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Statement of Summer Zervos

I am marching today because it is important to show others who have been bullied that you can have the courage to stand up to bullies and to people who are in power. The last few days I have received an overwhelming amount of support and I want to extend my gratitude to those who have provided me with that encouragement. I am here to seek justice and am pleased to have the opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with those who march for women's rights today.

January 21, 2017

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Statement of Jessica Drake

Today I am marching in solidarity with women everywhere to let the Trump administration know that they will be held accountable if they infringe on the rights that we have fought so long and hard for.

I am marching for not only women's rights, Black Lives Matter, reproductive rights, LGBTQ rights, and the rights of sex workers, but also for basic human rights that are being threatened. The progress that our proud nation has made should not be sacrificed at the hands of a power hungry elitist.

Like many, I am horrified by the potential upcoming administration and fear the consequences it will have, and as a woman who has used the services of Planned Parenthood in my adolescence, I want to use my platform to speak for others who cannot and join voices with those who can and who march with me here today.

Mr. Trump, we are watching.

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Statement of Temple Taggart

I wish to march in support of the other accusers, as well as for any other victims of sexual harassment or abuse. I hope that through my example I can be a pillar of strength and support for them, and help them see that they are not alone.

Women, as well as men, deserve to be treated with the same level of respect and should not be viewed as mere objects for someone else's pleasure. It's not right for anyone, let alone the President, to speak about nor treat women in the way that he has, as if he can use & abuse them however he likes. That's not something we should tolerate in our country especially from someone who sits in such a powerful position.

I felt a wave of anxiety come over me when I thought about having to leave my children behind to board an airplane to fly to D.C., then add to that my fear of being in large crowds with all the recent violence that we continue to see played out in the news, as well as the fear I have of being in the spotlight again and thinking of the additional backlash I will have to face for taking a stand...yet, instead of running to hide, I want my children to see that I am willing to face my fears, head on, with the hope that I might not only bring about positive change in others, but also instill in them a similar strength, which might give them the courage they will need to one day stand for what they believe in, and if needed resist what isn't right.

Last, I can't help but think of how Donald Trump mocked a disabled reporter, and how he has belittled or bullied anyone with differing views, opinions, beliefs, or backgrounds.

I happen to have a brother who was disabled. I say "was" because just last month he walked away from his apartment, climbed up a 10 story parking garage, and jumped to his death.

His death has been absolutely heartbreaking to deal with, and has nearly taken a toll on me, as well as the rest of my family. My brother left a suicide note that helped to explain why he did what he did, but we wanted to further understand to help make more sense of it all. In sorting through his stuff, we came across something he had written, in the past. He wrote: "I wish I could persuade people to stop the hate...to love people unconditionally for who they are by looking on the inside. Doing so would result in a more peaceful world." It's a quote we included in his obituary to help spread his message to those who knew him, but it is my hope to carry his message to the world by marching in honor of him, as well.

My brother faced unbelievable hardships, bullying, abuse, and never-ending discouragements his entire life due to the disability he was given. It wasn't enough that he had a

family who loved him...He ultimately ended his life because he felt that because of his disability he didn't matter to the world

I think of how low my brother must have felt to have the courage to jump like he did. It just breaks my heart and makes me think of others who may face similar hardships, whether they live with a disability, disease, live in poverty, are being bullied, abused, or are judged for the color of their skin, their size, their sexual orientation, their differing beliefs, nationality, or any other differences that might set them apart from others. I hope to share my brother's message that we need to "stop the hate" and start "looking on the inside" so we can see that each individual matters and each life is truly priceless and as such has the ability to offer something positive to this world.

Whether we came to this earth as a woman or a man, black or white, gay or straight, it does not matter. Despite our differences, we were all created equal in God's eyes, and as such we each have a divine purpose here on earth. That's the message I hope to spread and why I choose to march.

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