

Democrats abstain on House resolution praising ICE thugs

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The US House of Representatives voted Wednesday to pass a resolution supporting the actions of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency. The resolution was proposed by Republican Representative Clay Higgins in response to a bill that was introduced by three Democrats last week to abolish ICE.

As the WSWWS reported Monday, the Democrats' bill was just a show to give themselves a left cover. Not expecting the Republican leadership to actually bring the bill to the floor, the Democrats who introduced the bill exposed themselves by vowing to vote against their own legislation.

Republicans seized on the opportunity to embarrass Democrats further by introducing a new resolution to praise the institution responsible for the detention of thousands of immigrant children. The resolution contains language like "The national security interests of the United States are dependent on the brave men and women who enforce our Nation's immigration laws" and "abolishing ICE would allow dangerous criminal aliens, including violent and ruthless members of the MS-13 gang, to remain in American communities."

ICE has broken up thousands of families, stripped children away from their mothers, jailed the elderly, and perpetrated other heinous acts. Perhaps most disturbing are the reports from inside child detention facilities that include unclean living areas, lack of healthy food, and sexual abuse by ICE officers or contractors. This is the organization that the Republicans praise as "heroic law enforcement officers."

But Republicans are not alone in their support for ICE. Only 34 Democrats voted against the resolution. The majority of Democrats voted "present," meaning

they abstained from voting altogether. Democrat minority whip Steny Hoyer claimed, "Democrats refuse to play Republicans' game when it comes to children's well-being and the safety of those who come here seeking asylum." He continued, "Democrats support secure borders and honor the service of all those whose lives are at risk in protecting our country and our people. ... But we will neither be silent nor will we cease fighting to bring an end to the dangerous and inhumane policies of the Trump administration."

Hoyer was joined in his vote by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, former Democratic National Committee chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz, and Debbie Dingell, the millionaire representative from the 12th Congressional District in Michigan, whom Socialist Equality Party candidate Niles Niemuth is opposing in the November election.

Even Mark Pocan of Wisconsin and Pramila Jayapal of Washington state, two of the three representatives who introduced the Abolish ICE bill, voted "present" rather than opposing a bill to salute rather than rebuke the agency. Adriano Espaillat of New York was the only one of the three sponsors to vote no.

Additionally, 18 Democrats voted yes on the Republicans' resolution praising a key component of the new American Gestapo. These included the two Democratic representatives, Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona and Jacky Rosen of Nevada, who are the Democratic nominees seeking US Senate seats in those states. They fear that failing to shower the perpetrators of human rights violations with endless praise will hurt their chances of joining the Senate.

Representative Conor Lamb, the former military officer and US prosecutor who won a Pennsylvania seat in a special election earlier this year, also voted to praise ICE.

The sham of these two congressional actions—the abandonment of the anti-ICE bill and the passage of a bill groveling before the agency—shows the Democratic Party for what it is, a capitalist party that does not support the rights of immigrants and only uses left-sounding phrases like “abolish ICE” to help win elections in a few districts where that seems an opportune slogan.

In any case, the Democrats are incapable of abolishing ICE and securing the safety of immigrants and refugees. Even though they attempt to present themselves as the progressive alternative to the Trump administration, Democrats have taken no actions to defend basic rights. Instead, they are devoting their full energy to promoting the hyper-nationalist anti-Russia campaign. Just yesterday, Democrats erupted into chants of “USA, USA” on the House floor as Hoyer accused Trump of treason and promoted legislation that would “secure” the 2018 elections.

Only a socialist program, like that fought for by SEP candidate Niles Niemuth in Michigan’s 12th district, can secure open borders and the protection of immigrants and refugees.



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