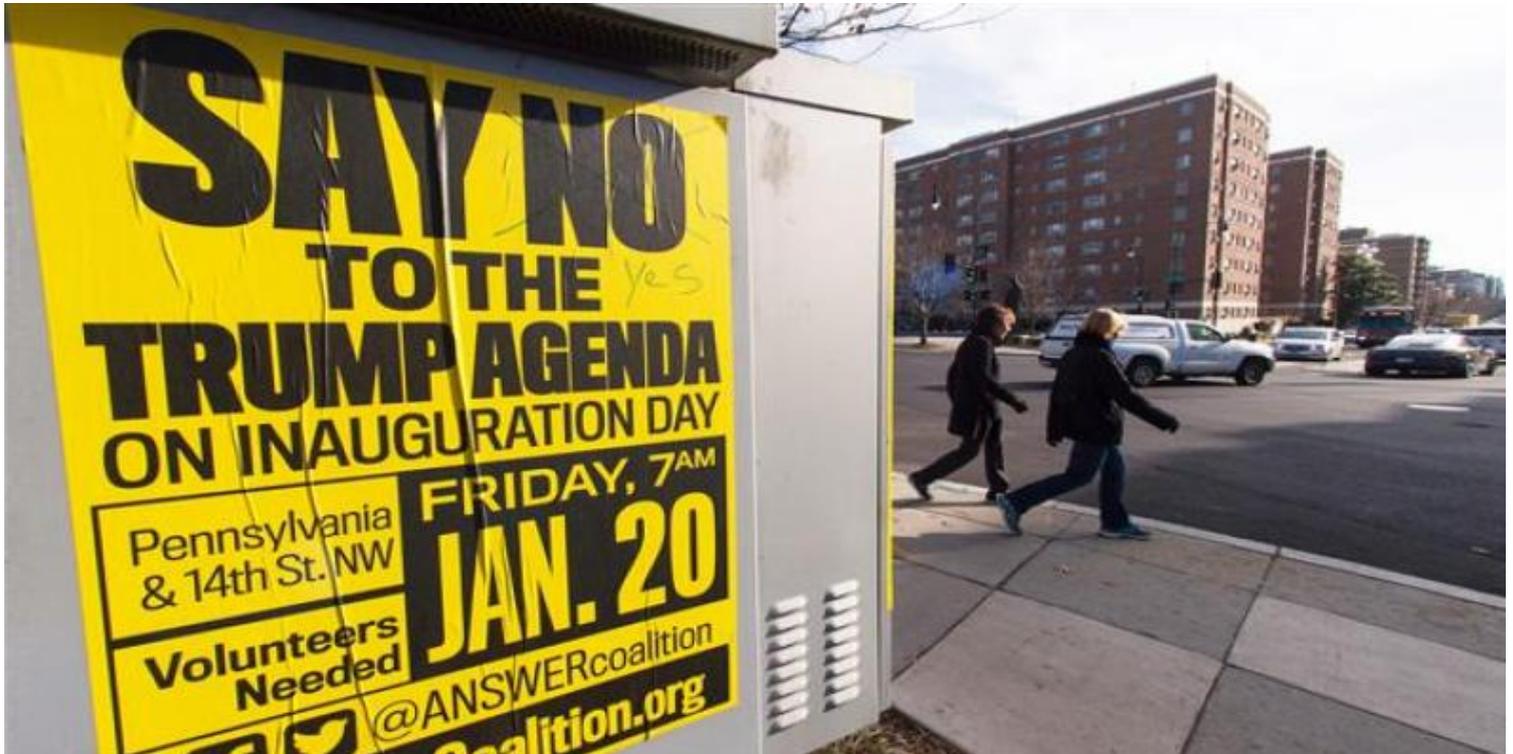




Activists Kick Off Week of Protests Ahead of Inauguration



Washington, January 16 (RHC)-- U.S. civil rights activists have kicked off a week of protests ahead of Donald Trump's presidential inauguration with a march in Washington. Several thousand protesters chanted "No justice, No peace" while marching along the National Mall toward the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial over the weekend.

Braving drizzle and near-freezing temperatures, speakers denounced the Republican president-elect for his disparaging remarks against minority groups and women as well as his pledge to dismantle President Barack Obama's signature healthcare law, known as Obamacare.

"We stand together, not as a people of hate, but as a people of hope," said Charley Hames Jr., president of the Oakland, California, chapter of Sharpton's National Action Network, according to Reuters. "We believe this march is the first of many."

Trump, a billionaire real estate developer from New York, defeated his heavily-favored Democratic rival Hillary Clinton in the November election with a populist platform that included promises to build a wall along the Mexican border, deport millions of immigrants and ban Muslims from entering the United States.

Civil rights groups including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Council of La Raza, as well as several Democratic lawmakers have all said they'd take part in more demonstrations throughout the week, leading up to Friday's inauguration.



Hundreds of thousands of protesters are expected in the capital to disrupt the January 20th ceremony. They plan, among other things, to close off security checkpoints along the inaugural parade route. Another major protest will come the day after the inauguration ceremony with at least 100,000 people expected to attend the Women's March on Washington on Saturday.

Organizers say they are encouraging support on a range of social justice issues that affect women in the United States. "We expect elected leaders to act to protect the rights of women, their families and their communities," they said in a statement. Dozens of progressive groups are supporting the event. The Black Lives Matter movement, which has focused on police brutality, is one of the participants in the march.