



Northern NJ NOW Chapter Bulletin

winter 2017

Message From the President

The chaos and instability we are now facing under the Trump Administration is not, to my mind, the result of incompetence or inexperience. I think it is all completely purposive, to keep us spinning and spinning and create a situation in which only Trump (and Bannon and Putin) is in charge and knows what is going on, while everyone else peters out from exhaustion and confusion.

Right now we are in the midst of a national outrage, the executive order on immigration. However, by the time you get this bulletin, this outrage will be one of an onslaught of many more. There is the risk that all of these outrages, piled one on top of the other, will overwhelm us. Right now, for example, people are hardly paying attention to the demotion of the Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in favor of Chief Strategist Bannon. The firing of the Acting Attorney General is barely a blip—although called the Monday Night Massacre, the true story is that the Justice Department is no longer an independent curb on the Presidency; it is now an arm of the Presidency. Etc. etc. etc.

What does “give us your huddled masses yearning to breathe free” mean to you? What does “exceptionalism” mean to you? What does “United States of America” mean to you? I was brought up to believe they are one and the same. Trump was not. He equates everything with himself; the first quote does not compute.

We must remain horrified by this outrageous man and his vision of a fascist America in his own image. We will march, we will call, we will write, we will persist in being sane, and NOT thinking that WE are the irrational ones. Like so many before us, fighting similar outrages, we shall prevail.

Bonnie - bonnie.shapiro2@verizon.net

January 21, 2017 The Mother of all Rallies, Worldwide Outrage. Voices from Trenton and NYC

Trenton, NJ- There were more than six thousand women and men of different colors, creeds and nationalities participating in the Women's March on New Jersey campaign that was hosted in state's capital city Trenton.



Elizabeth Mayer, Founder/Lead Organizer of The Women's March on New Jersey. Photo by Pradeep Pariyar Thapa

The Women's March on New Jersey

The March was so exciting! The crowd of 7500 was extraordinary for Trenton, one of the largest turn-outs ever. The signs and speakers were great! (See more photos at nnj.now.org)

As you know, NNJ NOW and NOW-NJ were sponsors of the March along with many other groups. I was honored to work on the Steering Committee with many other people, including March founder Elizabeth Meyer (her photo at the podium is included in this newsletter). NNJ contributed toward the payment for the venue, the sound system and other expenses, and NNJ member Laura Gaines contributed generously as well.

Not only were NNJ and NOW-NJ members out in full force, but both Maretta Short, President of Essex County NOW, and Deb Huber, our NOW-NJ President, were speakers, and they were outstanding!

Chip O'Brien, head of Jersey Justice Action, brought his students Isabel, Patrick, Link, and Harley from Fusion Academy in Morristown. I was able to (easily) persuade them to carry our NOW-NJ banner in the March (to see their young faces expressing terrific "attitude" go to our website at nnj.now.org).

After the March, several of us had lunch at a nearby restaurant, wearing our March t-shirts and hoodies. People came up to us asking what it was all about!! Amazing how uninformed many people are, isn't it? It will be the job of ALL OF US to keep informing them for the next four years!

Bonnie

The view from the NYC Women's Rally

The NYC March was the most amazing event I have ever attended. I have never seen a group of people who were more cooperative and supportive of each other. It reminded me of the atmosphere immediately following 9/11. There were so many people that the marchers just 1-2 blocks further down 2nd Ave didn't start marching for hours after we started. There was a point during the march when the organizers were trying to insert a band into the line up. They asked us to make way. Even though we were pressed cheek to jowl everyone was polite apologizing for pressing into each other as we somehow gave them some room to get into the march. At one point one of our group left the march due to symptoms of claustrophobia. She said she sat with a police officer who protectively said that he wasn't going to let anyone hurt his ladies (not exactly PC but the sentiment was great). There were as many men as women and men carried signs like: "I have a penis but I'm not a dick about equal rights" and "Women are perfect." There was a family with the father holding a sign that said "women's rights are equal rights" while he held onto his wife and two children. Every age and ethnicity was represented. I loved seeing the young men with their girlfriends all wearing pink cat-ear caps. By 4 pm I heard that the estimated number was 400,000 but there were blocks and blocks of marchers behind us so I think it was more like 500,000 (we were close to the front of the march).

Sincerely,
Marissa
NNJ Board member

And it continues..... February 12, 2017

Unity Rally in Hackensack called by State Senator Loretta Weinberg

Snow, sleet or rain could not keep 150 activists away. Speakers included: Bergen County freeholders, new Congressman Josh Gottheimer, ministers, mullahs, various union representatives and our own NOW chapter addressing women's rights.



Senator Loretta Weinberg
under cover from the
elements

How to maximize your lobbying efforts;

Conversations with a congressional staffer.

By Pat Reuss, retired NOW lobbyist and NOW policy advisor

There are two things that all progressive activists and concerned voters should be doing all the time right now, and they're by far the most important things. **You should NOT be bothering with online petitions or formula emailing.**

1. The best thing you can do to be heard and get your congressperson to pay attention is to have face-to-face time - if they have town halls, go to them. Go to their local offices. If you're in DC, try to find a way to go to an event of theirs. Go to the "mobile offices" that their staff hold periodically (all these times are located on each congressperson's website). When you go, ask questions. A lot of them. And push for answers. The louder and more vocal and present you can be at those the better.

