

Young people spearhead anti-Trump protests as student walkouts spread

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Anti-Trump protests across the United States continued for the sixth straight day, as demonstrations spread to new cities on Monday. Following the incendiary remarks of Trump on “60 Minutes” Sunday night pledging to deport 2 million or 3 million immigrants, young protesters have redoubled their opposition.

Over the past week, thousands have taken to the streets in New York City, Boston, Chicago, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Kansas City, Dallas, Phoenix, Indianapolis, Miami, Detroit, Dayton, Cincinnati, Oklahoma City, Salt Lake City, Providence, Las Vegas, Atlanta and Washington DC. College campus protests have erupted throughout the nation, with large numbers participating in California, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

Such immediate post-election protests in the US are unprecedented. They expose the hostility of large swathes of the American population to the vicious class war and anti-immigrant policies advocated by the president-elect. The defense of gay rights and the protection of minorities have likewise been a major concern for protesters.

At the same time many of the protests have been influenced by various pseudo-left organizations promoting identity politics and oriented to pressuring the Democratic Party.

On Monday students at Montgomery Blair High School, in the Washington DC area, walked out at 10 a.m. Students left classes with posters and megaphones and gathered in the football stadium chanting, “Not my President” and “We reject the President-elect,” according to the student newspaper. They then marched down a nearby boulevard, onto the highway, and all the way to downtown Silver Spring, a nearly six-mile hike. They rallied hundreds of additional students from four neighboring schools on the way.

Blair student Jorge Ventura told *Bethesda Magazine*, “A lot of immigrants come to this country for jobs and an

education. ... They work, so don’t judge a book by its cover.” He held a sign during the protest that said, “Without immigrants, Trump would have no wife.”

In Portland, Oregon more than 400 middle and high school students walked out of class around 10 a.m. Monday and gathered at Pioneer Courthouse Square. They joined an anti-Trump rally sponsored by Reed College students outside City Hall, and hundreds marched through the city, reported local television station KATU2.

Since the election results were announced, more than 100 people have been arrested in Portland, as protests have continued daily. On Saturday night, more than 4,000 demonstrators were met with police officers in riot gear. The police deployed tear gas, multiple flash bangs and carried out mass arrests. The authorities have claimed more than \$1 million in damage to property by graffiti-writing protesters. In a blatant intimidation measure, KATU2 published the names, ages and charges against all of the young protesters.

Waves of protests continue throughout Los Angeles. In California, with its large immigrant population, young people have sought to express their solidarity against Trump’s anti-immigrant venom. On Thursday, some 4,000 students from 16 LA high schools staged walkouts. Over 8,000 people protested in LA on Saturday.

Nearly half of South Gate High’s 3,000 students walked out at noon Thursday. Another 500 walked out of the city’s Santee Education Complex. Erasmo Camacho, a 16-year-old Santee junior, told *Education Week* that all of his classmates “were able to support each other” by staging the walkout.

Another 600 students at Hawkins High School in South Los Angeles headed for the doors about 10:15 a.m., said Jazmin Casas, a community representative for the school, according to *Education Week*. “We ended up opening the gate because we couldn’t hold them back,” Casas said.

On Monday, Los Angeles students issued a statement

protesting the mass deportation of immigrants, the construction of a wall between the United States and Mexico, the repeal of the Affordable Care Act as well as other Trump policies, according to the report in the Chicago Tribune. They then rallied Monday morning at Boyle Heights' Mariachi Plaza to march to Los Angeles City Hall. Young people from Felicitas and Gonzalo Mendez High School arrived at the plaza carrying signs that read "United We Stand" and "DNC [Democratic National Committee] failed working people." One student held a pink sign with a black swastika, and Trump's face in the center of it.

Students ignored instructions to remain in class broadcast over high school intercoms. The Los Angeles Police Department also sought to intimidate families, issued a special advisory urging parents to tell their children to abide by the law, listing all the actions that would make young protesters subject to arrest, including "unlawful assembly," "refusal to disperse" and curfew violations.

Monday also saw walkouts in Oakland, California. Dozens of students held signs and chanted as they marched through downtown Oakland.

Last week other California cities, including Santa Monica, Sacramento and Santa Barbara saw walkouts. Maddy Peterson, a 17-year-old senior at Inderkum High School in Sacramento, told *Education Week*, "We just wanted to show that we are completely in opposition to everything that Donald Trump stands for." Peterson said the group's slogans were: "Not my president," "Love trumps hate," "No justice, no peace," and "Black lives matter."

After the election "everyone was very scared and disheartened," she said.

"We felt let down by not only the government, but also the voters. It was jarring to know that so many people agreed with what [Trump] was saying. It was unfathomable to us."

Students throughout the US have been demonstrating their revulsion at the racist, anti-immigrant, pro-war and pro-big business policies endorsed by Trump since the vote count. The role of high school students has been especially significant, as walkouts of high school and even middle school students have developed throughout the US, in both "red" and "blue" states.

The day after the election, students in Austin, Texas walked out, chanting, "We love Muslims, we love Blacks, We just want our country back." The almost universal motto of protesters was "Not my president."

In Phoenix, Arizona, students from multiple high schools marched through downtown holding signs and Mexican flags and chanting "Who's Donald Trump? Not our president!" Angela Morales, age 16, a student at Carl Hayden High School, told the *Arizona Republic* she wanted to speak out for parents who cannot vote because of their legal status. "We are here to support everyone for their families," Morales said. "I don't want families to be separated."

Elie Malekera, 19, a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo, also said he opposes a wall with Mexico and deportations. He said he had lost his father and many family members, and for him, going back to Africa would be certain death. "We came because of war," Malekera said. "I don't know how he is going to make it better for everyone."

Denver, Colorado students from Strive Prep Excel High School and Byers Middle School protested Monday at the state Capitol. The 200 demonstrators held up signs including "The people united will never be divided" and "Don't Make America Hate Again."

"We feel unsafe with our futures," said West Seattle High student Dana Douthwait. Approximately 200 students walked out in the Washington city last week, cheered on by honking drivers and business owners who slapped an occasional high five, according to KOMO News. They chanted "Save our future" and "not my president" as they marched through the streets. They also held a banner that read, "Fight it."

Last Friday, students in Omaha, Nebraska at Omaha Central, Northwest High School, Bryan and South High Schools walked out. At Central, they chanted "not my president" and "we have a voice." "Most of us are 15, 16, 17 years old," Nick Koehler, a student at Central, told the *Omaha-Herald* on Friday morning during the walkout. "We feel like we don't have a say ... By doing this, students have a voice." They carried American, Mexican, and gay pride flags.

Similar protests were reported at Roosevelt High School in Des Moines, Iowa.



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