



**Black marchers stress the 2019 #WomensWave must include Black issues**

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At the 2019 Women’s March, Black women were noticeably smaller in number, but they made their voices heard.

“African-American women are present at this march. We want to show our solidarity and support to other women and women’s organizations, because it also impacts us as well,” said Tonya McKenney. The Marylander attended the inaugural Women’s March in 2017 and returned this year with fellow Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority members.

The 2017 flagship march was a direct response to the 2016 presidential election that landed Donald Trump in the White House. In 2018, the march focused heavily on mobilizing for the midterm elections.

The 2019 Women’s March, like years past, consisted of a primary march in Washington, D.C. with “sister marches” internationally. Saturday’s images of marchers flooding streets adorning pink knitted hats and signs protesting the Trump administration also flooded social media. The #WomensWave hashtag trended on social media, serving as an agenda-setting moment for global activism surrounding women’s issues.

Social media played a major role leading up to this year's Women's March, after an Instagram post from march organizer Tamika D. Mallory sparked questions surrounding her support for Nation of Islam Leader Louis Farrakhan and alleged anti-Semitism. This resulted in the Democratic National Committee, Southern Poverty Law Center and nearly half of the event partners from 2018 pulling their sponsorship and support from this year's march.

"I love all people, and no one will define for me who I am," shouted Mallory from the march stage in Washington, D.C.

"To Jewish women, there is a place at the table for you," said march organizer Carmen Perez. "I want to be unequivocal in affirming that the Women's March, and I and my sisters condemn anti-Semitism. There is no defense of bigotry. There is no excuse for hatred."

Former Ohio state Sen. Nina Turner pointed to a number of social issues including racial inequality, the government shutdown, national labor strikes and growing poverty issues.

"If you are not mad about injustice, then something is wrong with you," said Turner.

Johnnetta Cole, the new president of the National Council of Negro Women, called for "the end of all -isms that keep us, our families and our communities from thriving."

"We must ripen the time for the end of any and all systems of inequality," said Cole, former president of two historically Black all-women's colleges — Spelman and Bennett. "NCNW is focused on eliminating what is minimally the double jeopardy that Black women suffer from — racism and sexism."

That sentiment was echoed by march attendee McKenney, who is a member of the Anne Arundel County Maryland NAACP Chapter. Violence against women, gun violence, education and health care are top priorities for her.

"Mainly health care because if we are not healthy, then the rest of our life is off-balance," said McKenney.

Members of the Metro Washington Bennett College for Women Alumnae Association also marched at Freedom Plaza to bring attention to their alma mater's #StandWithBennett campaign to raise \$5 million dollars by Feb. 1 to keep the HBCU from losing its accreditation.

"It's [Bennett College] a beacon of Black women and sisterhood, and we want it to continue on," said Bennett College alumna Kenya Gray. "We came out because we knew there would be women out here that would support our cause."

Also among the marchers, Morgan State University's Mister and Miss NAACP, Daniel Gibson and Marketa Lewis, demonstrated how their royal positions are centered in protest, activism and awareness.

"Black women are so strong, and we do not get enough credit for all the work we do," said Lewis. "We definitely deserve more position and more rights."

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## **Black and Shut Down**

The Crisis Magazine

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LINK: <https://www.thecrisismagazine.com/single-post/2019/01/10/Black-and-Shut-down>

“A government job used to mean it was a sure thing,” said U.S. Census Bureau employee Johnny Zuagar. “We cannot go to work [because of] a wall!”

The statistician is a 15-year employee with the Census and serves as the [American Federation of Government Employees](#) (AFGE) Census Council 241 President.

Zuagar’s one of the 800,000 federal employees affected by the partial government shutdown that began Dec. 22, 2018 after Congress refused to allot the \$5.7 billion that President Donald Trump wants to build a wall on the U.S. southern border with Mexico.

The Maryland suburban husband (above), and father of three sons ages 8, 6 and 1, is furloughed until further notice. His family scaled back their post-Christmas plans because of the partial shutdown.

The Zuagars live in Prince George's County, Maryland, [the most affluent African-American county in the country](#).

"No one's on the roads. The parking lots are nearly empty at the Metro stops. That's really strange considering everyone around here's somehow connected to the federal government. Either you're a federal employee or a contractor," said Zuagar. But after three weeks of shutdown, he's wondering if he needs to look elsewhere for work.

