#USCA2018

November 12, 2018 By Joe Mejía

The 22nd annual United States Conference on AIDS (USCA 2018), organized by NMAC (the National Minority AIDS Council), took place in Orlando from September 6 through 9. In what was billed as an homage to ACT UP, the conference's focus was activism and its theme was "Fight Back, Fight HIV."

The opening plenary, titled "Activism and the Intersection of Movements Fighting for Social Justice," featured high-profile activists Abigail Echo-Hawk, director of the Urban Indian Health Institute in Seattle; Alicia Garza, cofounder of #BlackLivesMatter; David Hogg, a survivor of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas (MSD) High School shooting in Parkland, Florida, and founding member of anti–gun violence group Never Again MSD; and Richard L. Zaldivar, executive director of the Latino LGBTQ group The Wall Las Memorias Project in Los Angeles. Legendary ACT UP founder Larry Kramer appeared via a special video.

Attendees used social media not only to praise the event and share their insights but also to shame Vice President Mike Pence (who happened to be in town stumping for Governor Rick Scott) for his mishandling of an HIV outbreak in Indiana when he was governor of that state, proving that activism can take many forms and, thanks to modern technology, need never take a break.

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