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# The Contributor

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ONE YEAR LATER:

# WHY WE MARCHED

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BROTHERS ARE  
CASTING IN  
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# ONE YEAR LATER

## WHY WE MARCHED.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BAILEY BASHAM

Darlene Leong Neal stood body-to-body in a sea of pink cat-eared hats. She was surrounded by nearly 500,000 marchers in Washington, D.C., all waiting for the announcement to take that first step.

Neal had made the 700-plus mile trip with 12 others from Nashville to participate in the Women's March on Washington, and after what seemed like hours of waiting, they heard the news from the stage — the march was on.

"We got the instructions from the stage that we're all going to turn around together to march out," Neal says. "There was maybe one step, but we had arrived. Once we took those baby steps, we'd done it. It was beautiful. Even

in that scenario, all the people who wanted to march were excited about those baby steps."

In a few days, Neal will dust off her protest signs to join the thousands of Tennesseans expected to turn out for the second anniversary women's march and conference in Nashville. This past year, the first organized women's march of the modern movement started as a grassroots idea to bring together people who were frustrated by the fact that Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton won the popular vote, but lost the election. It quickly came to represent the movements for affordable birth control, better access to health care, equal pay for equal work, rights for trans-



gender Americans and so much more.

The march came together in about two months, and the idea was co-opted by every state in the country. Organizing began on Facebook before spreading to pockets of people in communities around the United States. The Women's March became the largest single-day protest in U.S. history. A total of 673 sister marches were held, five of which were in Tennessee.

This year, the Women's March — referred to this year as Power to the Polls — is being held in Las Vegas, as Nevada is a swing state that will be determinant in the way Senate seats are filled in the 2018 midterm elections. The march in Nevada will be the genesis of a national tour focused on getting citizens registered in their precincts.

The purpose of the march is to “[uplift] the voices and campaigns of the nation’s most marginalized communities to create transformative social and political change,” according to the official Women’s March website.

“Women are the caretakers, so for every marcher, there may be a different reason to march,” says Kristin Dillard, a volunteer coordinator for the march. “My reason to march might be concerns about the environment. Yours might be folks that are hungry. Someone else’s might be folks that are undocumented.

**“WOMEN ARE THE CARETAKERS, SO FOR EVERY MARCHER, THERE MAY BE A DIFFERENT REASON TO MARCH. MY REASON TO MARCH MIGHT BE CONCERNS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT. YOURS MIGHT BE FOLKS THAT ARE HUNGRY. SOMEONE ELSE’S MIGHT BE FOLKS THAT ARE UNDOCUMENTED.”**

**- KRISTIN DILLARD  
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**

Anyone who doesn’t have the perfect privilege of being male, white, straight, Christian and born in America is on someone’s mind as they are marching.”

This past year, like many at the Women’s March, Dillard was a first-timer. Her involvement, she says, was a reaction to the results of the 2016 presidential election.

“I committed to D.C. before I even knew there was a Nashville march. The vibe there was nothing like I had ever seen before,” Dillard says. “There were 600,000 people standing body-to-body, no moving for about three or four hours. We were just communing with the people around us and hearing each other’s stories about why we were all there, what we were going to do moving forward.

“I have always, for my whole life, been expectant and couldn’t wait for someone else to do the right thing and fix [whatever needed fixing]. And then ... I woke up. I realized I am somebody, and I can do something.”

Dillard’s response — what Neal refers to as righteous anger — was not uncommon among march organizers, activists and the “average Jane” after the election.

