

# WOMEN'S MARCH YOUTH EMPOWER

## ENOUGH! NATIONAL SCHOOL WALKOUT

*Congress must act now or live to regret it; without legal protections this horror will continue until all classrooms are filled with fear and emptied of students. — Alie, 18, NYC*

### TOOLKIT

#### WHAT?

Women's March Youth Empower is calling for a National School Walkout to protest Congress' refusal to take action on the gun violence epidemic plaguing our schools and neighborhoods. Our elected officials must do more than tweet thoughts and prayers in response to this violence. Students and allies are organizing a National School Walkout to demand Congress pass legislation to keep us safe from gun violence at our schools, on our streets and in our homes and places of worship. We view this work as part of an ongoing and decades-long movement for gun violence prevention, in honor of all victims of gun violence — from James Brady to Trayvon Martin to the 17 people killed in Parkland.

#### WHO?

Students, Teachers, School Staff, Parents, Everyone.

#### WHERE?

Schools and universities across America. Workplaces and Legislative Houses are encouraged to join in solidarity.

#### WHY?

We are not safe at school. We are not safe in our cities and towns. Congress must take meaningful action to **keep us safe** and pass federal gun reform legislation that addresses this public health crisis. We want Congress to pay attention and take note: many of us will vote this November and many others will flood the polls in 2020.

- Students and staff have the right to learn and teach in an environment free from fear of being gunned down in their classrooms or on their way home from school.

- Parents have the right to send their kids to school in the mornings and see them home alive at the end of the day.
- We all have the right to live free from fear and violence in our community.

## HOW?

### Steps to Organize Your Walkout (Suggested for Grades 8-College)

1. Use the [Action Network Map](#):
  - a. The map allows you to see if there have been walkouts already organized in your community. If your school does not already have a walkout registered, take initiative to organize one.
  - b. The Action Network Map allows you to keep track of the students who have RSVP'd to your event.
2. Sign up for a coach — an adult ally with experience in organizing (optional).
  - a. Sign up [here](#)
3. Get support from parents and guardians:
  - a. The order of this is a case by case situation. It often helps to have parental support when it comes to student participation in the walkout. Your parents and guardians can encourage your school to support your action.  
[For safety reasons we request adults **NOT** join school walkouts on school campuses unless they work there or are invited by school staff.]
4. Contact the administration:
  - a. Talk to a guidance counselor, trusted teacher, or administration about why it is important for you to participate in the #Enough National School Walkout.
  - b. Ask your administration to support you in your demonstration. Your administration may or may not support your walkout.
    - i. Find template letter [here](#)
5. Spread the word:
  - a. Create posters, post on social media and spread the news with word-of-mouth. Create a facebook event and invite all your classmates! Galvanize as many students you can to participate with you. Use the hashtag #ENOUGH.
  - b. Put out a press release announcing your action. Find a sample release [here](#)
6. Get involved with Women's March Youth Empower and follow us on social media
  - Email: [youth@womensmarch.com](mailto:youth@womensmarch.com)
  - Instagram: [@womensmarchyouth](#)
  - Twitter: [@womensmarchy](#)
  - Facebook: [@womensmarchyouth](#)

### Safety

Have conversations with your school administration or school resource officer to help determine best practices that take into account the safety of all students. If walking outside is not a safe option then consider walking-out into hallways, congregate in your school gym, or simply stand up in your classroom for 17 minutes. We encourage adults

not to join walkouts on school campuses unless they work there or have been directly invited by the school's administration.

### **Developing the Action**

- **Walkout on March 14th at 10am across all time zones for 17 minutes** to honor the 17 lives killed at Parkland, FL shooting on Valentine's Day. Stop whatever you're doing and simply walk out — into the hallway, out of your school building, whatever feels right to you.
- This is YOUR 17-minute walkout! You can circle your school holding hands, you can stage your walkout in your school's hallway, you can hold a lie-in on school grounds, or any other action that makes sense for you and your community.
- Consider including a voter registration drive for high school seniors during your walkout. Find information on voter registration [here](#).
- Wear orange to show solidarity. Orange is the color of the gun violence prevention (GVP) movement.
- We recommend students bring their school IDs for head counts.

### **POWER TO THE POLLS**

Walking out is just one of many ways to take action. Another way to bring about change is to vote! If you will be age 18 by your [Primary Election Day](#) or the General Election Day on Tuesday, November 6, 2018 then you are eligible to vote in one or both of these elections in 2018. The leaders we elect will make important decisions about gun violence and many other issues young people care about — so your vote really does matter.

If you meet the age requirements, use the 17-minute walkout to make sure you and your classmates are [registered](#) to vote! **Text P2P to RTVOTE (788683)**. This will get you started, just follow the text prompts that will lead you to fill out the online voter registration form. If your state does not accept online voter registrations, you will be prompted to print out your form so you can sign it and send it by snail mail. **Some states will let you pre-register to vote at the age of 16 or 17. Check out which ones [here](#).**

Also, make sure you're registered [before the deadline](#) to be eligible to vote in each election. Finally, [know your rights](#)! An informed voter is a powerful voter!

