

Renee Hill and Laura Meier

Renee: Good Morning! What a wonderful day! I am so excited to see so many of you here today! My name is Renee Franklin Hill and I am a Board Member of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women QCMC & Co-Chair of today's Women United March

Laura: And I am Laura Meier and I am co-President of the Charlotte Women's March organization. On behalf of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women – Queen City Metropolitan Chapter (Tiffany Hemmings Prather President) and the Charlotte Women's March organization, and my co-president Gina Navarrete, I want to welcome you to the first annual Women United March. Renee and I want to thank and acknowledge the unbelievable hard work and effort it took for this march to get off the ground. First, the partnership between 100 Black Women Queen City Metropolitan Chapter and the Charlotte Women's March has been a great success and both organizations' members have played a huge role. I want to thank the two co-chairs, Autumn Watson & Renee Hill, and the Committee members

Aisha Sabur
Atreece Bailey
Autumn Watson
Bella Williams
Beth Davis
Calla Hales
Carla Archie
Catherine Verratti
Emily Ethridge
Gina Esquivel
Jan Anderson
Jodi Shaefer
Kay Ethridge
Kerrie Stewart
Krista Marshall
Lisa Workman
Laura Meier
Mary Staton
Mickie Hall
Renee Hill
Takiyah Amin
Tiffany Hemmings-Prather

Ursula Jabogs-Guidry
Wendy Mateo-Pascual
Kelly Finley

for all they have done to make this day possible. Charlotte Women's March organization, born over two years ago in 2017 as a march, has evolved into an organization that is committed to supporting women's issues by promoting education and collaborating with and supporting those organizations dedicated to furthering women's issues.

Renee: The NCBW was founded in 1970 in NY, and today we have more than 7000 members, representing 63 chapters in 24 states. Our local chapter consists of 75 dynamic women who are committed to improving the lives of African American women and their families by advocating for programs focusing on education, health and economic empowerment. I invite you to visit the tables in the back to learn more about NCBW- QCMC and Charlotte Women's March. Both groups have some exciting programs planned for the upcoming year. We welcome your participation.

Laura: Now we know that the National Women's March has been plagued with criticism. We are saddened that there is division and controversy. It is hard enough to sustain a movement without controversy. We hope for them a unified and peaceful resolution. Please know that Charlotte Women's March organization is committed to bringing diverse voices to the table. And you will hear that diversity of voices today. We are so excited that you are here to join in the celebration of Women.!

Renee: When Charlotte Women's March reached out to NCBW- QCMC we did not hesitate to accept the call to be involved in organizing this year's March. While our focus is on advocating for Black Women and Girls, we know that we will all do better if we stand together. Today's politics, today's culture is all about divide and conquer. Really, our differences should not divide us but having diverse perspectives should make us stronger. Wouldn't it be great if we could move out of our individual silos and care about the life's of people who don't look like us, who do not speak like us, who do not worship like us. Wouldn't it be nice to have a few hours where we can come together and focus on what we have in common and not what separates us! And that is what today is all about – Women United/Together.

Laura: Yes, People would love to see us divide and conquer. They want to see us splinter and cut each other down. But we women must rise up and support each other. We MUST listen to each other! We are in the throes of a women's movement. . And there are those who would love to see it falter. But as you all know: women united can never be divided!

Renee: So Laura and I thought it would be great for us to all agree on some basic principles. The fact is, we have more in common than people think. We don't have to agree on everything. But we can agree on so much. So, here is the opportunity for Your participation. Let's see if we can get some agreement on some basic concepts. So, if you believe that All Children Should have a Quality Education – Make Some Noise! Alright we need a visual on that If you believe that All Children Should have a Quality Education. Make some silent noise. Raise your hand and snap your fingers.

If you believe that:

Laura: Every one should have access to health care. Make some silent noise!

Renee: Immigrants make valuable contributions to this country. Shout out and make some silent noise

Laura: The Rule of Law should be applied equally. Shout out and make some silent noise.

Renee: You should be able to love whomever you want. Make some noise! Make some silent noise!

Laura: Gerrymandering is just plain wrong, no matter which political party is in power

Renee: Voting should be getting easier, not harder.

Laura: Equal Pay for Equal Work

Renee: Now we are not naive. We know that our individual life experiences will make us more passionate about some issues than others. Our individual cultural experiences make us see issues from different prospective. As an African American Mother, I don't just say to my son when he goes out "Be Safe". I also have to remind him that his BA from Duke and his MBA from Stanford mean nothing. He is still a Young Black Man in America. Race Matters.

Laura: And I, as a white mother, CAN say to my white teenage sons "Be Safe." I don't want to live in a world where this inequity is OK. We should NOT tolerate it. Race Matters.

Renee: When I look at the Southern Border I do not see a terrorism/gang crisis, I see a humanitarian crisis. Separating children from their mothers, their fathers. This can not be the answer!

Laura: And it's not ok that I as a white woman can be assured to have quality healthcare when many women of color do not receive the same level, just because of the color of their skin. We have to combat implicit bias and systemic bias in America. It's not an easy issue to solve but we must talk about it!

Renee: I see the hypocrisy and inequities in our criminal justice system and see first hand the impact that mass incarceration has had on Women and Families of Color. A good example. The crack cocaine epidemic resulted in the "war on crime" and mass incarceration poor and black/brown people. The opioid epidemic is described as a National Health Crisis.

Renee : Today we hope that you will listen to and learn from the diversity of prospective. We hope you find a voice to advocate for whatever you are passionate. We hope you March in step with others who have shared principles even if we do not always agree.

Laura: We know that as Women we can find common grounds. As strong Women we can solve problems! As United Women we can make this world a better place to live. So, let's chant today!

**Together: Women United, We'll Never Be Divided
Women United, We'll Never Be Divided**