



Post-election Demonstrations: From Iowa to D.C.

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ABOVE: Pro-
testers march
in Washington
D.C. on January
21st. LEFT: Pro-
testers assemble
in Des Moines,
IA, for their
chapter of the
women's march.
PHOTOS
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DES MOINES

It was a grey morning, but only slightly chilly as thousands of women's rights marchers gathered. Signs blared with messages against hate and discrimination. An assortment of messages such as "build bridges not walls," "Immigrant rights are Human Rights," "Love Trumps Hate". And of course there was a sea of pink yarn hats.

Initially the march was scheduled to be held inside of the state capitol--that was, until the organizers of the march realized that the RSVP numbers were exceeding the amount that was allowed into the state capitol. The day before the march they moved it outside to accommodate the estimated 10,000 marchers to arrive. By the organizer's count there were 26,000 attendees throughout the entire event. For some this was their first time at a march, but others were seasoned activists calling for change.

"I'm here today because I've been marching since I was eleven years old. In 1963 I was arrested marching with congressman John Lewis. I've been marching for rights ever since then," Vikki Brown, the co-chair of the affirmative action committee in Black Hawk county, said. "I tell people this isn't for a season it's for a reason. All rights. I've been fighting for civil rights for years."

People spread from the top of the steps of the capitol, facing towards downtown Des Moines to the bottom of the steps. The majority of the marchers prior to the march had gathered around the square midway down the steps to listen to the speakers that varied from Democratic state senators to high school students from Des Moines' Roosevelt High School to Native American clean water activists. Each brought their own flavor of issue to discuss from women's rights to saving the Affordable Care Act.

"We're here today for our grandmothers, the children that are not yet born, our daughters that are not yet born but our sons as well because we feel like we are at a time in our society where we need change and in order to do that we need to collaborate and unite with one another," Marissa Cummings, speaker from the Last Real Indians, said.

By noon, the actual march had begun around the the capitol. It was a slow start initially as the crowd had outgrown the sidewalks, but it rapidly picked up in pace and the march was completed in 45 minutes. Each person at the march wanted to be able to let their voices be heard.

"I hope that my granddaughter sees that we have a voice and that when we come together it makes a difference. It may not

show right then, but it will change," Donya, a women's rights marcher, said.

MADISON

Thousands of signs hovered above the heads of protesters during the Women's March in Madison. Police were initially expecting a maximum of 15,000 protesters but final estimates showed up to 100,000 protesters--more than two-fifths of the population of Madison.

"I found the experience joyful, exhilarating and hopeful," said Dorris Lanning, an 88 year old resident of Cedar Rapids. "[The] people around the world felt so strongly about the wrong this administration is promoting came together, walked together, chanted together from all nationalities, all religions. We were united for a cause."

Although the march was titled "Women's March," protesters held signs about tweets, science, and "Unpresidenting" President Trump. Amid the long crowd, a leader of a series of chants was barely visible, but chants were carried through the streets.

At the end of the marching path, several additions were made to the iconic "Forward" statue that celebrates the women's suffrage movement located in front of the Madison capitol building, including the popular pink "pussyhats" hundreds of protesters wore during the event.

"The message sent loudly and clearly is that there are millions of people concerned about the need for equal rights and treatment for all people," said Monica Dreyer Rossi, an Iowa City resident.

Along with the diversity of signs in the crowd, the protesters came from many different walks of life.

"I was also very pleased to see how diverse the crowd was in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, and income," said Rossi.

Lanning also agrees.

"There were a surprising number of men," Lanning said. "I realize they were marching for various causes but many were carrying placards supporting women."

Badra Kalil '21 believes there's a reason behind this diversity.

"I feel that, in this day and age, people start to view women's rights as a thing of the past, that the world has come so far that we don't have to worry about things like equal rights," she said. "However, many women and minorities still feel as though they aren't getting the kind of representa-

tion as your general white male. I think this is why so many people, not just women, came together to protest."

Lanning is unsure of the effects of the march but hopes it will change the attitudes of women, but Rossi and Kalil are sure that this march made a difference.

"I think the march helped to make women more aware of their potential for influencing decisions in this country and perhaps stimulate some women to stand for public office," said Rossi.

Kalil agrees.

"When millions of people worldwide come together to protest, it doesn't go unnoticed," she said. "I hope this will make a difference."

WASHINGTON D.C.

To combat post-election feelings of unease, Iowa City resident Monica Moen organized two buses of 56 people to go to the Women's March on Washington the day after the inauguration of Donald Trump.

"There seems to be an air of exclusion [regarding] certain people of color, of different sexual orientations, women, and I just didn't think that was what represented America--that we are a combination of so many different races, religions--and the election, I don't think, was a representation of who we are," said Moen.

The New York Times sourced metro usage and crowd scientists to estimate that there were that there were over 470,000 women and men united in Washington, DC, to peacefully protest Donald Trump's views on women's rights. Police were visible throughout the city, although there were few, if any, problems that they needed to stop. As of 6 PM on January 21, no arrests had been made in DC in relation to the women's march (Huffington Post). People of various races, genders, ages, sexual preferences, and ethnicities showed their support for issues such as clean water, abortions, wage gaps, rape prevention, among others.

About 40 people assembled at the North Dodge Hy-Vee parking lot to send off their friends and family on the afternoon of Friday, January 20. Although not all of the people who gathered attended the march themselves, they aimed to show support for the causes with signs and encouragement.

The rally was scheduled to begin at 10 AM Saturday, and the march was scheduled to begin at 1:15 PM. However, the march did not begin until hours after it was scheduled due to the immense crowd.

At the last minute, Naomi Meurice '19 realized that she needed to participate in the march in order to fight for what she believed in.

"Just being there in the atmosphere was very crazy," Meurice said. "There were so many different types of people there. Not only women, but young men, every type of person--and I think that was crazy that we all came together for one thing."

Beatrice Kearns '19 is a strong supporter of Planned Parenthood and abortion rights. She came to the march on the Iowa City bus, accompanied by her mom, to stand up for what she believes in.

"I think it was a really cool experience. There were a lot of cool people, and although it was really crowded, there were a lot of cool signs and it was pretty fun," said Kearns.

Kearns believes that it is important for her generation to be a part of these experiences and to stand up for what they believe in.

"It's important that our generation participates because we're going to be leading the country at some point. And also I think having these experiences is important and it's cool being able to tell people I was on the Women's March on Washington," said Kearns.

The Women's March on Washington was the largest post-inauguration protest in the history of the United States according to The New York Times, but Nia Washington '18 believes that in order for the march to be fully effective, there must be continued resistance.

"We can't just stop now. We have to keep doing these things and get our opinions out there," said Washington.

Moen agrees; she hopes that the March will have a lasting effect, and that this will help motivate the men and women of the United States to continue to fight for their rights.

"I'm hoping that this march is a momentum and we can keep this going. It can be a strong reminder that we are a diverse nation; because of that diversity we are even better and stronger," said Moen.