### **AFTER THE WALKOUT**

1. Contact your local member of Congress. Let your elected officials know your thoughts via social media, letter or postcard, phone call, email, or a meeting at their in-district office. Make sure to tell them you'll be voting soon and that this issue is a priority for you. Visit [this website](#) to find out who your congressional representatives are.
2. Find out about local town halls and attend them! Find your local town hall [here](#).
3. Organize a student assembly or advisory group to keep the conversation going at your school.

## COLLEGES

High school and college students alike are holding walkouts in solidarity on March 14th. All actions should begin at 10am local time. Most college students can be bolder with their demonstrations and actions than high school students. Here is some support for those looking to do actions on a college campus.

**Outreach:** Resources on your campus to take advantage of

- I. For collaboration
  - A. **Student Government** - they often have the widest ranging mailing lists and can publicize the event widely
  - B. **Cultural Student Associations** (i.e. Black Student Unions) - key to ensuring that all communities feel represented in your action and the messaging around it
  - C. **Political Parties on Campus** - These groups can support with voter registration and raising awareness
  - D. **Student organizations related to gun violence** - they've been doing the organizing work for a while and can often connect you to speakers and help tailor calls to action
- II. For publicity (see [here](#) for a draft press release)
  - A. Prominent student newspaper on your campus
  - B. Any and all campus publications
  - C. Local Press
- III. For resources
  - A. Media Lab/Library- or free equipment rental like speakers or a bullhorn
  - B. Center for Social Justice (or your campus' equivalent) - Free printing as an in-kind donation for posters

## Action Development

Below we have outlined different types of demonstrations that your campus can hold, which might be a bit more bold than what students at middle and high schools will be able to do. Regardless of which demonstration you choose to go with, we encourage you to incorporate a *call to action* such as voter registration, calling or writing elected officials in your state, etc.

- I. **Rallies**
  - A. Choose a central location on your campus to host a rally. Invite speakers, create posters, plan a sit-in/lie-in. If you have speakers, we encourage you to reach out to students, staff, and faculty who may have been personally impacted by gun violence or who are involved with activism around gun reform.
- II. **Vigils**
  - A. Hold a more solemn and reflective action in solidarity with gun violence victims. This can often feature a moment of silence as well as an opportunity to hear from and support those personally impacted by gun violence. Common features

are candles (real or electronic), images/pictures, or a show of solidarity by wearing orange, the color of the gun violence prevention movement.

### **III. Campus March**

- A. (A strong option for campuses that are spread out) Hold a march where you move between significant campus sites. This can increase visibility of the action and also serve as an outlet for participants to physically move and chant.
- B. Suggested chants: “No More Silence, End Gun Violence,” “Guns in schools? We say NO, NRA has got to go,” “Enough is Enough”

### **Connecting with Other Schools in Your Area**

- I. This is a student-led movement and our goal is to have students leading students. We want to promote mentorship and coordination between middle/high schools and colleges.
- II. If you visit [womensmarch.com/enough](http://womensmarch.com/enough) you’ll find a map of currently registered events. Search your area and see what schools in your community are planning. Offer up advice, support and resources they may need to make their demonstration safe and impactful.
- III. If you don’t see any currently registered events in your area, seek out campus organizations that work in local schools and discuss suggested avenues or contacts for encouraging a walkout. Many high schools, and even some middle schools, have student governments or Key Club chapters that engage in community service and may find a way to integrate the school walkout into their organizational goals.
- IV. Above all, be sure to respect the autonomy of the students and only offer up suggestions that they feel comfortable with receiving. For many, this will be their first time even considering engaging in such an action and it can be scary. Don’t push anyone to do anything they are not ready for and simply be a resource they can go to for advice and guidance.

## **DEMANDS**

We demand that Congress enact an immediate resolution declaring gun violence a public health crisis and dedicating federal funding to research solutions and implement violence intervention programs. We demand Congress recognize all forms of gun violence, including violence committed by police.

The priority policies we support are:

- Banning Assault Weapons & High Capacity Magazines / S. 2095 / H.R. 5087
- Expanding Background Checks to All Gun Sales / S. 2009 / H.R. 4052
- Passing Gun Violence Restraining Order Law / S. 1212/ H.R. 2598
- Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act / S.1856 / H.R. 1556

The priority policies we oppose are:

- Conceal Carry Reciprocity HR 38 / S 446

- Any legislation that would aim to fortify our schools with more guns.

Click here to learn more about our Demands.

For further information about ways to prevent gun violence click [here](#).

## **MORE ACTIONS**

[Sign a Petition](#) to ban military-style assault weapons and large capacity magazines

Resist Bot: Text NRA to Resistbot (sms or Facebook messenger) and it will return the exact \$ amount the NRA has spent in your House and Senate elections. To start text resist to 50409!

You can find the March 14th #NationalSchoolWalkout events [here](#).

You can find the March 24th #MarchForOurLives events [here](#).

You can find the April 20th #NationalSchoolWalkout events [here](#).

