

# DSA-backed “progressive Democrats” drop phony opposition to Trump’s attacks on immigrants

Will Morrow  
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The Congressional Progressive Caucus of House Democrats held its first press conference since the midterm elections on Monday afternoon. They used the event to signal their fundamental agreement with the Trump administration’s war on immigrants.

The CPC is held up as the “left” face of the Democratic Party. It includes Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan, both members of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), and Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts. All three were present on Monday.

The speakers defended the Democrats’ decision to ignore the immigration issue during the election campaign, as President Trump delivered fascistic anti-immigrant diatribes; deployed 15,000 troops to the border against Central American immigrant workers seeking asylum; called for the rescinding of birthright citizenship upheld in the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution; and announced the creation of immigrant “tent cities” and a ban on all asylum applications apart from designated ports of entry. The Democrats remained silent and claimed Trump’s actions were a “diversion” from the real issues facing the population.

CPC Chair Mark Pocan said that while “we are still absolutely going to be pressing that” issue, the “main goal getting out of the gate is going to be the issues that we ran on across all districts: around healthcare, around good-paying jobs, around opposing the culture of corruption. Not that we can’t walk and chew gum, but those are going to be the lead issues.”

Veronica Escobar of El Paso, Texas said Trump’s anti-immigrant attacks are unnecessary because the militarization of the border by both parties had already achieved the bipartisan goal of stopping immigrants.

“We’ve had 15 years, billions of dollars, a wall, drones, a border patrol that’s grown by seven times, ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] that’s grown by three times,” she said. “The border is secure. It has never been safer. We are still, even with the surges of Central American families seeking asylum, at historic lows for immigration. It’s time to stop the national obsession with border security.”

A reporter at the press conference noted that some members of the CPC had won support based on their calls to “Abolish ICE,” and asked whether they would maintain this slogan.

In fact, the Democrats never intended to abolish ICE. They saw in this slogan a means for committing themselves to nothing while gaining support from millions of workers and young people who are horrified by the American immigration Gestapo and want to see it abolished.

In July, the Democrats opposed their own bill that included the call to “abolish ICE.” The Democrats never intended for the bill to come to a vote, expecting that Republicans would block the measure. When Republicans sought to force a vote on the bill, the Democrats announced they would vote against it as well if it came to the floor.

In response to the reporter’s question on Monday, however, Pramila Jayapal complained that she and other Democrats had been falsely associated with the slogan to abolish ICE. “The bill says that ICE would be abolished with the assumption that there is some new agency that will continue to enforce border control,” she said. “I would love it if you would all read the bill and report on what was in the bill and how we propose building an immigration system that is humane, where

the enforcement is transparent, saves taxpayer dollars, and is effective.”

In other words, the so-called “Progressive Democrats” want a border agency that is more “effective” and efficient at rounding up, detaining and deporting millions of immigrants and splitting up families. They want it done more quietly, with fewer “taxpayer dollars,” and less of Trump’s fascistic rants, which they fear will trigger a social explosion by workers. This was the method of the Obama administration, which deported more than 3.5 million immigrants in the course of its eight years in office.

Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib, whom the DSA-affiliated *Jacobin* magazine characterized in a November 14 article as an “embryonic socialist bloc” in Congress, stood alongside their colleagues and nodded and supported these statements and chose not to say anything on the matter. That is because they agree with everything that was said.

Ocasio-Cortez in particular won widespread support from young people for her use of the slogan “Abolish ICE.” The day after her victory in the New York 14th District Democratic primaries, as her Democratic Party instructors explained how to conduct herself, she had already begun hedging on the demand, telling CNN, “We do need to make sure that our borders are secure.” In August, she commented that abolishing ICE “does not mean abolish deportation.” Her comments on the issue dropped to almost zero, with tweets on the topic just twice after September 1.

Horrific and unprecedented crimes are being carried out against immigrants on a daily basis. There are now almost 14,000 immigrant unaccompanied minors detained in internment camps. Reports emerge almost daily of crimes against asylum seekers by fascistic border guards emboldened by the Trump White House.

Silence about what is taking place equals complicity. The complicity extends to the DSA-affiliated *Jacobin* magazine, which has said nothing that could jeopardize its efforts to channel disaffected workers and young people behind the Democratic Party. *Jacobin* has published only two articles dealing with immigration since September 1, a rate of one article every 33 days.

Genuine socialists approach the question of immigration from the standpoint of the unity of the international working class and a scientific understanding of world economy. The nation-state

system has become an irrational brake on the development of society, which has objectively unified billions of workers all around the world in a common production and supply chain. It leads inevitably toward the persecution of immigrants and to colonial and inter-imperialist wars that threaten the international working class with nuclear catastrophe.

Socialists call for an end to the division of the planet into competing national states and the construction of a rationally planned, socialist economy, with corporations transformed into utilities under the democratic control of workers, to organize production according to social need. They defend the right of workers to reside in whatever country they choose, with full legal and citizenship rights, and oppose all forms of nationalism, which is utilized by the capitalist class to divide workers from their class brothers and sisters.

The DSA is not a socialist organization, but a nationalist and pro-capitalist organization. It fights not to build a revolutionary party of the working class to overthrow capitalism and establish socialism, but to channel workers and young people behind the Democratic Party, the oldest capitalist party in the United States. It explicitly does not call for the abolition of the nation-state system and the provision of citizenship rights to all workers.



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