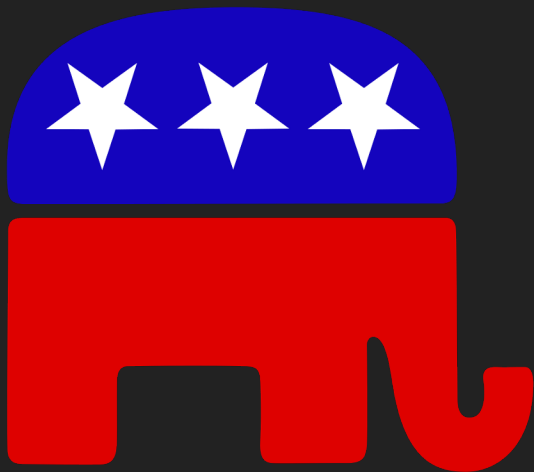


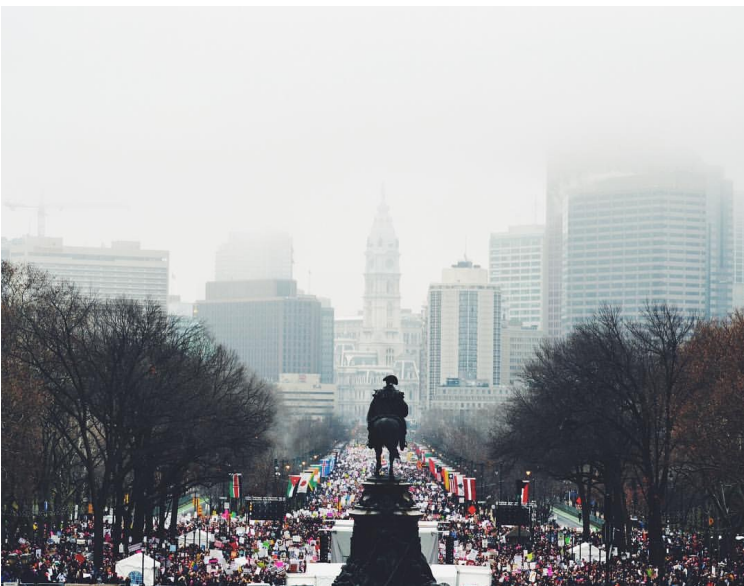
# SLAP'D

*Science Leadership Academy's Political Diary*



**FEATURING:  
'WHY I SUPPORTED TRUMP IN  
THE ELECTION' BY GAVIN  
LANE**

# PHOTO GALLERY



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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

*Politics is prevalent in our everyday lives. The freedoms we hold are only accessible to us because of our elected officials. Every four years the political awareness of the country skyrockets. We look at the candidates through our lens, whether that be partisan or through a certain issue, a back a candidate. This year's election sparked a global interest. With so many opinions running around the globe it was hard to capture the very essence of the 2016 election. This goal of this magazine is to capture the progression of opinions within SLA to the new administration. The magazine represents the opinions of students and teachers. SLAP'D explores different viewpoints and demonstrates the individual thoughts of SLA students on the actions of the administration and their policies. SLAP'D is also a space for students and faculty to share how they chose to respond and share what they implemented at SLA and in their communities. This magazine was my way of expressing my thoughts on the administration and getting word out to others about the implications our silence can have. All in all I hope you enjoy reading students and teachers thoughts and are encouraged to express your opinions through your desired medium. I encourage you to reach out to the writers and discuss your impressions.*

*Thank you for picking up SLAP'D, I hope you enjoy the read!*

# DONALD TRUMP: THE LAST ONE STANDING

BY: CHIARA NEMATI



This election season has been an interesting one. I'm not going to lie, I have been more informed than ever before and the only reason is because of the lovely republican candidate, Donald J. Trump. I have watched every debate and the contrast between the Republican Party and Democratic Parties is drastic. Instead of thinking of these candidates as possible presidents of the country, I've looked at them as students running for president of their school. Each month we've seen candidates dropping out, lots of them voicing their support for Trump. This shocked me; they went from fighting to keep Trump low in the polls to rallying behind him. Throughout the early primaries it was clear that Trump got most of the delegates. Now everyone besides Trump supporters are faced with a huge problem, Trump is the only Republican candidate.

For a while there was talk about a contested convention where Ted Cruz and John Kasich would run together and hopefully win the nomination. However, after Ted Cruz's loss in Indiana he dropped out of the race, but not without a fight. He tried many things to insure that Trump would not become the nominee, but none worked. He began by making a pact with Kasich, which would allow Cruz to focus on India and Kasich to work on the later states. Cruz also gained support from former runner Carly Fiorina. This, however, was also a bust. The Republican Party's worst fear was coming to light, an outsider would be heading their party in the fall elections.

The most memorable part of the republicans primary race has been the fire between Cruz and Trump. There has been a lot of heat and back-and-forth fighting. Now it is all over; we no longer have to listen to debates or speeches by the candidates attacking one another. Trump took a moment to acknowledge Cruz and appreciate his former running mate but quickly switched gears to attack former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. America is left with a big problem, the man we all thought would fizzle out and be looked at as a joke is the republican nominee and there is no one that can step in his way.

# TO MR. WANNABE PRESIDENT

BY: TAMIR HARPER

Dear Donald Trump,

Have you noticed the disrespect that have been going around our country? These days, It's your fault.

"The Hispanics," "the Muslims" and "the blacks." You continue to use these phrases in your speeches.

Why does this language offend me? You continue to use "the" before addressing us as if we were objects, but in reality we are human beings that have been oppressed multiple times by the systems of our country. It may not seem like a big deal for you, but it's definitely a big deal for me and my brothers and sisters.

You disrespect people that have nothing to do with you, that have never asked for your attention. You continue to help people find reasons to oppress minorities. You have disappointed the Black Community, and you have has been disrespectful to almost every minority group in our Country. As an African American male, I am disappointed that this country has allowed a bigot to become a frontrunner for President of These United States.

During last Wednesday's debate, you continued to say the African Americans and The Hispanics. But during his closing statement he hit home for urban city residents and in the past hit home for residents directly in Philadelphia.

*"I know the city so well, because I went to college here, but it's very sad to see what's going on inside Philadelphia," he said. "It's gotten so much worse than when I was going. It's dangerous; the crime numbers are up. Your mayor is doing a terrible job."*

During Mr. Trump's time as a student at the University of Pennsylvania in the 1960's, Philadelphia was a much different place. But the changes have nothing to do with our most recent mayor. Mr. Trump, why do you continue to one target urban communities and minorities in your speeches? Why do you tell us we are living in hell? What do you hope to gain from these attacks?

I think you are one of the worst candidates that have ever run for office. You should never be addressed as Commander in-Chief. You should never have access to the nuclear codes.

At this point, it doesn't look like you have any chance of winning, anyway. But I promise you something — if you win, I will never address you as President of The United States. You have disrespected the American people in a way that makes you unqualified for the job.



# THE FINAL HOURS BEFORE ELECTION DAY

BY: CHIARA NEMATI

As we head into Election Day, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump pull out all the stops to sway their voters to go out and vote.

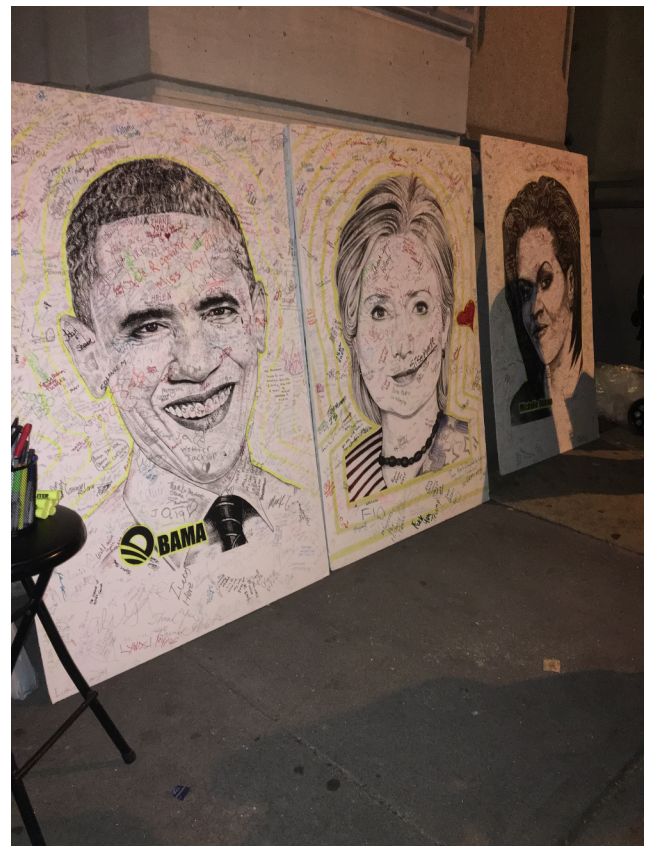
Hillary Clinton held a rally tonight at Independence Hall. Chelsea Clinton, Bill Clinton, and the Obamas were present to share their final remarks on this election.

The wait to get in was a long and cold one. I arrived around 5:30 and did not pass through security until about 7:40. Even in the line excitement spread all over. No one could wait to hear the Clinton's and Obama's.

