

Women's March on Washington Speech For Carmen Perez

Good afternoon family. My name is Carmen Perez, and I'm the executive director of the gathering for justice and the founder of Justice league NYC and California. I am truly humbled to join and serve you as one of the national co-chairs of the women's March alongside my sistren Tamika Mallory, Linda Sarsour and Bob Bland. As well as so many who have worked so hard to make today happen. Thank you!

I stand here as a Chicana Mexican-American Woman. As the daughter and granddaughter of farm workers. As the family member of incarcerated and undocumented people. As a survivor of domestic violence. As a woman who knows pain. And who has transformed her pain into gifts. Gifts that have allowed me to see light in the darkest places.

For twenty years, I have worked in America's prisons. I have seen families being torn apart. Locked up in cages. Forgotten and silenced. Many stripped of their rights, their freedoms, And ultimately, their lives. And the majority are black and brown people – including women. Women who I call my sisters

This HAS TO END. This WILL end. Because of *you*. Because of *us*. Today I join you all and raise my voice loud and clear to say WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH.

We know what the problems are. We know who our enemy is. We know what the injustices have done to us and those we love. But to overcome them we have to stand in solidarity. We have to listen to each other and know that we always have more to learn. To protect each other, we don't always have to agree with one another. But we *have* to organize and stand together. We must remember that unity of action does not mean we have to be unanimous in thought, but that an injury to one is an injury to all.

I am often reminded by my mentor and boss Harry Belafonte, "Those who are working for the liberation of our people are only subject to friendship and support. Those that are being divisive are playing the enemy's game." And so it is our responsibility to find our way in. There is an entryway for everyone into the Movement. So get involved. Stay involved. And keep your eyes on the prize.

Know that those closest to the problem are also the ones closest to the solution. Trust them. Stand with them through your actions. Because I believe what Fannie Lou Hamer said, "When I liberate myself, I liberate others. If you don't speak out ain't nobody gonna speak out for you."

And to those threatening us and our livelihood, I say:

"Si no nos dejan soñar, no los vamos a dejar dormir."
If they won't let us dream, we won't let them sleep.

We stand here on day one of the new administration, refusing to let them sleep. Not for one second. We will hold all officials – whether elected or appointed – accountable. There are some in this country who say we should work with and adjust to hatred. But Dr. Martin Luther King spoke of the power of being maladjusted to an unjust society. We will *not* adjust to hatred and bigotry. We will resist islamophobia, xenophobia, white supremacy, sexism, racism, misogyny, and ableism. We will be brave, intentional, and unapologetic in addressing the intersections of our identities. And collectively we will stand up for the most marginalized among us – because *they* are us.

We will not wait for some magical being to rise up and save us. We are not helpless. We are the ones we have been waiting for. We are who we need. When I see my liberation bound in your liberation, and you in mine, together we will get free!

So remember when you go back home THINK ABOUT WHY YOU MARCHED and Organize!
Organize! Organize!

Si Se Puede!

Thank you!