

On the national level, Bland brought in an experienced and diverse group of activists and organizers to take the lead on the national march: Tamika Mallory, an African-American gun-control activist; Linda Sarsour, the Muslim-American executive director of the Arab American Association of New York; and Carmen Perez, the Mexican-American head of The Gathering for Justice, a criminal-justice-reform group.

More sister marches sprang up across the country and then across the world. "It's what got me out of bed," Barnhart says. "I started volunteering two days after the election."

Barnhart works with nonprofit groups and is an adjunct instructor at the University of Oregon, teaching online classes to AmeriCorps members.

Barnhart says that about 1,500 people from Oregon alone are expected to travel to the march in Washington D.C. And Oregon itself has sister marches planned for Ashland, Astoria, Bend, Coos Bay, Eugene, Florence, Newport, Portland and Salem.

Like the original national group, the state organizers were mainly white women. So Barnhart says she made it a point to reach out to women of color and LGBTQIA people, she says, and get them involved. She contacted organizations that served specific audiences and asked them to get the word out.

**AND THAT IS WHERE INTERSECTIONALITY COMES IN.** Barnhart says that for many marchers, "coming to this march, this is the first political action they've ever taken." Barnhart says her goal is try to get great tools and resources into their hands and help them to be "stronger allies, learners and listeners going forward."

Shortly after Barnhart offered to be an Oregon admin, Eugene resident, SLUG queen and mother of two Constance Van Flandern offered to organize as well, and she too became a state admin helping bring people to Washington, drawing on her experiences dating back to her childhood in D.C. and her mother's involvement with the National Organization for Women (NOW).

Van Flandern remembers growing up in an era where daughters were told, "you are equal" but where women were not truly viewed as equal. She points to a national failure to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment as a part of that inequality.

The ERA, which would have amended the Constitution to guarantee equal rights for women, was passed by Congress in 1972 but not ratified by the states. "People seem to forget that the ERA was never ratified," Van Flandern says. If and when the ERA is ratified she says, then that's legal recourse for when women are not given equal human rights.

Women are still passed over for jobs and objectified, Van Flandern says. "Why?" she asks. "As a group — though not every individual — we are physically less powerful. So we are to be dominated?"

Eisinger, who is of Van Flandern's mother's generation, remembers being told that same "you can be anything you want" thing and says she sees today's young women believing "that kind of lie."

She says, "Well we can vote, I can get a job, we are working on equal pay." But many young women "don't realize how insidious the whole inequality of women is."

Eisinger's family expected her brother to go to college but not her. She finally put herself through school at the UO at age 37 and became a teacher. In the early '80s she remembers participating in a teachers' strike and another teacher saying to her, "I like what I do; I think the pay is OK."

Eisinger told her, "This isn't for us; this is for the people who come after."

She says, "I didn't want to strike either. I didn't want to be out on the picket line. I wanted to be in the classroom, but there are sacrifices you have to do to advance society as a whole."

A bird lover, Eisinger didn't participate in any protests until the Malheur occupation last year. That weeks-long drama drew her out, she says, as birds and the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge are very close to her, emotionally. Now Eisinger will march again, with her granddaughter at her side, because, she says, "men are still in control of women's bodies."

**BRINGING TOGETHER THE DIFFERENT GENERATIONS AND TYPES OF FEMINISTS** and creating inclusivity is a key challenge of the march. A member of an older generation of feminists may see the suffragettes as heroes and want to march in white, wearing banners, but they will march side-by-side with a newer wave of feminists who argue suffragettes put their rights ahead of those of people of color and that early women voters used their enfranchisement to bring racists into power.

Van Flandern explains that as the march strives to be intersectional and diverse, it also strives to give marchers the understanding and abilities to be better allies and listeners.

Howe doesn't see herself as one of the groups who doesn't have a voice. A blogger for the *Huffington Post* and writer for local publications, including *EW*, she says, "As transgender, I don't feel left out of the media, ever." She laughs, "I went from being a boring white guy to trendy."