Chelsea and Bill focused on Hillary as a mother figure and all that she has done on in her past, while the Obamas made the message clear. No one is more qualified to run this country, we will break barriers and continue our path forward. Through these strong words, the air at Independence Hall was filled with hope. The Obamas were able to stress the importance of this election, Donald Trump's downfalls, and Hillary's character and passion all into one captivating speech.

My hope tonight is that those who can vote will make the decision to go out to their polling place. That just like all of the tens of thousands of people who showed up to Clinton's rally will have the patience and willpower to go out and vote. Because as each of the speakers stressed tonight...this is an important election and every and any vote counts.

While I can not vote, I enjoy any moment I can spare learning about our country and the people who have an influence in changing the policies that affect me. So I also urge all of you who can vote to go out and vote.



# I JUST CAN'T WAIT UNTIL 8 O'CLOCK

**BY: GABRIELLE KREIDIE**

We are here, the day of the Presidential Election. After over a year of non stop media obsession, months of countless candidates during an unforgettable primary season, and weeks of surprise after surprise for the two top party candidates, we are days away. Days away from electing the 45th President of the United States of America and our country couldn't be more tense.

The surprises started after a flawed debate performance from the Republican nominee when a few days later, a sexist video representing Donald Trump's past comments on women began circulating. It seemed like from that day forward, Mr. Trump had no path forward to the highest office in the U.S.. That changed with the Wikileaks investigating into the emails of Clinton's long term aide John Podesta, released in a segments for the last few weeks ago. These new batches being released daily, show more and more deeply concerning communications, bribes, and possible flawed decisions from an already imperfect Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton and her defective circle of top aides filled with billions of secrets and inconsistencies. These leaks simply continued the dishonest and skewed thoughts millions of Americans have for a person they think embody everything that is wrong with the political world today, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Though these Wikileaks findings were digging close into the heart of a majority of Americans views on Secretary of State Clinton, there were no deep poll numbers or bumps in her campaign. That was until Friday October 28th, which could have been the large turning point for the election. October 28th, 2016, could very well be one of those dates that everyone will remember where they were and what they were doing when they heard the news. The words through my mind and I'm sure many more, was "not more Clinton emails!".

After months of the nonstop scandalous depictions of Mrs. Clinton's emails, the FBI and Justice Department were unable to find reasonable evidence to serve Hillary with criminal charges. FBI Director James Comey found that Hillary's decision was "extremely careless" but gave no indication of charging the Democratic nominee. We all thought that that would be the end of the emails... but then Anthony Weiner happened.

The disgraced, sex scandal complete former Congressman and candidate for NYC mayor, was discovered to have messaged lude comments to an underage girl. The FBI began



investigating Mr. Weiner immediately after the accusations were brought to their attention. As soon as the story came out, Huma Abedin-Mr. Weiner's wife and long time aide to Hillary Clinton- announced her plans to divorce her shamed husband. During the investigation into the messages, the FBI came across the device that was shared between Weiner and Abedin. This device stored emails related to Hillary Clinton that had not been originally looked at in the first investigation. The FBI obtained a warrant and now are searching those emails. Up until Saturday November 5th, it seemed like the investigation would go on for weeks but finally a follow up of the words heard in July came out and Hillary was cleared. From that point forward, Hillary Clinton has had the easier fly to the White House.

So here we stand. Two weeks ago, it seemed like Hillary Clinton was on her way to the office she has obsessively chased for decades and could still very much get there with 320+ Electoral Votes. But you can never trust or call victory to a Clinton to early. With the ever present lack of trustworthiness and lies that follow the Clinton's and their team everywhere they turn, there is a possibility that this election may not be hers. National polls are closer than ever. State polls are so inconsistent within each other that now pollsters are saying that states that were once seen as Clinton (Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin) bets could go either way. With hours until the election arrives, and with Clinton and Trump just about tying with dishonesty and unpopularity nationwide, the election is seeming more and more like a tossup. Today is the day. These have turned out to be the most stressful days for the American people and surprises could be lurking around every corner throughout the day. Nothing can happen, everything can happen, anything can happen. The not knowing and the inconsistencies of a Trump presidency are growing by the hour. And we are voting today, we are voting TODAY.

# WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

BY: CHIARA NEMATI

Last night I went to bed with the knowledge that the man that is against everything I am had just been elected President of the United States. What happens now? Where do we go from here?

I am the daughter of immigrants. My father is an Iranian immigrant, my mother an Italian immigrant. I am a citizen of three vastly different and ever changing countries. I am a woman. I represent everything Donald Trump believes is wrong with this nation.

This morning my brother woke up to knowledge that the man that hates who he is is his new President. My brother like many other U.S. citizens holds a place in this country that is between worlds. He sees his father, a man who has worked so hard to come and prosper in this country, a man who has sacrificed living close to his own family for the benefit of his own, he sees a man who may lose it all. He is left to wonder, is my father's citizenship to this country enough?

This morning my brother asked my father, "What happens now?"

My father said, "We hope..."

So America, now we hope. We hope that the man who has just been elected President of the United States will run this country for the people and not just for the elite and his voters.

We must hope that a man who was not trusted to speak freely on his own, a man who needed his Twitter account to be taken away from him, to run this country. But I ask you, how long will this man need his training wheels? Because that's what they are. His entire campaign staff are his training wheels. They have held him on his course. Steered him back when he went way over the line. This man, who cannot even control himself from more than half an hour, will enter the White House expected to be the Commander in Chief.

In Donald Trump's victory speech, he made a call to unite all Americans. As I sit here and write, I wonder to myself how this is possible. Donald Trump a man who has run his campaign through hatred, racist and sexist remarks, now wishes to unite all Americans. Trump does not speak for me. Donald Trump does not speak for women. Donald Trump does not and has not spoken for the African Americans of this country. For the immigrants of this country. How can he unite us now?

As I woke up in the morning I thought to myself, it's so much more than just who I am and who my family is. This is about all of the leaps and bounds this country has made in the last

century. Human rights. Equal rights. Women's Rights. Does it all just go away? I sit here and write and wonder what will happen to planned parenthood? What will happen to the legislation that has been written in favor of the LGBTQ community? What will happen to ObamaCare?

No one saw this Trump Presidency coming. So now I ask you, how can someone who will not publicly support their candidate support their candidate? If you cannot be proud of who you are supporting then why are you supporting them? If you are not proud to be supporting who you are then look at the flaws of the person you are supporting and reconsider the choice you've made. We live in a country of freedom so anyone can support who they want and should not be ashamed of their choice.

Republicans hold majority in the House of Representatives and the Senate. It is hard to see light at the end of this tunnel. All that I believe in is now on the table, ready to be thrown out. I am now going to be living with a President who flip flops on important issues. A President who refuses to reach out to other nations. Who explicitly said in his victory speech that he would only ally with willing nations. Usually we look to the Vice President for a slim shot at hope. But Pence might scare me more. An extremely conservative and intelligent man who will not have much trouble swaying the other Republicans to his side.

I wonder about my future. Where do I go from here? Many students at SLA have voiced their concern. Is college still something that is on the radar? Do they continue with their intended majors or paths? I will continue my education. I will not let this election be the decision maker in my life. I will continue to fight. I will fight in any way I can.

So what happens now? Now we hope. Now we fight. Now we become the hope. For those of us who had to sit on our hands and hope that the rest of the U.S. would go out and vote, we must fight for a stronger and more influential Democratic ticket in the coming election. What happens now is up to us.





# SPEAKING OF LOVE

BY: LARISSA PAHOMOV

In my first year of teaching at SLA — which was my first year of teaching in my own classroom — a student asked me, “do you love us?”

The question gave me pause. This was a student in the crankiest class I taught that year (hello, Fire Stream, Class of 2010) and it seemed, for a moment, that the query might be a trick. But I still knew the answer in my heart.

“Yes, of course I love you.”

The student wasn’t buying it. “What? You lyin’. We really annoy you in our class.”

Zac Chase, who was listening in, came to the rescue here: “You mean you’ve never been driven crazy by somebody you love?”

It was only a couple of years in that I came to realize how truly rare this conversation was at the high school level. Love exists between young children and their parents, with teachers serving as proxy; as those children become adolescents, the definition of love shifts towards romance. Our popular portrayals of “I love you” further narrow our understanding of the experience — with our heads full of images of (straight, white) couples in joy or anguish, we lose contact with the universal experience that love can be.

And yet. I am lucky — beyond lucky — to work at SLA. What I have witnessed here has helped expand my understanding of what love is and how it can save us.

When a student carries a friend in a cast down the stairs during a fire drill, that’s love.

When an entire advisory turns out for the funeral of a parent, that’s love.

When a teacher takes a student into their own home so they will make it to graduation, that’s love.

And when we feel concern, fear, even terror about the changing political landscape, our love for each other is not just comfort or safety, but an act of resistance against the forces that would prefer to see us tear each other down in hate rather than lift each other up.

