



## Why I Marched

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My view from the crowd

Anyone aware of the presidential election will have heard of the protests on and around inauguration day. News channels, analysts, and especially President Trump focused mainly on crowd sizes and small outbreaks of violence, while thousands of women traveled to the capital for a "protest march." But this is not a political article, because my march was not about politics.

When I first heard of the march two months ago, I was just excited to be a part of something important. Obviously, as one of six girls in my family, I saw the connection to my own life; but I didn't really understand what the point was until the day of the march.

We flew early Saturday morning from Boston to Baltimore on Spirit Air, an airline whose moniker fit perfectly with the crowd of cheerful passengers, 95% of whom were women wearing pink hats (for further detail on the hats, search "pink cat hats" online). Even the security officials sensed the excitement, and were all smiles examining clear backpacks full of trail mix and granola bars. The flight attendants were thrilled that everyone was cooperative and friendly; there was no pushing or rushing, just a group of women helping each other on to a plane to go for a walk.

Because of my 8-month-old nephew, my sister scouted out a "sanctuary" for mothers and young children at a church a few blocks from the Capitol for everyone to meet up. The volunteers indiscriminately opened their arms to hundreds of strangers over the two hours I was there, offering refreshments and encouragement for the cause we all shared. Even the bathroom line was happy.

We eventually dragged ourselves away from the comfortable couches and made our way over to the rally point. I was somewhat overwhelmed by the crowds at first, given the publicity beforehand. I amused myself by reading the signs, appreciative of the usually crude humor directed at the president and the world in general. Intrigued by one particularly descriptive slogan, I heard a building rumble behind me, and turned around to see what looked like the remaining female population of D.C. making its way towards us. The overwhelming numbers caused confusion, and after another hour of waiting a splinter march took an alternative route on the street parallel to that planned, squeezing through market stalls to meet the front of the group. But there were too many people to organize much, the streets were too crowded to know what was going on, and clearly nobody cared about the original route. It was chaotic and disorganized, but it was peaceful and purposeful, and that made it more effective than any coordinated march.

I have always known women could do anything if given the chance. In my house, we were a majority, so the power rested solely in our hands. I was lucky enough to watch my older sisters and my mom go through college and make a difference afterwards, as teachers, doctors, EMTs, musicians, and mothers. In Marblehead High School, the gender distinction is actually often biased towards girls, because, let's face it, we are far more likely to do our homework. In all seriousness, we are fortunate here that girls get the same opportunities as boys in school. But that may not be the case after school, and we must be prepared to do what we want to anyways.

So I marched for my sisters, because they're living proof that women can do anything. I marched for the woman who stuck her foot into the train door to keep it open for one more person to squeeze in. I marched for my nephews, so they grow up surrounded by men and women who treat each other with respect and fairness. I marched to continue the tradition of protest, peaceful and otherwise, that has given people voice and opportunity for more than 240 years. If even one woman feels empowered by our show of solidarity, then the purpose of those million others was fulfilled, and we can all rest easy knowing we might have inspired the next great leader. In my opinion, that's not politics - that's just the world as it should be.



## Quote of the Week

"It is what you read when you don't have to that determines what you will be when you can't help it."

- Oscar Wilde

## Students Voice Their Opinions about the Future

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Donald Trump's election has precipitated protests to fight division and voice democratic values, and hundreds of thousands of people have already marched across the United States. The rhetoric of his campaign has left many Americans feeling targeted and isolated. I interviewed Marblehead High School students as they voiced their perspectives regarding the Trump Presidency.

