

## Women's March: DC



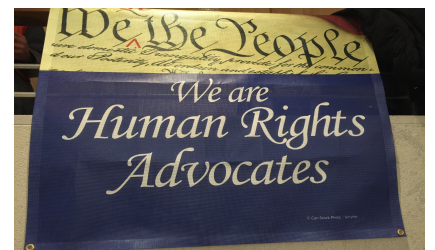
Traveling alone from Florida to DC for the march I wasn't sure what to expect.



The only thing I was certain of is that I was compelled to be there. It wasn't just the disappointment of my candidate losing the prize despite garnering the most votes. It wasn't the sadness of a dream so close to reality yet still unfulfilled. It wasn't the frustration of an incompetent, unqualified man usurping the election from the most qualified candidate in modern times. It wasn't even the insulting conduct of a spoiled winner who refused to tried to breach the divide he had exacerbated.



It was that all the issues being voiced were MY concerns: issues I had advocated for, called on legislators for, written about.... as a teacher, I had lost students to gun violence.





As a mother, I saw the agony on the faces of women who had had 'the talk' with their young black sons, but still they were dead in the streets. As a woman, old enough to remember the days before Roe v. Wade, I know we couldn't turn the clocks back on a woman's control of her body. As an environmentalist, I care deeply about our planet so climate change denial disturbs me. As an educated woman, I respect science and know its value to students AND to communities. As a retiree, I certainly cannot afford to have my earned benefits of Social Security and Medicare diminished. As a friend, I know people whose lives have been saved by the Affordable Care Act, Obamacare. As a minister, I prize freedom of ALL religions.



Marching I saw signs everywhere. Every single one had meaning for me. Some made me laugh. Some made me want to cry. It's so hard that after all these many years, we are still fighting the same battles.







And so, I went. But I found more than I expected. I found camaraderie. I made friends with strangers. I was inspired. I was motivated. I was energized. I got so much more than I either expected or I gave. I was welcomed. Churches opened their doors. Signs were prepared for me. Hospitality was shared. Police acknowledged us with smiles and high fives. And through it all it was clearly self evident: we were not alone. Ours was not a voice in the wilderness. Ours was a universal call to conscience.

A wake up call. A call to arms. A reality check that the world is watching and it doesn't like what it sees. But its voice will not be ignored. This is a movement: Like Abolitionists, Like Suffragettes, Like Civil Rights demonstrators, Like Viet Nam protesters: we will not be ignored or silenced until we have the justice we seek.



If the election was a surprise, this was a shock. The pundits didn't predict it. The media didn't understand it. And the political parties are not yet sure what to do about it.



But I was there. I was fully present. I know the future is through uncharted waters. But there is no doubt there is no turning back. The only way is forward.