Late in the evening of election night — but long before the results were made official — a question formed in my head:

*What are we going to say to the kids tomorrow?*

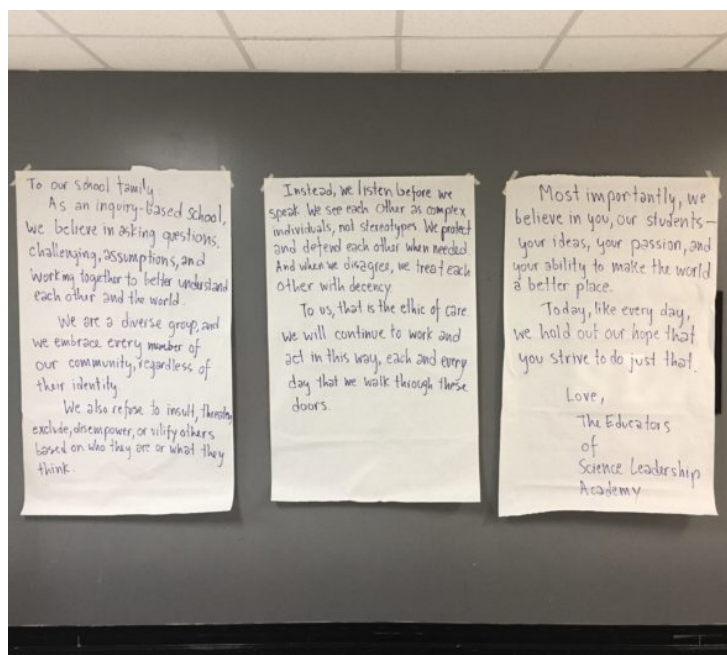
That question led to a few lines of text, which then became a collective letter that SLA teachers composed between midnight and 7AM the next morning. We got to school early, wrote it out on poster paper, and made photocopies for every teacher to read out loud at the start of first period.

These actions saved me that day, and it brought strength to many teachers (perhaps even more than the students).

At the end of the next day, I had a chance to debrief a bit with my advisory. I had to tell them: It’s not every teaching staff that would start a letter with “to our school family” and sign off with “love.”

And yet, I’ve been hearing and seeing expressions of love more than ever since last week. Not just in my building, or in my house, but all over this fine city.

There are some dark times ahead. But it is the dark moments that make love the most precious, the most essential. Let’s not lose that.



# WHY I SUPPORTED TRUMP IN THE ELECTION

BY: GAVIN LANE

When the Presidential election was in its opening months, I did not support Donald Trump and I never thought I ever would. He seemed like a crazy, mockable meme of a man. On the Democratic side, Hillary Clinton seemed like a corrupt warmonger, and Bernie Sanders a well-meaning progressive who had fought for civil rights in the past but now just seemed to be pandering to *ultra* radical leftist millennials. At the time, I did not and could not support any of these people.

So how did I end up supporting Trump?

By May of 2016, it was clear he was becoming a serious contender for the presidency, so I actually started looking at some of his policies. I listened to what he said and I read about him with genuine curiosity.

One issue I found I agreed with him on is immigration. While I have never agreed with concept of building “the wall,” I have become concerned with crime around our southern border.

We all know (or should know) that statistically the large majority of illegal immigrants come from south of the border, mainly Mexico and Central America. It is also true that not all Latinos or Hispanics are illegal immigrants from Mexico or Central America, and of those who are, not all are criminals. However, I think deportation is a useful method to help prevent crime in the United States. What’s more, President Obama agrees — in his presidency, over 2.5 million illegal immigrants have been sent back to their home countries.

there are illegal immigrants who do not commit crimes, and no heavy evidence that the immigration problem is causing more crime than usual in the United States. However, something that has helped the illegal drug market thrive is a weak border — and this is true for both Mexico and the United States. The more territory that drug cartels can grab in the United States, and the more population they have access to, the more powerful they become.

While I don’t recommend a wall, I believe something dire must be done about border control, and Trump seemed bent on a solution like no other candidate, so I found myself leaning toward supporting him.

Another thing that Trump proposed that I was drawn to is the maintenance of robust employment in the energy sector while making sure that environmental regulations are more helpful than hindering. For example, he is adamantly opposed to undue and expensive industrial

regulation, which can have a crippling effect on our economy and put people out of work. I have known that there has been some controversy over the Carrier issue, where Trump made a personal intervention in a private business matter to save jobs, but in the end I think that what he did there benefits the American people more because you have more jobs staying in the country.

At the time he discussed this, he also reversed his claim that the Chinese completely made up the concept of global warming. This is good for me, because it means that there is hope for climate talks, because I believe it is a real thing. Humans have both caused it and can intervene.

Once the primaries ended, my choice to support Trump was also a result of the fact that I could not support Hillary Clinton. Now, I had already heard the allegations of corruption surrounding her, but thanks to the many emails stolen from her campaign chairman John Podesta, I became more alarmed with corruption and cynicism in the the campaign. Just the thought of a politician having a *completely different* “public” and “private” policy, for example, seemed scarily shady. Finally, considering her support of a no-fly zone in Syria, I worried that by electing Hillary Clinton, this country could very well elect a warmonger, and the thought of a World War III, especially with a country like Russia involved, is scary. And of course, there was *one more* reason I became especially disenchanted with Hillary Clinton, and that was her involvement with “same old, same old” establishment politics.

Since Philadelphia and SLA are both very liberal environments, when I decided to support Trump, I did wonder how I would tell people. My close circle of friends and my family would be okay with it, but what about others? To an extent, I almost felt like I was coming out of the closet all over again. (FYI, I’m bi – and I don’t give a rat’s ass about Pence, although it seems even *he* has realized the ridiculousness of things like electro-shock “therapy.”) I have worn my Make America Great Again hat around school a couple times, and so far that’s been uneventful. One person unfriended me on Snapchat, I think, but that’s a low-key response.

Despite how I feel about Hillary Clinton — and I honestly hope Trump goes through with that FBI investigation of Hillary — I do respect those who supported her. She put up a good fight, and I don’t just throw away members of my community due to politics. I can’t predict exactly how his presidency will go, but I am hopeful because of this: Globalism and its international conflicts that it breeds are not good for any nation, and when it comes down to it, I am for nationalism over globalism.

# 'WARD LEADERS' LEAD SLA TO ELECTION WIN

BY: MADDI EXTEBESTE

While the real general elections were happening this past fall, the Free Library of Philadelphia offered the opportunity to high school and middle school students to participate in a school citywide program called "Philly Students Vote." It allows them to vote for their favorite candidate for president.

SLA won the first prize for being the school with the highest percentage of voter turnout, with 59% of registered students voting. As a prize, the school will receive \$1,000 to spend on a project that the student organizers provide.

The contest worked like the regular elections. Students had to register to vote in advance, and then on the Election Day vote. The voter registration ended at 5:00 P.M. on Tuesday, November 1st. Then at 7:00 A.M on next Tuesday, November 8th, the Election Day, every student registered received an email invitation so they could vote online until 8:00 P.M.

SLA participated with the new History teacher Daniel Symonds as the teacher sponsor, and each History teacher picked one student from each stream to become student organizers, who called themselves "ward leaders."

The FLP announced the results of popular vote when schools finished counting and sending their votes, a few hours after the polls got closed.

"This program is a way to help students understand how voting important is and how does it work," Mr. Symonds explained. "It makes them be more engaged in politics."

Freshman and Student Organizer Zeniah Navas agreed. "It allows us to have ideas on how to change the world. It also allows students to feel that they're changing the world and that have something to say about what is happening."

Mr. Symonds said they might spend the \$1000 prize money on a charity event to raise more money, which could be given to charities, because they want SLA to look further, outside the school. The FLP also provided \$50 for a pizza party for the whole team.

So how did students vote at SLA? Here are the results:

Democratic: 84% (218 votes) Republican: 6% (16 votes) Green: 3% (9 votes) Libertarian 3% (8 votes) Ken Bone (Write-in): 2% (4 votes) Constitution Party: 0% (1 vote) The



real grandmaster jay (Write-in): 0% (1 vote) Jen Bowles (Write-in): 0% (1 vote)

"SLA is majorly Democratic and when we found out the results, many of us were happy with them," said Navas. "I was especially happy because I, myself, voted for Mrs. Clinton."

Another student organizer, the sophomore Afi Koffi, also said she was not surprised at all, and added: "Even in the real election, the rankings were similar, based on the popular vote."

The high participation of the students also shows that students want also to be heard, and this program gave them this opportunity "to show how their voice effects the world", said Koffi. It makes people think about how different could have been the results in the official elections if high school students countrywide could have vote.

"I am very pleased with our voter turnout because we, the ward leaders, worked so hard to make it so," she said. "I witnessed students who weren't ward leaders send reminders to their peers via social media. It's things like this that make SLA so great. The feeling of community, collaboration, and duty are what gave us the win."

# TEACHERS ARRESTED AT PROTEST

BY: SAAMIR BAKER

On Tuesday, November 29th, two teachers at Science Leadership Academy were arrested in a protest with the organization Fight For 15, a group that wants to raise the minimum wage for workers.

Video of the arrest, posted on Facebook by a fellow district teacher, showed a dramatic scene. Rain was pouring down while protesters screamed “Workers are united!”

Among the 13 total arrested were English Teacher Larissa Pahomov and History Teacher Daniel Symonds. They wanted to fight for what they felt was an important social issue and had no problem doing so.

The arrest was not unexpected.

“Fight for 15 approached my union caucus, and asked who wanted to be arrested,” Ms. Pahomov explained. “So it was a planned arrest. We didn’t KNOW we would be arrested but knew it was a possibility.”

With the knowledge of it being a planned arrest, the goal was to have 1000 people arrested by the end of the night nationwide. Proudly, that goal was reached and the occurrence even made 11 o’clock news in many areas including Philadelphia.