2. But, those in-person events don't happen every day. So, the absolute most important thing that people should be doing every day is calling. You should make 6 calls a day: 2 each (DC office and your local office) to your 2 Senators & your 1 Representative.

The staffer was very clear that any sort of online contact basically gets immediately ignored, and letters pretty much get thrown in the trash (unless you have a particularly strong emotional story - but even then it's not worth the time it took you to craft that letter).

Calls are what all the congresspeople pay attention to. Every single day, the Senior Staff and the Senator get a report of the 3 most-called-about topics for that day at each of their offices (in DC and local offices), and exactly how many people said what about each of those topics. They're also sorted by zip code and area code.

She said that Republican callers generally outnumber Democrat callers 4-1, and when it's a particular issue that single-issue-voters pay attention to (like gun control, or planned parenthood funding, etc...), it's often closer to 11-1, and that's recently pushed Republican congressmen on the fence to vote with the Republicans. In the last 8 years, Republicans have called, and Democrats haven't.

Contact Information for state and federal officials

The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20500 (202)456-1111

Governor Chris Christie, PO Box 001, Trenton, NJ 08625 (609)292-6000

To find your Senate members: www.senate.gov/general/contact (indicate your zip code)

So, when you call:

A) When calling the DC office, ask for the Staff member in charge of whatever you're calling about ("Hi, I'd like to speak with the staffer in charge of Healthcare, please") - local offices won't always have specific ones, but they might. If you get transferred to that person, awesome. If you don't, that's ok - ask for their name, and then just keep talking to whoever answered the phone.

Don't leave a message (unless the office doesn't pick up at all - then you can...but it's better to talk to the staffer who first answered than leave a message for the specific staffer in charge of your topic).

B) Give them your zip code. They won't always ask for it, but make sure you give it to them, so they can mark it down. Extra points if you live in a zip code that traditionally votes for them, since they'll want to make sure they get/keep your vote.

C) If you can make it personal, make it personal. "I voted for you in the last election and I'm worried/happy/whatever" or "I'm a teacher, and I am appalled by Betsy DeVos," or "as a single mother" or "as a white, middle class woman," or whatever.

E) Be clear on what you want - "I'm disappointed that the Senator..." or "I want to thank the Senator for their vote on..." or "I want the Senator to know that voting in _____ way is the wrong decision for our state because..." Don't leave any ambiguity.

F) They may get to know your voice/get sick of you - it doesn't matter. The people answering the phones generally turn over every 6 weeks anyway, so even if they're really sick of you, they'll be gone in 6 weeks.

From experience since the election: If you hate being on the phone & feel awkward (which is a lot of people) don't worry about it - there are a bunch of scripts (Indivisible has some, there are lots of others floating around these days). After a few days of calling, it starts to feel a lot more natural. Put the 6 numbers in your phone (all under P – Politician. An example is McCaskill MO, Politician McCaskill DC, Politician Blunt MO, etc..) which makes it really easy to click down the list each day.

Taking action: Writing, calling and marching

NOW.org has regular updates on upcoming legislation. Anyone whose membership has lapsed needs to renew it now. Tell your friends to join at now.org. The tools for funding activism requires members and funds.

The Action Network: www.womensmarch.com/100. 10 actions for the first 100 days.

The second action is to organize or attend a Huddle (other marchers in your area) As of now there are 3 times as many Huddies as there were marchers.

Jersey Justice Action Network: jerseyjusticeaction@gmail.com This is also a recent platform for informing members of local actions. Every day (and sometimes more) there is a progressive group which is having a rally. Join forces with likeminded organizations.

Welcome to new NNJ NOW board members!

At the annual board meeting in January, Marissa Koziar and Diane Scarangella joined the board, to make a total of 9.

Marissa Koziar:

I have been a feminist since age five when my mom put an ERA bracelet on my wrist. As for my career background, I am a psychologist with a private practice in Nutley. I have taught college, written, recorded and performed music and have held several IT management positions (computers and telecommunications).

Diane Scarangella:

Diane Scarangella, MA, GPC, and President-Elect of the Displaced Homemakers Network of New Jersey, Inc. She has served upon the Executive Board of this non-profit organization for over fifteen years. She began her career in 1985 as the counselor and coordinator of programs for displaced homemakers, single parents, teen parents, women on welfare, gender equity and women in the trades. In 1992, Diane was recognized by the New Jersey Department of Education as New Jersey Equity Leader of the Year. She has authored resource manuals for practitioners that focus upon *Survival Skills for Displaced Homemakers*, *Job Search Strategies and Resources for Changing Times*, and *Humanizing Welfare – The Carl Perkins Act Creating Change*.

Upcoming Events

NNJ NOW is co-sponsoring a discussion by Peace & Justice Committee and Racial Justice Committee of USR called "Policing and Violence in the Time of Trump". It will be held on March 9th at the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood at 7:30 pm.

Watch for details of our screening in October of "Equal Means Equal." To find out more about this great film go to <http://equalmeansequal.com/>.