protest this shit."