

Transgender Day of Visibility: NOLA high school students walk out, leading hundreds in the streets

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SLL photo: Gregory E. Williams

March 31 — On International Transgender Day of Visibility, hundreds of students at New Orleans' Benjamin Franklin High School [walked out of class](#). Benjamin Franklin students [did the same last year](#) in March as the fascist attack on trans people escalated.

Now the attacks have reached a fevered pitch nationally, with Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry, an oil-and-gas-investment millionaire, leading the charge in this state. Landry is running for governor, using a playbook similar to that of Florida Governor Ron DeSantis.

The students rallied outside of class. NOLA.com reported some of their powerful statements:

“People who will never ever understand how it feels to live my life are attempting to control it in ways that will leave not only me, but many other transgender people devastated, depressed or even at risk of physical harm,’ said Vincent Jarand, a 16-year-old trans student. ‘This is the beginnings of a genocide.’

“Jackie Kimbrough, a Black trans 17-year-old, wiped away tears talking about the impact the bills could have on LGBTQ youth in the state. ‘I’m 17 years old, and I’m fighting for my life,’ Kimbrough said.”

These students are serious leaders inspiring the broader progressive movement. Starting at 5:30 p.m., they led a 500-person-strong march from Washington Square Park, through the French Quarter, to Jackson Square. This square itself has been a site of intense struggle, as Take ‘Em Down NOLA has fought to have the name changed from that of the genocidal U.S. President Andrew Jackson.

Marchers took over the streets and then the amphitheater across from Jackson Square, shouting militant chants like, “If they don’t see us, if they don’t hear us, you’d best believe they’re going to fear us!” High school students and others gave

speeches.

The students were joined by groups including Real Name Campaign NOLA, Freedom Road Socialist Organization - New Orleans, ACLU of Louisiana, college branches of Students for a Democratic Society, and others. This was an example of working class and oppressed people from multiple generations working together to take a stand against the far right's assaults.