Immediately after being arrested, Ms. Pahomov and Mr. Symonds were driven to the police station with many other protesters, many of which being workers that only own minimum wage, to the nearest police station. They then were released one by one after being written a citation for failure to disperse, which will be paid for by the national organization FightFor15 which is a part of a service workers union called SEIU. With no charges being placed on them, they will not have anything on their permanent records.

The video was posted online shortly after Mr. Symonds and Ms. Pahomov were put in handcuffs the video. was uploaded to social media where Art Teacher Ms. Hull shared it on her timeline. Two juniors saw it, and decided everyone at Science Leadership Academy should know about what has happened, and the hashtag #FreeMs.PahomovandMr.Symonds was born.

Junior Samuel Dennis saw the post and immediately thought he had to share it. “It was cool to spread awareness about what happened.”

Students were especially intrigued by how calmly Ms. Pahomov was while her hands were being zip-tied. She explained the reason for this: “I was given advice to be as calm as possible so we couldn’t be accused of assaulting a police officer.”

Pahomov also emphasized that the entire protest was peaceful and intentional.

“There was no violence, we were all expecting to be arrested. The main point of this protest was to gain media attention, the fact it gets on the news was more important.”

The next day, Mr. Symonds and Ms. Pahomov wrote a post for their union caucus titled “Why We Fight for 15” which explained their reasoning for participating in the action.

“As union members, we stand in solidarity with all workers seeking a fair wage for their hard work. And as teachers, we take up this fight not just as employees, but as caretakers of the children of Philadelphia. We know that civil disobedience is one way that working people can assert control over their lives, and it’s one way that we can help keep poverty from unraveling the fabric of our families and our city.”

To see educators that are able to support other people’s livelihoods but also try to support children they are and are not teaching by fighting for them to have a stable home life financially and be able to see their parents is amazing in the eyes of their colleagues. Ms. Pahomov mentioned that Principal Chris Lehmann had a positive reaction when he got the news.

“Even though he was in Norway, he became aware of the situation after some faculty confusion, he was very proud and was happy everyone was okay.”

Both teachers are back in their respective classrooms teaching their students, and expect their citations to be taken care of in the coming weeks.



# STUDENTS REACT TO PHILLY SODA TAX

BY: FATU CASTILLO

On January 1st 2017, the City of Brotherly Love successfully implemented the Philadelphia Beverage Tax to welcome Science Leadership Academy students, as well as all Philadelphians, into the new year.

The tax, originally approved by city council last year, was successfully campaigned by Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney. Through it's been nicknamed the Soda Tax, it applies to any beverage that contains a sugar-based sweetener. That means anything from a Diet Pepsi to an Arizona Ice Tea will cost more to purchase, as ¢1.5 is now charged per ounce.

City officials predict the the tax will generate over \$90 million in revenue over the course of the year. Mayor Kenney intends that revenue to be funneled to public services such as Pre-K Schooling, Public Libraries, and City Parks.

Kenney also suggests that the increase in prices of sugar-laden drinks will also help fight the obesity epidemic Philadelphia faces, Philadelphia has one of the largest obesity rates amongst major cities with 68% adults being obese, as consumers will take in less products due to higher prices.

Opponents claim that the Beverage Tax will disproportionately affect lower-income families and small businesses as both will be paying more to buy their favorites products. Back when the 2016 Presidential Election cycle was still underway, Secretary Clinton and Senator Sanders both chimed in their opinions on the matter. Perhaps to no surprise, the former supported the tax in earnest while the latter strongly opposed it. Surprisingly, President Trump had no opinion on the matter

While support for the Beverage Tax is somewhat scattered, Kennedy's promise to fund popular public services are what pushed the tax to be implemented. That doesn't mean that everyone is thrilled to pay more for their favorite drink, however. Science Leadership Academy students give their take on the matter.

"I heard something about it before," stated Senior Peter Torelli. "I'm in the restaurant business so they were telling us that all sodas were going up \$2 a glass."

Torelli had mixed feelings regarding the Beverage Tax.

"I think it's good because it also gets kids to drink a lot of water and that's really good," he said. "People that drink soda are at risk of tooth decay and stuff like that."

"But it's kinda bad because everything is going up in taxes now," he added. "I wonder what's the next thing that's gonna be taxed."

Other students had a more intensely negative view of the tax.

"It's stupid," Freshman Naseem Hameid said. "Since we have a school store, I always buy Gatorade and now it costs \$1.25, and I



need the ¢.25 to get Jolly Ranchers".

"What am I supposed to do?," questioned Hameid. "Buy food or buy one drink?"

When it was explained to Hameid which services the tax revenue would fund, he had a different take than most.

"I don't agree with that," Hameid stated bluntly. "They always give our money to little kids, what about those little kids out here out in the world that don't have families?"

A school store manager offered his take on how the tax might affect SLA business at the school store. Prices for individual beverages went up 50 cents on average.

"It'd be interesting to see if we're making more money or less," theorized SLA parent Chris Lahr. "But I feel like we're probably making a little bit less because everything is a little bit more."

Since the tax is still in its infant stages, it's impossible to calculate whether Kenney's plans will have the money to fund them. Philadelphia can only wait and see what happens over time.

# A BRIEF HISTORY ON OUR VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT

**BY: CHIARA NEMATI**

Love him or hate him, President-elect, Donald J. Trump has gotten a massive amount of attention in the news.

But what about the Vice President-elect, Mike Pence?

The news channels dance around Pence and his past. But I am curious as to who we have elected into office. On the Republican ticket, Mike Pence was the only one with a political background. While Trump is our President-elect it is important to note that he will be getting a massive amount of help from his VP, who has been in the political circuit for sixteen years. As a result, we know more about what his political agenda might be like as the second in command.

Mike Pence began his political career in 2000 when he was elected to congress to represent Indiana. During his six terms in the House of Representatives, Pence moved up within the ranks. By 2008 he was elected to the GOP's number three spot, Republican Conference Chairman. This position allowed him to create the Republican party's message.

Interestingly enough, Mike Pence was encouraged by the Republican party to run for President in 2012. However he decided to run for Governor of Indiana.

While governor, Mike Pence passed a Religious Freedom Restoration Act, an Act that shook the country. In 2015 Pence signed an Act that allowed the business owners of Indiana to discriminate against the LGBTQ community. Business owners could use their religious beliefs as an excuse not to serve gays and lesbians. President Obama even took the opportunity to come at Mike Pence and the Act during the White House Correspondents' Dinner, "We've gotten so close that in some places in Indiana, they won't serve us pizza anymore." Obama said, jokingly suggesting that Vice President Joe Biden and himself were a gay couple.

Even though the bill was amended to explicitly say that it does not sanction discrimination, it is still an enormous part of Pence's career and beliefs. Currently a bill for the ban of abortions on fetuses diagnosed with down syndrome is awaiting action by Mike Pence. This would take away a woman's right to decide whether she is ready and willing to have a child. This bill outlines that the doctor may not perform an abortion if the woman's reason is a diagnosis, race, sex, or nationality. All of the bills that Pence voted and will vote to pass or not must be looked at and analyzed by us, the citizens of the United States.

While there are many concerning attributes about Mike Pence and his career, it is important to recognize his upsides. While in Congress, Mike Pence was one of the few Republicans who voted against the No Child Left Behind act. If you are unfamiliar with the No Child Left Behind, it increases the amount of standardized tests. It's goal was to help the U.S. thrive and solve the issue of failing schools. Instead this act attacks teachers, stresses the students, and does not get the intended results. No Child Left Behind, created during the Bush Presidency, caused an uproar in the education system. Many states have worked to reform it and cater it to their education system. In 2015, Obama passed a new version of the No Child Left Behind act that would reduce the role of the federal government. Using Indiana as a model, we can anticipate Pence's general views. From this information we should be able to know which issues to hold a stronger stance on.

Just like it is our duty to push Pence on the issues that we care about, it is our duty to know exactly who is sitting in the White House aiding Donald Trump. Now more than ever must the American people be informed on politics. We must be informed about each election, whether that be for the House or for the governors of our states. We must be informed about the bills that the Congress will be working on. We must be informed on who Donald Trump's cabinet will be, which currently includes Mike Pompeo as Director of the C.I.A., Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education, Rex. W. Tillerson, CEO of Exxon Mobil, for Secretary of State, and many more.

The Secretary of State pick Rex Tillerson has sparked much controversy. Rex Tillerson is the CEO of Exxon, a company which has many dealings around the world and most prominently Russia. Tillerson was even awarded the *Order of Friendship* from Vladimir Putin. With all the scandals that Russia has been involved in pertaining to the U.S. this should not come as a shock, yet it's repercussions are causing many to worry, predominantly other nations.

The picks that do not require approval include; Reince Priebus as Chief of Staff, Michael T. Flynn as National Security Advisor, Donald F. McGahn II as White House Counsel and Steve Bannon as Political Strategist.

Just a friendly reminder as I continue to read about all the possible ways President-elect Trump could be impeached, remember who is next in line (Mike Pence). Read up on politics and exercise your rights as a U.S. citizen.

For those of us who did not have the opportunity to vote in this election, do not worry and do not give up. In the next two years we will have the chance to voice our opinions and elect into Congress those who will represent our beliefs best. Keep on researching, our time to speak will be here before you know it.



# OBAMA OUT

BY: TAMIR HARPER

On Tuesday, January 10th, President Barack Obama delivered his final speech as President of the United States from an auditorium in his hometown of Chicago. In just eight days our President Obama, First Lady Obama, and daughters Sasha and Malia will be leaving the White House as our first family to become “normal citizens” again.

