

Generation Ratify Guide: 5/18 Nationwide Walkout for Reproductive Rights



[REGISTER YOUR WALKOUT HERE**](#)**

[*Come to office hours to get help, ask questions, and bounce around ideas*](#)

We are in a time of unprecedented attacks on our reproductive rights. In 2022 alone, there have been more than 500 anti-abortion restrictions introduced across 41 state legislatures. According to a leaked draft majority opinion by Justice Alito, the Supreme Court has voted to strike down Roe v. Wade. If Roe v. Wade were to be overturned, 26 states are certain or likely to ban abortion. With unconstitutional, anti-abortion legislation sweeping state legislatures and a Supreme Court that refuses to uphold the Constitution, young people are being stripped of our right to healthcare and bodily-autonomy. **We need a mass youth mobilization to defend abortion.**

On Monday, May 9th, thousands of Virginia students walked out of their schools under the leadership of Generation Ratify Virginia to demand action on their reproductive rights. Check out coverage of this mobilization [HERE](#). **With their support and guidance, we are building off of this momentum to organize a NATIONWIDE walkout on Wednesday, May 18th.** We want thousands and thousands of students of all ages and grades walking out to demand action on our reproductive rights. **[Are you in? If you are, fill out this form.](#)**

This guide is designed to help youth organizers successfully plan walkouts at their schools. Here is what this resource covers:

1. Deciding the Who, What, When, Where, and Why
2. Outreach, Building Attendance, & Connecting with Partners
3. Messaging, Dealing with the Press, & Social Media
4. Solidifying the Game Plan, Final Prep, & Other Considerations

5. Absorbing & Next Steps

In addition to this guide, Generation Ratify team members are ready to help you every step of the way. **If you are interested in planning your own action, fill out this form so we can support you.** If you have any questions regarding this document, please reach out to Emma Khodaverdian at emma@generationratify.org and Ritwik Tati at ritwik@generationratify.org or [on slack](#). We will also be hosting Office Hour spaces to help folks organize, answer questions, bounce around ideas, etc. **Hour long office hours will be held on this zoom link at the following times:**

- Wednesday (5/11) @ 5:30 pm EST
- Thursday (5/12) @ 7 pm EST
- Friday (5/13) @ 6 pm EST
- Saturday (5/14) @ 3 pm EST
- Sunday (5/15) @ 6 pm EST
- Monday (5/16) @ 5 pm EST
- Tuesday (5/17) @ 3 pm EST to 9 pm EST

Please note: This guide is a work in progress. It will continue to evolve and update with more resources. If you have anything you want to see added, reach out to rosie@generationratify.org.

Participating schools (so far!!): Dexter Regional High School (ME), Amherst Regional High School (MA), Harriton High School (PA), Langley HS (VA), Amherst Regional Middle School (MA), Lower Merion High School (PA), Sherando High School (VA), Midlothian High School (VA), Harriton High School (PA), Washington-Liberty HS (VA), Wakefield HS (VA), Poolesville HS (MD), Battlefield High School (VA), Science Leadership Academy (PA), Prince George High School (VA), David W. Butler High School (NC), Masterman HS (PA), Savannah Arts Academy (GA), The Shipley School (PA), Chapman University (CA), west career and technical academy (NV), ATECH (NV), Lynbrook High School (CA), Rochester Community High School (IN), Clark High School (NV), Calhoun school (NY), Oakton High School (VA), Academy of the New Church (PA), Coronado High School (NV), Reno High School (NV), Lake Forest High School (IL), CAPA (PA), Princeton HS (NJ), DeBakey High School for Health Professions (TX), Northampton High School (MA), Stone Ridge HS (MD), Visitation (D.C.), Decatur HS (GA)

Deciding the Who, What, When, Where, and Why

The first thing to establish is why you are doing this action. What is your goal? What message are you trying to get across?

With these protests, we are trying to amplify youth voices in the fight for our reproductive rights and call on our leaders to defend and expand our reproductive freedoms through advancing measures that codify Roe v. Wade, such as the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and other federal and state bills that will protect abortion access. [You can view a more detailed document of our legislative asks here.](#)

You want to make the why very clear to participants and provide action items. Here is a QR code you could print off for folks to email their Congress Members to support your legislative asks. After folks fill out this form, we are going to follow-up with them to take further legislative action.



Additionally, we want to encourage folks to support abortion funds. Here is another QR code that can be printed and shared at the rally that [splits funds between 10 abortion funds primarily in the South and Midwest.](#)



Next, figure out the who. Who are your fellow organizers that will help you pull this off?

It always helps to have friends and fellow gender justice advocates support you in organizing a protest. Who will be able to help you figure out the details, recruit attendees, coordinate social media efforts, etc. Once you identify these people, get in communication with them and get to planning the rest of the protest using the steps outlined in this guide!

