

Pride in Washington D.C.



“NO JUSTICE, NO PRIDE!”

A volunteer yells into a bullhorn, causing the surrounding crowd to sound off several more times until the march comes to a stop in the middle of the Dupont Circle park. Allison Aguilar took a moment to collect herself in this brief respite, pulling out her phone to check her messages.

Aguilar is a volunteer organizer, and one of the hands behind the protest that ultimately interrupted the Capital Pride's parade, causing it to be rerouted 2 blocks over.

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Pride weekend in D.C. is usually about people being unapologetic in celebrating who their gender identity and sexual orientation. However, for one group, this was an opportunity to bring attention to causes that affect members of intersecting communities.

No Justice No Pride is a DC activist group which wants Capital Pride, the organization behind Pride month in D.C., to be more inclusive by severing corporate ties, centering trans women of color, and taking a position against police.



"If we are going to celebrate the liberation of our identities we need to keep in mind that our liberation is a hundred percent tied in with and linked in with the liberation of all marginalized people," Aguilar said.

No Justice No Pride objected to the participation of several entities in the parade: Wells Fargo for its ties to private prisons; Lockheed Martin for being a part of the prison industrial complex; the Metropolitan Police Department and police in general for their participation in violence against Black and Brown bodies.

"So we just find it to be completely hypocritical to involve those sorts of organizations and



companies in a celebration of marginalized people," Aguilar said.

Even those who do not overtly harm these communities are not above reproach.

"These corporations really want to pat themselves on the back for showing up and it's just not enough," Aguilar said.

According to No Justice No Pride, their concerns have been dismissed by Capital Pride. As a result, they responded with a night march on June 9th, a march into the Pride block party on June 10th, and three blockades of the parade later that day.

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When visiting Capital Pride's main square, pride flags appear from seemingly every direction. The flags represents many different subcommunities in the LGBTQ culture, from lipstick lesbians, to bears, to people into leather. All that and more is represented at this event where people get to laugh and smile, to dance and sing, all without fear of judgment. Here everyone shares a common identity, identifying as LGBTQ.

This year was different, however. Not only was the parade disrupted by an anti-capitalist LGBTQ group, but this year is the first anniversary of the Orlando Pulse shooting.

The shooting, which took place at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida, killing 49 and wounding 58.



Hank Harris and Frank Finamore came to represent the Pride Fund against Gun Violence, which was founded after the shooting.

"The parade is all about humanity and people being human to themselves and to each other," Harris said. "Our cause is about that too. What person actually wants to see gun violence? It's amazing how it has to be a controversial issue, that we have to stand with signs trying to eliminate it."

Their aim is to get donations so that they can support elected officials who will pass gun control.

"We want as many people as possible there so that more people will see that we need sensible gun legislation," Finamore said. "Even under this congress, we can achieve something."

In some ways the community writ large still seems to be reeling from this tragedy. It also shared many characteristics of the Pride events people were at today. They were celebrating their identities and being public about this celebration and acceptance.

Today, for some, was a way to reclaim this act of celebration. For others, it was a day of remembrance and reflection. For others, it was time for action.

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This year's theme at Capital Pride was Unapologetically Proud, which seems fitting over a year later.

There was more than 200 contingents, including floats, vehicles, walkers, and other entertainment planned for this parade. Originally, the parade was supposed to start at 22nd and P St. and go 1.5 miles through Logan Circle, ending at the 14th street corridor at S Street.

No Justice, No Pride changed all that.

After blocking the parade's procession in three separate places, the parade was eventually rerouted to the contingency route a few blocks over. From there, the parade was able to finish its route successfully.

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This Unapologetically Proud theme extended to many festival goers, including Lizzie Orbaker -- who wore a purple wig and matching purple eyeshadow. This was her first year going to Pride, and for her it was nonnegotiable.

"It's the first year that I felt comfortable to come to Pride," she said. "I feel like it's necessary to make an appearance and be out and proud especially given our current administration and their stances towards the LGBTQ community."

"It's really just important," she said. "Not just for ourselves to be out and proud and not being afraid to be who we are, but for kids who are also in situations struggling with who they are, as well."

"It's a way, to basically tell the people who don't like us, 'Hey, we're here we're not going away.'"