He spoke on many topics, from our economy to foreign relations, but humbly did not speak about how him and First Lady Obama empowered and inspired so many young people to get involved with politics. Instead, he just encouraged citizens to “[You are willing to carry this hard work of democracy forward. You’ll soon outnumber all of us, and I believe as a result the future is in good hands.” Just like his first campaign for President in 2008, he told young people that yes, they can.

As they say goodbye to the president that has filled most of their lives, student at Science Leadership Academy had many sentiments to share with the world.

Junior Kaamil Jones made a facebook post about how inspiring the First Family was. “you have inspired me and so many others. I’m so proud to be apart of a generation that’s so inclusive and you have done nothing but push us forward. Since 3rd grade you’ve showed me class, dignity and true leadership. Thank you for showing me that I could literally be anything I want to be. Yes We Can! Yes We Did!”

Sophomore Kenzie Hopkins gave us in the inside of how she felt when President Obama was elected.

“ I felt good because he got reelected and he was the first Black President to serve and be reelected. He showed no matter who you are or where you came from that you can do anything.”

Teacher Larissa Pahomov weighed in about President Obama effect on our students. When Pahomov was asked about the uproar in politics and social change from SLA students she said “It was inspiring to some students but did not cause an uptake in direct political engagement I think that ironically it was the election of Trump that mobilized students to do something about their political situation because they no longer felt safe and secure.”

She also described an unusual game that SLA students played when the Obamas first moved into the white house.

“Eight years ago, there were a set of Juniors that would pretend to be the Obama’s. It was a joke but also it wasn’t a joke. There was one girl that would pretend to be Michelle Obama and one that would be Sasha and Malia.”



President Obama said he will continue to serve us and represent us as an advocate and a believer. “ I won’t stop. In fact, I will be right there with you, as a citizen, for all my remaining days.”

## TURN ON THE NEWS

BY: CAROLINE PITONE

During election season, politics is the talk of the country, but even more so for this year’s election. The rivalry between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton has been all over the media. The difference of opinions has split the country. The country went out and voted for who they believed could run our country for the next 4 years. *Apparently* that is Donald Trump. But does the majority of the country really want him as president?

I have a confession to make: I was not so into politics, I thought it was a tricky topic to talk about. I knew that [describe what you DID know about the election, but I was turned off by the whole thing because [describe what candidates did or said that worried you]. There has been bonds broken over this election. This topic of discussion has been eating people alive and has started social media riots.

Even though I wasn’t paying much attention during the election, I was still surprised when Trump won because... When the election results came out, I decided it would be worth talking to other people like me — who hadn’t taken the election that seriously prior to November 8th.

What did those people have to say?

So what conclusions did I come to after talking to students?

After talking with students, I saw how passionate some were and how uninvolved some were. With that being said, everyone has a different pace and different way of going about things.

The way people sometimes go about things while trying to change someone’s opinion, if they are strong about it, is difficult. If you didn’t know already, people are very stubborn, and trying to demand a vote for Hillary or Trump from another being, is a hard task to conquer.



Trying to inform people is a good step, and trying to get people more woke is an amazing step as well.

So why is it good to stay educated on the topic of politics?

Being a good citizen of the U.S. requires active participation when it comes to politics. The habit of constantly shutting out important topics of the nation has progressed over the years. I have gone through not knowing enough about what has been going on, and I have learned a lot from it. Being surrounded by so many people who are involved in the news have opened my eyes. I enjoy debating on politics, because it gives me a different point of view, it is exciting. Even though I will not have the option to vote until the next voting season, I will stay on top of what has been occurring in our political world, instead of hearing the opinions from others.

# A LETTER TO NOMINEE DEVOS FROM A BLACK PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT

BY: TAMIR HARPER



Dear Donald J. Trump, Reince Priebus, Steve Bannon & United States Senators,

It's been less than a month since Donald J. Trump was elected as President of the United States of America, and he has already deemed public schools a failed system. He has not directly stated it but by nominating Betsy DeVos as the nation's Secretary of Education it is shown. For those who don't know, Nominee DeVos is a billionaire, philanthropist and "education" activist. DeVos is a pro school choice and voucher program.

For those who don't know, Nominee DeVos is a billionaire, philanthropist and "education" activist. DeVos is a pro school choice and voucher program.

What is pro school choice and the voucher program you are probably wondering. School choice allow families alternatives to publicly provided schools. The voucher program is pretty much scholarships for low income families to attend private schools. These don't seem terrible right? But, they both take dramatic funding from public schools and encourages schools to be for profit which means they care about making money more than educating students.

Betsy DeVos was educated in a pristine private school and attended Calvin College. She is a mother of four very privileged and private school educated children.

Nominee DeVos has no experience leading nor working in the public school system which is important for our country's Secretary of Education. The Secretary of Education is spokesperson of education for the President, adviser to the President for education policy, Title 1 funding head and the face of American education. As a public school student whose district relies on Title 1 funding, I deem Secretary of Education nominee Betsy DeVos ill-equipped to serve in such a key position for our country.

My school is not like one that DeVos or her children ever attended. DeVos and her children attended private schools that do not rely on Title 1 funding. Title 1 primarily supports school districts with a high percentage of students from low-income families. Not only does it help those families but it helps families that have migrated to the United States.

The City of Philadelphia residents with income below the poverty level in 2013 was above 30 percent; many more people are low income but are not deemed impoverished. Taking Title 1 funding affects over 30 percent of Philadelphia residents and half of the United States population. According to the 2010 census half of the population are at or below low-income levels. This does not just affect Philadelphia students, it affects half of the families in this country. Many families will be out of a free and public education which will damage the economy because we are producing less educated and college ready citizens. Our unemployment rate will rise and our spending on government assistance programs like welfare will increase. Cutting Title 1 funding has a larger effect than some realize.

Mr. Trump I am not sure if you fail to realize but our education system nor our economy can afford to fail like your businesses. There is no filing for Chapter 7!

United State Senators I urge you for the safety of our education system to vote NO for Donald J. Trump's nominee, Betsy DeVos, for Secretary of Education. We need someone with experience, a heart and someone that has experienced to fix this system that continues to fail.

Sincerely,

Public School Student

Tamir D. Harper

# REACTION TO THE SENATE'S NOMINATION OF BETSY DEVOS

BY: AARON WATSON-SHARER

On February 7th, I sat in class like any day, surfing the web. But this time was different. I sat expecting the worst on Twitter live, waiting for a decision from the Senate hearing of Betsy DeVos. It took only a few minutes to accept our reality. A reality that party lines are far more important than making the right choice, as only two Republican senators crossed the line to vote against Betsy DeVos. The vote was at 50-50 which was broken by Vice President Mike Pence.



Our principal, Chris Lehmann, is an avid public school advocate certainly isn't enthused by the decision. He felt disappointed that DeVos was nominated as DeVos "represents a lack of respect for the work of schools given her lack of experience." "She's dangerous to K-12 education, public education and higher education."

So who exactly is Betsy DeVos? Pretty much who SLA wouldn't vote for. DeVos is a billionaire whose husband runs one of the largest corporations in America. DeVos comes from the world of wealth and politics, where she's donated \$10 million dollars of her own to the GOP. As a family, she said it's "very possible" the DeVos family has donated neatly \$200 million dollars to the party.

Betsy DeVos is a pro school-choice advocate (which isn't bad for a magnet school) and a heavy believer is Christian learning and its relevance in the American classroom. That means she wants to make public schools into Christian private schools with public school dollars. If they can't be privatized, make them charters. She worked her strategies once in her state of Michigan with a voucher system, which Principal Lehmann believes could be funded by cutting title funding. Now, her old city of Detroit has the largest rates of charter schools in the country, and the schools she has backed have declined in test scores.

She actually has no formal experience in public education. She and no family of hers has been student or faculty in the system. DeVos also in her hearing had what appeared to be no knowledge of the 1975 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the staple for any accommodations and needs for students in a classroom. Principal Lehmann sees I.D.E.A as "how we prevent the disenfranchisement of students with special needs and the idea she has a profound lack of knowledge and it's terrifying to me as a school principal and a parent. She has shown time and time again she's deeply unqualified for the job." With such poor knowledge and background the pick for Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education proves money plays, as her donations to the party and 22 of the 50 senators who voted for her suggests.

So we have Betsy DeVos as the secretary of education now. As unqualified as she sounds I and our principal see no true positive to her in this position. As a public school, you have to hope what she's done to Detroit won't come to fruition in Philadelphia.

# WOMEN'S MARCH IN D.C.

**BY: CHIARA NEMATI**

I woke up to the sound of ducks quacking at 4 a.m. and walked out of the house half asleep to the OCF coffee house, the meeting place for a group of 451 protesters on our way to D.C.

As soon as I arrived at the coffee shop, I was invigorated and ready to go. I was, and will forever be, touched by the people who were there. It is a new era of activism. There were girls in strollers, women in wheelchairs and every age in between. By 6:30 we were on our way out of Philadelphia and on the road to D.C.

A silent excitement bubbled through the bus for the next four hours, and as soon as we reached RFK Stadium in D.C. (our parking destination) the bus erupted with cheers. . Thousands of buses were parked in the lot, and out of them flowed even more people than I thought possible. All that was visible was a sea of pink pussy hats and busses coming into D.C.