Now, it's time to decide when and where the action is taking place. Once you have the details solidified, you can get into really planning it and recruiting people to come. Here are some considerations when deciding these logistics:

Time:

- **All walkouts will take place on Wednesday, May 18th.** If there is an extenuating circumstance where that day absolutely won't work at your school, we will work with you to find another appropriate date.
- **When will most people be able to join you?** What are times that everyone is usually at school or around campus? If you are in high school, is there a long transition time or free period that will maximize engagement? Usually the less class time students miss, the more likely they are to come!
- **Check AP/IB/Exam schedules.** Consider the commitments and schedules of your target audience. If there is a standardized test half your grade is taking, try to organize around that.

Location:

- **What is an accessible location for people to come together?** You want this location to be easy for people to get to and be able to safely accommodate all the attendees. Central locations on campus are usually safe bets. Also consider if this is wheelchair accessible. If you are in high school, fields and parking lots are good ideas. For college campuses, consider gathering in a central yard or outside of a central building.
- **Where will people see this action?** You want this action to be seen by others! This is particularly true for college campuses. Think of places that have heavy foot or vehicle traffic.

So far, you know why you are doing this action, who you are planning it with, and when/where it is taking place. **It is now time to determine what you are doing at the walkout.** Here are some ideas:

- Have a list of speakers share their stories.

- Do something art-based, like chalking on the street.
- Get really hype with chants and songs.
- Have a dance party with protest signs.
- March around the block or area chanting.
- The possibilities are endless!

Do whatever feels right to you! You can also do a combination of any of these options. If you need funding to make any of this happen, contact rosie@generationratify.org. ***Form coming soon***

Once you have established the who, what, when, where, and why. It's time to get to work recruiting partners and participants.

Outreach & Building Attendance

For a walkout, we recommend [making a graphic](#) and **BLASTING it.** RSVP forms aren't as necessary for walkouts. These protests are more about spreading awareness through word of mouth. Directly share information about the protest with anyone and everyone you know.

Here are ways you can get the word out:

- **If you already have a contact list of chapter members/organizers, contact them!** Send them emails. Text-banking is also an option.
- **Invite your friends!** Relational organizing the most effective ways to turn people out. Ask your friends to come, then ask them to ask their friends.
- **Message in other GroupMes/Slacks.** Send the information in other group chats you may be in that has other youth organizers.
- **Social media.** Make a graphic for the protest and share it out on social media. Encourage organizers to post about it on their personal accounts, too! You can also DM folks that follow similarly aligned organizations, such as Sunrise or HS/College Dems chapters.
- **Fliers and newsletters.** Try to spread the word throughout your community to people that maybe aren't as tuned into political organizing efforts. Hang fliers up around your community. Send a message through your listserv.

Another great way to build attendance is through partnering with other community-based organizations near you! We are stronger together. Working in coalition with one another is key to moving us all forward. This could be a great way to start new partnerships, too.

We highly encourage you to reach out to other organizations to ask if they want to co-sponsor/partner on this event. The key to this outreach is making clear what you want from the group, as well as how you want to support their work, too. Here is an example of an email/message you can send to them:

Hello X!

My name is (your name), and I am an organizer with Generation Ratify. Along with other youth organizers, I am planning a walkout to demand our leaders defend and expand our reproductive rights. *Insert details of the rally (when/where).*

I greatly appreciate the work of (their organization). Both Generation Ratify and (their organization) are advocating for a future where young people have control over their lives, bodies, and futures. *Insert sentence that directly talks about the intersection between our mission and their's (Ex: Climate justice is gender justice.)*

I wanted to make sure to reach out to you all ASAP to see if (their organization) wants to join the effort. We know we are stronger together.

Here is a graphic to spread the details. We would greatly appreciate it if you could amplify this out. Additionally, we would love for you to co-sponsor this event. This would entail you helping us amplify the event as well as having a youth organizer speak, if there is a representative who would be available.

Thank you so much for your consideration. Let me know any questions you have. Also let us know anything we can do to uplift the crucial work you are doing.

Sincerely,
Your name

Feel free to adapt this email to better fit your needs and what you are looking for in a partner. Instagram DM outreach is also acceptable for school-based groups. Here are some ideas of groups to reach out to:

- Chapters of national youth movements like Sunrise, MFOL, Period, Voters of Tomorrow, HS Dems, etc.
- High school/college clubs focused on gender equality, progressive politics, LGBTQ+ rights, etc.
- Any group that believes in gender equality, reach out to!

Outreach and building attendance is a journey! You should be doing it the entire time you are planning the protest, from the day you decide the details to right up until the event starts.

