

Anti-Trump protests continue to sweep US cities and campuses

Tom Eley
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On Tuesday and Wednesday, protests continued across the US against the policies of the twelve-day-old administration of Donald Trump.

The demonstrations, which have taken place in scores of cities and towns, as well as airports and college campuses, have in recent days become increasingly focused on the new administration's attack on democratic rights, including its executive edicts attacking immigrants and refugees and Trump's nomination of the far-right figure Neil Gorsuch to replace the Supreme Court seat vacated by the death, one year ago, of Antonin Scalia.

Large protests against Gorsuch's nomination assembled in New York and Washington, D.C. on Tuesday evening, almost simultaneous to Trump's announcement. The demonstration in Washington surrounded the Supreme Court building. In New York, protesters marched on Trump Tower, where 11 were arrested, including Gwen Carr, mother of the late Eric Garner, who was murdered by New York City police in 2014 for selling individual cigarettes on the street.

Also in New York, more than 3,000 demonstrators descended on the luxury apartment complex which is home to Democratic Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, to protest his complicity in ushering through Trump's ultra-right cabinet picks.

The protesters shouted slogans against the senator, who has himself cast votes for several of Trump's nominees, and held signs reading "Get a spine, Chuck." Interviewed by the media, one protester said of Schumer that he is "bought and paid for by Goldman Sachs."

The threat of large scale protests forced the cancellation of a scheduled Trump visit to Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Thursday. Motorcycle manufacturer Harley-Davidson scotched the presidential tour through one of its suburban Milwaukee plants, where Trump was slated to sign a new series of executive memoranda related to his trade war policies. In 2011, Wisconsin was the scene of a wave of protests involving hundreds of thousands in opposition to attacks on workers' rights launched by Republican

Governor Scott Walker.

In neighboring Minnesota, a crowd estimated at between 5,000 and 15,000 marched through downtown Minneapolis on Tuesday to oppose Trump's executive orders banning refugees and attacking immigrants.

The event was originally sponsored by a local anti-war group, but news of the demonstration spread on Facebook and social media. The march eventually forced the closure of several city blocks near the Minneapolis Federal Building. The Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul are home to about one-third of the roughly 80,000 immigrants from Somalia in the US, one of the seven countries targeted by Trump in his immigration ban.

Hundreds of Worcester, Massachusetts, residents crowded around City Hall on Tuesday evening to protest against a city councilman's proposal that Worcester abide by Trump's federal orders, which would effectively end its status as a "sanctuary city." Also on Tuesday evening, over 1,000 demonstrated outside of the Norwich, Connecticut, City Hall.

On Wednesday, a crowd estimated at over 1,000 demonstrated outside City Hall in Portland, Maine. Protests estimated in the hundreds also took place at Tennessee rallies in Nashville and Murfreesboro, with the common slogan "no ban, no wall, no mass deportations." Another demonstration took place in Johnson City, Tennessee.

Also on Wednesday, hundreds demonstrated in Clayton, Missouri, outside the offices of Republican Senator Roy Blunt, against Trump's immigration ban and his nomination of Gorsuch to the Supreme Court. In Hazleton, Pennsylvania, about 30 demonstrated at the offices of the anti-immigrant chauvinist, Representative Lou Barletta, a Trump loyalist. More than 100 demonstrated in Clove City, California, near the office of Rep. Devin Nunes. In Chicago, over 200 protested outside of the offices of the Department of Homeland Security.

Workers at telecommunications giant Comcast have organized a walkout against the Trump immigration ban, to take place today in Philadelphia, Washington D.C., New

York City, and Sunnyvale, California. In response to an employee petition, which had 1,200 signatories by Wednesday afternoon, Comcast announced that employees who leave work will not be docked pay.

In New York City, over 1,000 Yemeni-American “bodega” convenience store owners will close shop on Thursday from noon until 8 p.m. in protest against Trump’s immigrant ban, which singles out Yemen and six other predominantly Muslim countries, all of which have been targeted by US wars or sanctions.

Protests continue to sweep college campuses and high schools

On Tuesday several thousand students protested at Rutgers University, and later marched through downtown New Brunswick, New Jersey. At Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, California a crowd estimated at 150 showed up to protest a campus talk by Breitbart News editor and anti-Muslim zealot Milo Yiannopoulos, who was protected by police SWAT teams. Protests against Yiannopoulos, an associate of Trump chief advisor Stephen Bannon, were also expected at Berkeley on Wednesday evening.

At Old Dominion University in Virginia a crowd reported in the hundreds protested Trump’s anti-immigrant orders on Tuesday. “It’s heartbreaking for me,” Iraqi graduate student Bnar Mustafa, who is blocked by Trump’s order from seeing her family, told a local reporter. “I’m 39 weeks pregnant and I really want to visit my family or they can come visit me, but now I’m stuck.”

Protests ranging in size from dozens to thousands also took place on Wednesday at Chapman University in Los Angeles; Florida International University in Miami; the main campuses of the University of Connecticut and the University of Missouri; Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge; American University in Washington, D.C.; Stony Brook University in New York; and RPI University in Troy, New York; on Tuesday at Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant; Michigan State University in Lansing; the University of California, Riverside; the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa; Duke University in North Carolina; Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York; Ashland University in Ohio; and Lehigh University and Bucknell University in Pennsylvania.

Also on Wednesday, a student walkout took place at Akins High School in Austin, Texas. High school walkouts have been reported since Trump’s inauguration, including in Los Angeles, Oakland, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Berkeley in California; several districts in Washington state; Evanston, Illinois; and Providence, Rhode Island, among many others.

Across the US and internationally, the demonstrations since Trump’s inauguration have been characterized by a

high degree of spontaneity, illustrated by the ubiquity of homemade signs. They have been routinely larger than organizers’ expectations, and have often focused on issues related to attacks on democratic rights and public education, rather than the narrow single-issue questions associated with identity politics—the stock-in-trade of the upper-middle class protest groups, layers that are openly seeking to divert the opposition to Trump back into the Democratic Party, whose policies differ in no fundamental respect from those of the current administration.

After first distancing themselves from the protests, Democratic Party politicians are now attempting to prevent it from emerging as a challenge to the two major capitalist parties.

“It’s spontaneous, it’s unorganized, and the challenge is going to be to organize it,” Michigan Democratic Representative Sandy Levin, 85, told *The Hill*. “I’ve been around for a long time. I haven’t seen anything like this since the Vietnam War.”

“Unity is the key. In order to have our voice heard we have to be unified, and that hasn’t always been the case,” said Arizona Democratic Rep. Raúl Grijalva, head of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. “This is an important test of discipline.”

“Unity” with the Democrats means defeat. During his eight years in the presidency, Barack Obama expanded war throughout the Middle East and Central Asia and pushed forward class war policies that saw the vast enrichment of the top 10 percent and the impoverishment of most American workers.

As for democratic rights, it was Obama that claimed and used the right to assassinate anyone, including citizens, and who deported more immigrants and prosecuted more whistleblowers than all other presidents. Those Obama policies not only paved the way for Trump’s victory, they now fall into the lap of the most right-wing administration in US history.

The only way forward for the demonstrators is to break decisively with the Democratic Party and chart an independent course based on the international unity of the working class in opposition to attacks on democratic rights, living standards and the threat of world war.



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