

# Report from New Mexico Women's March



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## **By Adelita Michelle Medina**

I had wanted to travel to Washington, D.C., to participate in the main Women's March on January 21, 2017, but in many ways, I'm glad I attended the sister march in downtown Albuquerque instead. It was a spirited, diverse and energizing gathering of several thousand women, children and men of all ages, races, religions and backgrounds. Estimates of crowd size have ranged from 6,000 to 10,000, with the latter number offered by the local police. But regardless of the exact size, and despite the cold and wet weather, the march was a big success.

In these days of uncertainty and apprehension, the marches that took place on that day, in hundreds of cities across the country, provided some much-needed support and solidarity. Those who participated were reassured that they are not alone, and those who watched the events in their homes, know that people will not be silenced. They will be heard and they will be seen fighting for their families, cities and country.



*Crowd at Albuquerque Women's March. January 2017. Photo by Adelita Michelle Medina. [CC BY-NC-](#)*

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The issues made visible by the hundreds of colorful posters and banners were as diverse as the crowd itself. While the marches were initially conceived as women's rights marches, the time was ripe, amid the administration's attempts to roll back the gains made by civil, human, peace and environmental rights activists, to show support for dozens of other important issues—from education, healthcare, and immigration, to Medicare, Medicaid and the minimum wage.

Having lived on the east coast for some 25 years, I had not participated in a mass gathering in New Mexico since my years of involvement in the Chicano Movement back in the 1970s. So, it felt good to be among my fellow New Mexicans in making our presence and voices known to the powers that be—both locally and nationally.

In many ways, the march was very New Mexican—multicultural and welcoming—beginning with the aromas of copal and sage that permeated the air, to the poetry read by several women and the music that inspired people to break out in song.



*Grab Back. Albuquerque. January 2017. Photo by Adelita Michelle Medina. [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)*

The speakers, too, were diverse—young, old, Native American, Chicana, African American, White. Each addressed issues of concern to them. One woman sang a powerful song dedicated to “the children.” Four young women from the Southwest Organizing Project, Janell Astorga-Ramos, Isabella Baker, Amanda Gallegos, and Stephanie Olivas, shared their personal journeys and experiences working on women’s issues, cultural identity and social justice. Amanda shared her “10 Steps to be an Intersectional Chingona.” Janella ended by saying: “We need to remember all the reasons for which we fight that makes us who we are because now I know I am a warrior. I am a fighter. I am powerful. I am fierce. I am chingona. I am beautiful. And I am Chicana. And he is not my president!”

When Former Lt. Governor Diane Denish told the crowd “Yesterday the devil whispered in our ear, ‘You are not strong enough to stand the storm.’ Today we whisper back, ‘We are the storm,’” everyone took up the chant: “We Are the Storm! We Are the Storm!”

It was great to see a sizeable number of men and boys supporting the women in their struggles and making their voices heard as well. I think most people left knowing that the march was just a step in the long journey of commitment and resistance that lies ahead. ¡Que Viva La Causa!

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