

# Episode 188-- Why We March

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## SPEAKERS

Patricia Oliver, Christian Heyne, JJ Janflone, Kelly Sampson, Manuel Oliver

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JJ Janflone 00:09

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JJ Janflone 00:38

Welcome to a very special bonus episode of Red, Blue and Brady. I'm here talking to you from the Brady offices where I am helping some of our fantastic staff, volunteers and folks from other gun violence prevention organizations put together 2280 notebooks. These are notebooks to represent the on average five children and teens that we've lost in the US a day to gun violence while waiting for the Senate to move on expanded background check legislation. As we gear up for this demonstration on this coming Friday, followed by the March For Our Lives on Saturday, I was really happy to be joined in office by Brady Vice President of Policy Christian Heyne. And of course, the founders and presidents of Change the Ref and the parents of Joaquin Oliver, Manny and Patricia Oliver, to share with me why it is that we march and why we will continue.



Christian Heyne 01:34

My name is Christian Heyne. And I'm the Vice President of Policy here at Brady.



Patricia Oliver 01:38

Hi, my name is Patricia Oliver. I am a co founder of Change The Ref and mom of Joaquin Oliver.



M

Manuel Oliver 01:43

Hello, this is Manuel Oliver. I am Joaquin Oliver's dad, and also our co founder of Change The Ref.



JJ Janflone 01:50

And thank you for joining us today. So obviously podcasting, not a visual medium. But for listeners we're sitting in Christian's office, it is starting to get late on Thursday, folks are going to be here quite late getting ready for events that are going to be happening on Friday and Saturday of this week. And I'm wondering if we can just sort of talk about, you know, why is everyone here in DC?

M

Manuel Oliver 02:11

Well, I guess this is where things happen in DC. There's a lot going on, since the last two weeks. And if we need to make statements and do things, the way that we have tried for the last five years in our case for way more than that, in your case, we have to be in the right spot. So Patricia and myself, we're here and we're ready to rock and roll.

P

Patricia Oliver 02:38

Well, this is being a very interesting week. We are here in DC because we consider that we have to support the GV movement in all the way we've been going through a lot of mass shootings recently, we decided to come united with all the strength and power to talk to the world, talk to our communities, to talk to our country. What are we living, what are we going through, what we have to be going doing from now on?

C

Christian Heyne 03:08

Yeah, and I think right now the country's outrage is at an all time high, right? We have just witnessed too many violent acts day in and day out. Sometimes the nation pays closer attention to these incidents than other days. But what we do know is that we're at a tipping point. And Democrats, Republicans, folks across all spectrums of life here in America are calling on their legislators to do something about it. So it's a natural fit that all of the incredible activists from across the country folks like Manny and Patricia, and so many others who are right outside of our door, there's a an incredible energy here of folks who have come in from all over the country, demanding that the legislators step up and do. I mean, frankly, what we're asking for is the bare minimum, so that families don't have to undergo the pain and trauma that way too many of us have to experience not only the folks at this table that we've experienced, but too many Americans that we know tomorrow and the next day, and the next are going to continue to suffer until Congress does something different here. So it's a really complicated set of emotions that I think I'm feeling and many others are because it's wonderful to feel the energy of an excitement around this time. But we know that we're here for the wrong reasons.



JJ Janflone 04:33

Well, and then I think that brings up really well. What is it that we want? What is it the folks are asking for as a result of this March? I think, saying that we want to end gun violence. I mean, I think that's the given. Right, but what is what does that look like? What are we asking for specifically, in this instance.



Manuel Oliver 04:50

It's been said 1000 times at this point, I just feel like I'm repeating the same thing since the last five years. We have a specific, there is specifics that I could tell you. But even Congress came out with the specifics yesterday, they know what we want, I think it's time for them to start naming what we need. Because they already know, they want us to keep repeating the same old, same old story. Of course, we want a universal background check. And I'm sick of saying this, I think I'm wasting time and words. By repeating these, we do need safe storage. We do. We do need red flag laws, we do need to ban assault weapons at some point in high capacity magazine. So those are common sense things. I'm not asking in any moment anyone to give me your gun, our I'm not trying to get all guns out of the streets. It's impossible. I wish it could it can't. And so I'm not going to fight a fight that it's impossible. So we are actually putting these in a very easy way out there. And besides that, we help to write down these bills, we're not even asking you to write the bill down, you just need to vote for it, pass it and the President should be ready to sign it. So we do 99% of the job, you only have to do 1%. Just do your 1%.



