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Lamorinda women take to streets to march for justice

By Diane Claytor



Photo David Rowland, Probono Photo

Approximately 250 people from throughout Lamorinda and nearby cities gathered in front of the Orinda Theatre on Oct. 2. The group was predominantly women, the majority were holding signs, many were wearing pink and all were there for one main reason: to ensure that women continue to have access to safe, affordable and legal abortions.

The Lamorinda Women's March was one of more than 650 marches on that date attracting thousands of people across all 50 states. Every one of these thousands of marchers were doing their part to defend a woman's constitutional right to an abortion.

Jennifer Tejada, a longtime Orinda resident, organized the Lamorinda event with the help of her recent college graduate daughter, Aiofa. "I've raised my daughter to have a voice, to speak up and know the value of the

democratic society and our role in making sure we preserve that," Tejada explains. Unable to find any local marches protesting the recent abortion restrictions signed into law in Texas, Tejada elected to organize one herself. "I expected maybe 40 to 50 people to show up," she notes, expressing both surprise and pleasure that so many feel as strongly as she does about this cause.

For Tejada, the march was not strictly about the abortion issue. "I believe we are seeing a slow erosion of our freedoms and our right to choose and right to vote is something we should all be concerned about," she says. "This is not just an abortion justice issue."

The Lamorinda Women's March participants were spirited and enthusiastic. They marched in single file or in pairs or small groups from the Orinda Theatre to City Hall. They wore their masks. They sweated in the 90-plus degree afternoon weather. They held their signs high and chanted "our bodies, our choice," and "keep your bans off our bodies."

They cheered loudly every time a passing car honked or a pedestrian waved in support.

Once the group arrived at City Hall, they were greeted by Orinda Mayor Amy Worth, who warmly and emotionally welcomed them, seemingly surprised and touched by the large turnout. Tejada joined Worth in addressing the marchers, emphatically stating, "It's important that abortion remain a safe and legal medical procedure for a woman to consider."

Having recently retired after 26 years in law enforcement (most recently as the Emeryville chief of police), Tejada does not consider herself a political person. However, she says, "For me, democracy is fragile. We've seen many examples of what happens when our freedoms are stripped away. And we need to prevent that from happening. Complacency will potentially lead to the erosion of many of the freedoms we enjoy."

Moraga's Ellen Beans was one of the 250 marchers. She was determined to be a part of the group, she reports, because she's angry at what she believes to be disrespect for women. "Walking with other women, some men, and a few children that day enabled us to speak powerfully for respect, life, self-determination, and justice. A big thank you to the women who organized this event, enabling us to speak out on these values," Beans declares.

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