

Thousands of workers and students protest Trump's mass deportation operation

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Over the last 72 hours, large protests against Trump's attacks on immigrants and escalating deportation operation have erupted across the United States. Workers and students, immigrant and US-born alike, have participated in the protests and spoken out powerfully in defense of the democratic rights of everyone regardless of where they were born.

While protests against Trump and his scapegoating of immigrants have been a near-daily occurrence since his inauguration January 20, this weekend saw a massive increase in the number of demonstrations, and people participating in them. No doubt this was in part fueled by the Trump administration's ongoing and violent deportations which are not just targeting alleged "criminals" but workers and family members who have been living in the United States—without a criminal record—for years.

Since January 31, protests involving anywhere from a few dozen, to thousands of people have been held major cities throughout the country including San Diego, Sacramento, San Francisco, Riverside and Los Angeles, California, Washington, DC, New York City, Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago; Houston, Austin and Dallas, Texas; Des Moines, Iowa; Phoenix, Arizona; Charlotte, North Carolina; Miami, Florida; Denver, Colorado; Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon.

In North Little Rock, Arkansas Friday night, dozens of protesters, including many students, rallied in support of immigrants. Demonstrators held signs that read "No human is illegal," "Immigrants make America Great" and "Fight ignorance, not immigrants."

Protest organizer Angela Baltazar told the local ABC station she organized the rally to oppose Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids on families. "I got split from my parents from the age of three to the

age of nine," Baltazar recalled, "I wouldn't want any child to experience that, ever." On Saturday a similar protest was held in front of the state Capitol in Little Rock.

In Dallas, Texas for the third day in a row, hundreds of people—including immigrants and their children—protested against the Trump administration's anti-immigrant policies. On Friday, demonstrators rallied outside an ICE office, while on Sunday hundreds marched downtown for several hours.

In Chamblee, Georgia, hundreds of people, many of Hispanic descent, protested in support of immigrants on Saturday, temporarily blocking Buford Highway. The protest started at noon and lasted well into the early evening. Many children were seen holding signs that read "end family deportations."

Joseph Pastor, an organizer of the protest, told Fox 5, "We are basically being hunted down by ICE." He added, "We live in fear, we are here because we don't want everyone to live in fear, so we are going to speak out."

As the protest grew throughout the day, riot police were deployed to harass and intimidate demonstrators, eventually arresting four people. Crystal Alvarado, told Fox 5 that her friend was one of those arrested. She told the news outlet, "The protest was perfectly fine until they started to kick us out. That's when people started throwing drinks at the cops..."

Notably, virtually none of the protests have been led or organized by Democratic Party politicians or trade union officials. Far from opposing Trump's dictatorial plans to deport millions of people, the Democrats and nationalist trade unions have co-signed Trump's attacks on immigrants.

The first bill passed by the 119th Congress, with Democratic support, was the fascistic “Laken Riley Act” which greatly expands the power of police to detain and deport undocumented persons simply accused of committing a crime. In response, not a single major trade union, from the American Federation of Teachers to the Teamsters, has called on its members to strike in defense of democratic rights.

Instead, workers and students are organizing protests independently, particularly on social media. The largest of this weekend’s protests was held in Los Angeles on Sunday. At its height, thousands of people participated in the march which began at Olvera Street (*Calle Olvera*) before proceeding to City Hall and eventually US Highway 101. For several hours on Sunday, protesters faced off with hundreds of riot police from the California Highway Patrol while blocking the road.

Protesters waved Mexican and American flags and denounced the Trump administration and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Demonstrators held signs that read “No one is illegal on stolen land” and “Don’t bite the hand that feeds.”

Reporters for the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to several people at the Los Angeles protest. A middle school student told the WSWS, “We are here to fight for the rights of our people, of our family. We have family and friends that are undocumented—who aren’t criminals—they are here to work. They are here to live their lives like everybody else.”

Another student told the WSWS that their teachers were supportive of the protests and showed off her sign which read: “School is for education not deportation.”

A Los Angeles-based teacher at the rally told the WSWS that educators have posters in the classrooms that read “All immigrants welcome” or “This classroom is a safe space for immigrants.” However, as far as she knew, the teachers union, United Teachers Los Angles (UTLA) was not organizing strike in defense of immigrants.

Instead, she described how each school is doing its own individual and inadequate actions. She said some are “passing out the red cards about your ‘immigration rights’ if ICE comes to you.” When the WSWS reporter pointed out that this was not enough and that the entire working class must be mobilized to protect immigrants, the teacher responded, “Yes.”

Another teacher at the Los Angeles rally told the

WSWS, “I’m here to support my students and their rights and everyone’s rights to be here in this country.” She said that Trump administration “should be removed.”

She said, “I don’t think its right to have a criminal as president, and for him to be calling us criminals, enabling hatred.”

A worker at the rally concurred, “I agree. Personally, I work with a lot of Hispanics from El Salvador, Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, from all places and they are all working class.

“They produce the wealth, they are the backbone of America.”



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