“I look at my experience and see that last year, so many of us were primarily motivated by righteous anger,” Neal says. “Now, I see so many of us having moved to a space [where] outrage is not the primary motivator. We’re still pissed, but now we’re a lot more strategic

## WHERE TO FIND A WOMEN'S MARCH NEAR YOU

*This year, anniversary marches will be held on Jan. 20 and 21 in more than 250 cities across the United States and around the world. The Women's March 2.0: Power Together Tennessee will be held in Nashville on Jan. 20 at 2 p.m. in Public Square. Other locations include:*

Buchanan, Tenn.	Jan. 21	Lansing, Mich.
Chattanooga, Tenn.	Jan. 20	Bakersfield, Calif.
Huntsville, Ala.	Jan. 20	Spokane, Wash.
Knoxville, Tenn.	Jan. 21	New York, N.Y.
Mongtomery, Ala.	Jan. 20	Washington, D.C.
		Roanoke, Va.
		Sioux Falls, S.D.
		Little Rock, Ark.
		New Orleans, La.
		Charlotte, N.C.
		Raleigh, N.C.
		Asheville, N.C.
		Seattle, Wash.
		Las Vegas, Nev.
		and many more.

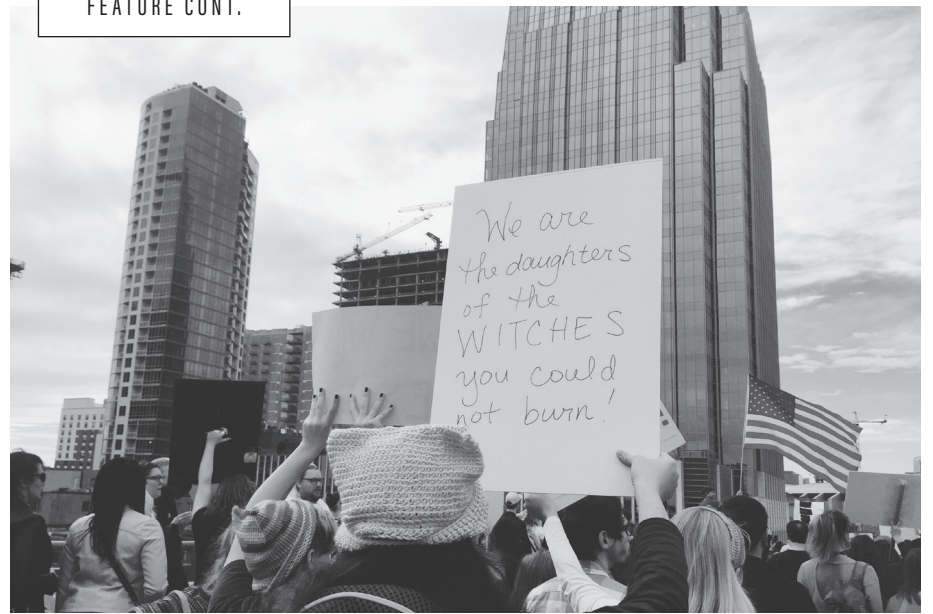
*For all locations, check out [powertothevotes.com](http://powertothevotes.com).*

about it. We're mad, but we're going to win.

"We've learned individually as activists and organizers that we need to be more intentional and collaborative with other groups and individuals because how do we build power for change? Together. It is literally the only way."

Neal, who has been working in the advocacy world since she started a food bank as an 18-year-old, said she has plans to be a part of that collaborative effort for the rest of her life. "I've got a really loud voice. That's one thing I do have," Neal says. "I don't have access to corridors of power, but I'm willing to stand outside and ring the warning bell. The main reason I march and do this work is because it's not

politics — it's personal. I think that's what it comes down to for a lot of people who march. It's a very personal expression of my morals, my values. I value all of us, and I don't feel good when I see people being left behind or left out," she says. "I march for my sons. Especially as a mother to boys; I have to do this for them. There is no choice. That's how compelled I feel. I am under a moral imperative to do what I can do to build the world that I know they deserve. I know them. I know what they're capable of, and they're not going to get there in this world. What are my options? Get me a hammer. If I have to tear something down before I can rebuild? OK. I'll do it. I'll leave the prettier stuff to other people." 🍌



## 2017: THE YEAR OF THE WOMAN

### JANUARY

Roughly 4 million people gathered in towns across the United States and abroad to show support for the 2017 Women's March.