Messaging, Dealing with the Press, & Social Media

To be effective in advocating for what we want, it is important that we use the right messaging. Here are some key things to think about:

- **Put the focus on the Equal Rights Amendment:** These attacks on abortion are possible because the Constitution doesn't prohibit sex-based discrimination. The Equal Rights Amendment would protect the right to abortion and the full range of reproductive healthcare services. And it is more critically needed now than ever before. If we had the Equal Rights Amendment, we would have a strong, comprehensive legal tool to defend abortion. [Here is a resource more about this.](#) **We want to highlight this permanent solution in our demands from these walkouts!**
 - ◆ A great way to get this message across is through what is written on signs. Here are some ideas:
 - Defend abortion. ERA Now.
 - The ERA is Reproductive/Abortion justice.
 - Young people want a permanent solution. ERA Now.
 - Young people demand action. Young people demand the ERA.
- **Use inclusive language:** Yes, the ERA and the fight for abortion access is a part of the Women's Rights movement, but it is so much more than that. The ERA and the fight for abortion access is everyone's movement. They are movements of queer liberation, racial equity, gender equality, and so much more. The ERA and expanding abortion access has the potential to uplift many marginalized communities all entrenched in the same oppressive system.
- **Avoid violent imagery and language:** GR is walking a thin line where we want to be aggressive, but we do not want to associate ourselves with images of violence. Keep this in mind for all messaging and be extremely careful in word choice. Do not use images of coat hangers. This stigmatizes ALL self-managed abortions, including safe methods. Additionally, don't use imagery of the Handmaid's Tale. It neglects the real, lived-experiences of BIPOC, disabled, and low-income people who have been living in that dystopian reality for centuries.
- **Focus on Individual Stories:** Generation Ratify's strength lies in its storytelling. Prioritize individual stories and the effect that the ERA and access to abortion will have on individual people and identities in messaging.
- **Use Accessible Language:** Avoid activist jargon and words that people not necessarily involved in the movement may not understand. Define everything when

you cannot avoid jargon—it's better to define too much than not enough. This is especially important when talking about policy.

[In terms of more specific messaging points, a document of talking points, chants, etc. can be accessed HERE. These are the messages we want to get across!](#)

We want to make this protest KNOWN by the press! The more coverage we get in the media, the further our message spreads. [Check out this document to learn how to pitch reporters and local news outlets to cover your protest.](#)

We understand this is a particularly tricky part! We are here to help you draft and pitch 100% of the way. [Here is a press release template that makes it super easy for you to add in your walkout's specific details.](#) We need your help on finding news outlets and reporters to send this press release to, but we are also working on our end to send over some contacts your way.

Social media is also a great way to make this protest known and should be utilized before, during, and after the protest. Here is a breakdown of when and how to use social media to uplift your protest:

Utilizing Social Media BEFORE the Protest:

- **Recruitment! Recruitment! Recruitment!** Social media is your best friend when spreading the word about the protest. In the days leading up to the action, post about the protest's details. You can also get creative, like posting memes and TikToks. [Check out the Generation Ratify instagram for inspiration!](#)

Utilizing Social Media DURING the Protest:

- **Encourage folks to post throughout the protest.** Tell people to tweet, post to their instagram stories, etc. to showcase the protest. This helps make the action known and bring more people to action if they see real organizing going down.
- **Livestream.** If you have the capacity, livestream the protest on Instagram, Twitter, or another platform that makes sense for you.

Utilizing Social Media AFTER the Protest:

- **Post photos!** Ensure that someone at the protest is taking photos of it. Preferably, someone will be able to bring a nice camera, but a phone absolutely does the job. Hype up the success of the demonstration and reiterate your aims. Use this protest

to bring more people into your fight, letting them know what else they can do to plug into the fight and stay in communication with you.

Solidifying the Game Plan & Final Prep

You've done the work to establish the details of your event. You have your core team working to make it happen. You've got people signed-up to attend. You have some awesome partners helping you out. What else do you need to do before game day? Here are some things for your consideration.

Do you have all the materials you need to be successful? Make a list of all the materials you need for your protest. Do you need materials to make signs? Do you need a speaker system? Jot it all down. One by one, make a plan for who is responsible for securing what thing. If no one is able to get a specific thing, ask your partners, or figure out a plan b.

Understanding the legality of an action. Your action will most likely not require a permit. As long as you are not obstructing traffic, your action will be legal, especially since it is a rapid response situation. [See the ACLU's Know Your Rights webpage full of helpful information.](#)

Excuse notes and dealing with admin. Check out a [guide here](#) about communicating with administration and having excuse notes. This is one of the trickier parts! Don't hesitate to reach out to Ritwik Tati over slack or email (ritwik@generationratify.org) to get one on one support.

Absorbing & Next Steps

Woohoooo!! You pulled off your demonstration and it was a major success! What now?

Time to turn that energy into sustained action! This action should serve as a springboard and give people an opportunity to plug in moving forward. What can people do to stay plugged into your work? Join an upcoming call? Join slack? It is great to have the next call to action/event planned and ready to plug people in to, but if that isn't the case, make sure they are in proper communication channels to continue organizing with you. **We recommend individually following-up (over email, text, call, etc.) with participants to establish a connection with them and welcome them into your organizing network/chapter.**

If you are not a part of a chapter, totally consider starting one to keep up the momentum in your community, or direct them to plug into Generation Ratify's movement-wide efforts.

[Slack is a great starting point.](#)