Patricia Oliver 06:17

Well, members of Congress, you know exactly what to do. We are here to keep the pressure. And I hope that you're going to be passing the bill as soon as you can. Because we're going to keep saying that no matter what. We're never gonna get tired. We're going to be annoying in order to see what you have to get done. That's your that's your mission. No this, you know, well, no, fucking job. That's your duty. That's your duty. Do your job.



Christian Heyne 06:47

Yeah, and I can't say it any better. I mean, I think the one thing I will say is, it's not any one thing, right. And that's what Manny and Patricia are saying. That's what I think the folks who are going to be showing up are saying, gun violence is an incredibly complex problem. And everybody who experiences experiences it differently, it requires comprehensive solutions. So while we are happy that hopefully progress has being made, and something can be done, the folks in this room know that it's almost certainly not going to be enough. And what we need is these members of Congress to show up every single day. To do that 1%, you've got one fucking job. And it is to protect your constituents and ensure that you are representing your people as well as you can. This isn't a complicated issue, just do what's right here and protect us. We are begging you. Nobody wants to know what it feels like to lose somebody to gun violence, and yet it happens every single day, without any responsible action from our leaders to make a difference. We need you to start doing that. And so that's what we're asking for.





JJ Janflone 07:57

If you could reach out to the senators who are refusing to have action, or to their constituents, like what would you say to tell them that, hey, we've got to move this forward.



Manuel Oliver 08:06

I will say that this is not a one day thing to do. Like, everyone in this table works daily, on preventing this from happening. And I will love that more people work daily or weekly in these matter. This is not something that by wearing an orange t-shirt one day a year, you can solve. This is not something that by marching twice a year, you will be seeing results. We receive these shootings every single day. So you cannot fight back something that is hitting you every day, just by showing up once a year. So I think that the message is for this society in general is to get more involved, because at this point, you are a potential victim of gun violence. Your kids are potential victims of gun violence, which is fear that I don't have anymore, because my son was already shot, but yours is still out there. So you should be actually doing more things than I'm doing because you have a reason to do it. So by bringing these points out there and calling out the need of more people demanding for change, I think that we will move faster, things will happen. By the way, I'm optimistic and I don't know when I don't know how fast but I'm pretty sure that we're going to hit that progress and that all nations were able to do and I don't see why we are the exception. So it will happen and at some point, the NRA will be irrelevant. That's my vision here. It's gonna take a few years, but that's my vision, but we need more people involved.



09:52

I'm going to talk about being a mom of Joaquin that I lost my dear son four years ago on the Parkland shooting. I don't want anybody of you that are listening to us to be going through what we're going through every single day. This is not a pain that just happened on one day, at that moment. No, not really, this is something that is struggling you every single day, not only me, as a mom, us as a family, as a community, as a friendship that we have for lover, these affect your life forever. Don't put your person in that place, do your best, you don't have to belong to any organization, you have to be a regular civilian, with the passion, with the love that you have for your families and friends, to do something for them and yourself. So I invited you, we have to be positive, but we have to be very powerful in our next move. Because the country needs us. And we are part of this country and as a civilians as a citizen. That's what we have to do. To the members of the Congress, put the power and the self, way to see yourself as an aside, and put in front your moral side, and do what you have to do. Because this is something moral, this is something that is about life that we're talking about. So please take your moment, and be yourself for a moment just alone. And think about for once that we are depending on you.



Christian Heyne 11:35

And with that, there was a hearing in the in the House Oversight Committee room last night where one of the mothers who had lost or loss of their own word, whose child was killed in Uvalde said something that I think resonated with me then and Patricia, what you just said, I think it, you know, rings true as well. But what she said was somewhere out there, there is a

mom, listening to our testimony, thinking I can't even imagine their pain, not knowing that our reality will one day be hers, unless we act now. And I think you know, what you're hearing Patricia say, what you're hearing Manny say what you're hearing, all of us say is, we are so desperate to not let that be the reality of tomorrow. Because we live with today's reality, and the pain of that and the trauma of that every single day. We should have no expectation that anything will change unless folks step up to ensure that they do. And so we need you to keep showing up. We need these members of Congress to do literally the bare minimum and protect our future. They can do that. It's not abstract, they can do it, they can actually do it. And I hope we can make that case clear. And that we can get to the place where these aren't as regular as they are today.