And Howe, also a former teacher, explains how she sees the effort to bring diverse voices to the march. She compares it to a classroom in which there are extroverts who are used to talking all the time as well as groups of kids who need to be drawn out. "You can say, 'I want you to speak up,'" she says. "But after centuries of being told to be silent, just saying, 'I'd like you to speak up,' isn't enough."

Also, Van Flandern and Howe agree, when someone speaks up and criticizes the status quo, even well-meaning activists can feel threatened. Howe says, "I want you to feel like you can say what you have to say, even if I feel threatened by it."

Van Flandern adds, "It's a messy grassroots process," because after all, Democracy is messy.

The march is open to not just women but those who believe in and support the rights and humanity of women and girls, organizers say. It seeks to be a march made up of self-identified women and girls, people of color, immigrants, members of the LGBTQIA community, people with disabilities and self-identified men and boys.

A Jan. 2 article in *The Week* proclaims, "Why the Women's March on Washington has already failed," and calls it a "a feel-good exercise in search of a cause." The article questions not whether many people will show up, "but whether they have the seriousness of purpose to be taken seriously."

At last count, more than 150,000 people have said they are going to the D.C. march alone, and countless people like Eisinger will participate in sister marches.

Van Flandern and her co-admins recognize the criticisms but don't flinch from them. "I'm glad people read it," she says of the article, "I completely disagree." She says the point of the Women's March on Washington isn't just the march itself but the tools and community that are being created as a result.

"When the shit hits the fan," Van Flandern says, "we will be reaching out to the community locally and across the nation."

Howe adds, "We have the mother of all mailing lists."

A policy platform is being discussed at the national level, Barnhart says, and the Women's March is looking at what it can do beyond Jan. 21.

**"I HAVE A POSTER BOARD AND I'VE BEEN THINKING AND THINKING** of what to put on it," Eisinger says. "I want to be broader than just anti-Trump. Something like, 'this is not normal or never normal.'"

Women don't really have the respect men have, she says. "By and large it's a man's religion, and it's a man's business world and you can break that glass ceiling only if you are allowed to by a man."

Reflecting upon Trump's "grab them by the pussy," comment, Eisinger says "a lot of men were appalled by it, and wouldn't say it themselves, but maybe think we are making too much of it." But, she says, "it shows the deepest disrespect."

She adds, "It could be so much better and should be."

*The Eugene march starts at noon Jan. 21 at the U.S. Federal Courthouse, 405 East 8th Avenue. The national Women's March on Washington starts gathering at 10 am Jan. 21 at the intersection of Independence Avenue and Third Street southwest, near the U.S. Capitol. To get involved with the local effort, go to Women's March in Eugene page on Facebook and for national and state information, go to womensemarch.com.*



**FIERCELY FEMINIST**

**DON'T GRAB MY PUSSYHAT**

**A**s the preparation gets under way for the Women's March on Washington and its sister marches, sign making and T-shirt preparations have taken off. One notable bit of fashion is the Pussyhat Project, which seeks to outfit marchers with more or less matching pink pussyhats to "make a unique collective visual statement, which will help activists be better heard. The hats are being created by crafters across the country and consist of a pink knit cap with small cat ears. For more go to [pussyhatproject.com](http://pussyhatproject.com).

For those lacking the crafty gene, Threadbare Print House, a Eugene-based woman owned, eco-friendly company, is producing T-shirts with a fist and the slogan "fiercely feminist." Threadbare owner Amy Baker says, "Most of us from the shop will be marching in Portland that weekend. We have several friends and customers who are flying to D.C. for the March." Baker says that \$10 from every T-shirt and \$20 from every hoodie sold will be donated to Planned Parenthood. "Planned Parenthood seemed like the right place to donate the money to because it is an institution that provides necessary health care to women across the country," she says. To purchase go to [threadbarepress.com](http://threadbarepress.com).