

## Principles of Demonstrating - Approved by Rise and Resist 3/5/2019

RAR is a direct action group. We believe in exercising our First Amendment rights to free speech, freedom of assembly, and to petition the government for change. We work to keep our demonstrations focused and our messaging clear. We often demonstrate in public spaces, and occasionally on private property or in privately operated public space. A team of trained RAR members, marshals, facilitate our actions and handle changes to our agreed upon plan.

RAR uses non-violence as a tactic. At almost every demonstration, we get support from people who agree with us, and we get heckled by a few people who disagree with us. Some hecklers may yell at us ("Get a job" or "Build the wall" or "Losers"), or shoulder check us while picketing, but most keep moving. We routinely attract counter protestors who, by name-calling and filming us, try to provoke conflict and disrupt our demonstrations. We have also had some interactions with the New York Police Department where they infringed on our First Amendment rights and we took group action to protest NYPD's overreach.

RAR tries to manage our demonstrations so that they unfold as planned by asking our members (and people attending our demonstrations) to "not take the bait" and to not engage with hecklers, counter protestors, or NYPD. We ask members to not yell back at hecklers/provocateurs, to avoid name-calling (including at NYPD), to refrain from seizing/ripping up their signs, and to not push or shove back.

Members who are unable to de-escalate should seek assistance from marshals or other demonstrators to help keep the peace. De-escalating with counter protestors means 1) asking them to step aside and hold their own demonstration, 2) asking them to respect our First Amendment rights, 3) talking to counter protestors in a conversational tone about why we and they are there, 4) asking them questions (to keep them from yelling), and 5) creating an active non-threatening physical buffer between the counter protestors and RAR members. We encourage all RAR members to help with this work.

De-escalating with NYPD means 1) explaining our right to protest, 2) our reasons for why we are refusing to follow their requests/orders, and 3) what we as a group are willing to agree to do, regardless of what NYPD wants us to do.

RAR makes every effort to keep a demonstration going as planned, and to deprive the counter protestors of what they want: to turn the demonstration into an us-against-them thing (media circus) – and to make counter protestors look like victims of left wing intolerance/violence. Our goal is to keep the counter protestors as powerless and ineffective as possible while respecting their First Amendment rights *and* keeping NYPD out of our demonstrations.

RAR cannot guarantee the safety of demonstrators. We trust our members to exercise self-control, to not be provoked into violent responses, and to try not to provoke others. We believe that these are the best tools for us to use. In situations where we are concerned about imminent violence from counter protestors or NYPD we ask everyone to stay in place and, if necessary, to sit down to hold space, to diffuse the tension, to allow everyone see what is going on, and to give us all, as a group, time to respond. We do not run in these situations because we do not leave vulnerable members behind to fend for themselves.

Action Guidelines:

- Our attitude will be one of openness and respect towards all people we encounter.
- We will not use physical violence or verbal abuse toward any person.
- We will not intentionally damage any property.
- We will not bring any alcohol or drugs other than for medical purposes.
- We will not carry weapons.
- We will plan our actions to avoid endangering the safety of other demonstrators and bystanders.
- We will remain accountable to the group for our actions.