### Student 1:

*I hope that Donald Trump takes stances on issues that continue the progress that has been made on climate change, civil rights, and peace. I also hope that he will cease to belittle and attack those that oppose him and leave behind the hateful rhetoric of his campaign, progressing to something more forward thinking. I hope that he will denounce the support of the racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, and homophobic groups that have praised him. I fear that he will not take a step back and listen to those that are no longer represented by the government. Trump's "America First" ideology is damaging when America is built from the people of other countries. There is a contradiction in wanting America to concentrate solely on American affairs and wanting to interfere militarily in places such as the Middle East. Trump's refusal to admit scientific fact is also concerning. Climate change is a real issue and it is the one that will affect more generations than a war or a policy change. If we ruin our planet, there's no fixing it and we've destroyed billions of future lives because we can't think beyond our own issues. I hope that Trump continues the forward progress on LG-BTQ issues that was made during the Obama administration. Trump's presidency will affect me. I don't go to Planned Parenthood, I'm not yet burdened with student loans or debt, and I don't yet need to pay for my own health care, but these are things that will become my responsibility during Trump's presidency. I worry about that.*

### Student 2:

*I am not American, but I do not live in this country and I've only been here for a few months so my opinion is quite objective. I think that regardless of whether you support Trump's presidency or not, chaos, sabotage, threats, and obstruction make Trump's opposition as bad as he is. Of course in a democracy it is the right of every person to express his or her opinion, and that is why elections are held. Last year, the Democratic Party fought and lost its battle against Trump, the reasons for which do not matter anymore. However bad the new president could be, right now it is best to take one step back and let him play his cards. If the Democrats had won the elections this is what they would expect from the Republicans. I have been told that I do not understand the fears of American citizens, and I agree, how could I? But it does not take much effort to understand that undermining Trump will do nothing but encourage him to use strong-arm tactics to defend himself. Instead, I believe energy should be spent on working to make sure that whatever happened will not occur again in four years, and that the next elections will see the Democrats as winners. Hopefully, Trump will be set aside by those same people whom he praises today. It is not about one side or the other, but it is about being smart and using a different approach, which I consider more rational and eventually more effective. As I said, however, I am not American so my opinion is very objective. All countries have a bad leader at some point in their history - people that are unfit for their role no matter what political party or ideology. Even so, the solution is not a civil war, but rather to roll up your sleeves and work hard together.*

### Student 3:

*Although I do not approve of President Trump's opinions/policies/intentions with respect to women, minorities, immigration and global warming, I am of the opinion that President Trump will make a positive impact on the American people and the country as a whole. His domestic economic policies, like lowering taxes and keeping factories in the U.S., will sustain and grow jobs, which will stimulate the economy. I support President Trump's intention to withdraw from NAFTA. The U.S. has a significant trade deficit. President Trump will equalize the playing field with respect to exports/imports, because he is a strong, forceful negotiator. His commitment to put America first will positively impact all the American people. In addition, he will gain more respect from world leaders, as he is not afraid to stand up for America. I am of the opinion that President Trump will increase U.S. Security, resulting in a safer country for all Americans. I support his intention to eliminate or significantly reduce the capability of the Islamic State. He will take the necessary steps from a military standpoint to protect the American people from terrorists.*

### Student 4:

*One of my biggest fears is that Trump will create a culture of hatred in the U.S. There have already been reports of hate crimes connected to his campaign, and his presidency may validate bigoted ideology and create a new white-nationalist social norm in the country. I am also worried he may try to restrict the press due to his inability to handle criticism. I hope that whatever changes he makes benefit our country, and if they don't, that they will be easily undone by the next president.*

### Student 5:

*I hope that Trump will be able to restore our economy to its former glory, keep factories and manufacturing jobs in America, and re-unite the country. I fear he will establish unfair abortion and marriage laws.*

### Student 6:

*I really do hope that Donald Trump is a successful president because I do not want my country to be a mess. I want him to maintain relations with foreign countries and keep Americans safe from terrorists. But I don't know if I believe that he can or will accomplish these goals. Many members of his cabinet are sexist, racist, and/or homophobic and have been given control over areas that they are not qualified or educated in. We need to maintain our laws that protect our Earth, or else future generations will not survive. The things Trump himself has said are often rude and uneducated that they are unrepeatable. I want children to look up to someone who says things that are kind, and in the position of president he must now become a better example. It's absurd that he is our president, but I do wish him the best because I want our country to thrive.*