JJ Janflone 13:10

Do you think that marches and things like this particularly I mean, there's going to be particularly on Saturday marches here in DC, but also all across the United States. Do you think that they're actually effective in making legislators act? Or do you feel that they're, they're more of sort of a chance for folks to share their emotions about what they think is happening in the US or kind of a mix of of both?



Manuel Oliver 13:35

I think it's both, however, a march by itself, it wouldn't without a statement, it's just a bunch of people getting together and feeling sad, together, supporting each other. So that would all depend on the, on the content of the speeches and the reaction that we have as a community. I keep saying like, is this time different? If we make it different, it will be different. It's up to us to react different. So we need to do things that we have not tried yet. I think we're in a good path at the moment with there's there's a lot going on, that I haven't seen happening before. And this is prior the march and what we're doing tomorrow. So I think we're in a good spot. I think we are ready to react in in the most reactive way possible. The aggression, it's incredibly disruptive. What happened to these kids, what happened to my son, so the reaction needs to be at the same level. And we have to do things in a different way.



Patricia Oliver 14:45

We're also going to see this Saturday at the March, those kids that they were there four years ago they were teenagers, and now they're young adults, and they feel the frustration they have to go back again on stage and expose the same crazy living that we have with the gun violence that is attacking us every other hour actually is worse than four years ago. I am positive, the more kids will see these ones on stage. And they will be encouraged to be able to move and to be very strong in their interactions from Saturday on. But it depends from all of us the attitude that we'll take and the support that we can give them to keep going and really demand from the government to do things on the straightway.



Christian Heyne 15:36

Yeah, and look, I think that any social change that we have ever seen in this country has happened because people have showed up. And you know, if you're asking, you know, a march

happened because people have showed up. And, you know, if you're asking, you know, a march alone isn't going to do it. Right. And what it requires is, is that Americans channel their outrage towards those that can make a difference and an impact, right, in this case, our legislators, and that they show up, they make their voices heard. And then they keep showing them. People don't realize the impact that a handwritten letter can have on these legislators or an interaction in an office or a phone call. All of these things take a matter of seconds, but can make a world of difference, especially if we work together in a concerted effort to make those voices heard together. And that's the moment that we're in right now we are hearing the phone the reason that folks are having the conversations they're having on Capitol Hill right now is because they are hearing from people who I think are listening to this podcast, they haven't always heard from folks from all over the country from their constituents. And I pray that everybody who's listening here today, and the folks who who show up tomorrow, and on Saturday, keep showing up because that's going to be what makes a difference here. And that's how we're gonna get to the finish line.

C

Christian Heyne 15:38

Thank you all so much. And if you want to get involved, you know, obviously, we would love to see you today or tomorrow or at the marches that are happening across the US. But as Christian pointed out, you don't have to just go to a march, right. There's so much else that needs to get done. You can reach out to your senators, you can reach out to your representatives, and you can start making change at the community level. Two really quick ways to do that. You can text 877877, two words the first one "checks", that will urge your senator in your local area to fight for background checks. And beyond that, just you know, keep fighting keep talking keep educating yourself out there.



JJ Janflone 17:33

Hey! Want to share it the podcast? Listeners can now get in touch with us here at Red, Blue and Brady via phone or text message. Simply call or text at 480-744-3452 with your thoughts, questions, concerns, ideas, whatever. Kelly and I are standing by.

K

Kelly Sampson 17:48

Thanks for listening. As always Brady's life saving work in Congress, the courts and communities across the country is made possible thanks to you. For more information on Brady or how to get involved in the fight against gun violence please like and subscribe to the podcast. Get in touch with us at [Bradyunited.org](http://Bradyunited.org) or on social at [Bradybuzz](https://www.instagram.com/Bradybuzz). Be brave and remember, take action, not sides.