

# We Went to the DC Climate Protest. Here Are 5 Things We Saw.

Protesters young and old descended Monday on Washington to call for immediate action on climate change, stopping rush-hour traffic and taking over city parks.

Environmental activists designed the event, called “Shut Down D.C.” or #ShutDownDC, to disrupt morning commutes for government workers and bring attention to their cause.

While world leaders attended the United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York – President Donald Trump dropped by the gathering – these activists took to the streets of the nation’s capital to dance and shout their way to “climate justice.”

Here are five things that caught The Daily Signal’s eye as we walked and talked with some of the protesters in Washington:

## **1. Activists sought attention by bringing traffic to a standstill.**

As the name suggests, #ShutDownDC protesters strategically blocked the streets throughout town. Some held banners that stretched across an entire road; others used more creative methods to make sure no one missed their demonstration.



One group, called [Extinction Rebellion](#), parked a massive pink yacht across a busy intersection, illegally interfering with traffic and dancing in the street until police arrived to tow the obstruction away.

Although some drivers honked in support of the activists, the hourslong traffic jam caused plenty of headaches for area residents as they drove to work.

## **2. They have a sense of urgency for legislative solutions.**

The D.C. climate protest featured a wide array of groups calling for everything from the Green New Deal to Trump's impeachment, but one message was clear: They want action now.

Protesters used blaring music and bullhorns to shout slogans demanding that politicians do something.



Others warned of impending doom within a dozen years if something isn't done immediately to curb global warming.

### **3. The protest had a 1960s vibe.**

When the march of banner-waving protesters arrived at Farragut Square, they set up speakers for a DJ who provided dubstep music with a pulsing beat.

The mildly psychedelic combination of individuals standing by in shining silver costumes as a 24-year-old D.C. woman danced barefoot on the grass in a simple brown dress felt like a step back in time.

Rhetorical hippie-isms added to the charm.

"We're coming here to declare a climate emergency," Northern Virginia resident Nick Brana, 30, told The Daily Signal. "We're taking the streets, because everything we've tried to do by democratic means has failed. We've tried voting, we've tried protesting, we've tried the phone calls, meetings with elected officials. None of it has worked."

"Underprivileged people feel the consequences of climate

change all the time,” Brana added. “The difference is that this time, we’re here on K Street [and] the Capitol building is right over there, so we’re impacting the corporations, the politicians who are responsible for it now. That’s the difference.”

A touch of anger added a little spice to the event.

Person after person refused to speak with reporters from The Daily Signal, which is the multimedia news organization of The Heritage Foundation. One emailed The Daily Signal to withdraw her consent to be quoted.

#### **4. Participants drew inspiration from the Hong Kong protests.**

Several groups imitated the use of umbrellas as a rebel symbol that was made famous by the mounting pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong.

Calling themselves “climate rebels,” the D.C. protesters spray-painted green hourglass symbols on their umbrellas by way of emulating the strategies of the Hong Kong protesters who last month clogged an airport.



## 5. This was a multigenerational crowd.

Young marchers proudly carried homemade signs and banners that served not only to spread the message of the climate protest but also to block streets.

Although most attendees appeared to be under 30, many older people also turned out.

Of those with whom The Daily Signal spoke, 68-year-old Larry Spoon, of Ashland, Ohio, was the oldest.

“I flew in from Ohio to be here, I just wanted to do something about the situation,” Spoon said. “I’ve got a flight back to Ohio tomorrow. I’m gonna be here for an hour today to see what happens.”

Emma Myers, 21, a student at George Washington University, said she wanted the protest to rouse support for the [Green New Deal](#) touted by liberals in Congress.

“We’re looking for the Green New Deal, as it will reduce carbon emissions and that is our goal overall,” Myers said. “We all made our own banners because we all have our own reasons for being out here today.”

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