The INSPIRE Women Act was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. It calls on NASA to encourage women and girls to pursue careers in STEM.

The Promoting Women in Entrepreneurship Act was written into legislation by the U.S. House, calling on the National Science Foundation to "encourage its entrepreneurial programs to recruit and support women to extend their focus beyond the laboratory and into the commercial world."

### MARCH

Around the world, International Women's Day became the day without women — women went on strike, staying home from work, closing schools and even marching to demonstrations at parliament in the UK. The strike, endorsed by the Women's March, was done in protest of pay inequality and workplace harassment and discrimination.

### JUNE

*Wonder Woman*, which made more than \$100 million in its opening weekend, became the biggest live-action box office ever by a female director.

### FEBRUARY

Viola Davis became the first black actor to win the "Triple Crown of Acting" award at the Academy Awards.

Massachusetts senator Elizabeth Warren attempted to read a letter by Coretta Scott King, but was silenced by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. This was the impetus to the phrase, "Nevertheless, she persisted."

### APRIL

The White House declared the month of April National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention month.

*The New York Times* found that Fox News personality Bill O'Reilly had paid five women who had accused him of sexual harassment for a total of \$13 million. O'Reilly left Fox with a \$25 million payout.

### JULY

Fox News CEO Roger Ailes stepped down amid accusations of sexual harassment.

### AUGUST

Rep. Maxine Waters sparked social media hashtags and viral memes when she interrupted Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin's answer to her question by repeating the phrase, "Reclaiming my time." The phrase later became the theme of the Women's Convention.

### SEPTEMBER

An unnamed female marine becomes the first female to pass the notoriously grueling Infantry Officer Course since it was opened to women in April of 2016.

### NOVEMBER

Democrat and former journalist Danica Roem became the first openly transgender person to be elected and hold a seat in a U.S. state legislature.

Ravi Bhalla became the first Sikh-elected mayor in New Jersey and one of few Sikhs to become mayor of an American city.

Elizabeth Guzmán and Hala Ayala both made history in Virginia, becoming the first Hispanic women elected to the state's House of Delegates.

Top NPR News executive Mike Oreskes was forced out after allegations of sexual harassment.

Eight women came forward with accusations against CBS host Charlie Rose. Rose was fired later on that month.

NBC fired long-time *Today* co-host Matt Lauer over complaints of sexual misconduct in the workplace.

U.S. District Court Judge Lee Yeakel blocked the newest Texas anti-abortion law.

### JANUARY 2018

Women in Hollywood create the #TimesUp movement to request legislation that will penalize harassment and support those who have experienced abuse, harassment, inequality and discrimination while discouraging the silencing of victims through the use of non-disclosure agreements. The movement also raises funds for victims of workplace sexual harassment who are unable to afford legal aid.

### OCTOBER

*The New York Times* publishes a story on accusations of sexual assault, some decades old, that had been made against Harvey Weinstein. Actresses Ashley Judd and Rose McGowan were among the first to come forward.

The #MeToo movement, originally created by activist Tarana Burke more than 10 years ago, was reawakened when actress Alyssa Milano encouraged Twitter users who have experienced sexual harassment to respond with #MeToo.

Women's March organizers planned a convention to "tap into the power of women in leadership as the fundamental, grassroots force for change." More than 4,000 people attended.

### DECEMBER

It's announced that the number of women seeking elected offices at every level has been on a steady incline, according to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers.

Chef, restaurant owner and co-host of ABC's *The Chew*, Mario Batali, was fired from his position with ABC and stepped away from his restaurant duties after accusations of sexual misconduct.

Doug Jones won the Alabama Senate seat as a Democrat, beating accused harasser Roy Moore.

*The New York Times* reported that, for the first time in 37 years, the three most popular films of the year were female-driven.

*Time* magazine named "The Silence Breakers," referring to those who came forward to report sexual misconduct, as its Person of the Year.