"At the end of the day my first obligation is to my family. I can't tell my sons, 'Hey I'm on furlough for two months, three months and four months,' because I have to pay my bills," Zuagar said. "If I don't hear anything by Friday, I need to start looking for another job."

"The government shutdown is a slap in the face to the country and to the hardworking federal employees," said [Sen. Chris Van Hollen](#) (D-Md.) during a roundtable with government employees Monday. (Check out this Washington Post [video](#) of the meeting.)

"We are people. We have bills to pay. We need food. We need to eat to survive just like everybody else. It's not a game to us," said Census Bureau employee LaVerne Byrd.

"I know everybody's talking about mortgage, car payments, car insurance. But let's just talk about little things like medication," said Tyra McClelland with the [Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency](#). "As of Friday I need to figure out which over-the-counter medication I need to go get. Do I go get the allergy medication? If my daughter has a cold do I go give her cold medication?"

Eric S. Yellin, an associate professor of history and American studies at the University of Richmond and author of [Racism in the Nation's Service: Government Workers and the Color Line in Woodrow Wilson's America](#), notes that the federal government has the most robust anti-discrimination programs of any workplace because of the federal employment provisions set in place to ensure equal opportunities for diverse and marginalized demographic groups.

"African Americans are 18 percent of the federal civil service and just 13 percent of the US population. They're 32 percent of federal workers in D.C. In smaller communities where decent jobs are rare for Black workers, government jobs are usually the best there is," said Yellin.

"The president needs to stop playing games and put people back to work," said U.S. Census Bureau employee Edward Hill. "I don't know of any other company or any other place where you require people to work and not pay them."

Zuagar says Trump should not look at federal workers as pawns in partisan politics, but as Americans looking for strong leadership.

"Your position [as] president doesn't make you a leader. A true leader takes care of the people under them. A true leader eats last," said Zuagar.

— Nicki Mayo is a digital consultant for The Crisis Magazine and a multimedia journalist for TV One's "Fatal Attraction," "Justice By Any Means" and Thou Shalt Not." Mayo is also a federal contractor directly affected by the partial government shutdown.

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## Delta Sigma Theta calls for national gun reform

The Philadelphia Tribune

May 9, 2018

LINK :

[http://www.phillytrib.com/news/delta-sigma-theta-calls-for-national-gun-reform/article\\_33216a28-2ef2-5631-8194-5434a2a34aa0.html](http://www.phillytrib.com/news/delta-sigma-theta-calls-for-national-gun-reform/article_33216a28-2ef2-5631-8194-5434a2a34aa0.html)

WASHINGTON — Members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. announced the organization is taking a formal stance against the growing gun violence issues in America. The historically Black Greek letter organization held a press conference Wednesday morning on the steps of their national headquarters in Washington, D.C.

“We are not opposed to the Second Amendment — but we are staunch advocates for responsible gun ownership and gun use who support the passage of sensible gun control measures in this country,” said National President and CEO Beverly Smith.

“This is not a partisan problem, but a problem that affects all of us,” Smith added. “We have long held the position that we as a nation can save thousands of innocent lives through common sense measures.

The sorority is calling for:

- closing private loopholes for gun purchases

- universal background checks;
- a three day waiting period for gun purchases;
- raising the gun purchase age to 21 years old;
- limiting the amount of rounds of ammunition a magazine can fire; and
- banning civil ownership of assault military ranked weapons.

The organization also wants the Centers for Disease Control to look into America's gun violence as a public health issue.

The call to action comes weeks after a deadly mass shooting at a Middle Tennessee Waffle House claimed the life of one of the members of the sorority and injured another. De'Ebony Groves, 21, died from gunshot wounds. Sharita Henderson was critically injured.

Smith also expressed condolences for the loss of Charleston church shooting victim and sorority member Myra Thompson. The 59-year-old Bible study teacher was killed in the 2015 shooting at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in downtown Charleston, South Carolina.

"It is a really sad place for a nation when it cannot protect its children. When it can not protect its seniors" said U.S. Rep. Marcia L. Fudge (D-Ohio).

I work in a Congress where the people have absolutely no backbone. If they did, they would do what is right," Fudge added.

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### **Advocates call for state's rights to combat mass incarceration injustice**

The Crisis Magazine

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Baltimore — Criminal justice reform fueled a heated panel discussion at the NAACP 108th Annual Convention opening plenary session.

The NAACP [reports](#) Blacks are incarcerated more than five times the rate of whites. African Americans also constituted 2.3 million or 34%, of the total 6.8 million correctional population in 2014.