You can find Newtown Action's updated list of vigils, rallies, marches, voter registration, community meetings etc. [here](#).

## **RESOURCES**

### **Graphics**

[Social Media Graphics and Samples](#)

### **Sample Letter to School Administration**

*Good Evening [Mr/Ms Administrator],*

*I'm sure you've heard about the school shooting that occurred in Florida on Wednesday, February 14th. In honor of the 17 kids that lost their lives the Women's March Youth Empower has coordinated a national school walkout. This walkout will happen March 14th at 10am where all students and staff members are urged to walk out of school and stand outside, or in hallways, for 17 minutes; one minute for each student that was killed. The walkout is an expression of solidarity with all victims and survivors of all forms of gun violence. Please let me know if you are willing to let our school be a part of this.*

*Thank you - Sabreen, 17, Brooklyn, NY, Senior*

## Know Your Rights

There is a long history in our country of student led political movements, and in some cases, civil disobedience, to promote social change. For some, there may be consequences but each person can and should decide (without judgment for their decision) whether or not to risk those consequences.

1) Schools are not a constitution-free zone, but schools do have power to regulate students during school hours and on campus to make sure the school functions.

2) Action can be disciplined, but can't be disciplined because of views underlying it. In other words: even if the school can punish your actions, it can't punish your ideas. The precise discipline you could face will vary by state and school district, so find out the policies that govern you, both in terms of possible punishment and process.

- Specifically, if you're thinking about joining a walkout during one class, look at your school district's policies regarding "unexcused or unauthorized absences." Find out whether parental approval can flip an unexcused absence into an excused one.
- And look not only at the possible punishment, but also what sort of process the school is required to go through before it can impose that punishment on you.

3) What schools can't do

- Discipline or censor non-disruptive speech
- Discipline any non-disruptive expressive clothing that doesn't violate neutral dress codes
- Discipline you for your ideas, rather than your actions (i.e., impose harsher punishment because you're walking out for a political reason than if you simply missed class for a doctor's appointment, etc.)

Keep in mind, though, that the school might claim that it has to deal with a mass walkout differently than with one student missing one class—and not because of the political nature or message of the walkout, but for safety or school functioning reasons.

4) What schools can do: exercise discretion

- But even when it comes to sanctionable absences: just because schools can discipline students for protest, doesn't mean they should. For example, university admissions for students facing consequences for walkouts now colleges.

5) Now that you know your rights, go out and use them

- Speak out and dress up (non-disruptively) in class
- Find out the rules that apply to your district re: walkouts
- Protest all you want outside of school
- Decide what feels comfortable to you.

6) Never doubt that a small group of people can change the world

[Watch the Know Your Rights training video.](#)

## Legal Support

National Juvenile Defender Center (NJDC) will be staffing a legal referral hotline to connect students and/or their parents to local attorneys where that student faces suspension,

expulsion, and/or arrest as a consequence of participating in the National School Walkout. We may not be able to respond to each call immediately, but will do our best to connect students and/or parents with defense attorneys as quickly as possible. The hotline number is [1-857-529-9373](tel:1-857-529-9373) (1-857-LAWYER3).

### **Actions Around Congresspeople**

Find your Member of Congress [here](#).

#### Send a Postcard

*Dear [Member of Congress],*

*I have had enough of your empty thoughts and prayers when it comes to our country's scourge of gun violence. It is time for you to take ACTION!*

*Your constituent,  
Name, Address*

#### Face-to-Face

Attend a town hall and ask a pressing question to your member of congress. Find a town hall near you at [Town Hall Project](#).

### **For Teachers**

[Gun Violence in America Discussion Guide](#) by Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence

Lesson Plan with Art Activity by Amplifier: [Download Lesson Plan](#), [Download Worksheet](#)

### **State Gun Laws**

Find out about gun laws where you live [here](#).

### **NRA-Backed Members of Congress**

Find information about how much money your member of Congress has accepted from the NRA [here](#).

### **Words Matter**

Use language that does not reinforce harmful stereotypes that paint all people with a criminal record or a mental illness as dangerous or violent. Read more [here](#).

### **Stop Police Brutality**

No more weapons of war for local police. Read more [here](#) and [here](#) to learn how cities can take action against police violence.

### **See Something - Say Something**

Sandy Hook Promise has created a helpful guide for interpreting and responding to possible threats of violence. Find out more [here](#).



## **#NoNotoriety**

Learn about the [No Notoriety Campaign](#) here.

## **White Papers & Statistics**

[GVPedia](#)

[Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence](#)

[Gun Violence Archive](#)

## **KEEP RESISTING**

Stay connected with [Women's March Youth Empower](#)

Read the [Women's March Unity Principles](#)

*By choosing to organize an event with Women's March Youth Empower, you are committing to acting nonviolently, working to de-escalate confrontations with others, and following the instructions of authorized event marshals. You also acknowledge that you are solely responsible for any injury or damage to your person or property resulting from or occurring during this event and that you release all event sponsors and organizers (and their officers, directors, employees, and agents) from any liability for that injury or damage.*