

Subject:Protest of cancellation of Sacramento, CA event by Women's March

Date:Tue, 6 Jun 2023 23:09:26 -0700

From:Reproductive Justice <reprojustice.sf@gmail.com>

June 6, 2023

Dear Women's March Sacramento,

We are writing out of grave concern about the abusive and controlling behavior of Women's March Sacramento.

When the Supreme Court made its ruling on mifepristone access and the national Women's March put out a call for actions, there weren't any events planned in the Sacramento area. So Sacramento and San Francisco organizers with the National Mobilization for Reproductive Justice (NMRJ) announced a Rage Revival protest on April 15th in Sacramento to bring together communities under attack by misogynist legal and legislative forces.

We added our event to the national Women's March calendar. Two days after the action was posted, we received an anonymous email from Women's March Sacramento that attempted to impose arbitrary restrictions. The email accused us of targeting a church whose parishioners are predominantly Latina/o because we listed Cathedral Square as our gathering place. Rather than supporting the initiative of a new Sacramento organizer, WMSac patronizingly scolded: "So take it from us, it's CRUCIAL to follow the lead of existing abortion clinics and organizations on this issue."

Rage Revival organizer Merideth graciously indicated her readiness to work with other groups. She explained that Cathedral Square is a small public square that also houses businesses and is a public thoroughfare. She described the action's inclusive demands and the choice of the meeting place due to its accessibility, availability of restrooms, and short distance to the rally at the U.S. Courthouse.

WMSac responded: "[W]e're not encouraging BIPOC or social justice leaders to work with you, because you didn't seem to be receptive to others' perceptions and ideas." This attempt by an unnamed individual or persons to censor and quell freedom of expression went even further with a demand that Rage Revival remove phrases that characterized our movement as a battle or a fight.

When Rage Revival organizers didn't cave to these demands, WMSac secretly deleted the protest from the national Women's March calendar! People who had signed up received a bizarre message, purportedly from Rage Revival organizer Merideth:

...for these reasons, we have to cancel your event. - targeting the incorrect people in power - hosting a rally outside a predominantly Latino church - encouraging

people to bring "an object that symbolizes the rage" which does not explicitly give guidelines about what is safe to bring and what is not - promoting coat hanger imagery - listing no safety precautions

Furious attendees emailed us to protest the last-minute cancellation. That was the first we knew of the sabotage.

We call on Women's March Sacramento to stop bullying reproductive justice activists through anonymous dictates and behind-the-scenes manipulation. We demand that its representatives come out in the open so that respectful sharing of opinions and differences can occur – including honestly appraising the role of the Catholic Church as an institution that opposes bodily autonomy, facilitated the theft of Native children, and covered up untold numbers of incidents of sexual abuse. We call on Women's March to support grassroots efforts instead of attempting to censor intersectional movements like NMRJ.

National Mobilization for Reproductive Justice is led by people of color, LGBTQI+, disabled folks, and unionists. We are building an inclusive movement. We've organized massive protests throughout the country in response to the overturn of Roe v. Wade and had CA Attorney General Rob Bonta and San Francisco Mayor London Breed speak at our rallies. We are building the fight for reproductive justice within the union movement with the call for an emergency labor conference to discuss how to stop the assaults on bodily autonomy.

If the Women's March is to have any standing in the feminist movement it must cease erecting barriers to reproductive justice activism. We look forward to your response. We can be reached at reprojustice.sf@gmail.com.

In solidarity,

Merideth Cooper, Sacramento
Norma Gallegos, San Francisco
Nancy Reiko Kato, San Francisco

cc: National Women's March