

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Students Across The Territory Organize Demonstrations As Part Of The '#Enough' National School Walkout Against Gun Violence Movement

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ST. CROIX -- March 14 marks one month since the [shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida](#), which left 14 students and 3 staff members killed and many others wounded. Women's March Youth EMPOWER, a national group established in 2016, and the St. Croix Political Action Network (SPAN), are calling on students, teachers, school administrators, parents and allies to take part in the national school walkout for 17 minutes, in honor of the 17 lives taken in the tragedy in Florida.

The walkout starts at 10:00 a.m. across every time zone on March 14, to protest Congress's inaction to do more than tweet thoughts and prayers in response to the gun violence plaguing schools and neighborhoods, according to the release.

"We, the students of the St. Croix, have decided that this moment is too crucial and this issue too urgent to stand idly by," said Julian Bishop, a senior student at Good Hope Country Day, who along SPAN and Women's March Youth EMPLOYER, is leading the effort.

"The USVI is no stranger to gun violence. While we may have fairly strict gun laws, we believe that more must be done by our elected officials to enforce them. They need to make sure no one dangerous can ever get their hands on a weapon like this again, and they need to take necessary action to protect the children in all our schools and beyond. On March 14th we will host student-led walkouts, protests, and rallies across multiple schools and universities on each island throughout the Virgin Islands," Mr. Bishop said.

"We are walking out for all people who have experienced gun violence, including systemic forms of gun violence that disproportionately impact teens in Black and Brown communities. It is important that when we refer to gun violence, we do not overlook the impact of police brutality and militarized policing or see police in schools as a solution. We also recognize the United States has exported gun violence through imperialist foreign policy to destabilize other nations.

"We raise our voices for action against all these forms of gun violence. We students and our allies are organizing the school walkout to demand Congress pass legislation to protect us. We are not safe at school. We are not safe in our cities and towns. We need action. It is our elected officials' jobs to keep us safe and pass federal gun reform legislation that will address the public health crisis of gun violence. We want Congress to pay attention and take note: many of us will vote this November and many others will cast their ballots in 2020," he added.

The groups hope to see participation from students, faculty, and parents of any school or university throughout the Virgin Islands. Currently, the St. Croix Educational Complex and Good Hope Country Day, are involved. Virgin Islands Montessori School and Peter Gruber International Academy in St. Thomas have a selfsame event planned.

Students on St. Croix attending UVI, Central High, Free Will, Seventh Day Adventist, St. Joseph's, and any other school -- along with the St. Croix Educational Complex and Good Hope Country Day -- are encouraged to participate.

Students are encouraged to create signs, wear black and orange (in honor of the victims of the Parkland shooting), and hold rallies, peaceful protests, walkouts and other forms of demonstrations, calling for serious change to protect the youth and general community, according to the release. All actions must be inclusive and non-violent.

On the afternoon of February 14, a mass shooting occurred at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, where seventeen people were killed, making it one of the world's deadliest school massacres.

Correction: March 7, 2018 (6:50 a.m.)

A previous version of this story included the Women's March Youth EMPOWER as a local nonprofit. However, the group is a national organization founded in 2016. The story has been updated to reflect the correct information.

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