The metro was packed, I used to think the most crowded subway I'd ever see was in New York, I was mistaken. By 11 A.M. the D.C. Metro reported it had 275,000 riders which was eight times the amount of riders on a regular weekday. This number beat out the number of riders for the Inauguration, which only reached 193,000 riders by 11 A.M. The number of riders continued to grow as the day went on.

I stepped off the metro and was met with a crowd moving towards the capitol. At first I was busy reading signs and soaking in the experience of all these wonderful people (not just women) coming together to march that I did not even take notice of the people sporting buttons or sashes representing the different states. 600,000 people (a rough estimate) came together to stand in unity and represent their concerns for this new government.

Unfortunately, I was not able to make it close enough to the stage for the rally to hear the speakers. Every turn brought me to a blocked-off section, often crowds came to a standstill, and once the march was set to begin there was no space for the crowds to move. The group I was with decided to take a small detour and make our way to the White House through an odd route. Avoiding the standstill crowds, we were able to make it to the National Monument. Here, the march was actually moving, and we joined in. There was various chants, most of which I am sure were heard here at the Philly march and at marches across the globe. But incase you missed any of these marches here are a few of the chants:

"Tell me what democracy looks like—This is what democracy looks like!"

"Keep your tiny hands off my healthcare plans!"

"Hey hey ho ho Trump has got to go."

"We are the 99% and so are you!"

"Hands too small, can't build a wall!"

"My body, my choice."

While this was not my first march it was my first women's march and my first march in D.C. The experience was a moving one and while I do not enjoy that this is something I need to protest, I am excited to do so again. I enjoyed meeting people from different states such as New York, Florida, California, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Texas. There was also a group of marchers from Canada!

Coming home, there was a sense of fulfillment and a new fire in the people around me. I read up on a few articles on my way back and while most were informative and supportive, I was disappointed to read an article that described the march as unorganized. It stated that there were so many different signs talking about a wide range of topics that no real message was getting out.

My response to that article is this: you got the message wrong.

We were not marching for a sole issue, our message was that we are here and we will not be ignored. We were not there to fight solely for one issue. We were there to make our voices heard. We were there to show that we will not be sitting quietly during this presidency and watch our rights and beliefs be ignored. We are here to defend healthcare. We are here to protect our climate. We are here to defend LGBTQ folks. We are here to defend the rights of immigrants and our nation's foreign relations. Our message was that we are here and we cannot be silenced. We will be here united, fighting for our basic human rights until we are heard.

Not only was the women's march able to gather 600,000 people in the nation's capitol, it sparked a worldwide march in over 150 cities. The world united, and fought for their fundamental rights.

Now we cannot just fall back into our everyday patterns. We need to continue to come together to protest. We need to remain informed about the actions that the government is taking. For those who wish to continue fighting outside of protests should check out the first 100 days challenge on the Women's March website. Get involved and work with others in your community!



# SLA PARTICIPATES IN PHILADELPHIA'S BLACK LIVES MATTER WEEK

**BY: LAUREN NICOLELLA**

Starting on the week of January 23rd, Philadelphia teachers got involved and took action both in and out their classrooms in a city-wide Black Lives Matter week. SLA teachers organized the school's participation in the events. The specific week was planned out to be in response to the presidential inauguration of Donald Trump. The city wide action lead into February, black history month.

## Participation and Contribution

Multiple teachers at SLA participated in the matter in different ways. Many of them chose to wear custom designed shirts and pins with the logo "Philly Educators: Black Lives Matter." The design was made by a graphic design teacher at Martin Luther King High School. 500 shirts were made and all of them sold. Students participated through an advisory curriculum designed by the teachers.

SLA's English teacher Larissa Pahomov and History teacher Daniel Symonds were the main promoters for this event to take place at our school, informing other teachers at meetings and distributing materials in preparation for the event.

## Student Reactions

Sophomore Zoey Tweh, who is a lead organizer of the new Black Student Union at SLA, was pleased to see the campaign take off at school.

"There are certain teachers I don't have, but it's reassuring to see them wearing the shirts because that tells me something else that I don't get to know about them."

This type of event allows students to feel supported and see the way that their teachers are standing with them, showing how much they care. A great number of the teachers participated during the week. Small actions like wearing a button, impacted students, giving them the knowledge that they have their teacher willing to help, and aware of these social issues.

"I think that understanding social and political movements is very important, students are often taught that history is something that happened a long time ago, and aren't invited to observe their world in the present day." Ms. Pahomov stated.

## African American History Class

As we know, African American History is a graduation requirement, and Philadelphia is the only city in the country to do this. Sophomore Miguel Rivera admits, "In the African American History class, current African American History is not talked about enough." There seems to be more talk around the current culture and issues of social justice in other classes and not where it seems to make the most sense.

Some students expressed a lack of connection in African American History because the teacher isn't African American. Sophomore Afi Koffi, who had a different teacher than the current one, talked about her experience in the class last year: "I think there was a barrier. It's hard for a white person to teach something like African American History because no matter how hard they try, they have personal biases that will show one way or another. Race is a touchy subject. People are going to get hurt and disagree, but discussions have to happen so that we can bring forth change."

Afi also explained how teacher turnover last year negatively affected her class experience.

Sophomore Taylor Green had a bit of a different viewpoint, and also a different teacher, "I feel like a white person is just as capable as teaching African American History as much as a teacher who is a person of color, the only thing different about it might be how the students feel within the classroom. I think as long as the teacher makes the environment a safe space and reminds kids to choose their words carefully, it can be the same experience."

## Advisory Awareness

During Black Lives Matter week, on Monday the 23rd, and Thursday the 26th, most advisors showed their students a slideshow with a series of questions and information about Black Lives Matter. Using the slideshow or not was a decision for the teacher to make, leading to some students were unaware of the presentation.

A math teacher, Mr. Estey decided to make his own slideshow containing a different approach with information and questions. Mr. Estey had explained why there was a lack of participation. "I realized this when Zoey started talking about BLM week during debate - she pointed out that the energy in our advisory was really flagging, even though we had lots of strong personalities with strong feelings about the topic. That showed me that we needed to change our approach to help unleash all that personality." The final result of this was two short readings and an open-ended question that let people talk freely.



# THE MUSLIM BAN

BY: CHIARA NEMATI

President Donald J. Trump's first weeks in office have consisted of him bashing the media, signing executive orders, and turning America's allies into enemies. The globe sits in front of the television watching with the American people with inexplicable emotion.

I am not immune to all this. My phone lights up and before looking at the screen, I already know what I am going to see. Yet another notification of some ridiculous executive order.

On January 27, Donald Trump signed an executive order targeting seven nations by denying entry to the United States for their citizens: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

President Donald Trump signed the executive order on Holocaust Remembrance Day portraying to the American people his true character and lack of care for history. Trump did not acknowledge the many Jewish victims that lost their lives that day and rather referred to them as "victims of Nazi Germany."



The order, more commonly referred to as "the muslim ban," immediately took effect across dozens of airports in the U.S. Many refugees and immigrants stepped off planes so close to a new home and in some cases their families, to be detained. It did not matter if those entering or reentering the U.S. held green cards or visas. Lawful U.S. residents were being detained across the nation, sparking protests outside of many major airports, including Philadelphia International and J.F.K. Airport.

While this order is directly impacting people seeking refuge, people with educational visas, business visas, and green card holders, it is also negatively impacting current citizens. A federal judge, granted emergency stay for those entering the United States with legal documentation, halting the immediate impact of the executive order.

However, this is still a huge blow to the foundations and morals of this country. The United States is referred to as the "melting pot for a reason:" this country is made up of immigrants. Many of our citizens were once here on visas and green cards. My own parents, who hail from Italy and Iran have gone through this process.

Contrary to popular belief, entering the country does not happen automatically for people who travel here. To be granted a visa for the United States, you must go through a two year vetting process. The United States holds one of the most rigorous vetting processes, yet President Trump has repeatedly said that terrorists can undercut the process. Currently the process of gaining citizenship includes an intricate and intense path. It is a process that can span over decades.

Many begin with applying for a visa. Many begin with an educational visa, then transfer to a working visa once they finish their studies. After a time they will apply for a green card, which allows them to stay indefinitely. Once they have been a lawful U.S. resident for a minimum of five years, they are able to apply for the naturalization test. Once they have passed this long process they are granted their U.S. citizenship.

I was born in the United States, and when I was two years, old I traveled to my father's country, Iran. It was my first and last time traveling to the nation. While I do not remember my visit, I am left with tons of pictures of the beautiful sites and my entire family sitting together over dinner. These days, because traveling to Iran from the United States is virtually impossible due to the troubled political relations between our countries, my aunt and uncle travel here almost every summer.

Now they will be denied visas to visit us. A vast amount of the families living in the United States have other family members who live in one of those seven nations and are grappling with the same issue.

Iran took action against this ban and has decided to bar U.S. citizens from entering their nation. However, they are not barring people with legal documentation. Iran will be allowing people with valid Iranian visas access to their nation. This reflects a country that trusts their own vetting process. For the United States to throw their process out the window lets the unsubstantiated fear of Islam.. Iran's actions follow a more favorable path rather than the unpopular actions taken by Trump's executive order.

Donald Trump, we are tired of getting the notifications of your poorly-planned executive orders. We are tired of your selfishness and lack of respect for the people, for history, and for politics. We are angered and we will continue to protest. We will continue to push back on your policies and create pressure on your incomplete administration.

