

Donald Trump rally in Chicago cancelled amidst mass protests

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The Republican Party presidential front-runner Donald Trump cancelled his scheduled rally Friday night at the University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC), west of downtown Chicago, as violence and scuffles broke out inside.

Thousands of students and workers in the area marched outside the UIC arena to protest Trump's attendance at the campus, denouncing his extreme right-wing and fascistic political views. Protesters marched from the campus quadrangle along a heavily-barricaded protest route to the UIC Pavilion with a large police and security presence. The protests outside were entirely peaceful.

In canceling the event, Trump's team cited security concerns over growing protests outside the arena and the highly volatile situation inside. After doors were opened at 3:00 p.m., protesters who attended the rally entered into scuffles and altercations with the rally participants as well as with security.

After significant delay, the announcer told the crowd, "The event is over." Cheers erupted, as well as more scuffles. Trump's team told the media in an official statement that "for the safety of all of the tens of thousands of people that have gathered in and around the arena, tonight's rally will be postponed to another date."

Prior to the cancellation, Trump's announcers initially encouraged conflict by telling attendees to inform police of protesters by placing a rally sign over their head and chanting "Trump, Trump, Trump," according to NBC's Chicago affiliate.

The events in Chicago followed several incidents of violence directed at protesters from Trump supporters and security, encouraged by the candidate. This included an incident on Wednesday in which a protester

was punched in the face as he was escorted out of a rally in North Carolina by police. Trump on numerous occasions has encouraged his supporters to "knock the crap out of" protesters.

Trump responded to the cancellation of the rally on Friday by denouncing protesters for violating "free speech."

The anti-Trump rally was attended by many thousands of workers and particularly young people of all races and ethnicities. It was originally organized on Facebook by an undocumented UIC graduate student, Jorge Mena Robles. Robles is a member of a newly formed political organization called Mijente, which promotes Latino identity politics and voter mobilization for the Democratic Party.

Support for the demonstration, however, was not limited to such forces. Over 11,000 responded to the Facebook event page by Friday.

Citing the incidents of violence at Trump rallies across the country, UIC students and faculty denounced the administration and Chancellor Michael Amiridis for allowing Trump to host his campaign event on the campus. Amiridis responded to the anger of students and faculty by saying, on the grounds of "free speech," that Trump had every right to rent a space at UIC. Similar considerations have not prevented the administration from placing enormous obstacles on the promotion of socialist politics on campus.

Reporters from the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to students, workers and professionals who attended the protest against the Trump rally.

Adriti, a biology student at UIC, said, "Trump needs to go. His attacks on Muslims and immigrants are despicable. America is a melting pot. Many people are fleeing countries as refugees and he keeps attacking them. So many immigrants have helped advance our

country. What is the point of scapegoating immigrants?”

Tim, a student of computer science, added, “And then Trump is calling for torture, war and assassinating people. We need to stop doing all that. We need to stop all the wars too, and I realize that both parties are involved in these policies. We need more equality and to move in that direction and away from war and torture.”

Paul, a UIC student, said, “I think Trump is a fascist and he’s a homophobe and a bigot. He makes me feel really angry and I don’t think he would be good for us as president. I don’t like his ideology or his political proposals. A lot of people want the world collectively to be peaceful and we don’t need to implement war policies. Things are already quite dangerous right now.”

“It really frustrates me that Trump is on the platform,” said Tim, a professional who came to see the protests. “He’s channelling the frustrations of many people and taking it to a really scary place. As far as Sanders, I like what he is saying. A big reason why I am pro-Sanders, at least among the candidates that can be elected, is because he’s called himself a socialist. I think capitalism is a flawed system and I agree with socialism in general, but I’m not sure if the United States is unified enough right now for that.

“But I would like to see us go towards a more socialist country. I do worry that Sanders may not keep his promises, but right now that’s who I side with. At the same time, I do need to look at his record more closely and make a more educated decision.”

Rachel, a workers compensation paralegal, said, “I hate Trump. I think that his policies of wanting to build a wall around Mexico are ridiculous. That’s not what America should be about. It’s like the second coming of Hitler. But we also need an alternative that’s not just a Democrat or a Republican. Politicians make promises to us that they won’t keep either. The inequality in this country is extremely awful. America is not a democracy anymore.”

Another student, who also works at UIC, said, “His policies are incoherent. I am here more to protest the fact that UIC is even hosting Trump. We have an incredibly diverse student body and it’s a completely inappropriate place for a Trump rally. He’s condoned violence at his rallies before.

“Trump is also calling for torture, which is an open secret of American politics now. We have an ostensibly democratic system that doesn’t in fact represent people, with our crony capitalism and the outsized power of money and lobbyists. Look at the closure of Chicago State University. We don’t have money for schools in Chicago, but if one of [Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s] buddies wants something, they have the money for it. Even Obama was not as liberal as he claimed to be. He was an idealized candidate.

“If Sanders is elected, it’s going to be really difficult to see how he actually deals with the conflicts that the US is already in. Does he actually stop drone warfare? Given that he’s for it? He’s been able to mobilize grassroots support, but I don’t know how he’s going to govern if he’s elected. I agree with you though that we need deep structural change.”



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