“Mass incarceration is the masses of people of color being subjected to penalties that viciously and specifically target us in ways that throw away the key when we are put into jail,” said Georgetown sociology professor [Michael Eric Dyson](#).

“Criminal justice reform means we have to reform a criminal justice system that is often unjust to us,” he added.

[Colin Warner](#) spent 20 years in prison after he was wrongly accused and convicted of killing a man he never met in 1980. Warner was 18 when he was arrested in Brooklyn, New York and says more needs to be done to protect youths from wrongful arrests.

“We don’t have proper representation. That’s key,” said Warner. “We are basically on our own.”

“They are separating mothers from children,” said Andrea James, executive director for the [National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls](#).

The former criminal defense lawyer says she left behind her five-month-old son and 12-year-old daughter to serve two years at a Danbury, Connecticut federal prison.

“I was in a prison with generations of Black women from the same family. Grandmothers, mothers and their daughters on the same drug case. Incarcerated for a minimum of 10 years mandatory minimum plus sentences,” said James. She says the women’s male counterparts were also often locked up.

“Who is left behind to care for our children?”

James says it’s imperative that Black people treat mass incarceration as the major civil rights issue of this era. She says now is the time to revisit justice reinvestment initiatives that promote: de-incarceration, redirecting those entering into the system, and invest money intended for prison facilities into programs to keep them out of lock up.

“Not reentry, but no entry!” said James encouraging attendees to leave the session motivated to support their local grassroots movements and to vote for local criminal justice reform policies.

“In every urban city in America we’ve become far too complacent,” said Baltimore State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby. “It’s not just those with fame. It’s also those of us that have gotten to a position of status. We drive past the boys on the corner and we judge.”

Mosby says criminal justice reform starts with changing perceptions of young people in economically oppressed communities. She shared the story of a teenager that’s selling drugs to support his siblings while his father is incarcerated and mother is out of the picture.

“This is the one time we need to understand the importance of the word federalism,” Mosby told the crowd this is the time to advocate for state’s rights.

“Criminal justice is going to come from the local level, it’s not going to come from the federal level.”

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### **Congresswomen call for action to protect Black women and girls**

The Crisis Magazine  
Spring 2017

WASHINGTON — “My daughter was almost abducted!” Baltimore hair stylist Linda Scott was shaken as she shared her family’s freighting story at the Congressional Caucus on Black Women and Girls (CCBWG) Convening on Missing Black Women & Girls Nationwide April 16.

Scott told the packed room at the Library of Congress, three men came to her Park Heights salon asking about her 16-year-old daughter while referencing the teenager’s social media posts. The next day, Scott says her daughter left her salon to catch a bus and men in three vehicles tried to block her for getting on the bus.

“These kids are not just running away. These kids are being snatched up,” Scott said.



“We’re very familiar with the tragedy of young white girls and women who have been taken,” said Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman. “But we rarely hear about young Black girls or young Black women.” The New Jersey congresswoman co-chairs the CCBWG with Rep. Yvette Clarke (NY-09) and Rep. Robin Kelly (IL-02).

“We’re not naive enough to think that we’re going to solve all of the world’s problems,” said Rep. Watson Coleman. “But we are going to have an impact to make sure the uniqueness of being Black and female is on the table.”

Impact Strategies’ Angela Rye moderated the event for community leaders, law enforcement and social workers. Rye said the core safety issue is being overshadowed by the [viral image](#) that falsely claimed 14 Black girls went missing in Washington D.C. in 24 hours, thus sparking national outrage and the #MissingDCgirls hashtag.

“If one black girl goes missing or if one black boy goes missing, how many of us know that’s still a problem,” Rye questioned.

“If we’re not looking for us, who’s going to look for us?” asked Black and Missing Foundation co-founder Derrica Wilson. The law enforcement veteran cited [FBI records](#) stating more than 647,000 missing persons cases were filed in 2016.

“Of that number 243,000 were persons of color,” Wilson said noting the statistic doesn’t include Hispanics that are categorized as white in the National Crime Information Center’s data.

“Just because you don’t see them on signs where they are bound and held, doesn’t mean they aren’t mentally bound,” said Kisha Roberts-Taab with Cook County Juvenile Courts. She says pimps mentally manipulate girls in vulnerable situations and many of these children end up in the juvenile justice system as offenders to be punished, instead of victims in need of help.

“Often times we see them as being misbehaved or fast. So the first thing that we need to do is change the image of our Black girls,” said Roberts-Taab.

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