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# SLA UNINFORMED ABOUT DISTRICT ATTORNEY RACE

**BY: TAMIR HARPER**

Who do you support to be the new District Attorney of Philadelphia?

Do you even know who the DA is and what they do?

These are a few questions currently being asked in the Science Leadership Academy community. As many people — but not everybody — know, current two term District Attorney Seth Williams decided not to run for a third term which blown the race wide open.

As of February 15th, 2017 six people have put in their bid to replace Williams. Current candidates include Former Managing Director Richard Negrin, Former Assistant District Attorney Michael Untermeyer, Former Federal Prosecutor Joe Khan, Judge Teresa Carr Deni, Judge Leon Tucker and Attorney Larry Krasnsner.

In addition to these official candidates, there are many rumors that State Representative Joanna E. McClinton, Attorney Kevin Harden Jr., and Former First Assistant District Attorney Tyrique El-Shabazz will jump in the race as well.

So who's the best candidate? And do students know or care?

When I asked SLA students about the District Attorney, many asked me who I was referring to.

Junior Asher Swartz begin to make a disappointed face when I asked him who Philadelphia's current district attorney is. "Why would I know the district attorney?" Swartz asked.

Senior Luke Risher, who also runs SLA's chapter of the Philadelphia Student Union, was also uninformed about the coming race, and begin doing research on his computer when asked about it. Risher then stated, "I am not qualified to speak on this issue."



SLA did have one informed student who stated her father previously worked in the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office under Seth Williams Administration. Senior Nyla Moore did know the current district attorney but was not well versed about him. When asked her views, she explained that "I know he's in a lot of trouble."

The "trouble" Moore was referring to is Williams accepting personal gifts without reporting them. In his statement that he would not seek re-election, Seth Williams has apologized for "embarrassment and shame" he brought to the office. It is also important to state that Williams has prosecuted the most police officers in Philadelphia's DA history and has made Philadelphia District Attorney's Office a model for the United States (before the charges of corruption) as he stated in his press conference on February 10th.

History Teacher Daniel Symonds, who was previously detained by Philadelphia police during a protest, had some strong views about the current DA and Philadelphia's future DA. Symonds believes that "Seth Williams is not a representative of the justice in the city, he prosecutes the wrong people and avoid the prosecution of the right people."

When Symonds was asked who he supports for DA, he said, "I don't know all of them, but I know one person that I strongly support and he talks about broadly about justice is not simply about an issue or policing but also of economics."

Symonds is referring to Attorney Larry Krasner. Symonds believe Krasner is "the candidate that most represent a city that treats people fairly regardless of their skin, economic background or place of birth."

Symonds and Krasner have had a positive encounter. Symonds did mention that he has not casted his vote yet and will not cast his vote until he does all the research on all candidates.

Symonds was a little disappointed when I told him that students around SLA students did not know who the DA was nor who was running.

"The District Attorney position matters a lot, people who are feeling pressured because of the District Attorney, people who are closely in contact with the police and the justice system know who Seth Williams is."

He recognized that the reason students don't know about the role is because of their lack of contact with the legal system.

"The DA is a kind of position, you can ignore its importance, but one day it's going to have an impact," he said. "Not knowing the District Attorney might be a function of your privilege of not needing to know about the DA."

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# LT. GOVERNOR STACK VISITS SLA

**BY: KIA DASILVA**

On Thursday, February 2nd, Lieutenant Governor Mike Stack made a low-profile visit to SLA. With bodyguards in tow, but without much pomp or circumstance, he represented Governor Tom Wolfe as he toured our school. A Philadelphia native and advocate of STEM, he seemed eager to understand SLA's unique educational model and chose us specifically for that reason.

"We're trying to encourage young people to really be involved in Science, Technology, Math, and Engineering," Stack explained. "I had heard about this great school, and I had always wanted to see it and meet you young people and see what you're doing."

As the visit progressed, he visited two STEM classes (11th grade Physics and 9th grade BioChem) and appeared pleased by the school, joking that his briefing to the Governor about the visit would turn into a

two-hour meeting because of all that he saw.

In terms of his politics, Stack has a lot of ideas for changing our state's struggling education system. He's in support of dedicated funding for education, saying that "The politicization of education is what's holding us back in the city and in the country."

A staunch advocate for local control of the district, likely stemming from his mother's career on the Philadelphia school board years ago, he spoke out against the state-run School Reform Commission.

"I've been a person who's wanted to get rid of the SRC for a number of years and I've proposed legislation to do it because when my mom was on the board of education," he said. "Things weren't perfect, but most of the decisions were left in the hands of local government."

The SRC, founded as part of a state takeover of Philadelphia's school district to address fiscal crises in 2001, has received much criticism from school officials, teachers, students, and legislators.

Current SLA students may take the school's oddities for granted, but Stack emphasized the value of bringing stories about schools like SLA to the discussion about Philadelphia's management abilities:

"There's this notion across the state of Pennsylvania that we have big problems in Philadelphia, that none of our kids are getting educated and that we're not focused on the future," Stack said.

"I always tell them they're wrong and that it's a generalization, it's a stereotype, and they're incorrect. So anytime I can get together with our kids I can tell those stories."

Students might complain about the constant visitors, but those visit reflect the fact that the school continues to be used as a model.

Stack underscored this message, saying that "Science Leadership Academy is a great magnet school that we can hold up as an example of great things going on."





# A NEW APPROACH TO TRUMP?

**BY: CHIARA NEMATI AND AARON WATSON-SHARER**

On March 2nd, Madeline Albright, the former Secretary of State to President Bill Clinton, and Stephen Hadley, the National Security Adviser under President George W. Bush, visited the Franklin Institute to talk to the students from SLA about issues facing the Middle East.

Around 80 SLA students were in attendance. Although the session had a stated topic, it was run in a question and answer format, which resulted in the students straying away from the main focus and very quickly turned towards Donald Trump.

The level of frustration with Donald Trump was evident in the students' voices. The morning after the national election, SLA had signs outside of the school showing we oppose all forms of hate and discrimination. Our classrooms held long discussion where students could exert their frustrations and concerns under a Trump administration. That discussion at SLA hasn't ended it appears. We had an opportunity to hear from some of the best political figures today on issues in the Middle East but too often the discussion was led to America's political discourse.

Albright and Hadley respectfully answered our question and gave us advice on understanding and combatting this new administration. They focused on how we talk about these issues and how we listen to others. They discussed the art of negotiation and compromise and its relation to Palestine.

In a few different ways, we feel that we disrespected both speakers. Instead of talking about the hard work they put into creating their report for the Middle East we focused on the Trump administration. While there are many comparisons to be made between the Middle East and Trump, the line of questioning did not follow the cross-overs. For example, one student asked about the implications of the previously imposed travel ban. Instead the student should have asked how the new administration should implement and use Albright and Hadley's plan to maintain working relationships with the Middle East and to stabilize the turmoil, allowing the United States to feel confident in their vetting methods and let in immigrants and refugees.

We understand that all of the opinions need to be heard. We are in a tough time and we need to have discussions about the different issues that are arising in our nation. This was not the place for this discussion however.

The most memorable piece of advice we received from both speakers was in order for us to get through these next few years we must work together. We must talk and listen to the other side of the isle. We need to be open to make these deals and compromises. We need to come together to create a stronger nation that represents our ideals. We need to realize that the United States is still a superpower. Many other nations look to us for hope and relief. In order to maintain this deserved status, we must be aware of the issues that encompass the world. These issues are our issues as well.



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# SLA TEACHERS PARTICIPATE IN 'DAY WITHOUT A WOMAN' PROTESTS

**BY: MADDI EXTEBESTE**

On January 21st, 2017 the "Women's March" took place in Washington D.C. After the success of this event, the same organizers coordinated the "A Day Without a Woman" event in Philadelphia, which would take place on March 8th 2017, for the same purposes as the previous event: promoting solidarity and liberty. As Technology and Art teacher Marcie Hull said "this events represents human rights from birth, that everyone is born free."

On the day of the event, the female teachers first met outside of school and stood in front of the main door holding a banner which manifested their support of human rights (especially women's rights) and solidarity.

After the school day started, female teachers went to English and Creative Writing teacher Amal Giknis' house, to do research and talk about the points there were presenting at their meeting at City Hall in the afternoon.

Once at City Hall, they met politicians who worked there, and had meetings with the city council to ask more fundings and present the points they wanted to talk about. Each teacher went with the person who represented their neighborhood.

### Government and administration

The event was partially in response to an expected decrease in federal education funding, which will negatively affected schools in Philadelphia, especially for the children who don't have many economic resources

As Senior Fatu Castillo stated, "it's something has been taken to the people who needs it the most."

The new Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, doesn't really believe in public schools, and sees them as a waste of money. The policy is that schools should have a certain percentage of progress to keep working, and for example public schools which not meet those expectations could be shut down, or turned into a private or charter school.

Ms. Hull explained: "What if the school can't progress much more because it has already very good results? This law would be a rule against success."

She also explained that education could be the "easy-target" for the government because 75% of the teachers are actually women, and that America society doesn't value women's jobs as much as they do male's jobs; Hull added "the government has a too patriarchal reasoning yet; the society wants to continue what Obama and others pioneered, but they don't let it progress."

English and Journalism teacher Larissa Pahomov explained "the biggest factor is money, but the government should provide equal funding to all the different departments like law enforcement and the streets' departments."

