

Nationwide 'Good Trouble' Rallies Mark John Lewis Anniversary

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Thousands of Americans gathered in over 300 cities on July 17 to commemorate the legacy of late Congressman and civil rights advocate John Lewis, with peaceful protests voicing opposition to recent federal policies, civil rights concerns, and growing unease over government intervention in community affairs.

The demonstrations were organized in remembrance of John Lewis's lifelong dedication to non-violent activism. From small towns to major cities, citizens raised their voices against what they viewed as government overreach, including the deployment of military resources in domestic matters. Barbara Arnwine, co-leader of the Transformative Justice Coalition, stated that the mission of "good trouble," Lewis' phrase for civic resistance, continues to inspire citizens nationwide.

A major point of concern for protesters was the growing use of federal authority to manage domestic dissent. In particular, President Donald Trump's move to authorize federal support for California National Guard deployments during recent protests drew criticism from activist groups, who argued that peaceful demonstrations should not be met with force. Allison Pulliam, co-director of the Declaration for American Democracy Coalition, said that "sending in the National Guard to deal with Americans exercising their First Amendment rights sets a troubling precedent."

In Fort Collins, Colorado, over 700 demonstrators lined College Avenue, with brass bands playing protest anthems and families holding signs highlighting their opposition to perceived injustices. In Middletown, Ohio, Vice President JD Vance's hometown residents took issue with what they see as a disconnect between Washington elites and everyday Americans. Local organizer Constance Miller said her goal was to give a platform to working-class voices that often go unheard.

Not every city chose to protest through rallies. In Cathedral City, California, organizers hosted a food drive and screened John Lewis: Good Trouble as an alternative to street demonstrations, citing concerns over excessive heat and safety. More than 100 events across the state followed similar creative approaches.

While many participants came out to address longstanding concerns about constitutional rights and civic freedom, some also pointed to broader social tensions. In Fort Myers, Florida, Georgia resident Kim Lowery expressed concerns about the breakdown of community unity, citing growing divisions between neighbors and increasing public hostility. "I'm afraid for my friends here who are different or speak out," Lowery said. "There's too much fear, and we need to stand together again."

Across the country, the message was clear: Americans from all walks of life are willing to engage peacefully in the democratic process to ensure their voices are heard and their

freedoms preserved. As the nation reflects on Lewis' legacy, many believe that his call for "good trouble" remains as vital today as ever.