

May 1, 2017

Dear Women's March Florida, Inc. Board of Directors and Leadership Team,

On Sunday, April 30th, 2017 members of the Women's March Florida - Tallahassee/Panhandle Chapter leadership team held a meeting to discuss the issue of Women's March Florida, Inc. Executive Director, account owner and Board of Directors member running for District 93 House of Representatives while maintaining her leadership positions for Women's March Florida, Inc.

The following documents, given to Women's March Florida, Inc. Area Captains on March 31st, 2017, were reviewed and distributed at the meeting:

- 1) [The accountable nonprofit organization mission statement](#)
- 2) [National Women's March, Inc. relationship to Women's March Florida, Inc.](#)
- 3) [Women's March Florida Leadership Chart](#)
- 4) [Women's March Florida Key Leadership Positions and Explanations](#)
- 5) [Women's March Florida Ethical Fundraising for non-profits](#)

A copy of the [SunBiz registration for state corporations](#), which holds the registration information for the 501c3 status of Women's March Florida, Inc., was also distributed. This document includes the date of registration and the names of the three active Board of Directors for Women's March Florida, Inc., namely: Emma Collum, Esq., Paula Munoz, and Alex Newell Taylor.

While the leadership of Women's March Florida - Tallahassee/Panhandle Chapter wholeheartedly supports the empowering call for more progressive women to run for public office in these troubling times, our chapter has expressed the following concerns with the structural formation of Women's March Florida, Inc and the conflicts of interest caused by the Executive Director, Board of Directors member, and owner of accounts running for public office:

- 1) Since Emma Collum exists as Executive Director with duties as the "primary spokesperson to organizational constituents, the media, and the general public" and would be running for office on a Democratic platform we feel that our position as a non-partisan action group would be compromised. All members of the leadership team expressed concern for the way this compromised status would affect our local, state and national ability to lobby all parties and gain bipartisan support on issue bills.

- 2) As a group we felt there was a conflict of interest between the Executive Director, account owner, and Board of Directors leader of a direct political action group and the ability of that group to apply political pressure to the legislature if that leader was running for public office. We feel strongly that you cannot objectively lobby a legislative body and campaign to be a part of that body simultaneously.

The group felt that it would be impossible to lobby in the Capitol and keep our reputation in place if we had a controlling member running for office. We felt that our group as a whole, but especially in Tallahassee as we are in the Capitol quite frequently and work with other non-profit advocacy groups lobbying the House and Senate in Florida, would be compromised and that we would have to continually answer questions about conflicts of interest and corruption.

- 3) Given the roles and duties assigned to the Executive Director as of March 31, 2017 we believe it will be impossible to unhitch the public persona of the Executive Director in her role for Women's March Florida, Inc with the public persona of Emma Collum as Democratic candidate for District 93 House of Representatives.

To this end, [the first media piece released on the the subject announced Emma Collum's decision to run](#) with an eye towards her role as Executive Director of Women's March Florida, Inc. thereby conflating the two roles. Furthermore, the [state Women's March Florida, Inc. Facebook page](#) was used to announce Emma Collum's decision to run for office, making it appear not only that Women's March Florida, Inc. is endorsing and supporting Emma Collum's Democratic campaign but also that the organization is being used to further that campaign.

- 4) Given the Executive Director's duties and responsibilities as
  - a) planning and operating the budget,
  - b) establishing employment and administrative policies and procedures for all functions and for the day-to-day operation of the nonprofit, and
  - c) collaborating on policy decisions, fundraising, and increasing the overall visibility of the Foundation throughout the State with the various positions and committees of the organization

and the loose structure of WMFL policy around fundraising and collection of funds - excepting the sole direction that all local chapter fundraising go through the state first - we felt that there would be an immediate conflict of interest with keeping track of organizational funds. Several members expressed concern that monies that might

otherwise go to the state organization as whole may end up being directed by patrons to Emma Collum's campaign account. Meaning that people may end up writing checks for Emma Collum as an individual to support her campaign when they might previously have written donation checks to Women's March Florida, Inc.

- 5) The group expressed concern over the construction of the Board of Directors as only three members with one of the members being the Executive Director who has primary control of budgets, policies, networking allies, social media, media in general, and communications to members/marchers.

Our primary concern is that there are no checks and balances in place and that no explanations were given to explain why there are only three Board of Directors members and no transparency on the decision to reduce the Board to this number. This lack of transparency for the construction of the Board of Directors creates problems with transparency in the group as a whole as the Board of Directors is generally understood to be the checks and balances against Executive Committee members and the Executive Director of most non-profit organizations.

- 6) Finally, the group expressed grave concern over the fact that there were no bylaws for the organization and that there was no voting process, review, or democratic involvement from the state leadership in the construction of leadership roles and responsibilities and the role of the Board of Directors.

By ***unanimous decision*** the leadership team of Women's March Florida - Tallahassee/Panhandle Chapter has decided, for reasons 1-6 outlined above, to remove themselves as a chapter of Women's March Florida, Inc. unless the following requests are fulfilled within a week's notice of this letter's submission on Wednesday May 3rd, 2017. The requests are as follows:

- 1) Emma Collum, Esq. remove herself from the Executive Director position, Board of Director position, and ownership of accounts for Women's March Florida, Inc. while running for, or holding, public office as a state representative for the state of Florida.
- 2) Anyone holding Executive Board, Board of Director, or who has monetary account access and/or fundraising responsibilities resign from their position and remove themselves from leadership at Women's March Florida, Inc. while running, or holding, public office as a state representative or senator for the state of Florida. Area Captains for Women's March Florida, Inc. are requested to do the same if they are running for County Commission or City Commission seats.

- 3) Formal bylaws for Women's March Florida, Inc. be constructed by the state leadership team, taken back to area chapters, and ratified by no later than July 1st, 2017.
- 4) All state Area Captains and co-Captains be put on the Board of Directors if they have the willingness to do so.
- 5) Any new member of the Board of Directors certify that they have read and understood the state bylaws and sign them within 60 days of being placed on the Board of Directors for Women's March Florida, Inc.

We look forward to hearing a response from the Board of Directors at Women's March Florida, Inc. by May 10th, 2017. If the decision is to deny compliance with our requests we will remove our organizing under the name of Women's March Florida, Inc. Thank you for your time and consideration and for all the hard work you have done.

Sincerely,

Women's March Florida - Tallahassee/Panhandle Chapter General Leadership Team

Lakey Love, Area Captain Tallahassee/Panhandle Chapter  
Susan Smith Tassarini, Tallahassee Chapter General Leadership Team  
BrendaLee L., Tallahassee/Panhandle Chapter General Leadership Team  
Anna Bethea, Community Networking Marshal  
Diane Cook, Environmental Justice Group Marshal  
Lisa Schuman, Economic Justice Group Marshal  
Terri Carrion, Gadsden County Leadership Team  
Lynn Bock. Gadsden County Leadership Team  
Vicky J., Gadsden County Leadership Team  
Shirley Aaron, Gadsden County Leadership Team  
Karen Rose, Community Care Leadership Tallahassee Group  
Rick Soskis, Gadsden County Leadership Team  
Chelsea N., Healthcare Issue Group Marshal  
Laura Metcalf, Healthcare Issue Group Marshal  
Emily G., Public Advocacy Group Leadership  
Cassandra W., LGBTQIA+ Justice Issue Group Marshal  
Deborah Morningstar, Gadsden County Leadership Team