For example, teachers' salary hasn't increased in four years. Before these economic "cuts" in education in 2012, SLA had almost twice as many Spanish teachers and a librarian. The lack of languages teachers is one of the reasons why Rosetta Stone program was introduced.

In the summer 2012, all secretaries and counselors at SLA were fired, like 4,000 more people working for the SDP, and didn't know if they were going to get their jobs back the next school year.

### Possible Consequences

These events sometimes have consequences for the people who protest. On "A Day Without An Immigrant" some demonstrators got fired., At SLA, male teachers volunteered to cover their peers' absence. They got to the building early but t they stayed inside when classes began. The female teachers appreciated this effort on the part of their colleagues.

"I'm lucky for being in this community and in this union which believes in women's liberation," said Ms. Hull.

They finally didn't invite students to join them in their march to the City Hall because one of the purposes was to make students "have a normal day at school," Hull said.

Moreover, the teachers who went to protest took a personal day, and as the School District of Philadelphia said, "teachers can take personal days for self expression".



# THE MUSLIM BAN ROUND 2

BY: CHIARA NEMATI

Here's something you might not know: I am a dual national, and Trump's travel ban changes my life.

I am a citizen three countries: Iran, Italy, and the United States. Under the travel ban imposed on January 27, 2017 it was unclear whether the ban applied to dual nationals.

I would have gone through additional screening upon re-entering the United States due to my Iranian citizenship. This vagueness and unjust executive order lead the 9th circuit court to vote against reinstating the ban.

However, on March 6th, Trump and his administration imposed an “updated” travel ban. That ban affirms my right, as a dual national, to gain re-entry to the United States. However, it still bars incoming university students who have not yet received visas.

Here are a few key differences: Iraq has been taken off the list of barred nations. Syrian refugees are not banned indefinitely, instead they also have a 120 day freeze on the refugee resettlement program. Valid visa holders, and approved by State Department refugees are not barred from entering. Still barred are employees of state universities or businesses who have not yet received visas. This also affects those who need to renew their visas. Only 50,000 refugees will be admitted to the United States annually as opposed to Obama’s 110,000. The ban will not take effect until March 16th.

For now, I am able to travel to and from the United States as long as I present my U.S. or Italian passport upon my return.

I am relieved. But the problem is not solved for my family.

My father is a sibling of nine. He and one of his sister are the only ones in his family who immigrated to the United States during the revolutionary war in Iran. Throughout my life, I have heard many stories about the atmosphere in Iran during that time and the reason for my father’s immigration. Due to the change in power and intense religious integration to government, his parents decided to send their sons abroad.

Each brother took a test, much like the SAT, for them to be admitted into a university in the country of their choice. My father decided to take the English equivalent of this test. He passed, and was soon headed to America.

He left at a pivotal moment in the relationship between Iran and the United States. The largest amount of student visas from Iran to the U.S. were seen in 1980. After Iran was declared an Islamic Republic, there was a drastic decrease in the number of students immigrating. Relations between the two nations have been tense ever since.

Today, the only family left in Iran is my aunt. She was the youngest of the nine and was not affected by the war due to her age and gender. Because it is so difficult for us to travel to Iran, she and her husband apply for travel visas every year. However, under this travel ban, they will not be able to obtain visas for 90 days. After those 90 days, we are unsure of what the restrictions will be.

Here is how we plan to continue to visit my aunt: In April, my father will be traveling to Italy to attend my uncle’s wedding. My aunt who still lives in Iran will be there as well. Our family is lucky enough to have relatives who have settled all across

Europe. Through them we will be able to continue visiting each other. Other families in the same situation are not as fortunate.

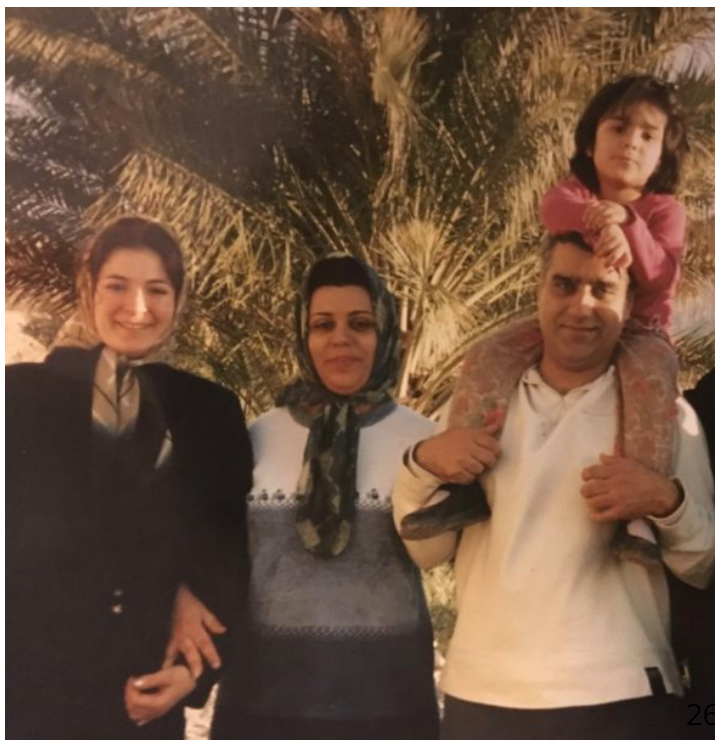
The goal of this travel ban is to tighten the vetting process which is already a strong and long process. We have neglected to ask what happens if a country does not comply or if the vetting process is not strengthened in those 90 days. What Trump plans to do after these 90 days is not public knowledge.

The United States has been a sanctuary for my family, and for many others. The travel ban sends the opposite message about what we stand for.

While the U.S. has never been the perfect nation and has not welcomed all immigrants with open arms, it has always worked towards understanding others and helping integrate immigrants into this country.

Under this new administration my mother worried about going on a radio show to promote their flower shop and explain their exhibit in the flower show. She worried people would not understand what she was saying and that they would get frustrated and stop listening. My parents have accents and it has never been something that bothered them or their customers. My mother has lived in this country for 20 years. Yet she still has to worry about what people will think when they hear her voice.

This is the battle we now fight. Immigrants now have to speak up and worry about things we previously paid no mind to. People are emboldened by Trump and feel that it is okay to oppress people who may have lived in this country for longer than they have.



# RACIAL UNITY CAMPAIGN TAKES HOLD AT SLA

BY: CAROLINE PITONE

On Monday, January 9th, the Stand for Racial Unity campaign kicked off at SLA, with students going around to advisory explaining the emphasis of the work.

Sophomore Bronwyn Goldschneider created the organization after thinking about it for six months. She herself is of mixed race — her father is white and her mother is Japanese — and they felt that there wasn't a way to bring people of different skin colors and backgrounds together.

"My dad and I discovered there was no symbol for racial unity," Goldschneider explained, so they decided to make one themselves.

With the help of her friends and her father, who is a photographer, she was able to produce photos of students with of all different races and ethnicities. In the pictures, each person was given a shirt with the racial unity symbol. The stance everybody was placed in, made the photo very eye catching and powerful.

These photos have been floating around the school and on different social media platforms. Not only have these pictures been hung up on the walls of SLA, but it is also easy to spot stickers on the back of computers from students. They have been the talk of students for these past few weeks. Bronwyn and the rest of the crew have been getting noticed for their leadership and recognition for racial unity.

Sophomore Sydney Rogers was one of the students featured in the picture and appreciated the opportunity that the group gave her.

"It means a lot to me," Rogers explained. "I've never been apart of a non profit organization like this. I'm really involved and invested in it."

After setting up the campaign, Goldschneider chose the



Southern Poverty Law Center as the group that would receive the proceeds of any t-shirt or sticker sales.

"They basically monitor all activity hate groups in the us," Goldschneider explained. "They try to bring the message out that there are still hate groups and to be heard about and changed. Awareness for this is the goal."

By donating online, you can order a T-Shirt with the racial unity symbol, and also, you are able to purchase stickers that can be put anywhere you would like.

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## WE WON'T BE SCILENCED

BY: HANAKO FRANZ

Silence can be terrifying. It can lead to feeling invisible, feeling intentionally erased. Those feelings are hard to ignore for LGBTQ folks given our current President and his administration. We went from President Obama who, despite his problems, would at least discuss the LGBT community openly and had a page dedicated to LGBT issues on The White House website. And now, we have a president who, only hours after being inaugurated, removed that page along with a whole host of other civil rights issues, as if those pages never existed. Additionally, he has surrounded himself with people who are outright homophobic, believing in things such as conversion therapy to "turn us straight." As a queer femme who often gets read as straight and already has to fight so hard to be seen, it is hard to know what these next four years will bring. We are living in uncertain and scary times for queer folks. Moreover, we know that we will not all be affected in the same way by the current administration. We know that race, class, gender, language, immigration status, and so forth all intersect to negatively impact some folks more than others. For example, as I write about wanting my queer femme identity to be seen, I also know that for trans women of color it is often their visibility that causes them to be targets of verbal and physical abuse.



The issues are complex and we must embrace the nuances that make our communities so beautiful. My heart finds strength in the power of my queer siblings who are taking this moment to be even louder, to fight even harder to be seen. I especially find hope and inspiration in the queer and trans youth of color who are leading so much of that fight. And, we know that our coming together to assert not only our right to exist, but our right to thrive, is something that can never be erased.

# PHOTO GALLERY

