

Walkout by Detroit high school students against anti-immigrant witch hunt

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Hundreds of students walked out of Western International High School on Detroit's southwestside Tuesday afternoon to protest raids by Trump's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents and the deportation of thousands of immigrant workers and family members.

Young people poured out of the school in the early afternoon with some carrying signs declaring, "No human is illegal. Abolish ICE" and "America was built by immigrants." Many joined a protest organized by pro-immigrant groups, which held a march down Vernor Highway in the heart of the working class and largely Latino immigrant neighborhood.

The action by Detroit students is part of a continuing wave of student walkouts and anti-ICE protests across the country. These protests which are involving large numbers of young people are also being fueled by the worsening social crisis and bipartisan school cuts, which will be deepened by Trump's drive to destroy public education.

On Wednesday, students in Monroe, North Carolina, just east of Raleigh, walked out of their high school to defend immigrants and demand that Union County officials not collaborate with ICE agents. The protesters, who rallied in front of the Union County Public Schools office, said their schools were underfunded and that North Carolina had some of the largest number of for-profit charter schools in the country.

The Detroit protest took place hours before Trump's fascist address at the joint session of Congress, where he repeated his rants about an "invasion" and "occupation" by immigrant gang members, murderers and rapists. He boasted that ICE and border patrol agents were "getting them out and getting them out fast."

Earlier in the day, Trump also posted a message on social media threatening foreign-born students with arrest and deportation if they engaged in what he called "illegal protests" on campuses like those against the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza. Making clear his anti-immigrant witch hunt is aimed at native-born workers and young people too, Trump added, "American students will be

permanently expelled or, depending on the crime, arrested."

One high school student said Trump's threats had intimidated some of her classmates but only strengthened the resolve of others. Referring to these threats, another student said, "It's disgusting and [they're] a way to control people, so they won't revolt against you. Honestly, he needs to be impeached immediately."

Another student said, "We decided to walk out because we don't agree with everything that is going on. My mom is an immigrant, and she suffered a lot to come here. It's not right what Trump's doing. It's like they're trying to bring slavery back in a way. But it's affecting everyone, not just certain people. People [who voted for Trump] just don't realize it.

"He says he wants to make America better by taking Mexicans out. But Mexicans are helping, and there wouldn't be buildings constructed and food provided if they weren't here. I feel Trump is blaming the immigrants to take the spotlight off him. Everyone should have equal amounts of everything—rights, money. Not everything should be distributed to just one class of people."

Another student said, "My family are immigrants, and they have been here a long time. Immigrants have built this country, and Trump is trying to take that away. They have jobs, they have families, and it's just not fair for the community and everybody here. Some have papers; some don't. One of my friend's grandparents got deported. Elon Musk is already rich. They're doing everything because they can get away with it. Us poor people, what do we have?"

Another youth said, "I'm out here supporting my friends who are going through these things like deportations. Immigrants have built our communities. They are breaking up families, and that's messed up. Blaming the immigrants for bad conditions in the schools and other problems is ridiculous. The politicians don't know what's happening inside our schools. They don't come here and monitor what's going on."

One student said, "Immigrants aren't hurting anybody.

We should all get together and fight. Half of the schools are broken down. Air conditioning doesn't work. In the summertime, it is so hot and in the winter the heaters don't work. The money should go into supplies and things that really matter."

Many of the young people who spoke to WSWS reporters said they worked at restaurants and stores after school to help their families. One young person held up a sign saying, "Salarios Dignos Para Todas" or "Decent wages for all."

Democrats back assault on immigrants

The attack on immigrants and the worsening social crisis in the Detroit area is provoking widespread opposition by workers against the Democratic administration of Mayor Mike Duggan, which has overseen an explosion of social inequality in the city since its bankruptcy restructuring 11 years ago.

Last month, a neglected century-old water main burst, flooding a southwest neighborhood with water and ice and forcing scores of residents to evacuate. Just a week before, two children froze to death in a van where their homeless family was sheltering in a casino parking garage.

In January, Duggan, who is running as an independent candidate for Michigan governor next year, pledged to collaborate with the Trump administration in the round-up and deportation of immigrants. "If you are in this country illegally, we should not be shielding you from ICE and federal enforcement, and the city of Detroit does not."

On February 26, plainclothes ICE agents arrested a 37-year-old father in Chicago as he was dropping off his two children at an elementary school on the city's west side. The children were left inside the car as the ICE agents took their father away. School officials brought the children inside. "Our people are being targeted," Lucy Salgado, a parent at the Acero charter school, told ABC7 News. "It is not fair what they are doing to our community."

Later that evening parents and young people held a vigil against the closure of at least two of the seven Acero charter schools due to the budget cutting by Democratic Party school officials and Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson.

Johnson and the Democratic mayors of Boston, New York and Denver were berated for hours Wednesday morning by Republicans during a hearing of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Several Republicans said they would urge the Justice Department to open investigations into the mayors, claiming their impotent "sanctuary" city policies were a federal offense.

Groveling before the fascistic Republicans, the Democratic mayors said arresting undocumented immigrants was the responsibility of "federal law enforcement," not local police. Johnson said having local police involved in such arrests would "make Chicago more dangerous" because crime witnesses and victims would "avoid cooperation with police."

The war against immigrants is an attack on the whole working class. It goes together with destruction of Constitutional rights, the mass firing of federal workers, and the gutting of public education, Social Security, Medicaid and other essential programs to fund more tax cuts for the rich and imperialist wars. The Democrats are opposed to any serious opposition to Trump because they defend the interests of the same capitalist oligarchy as the Republicans.

The only way the attack on immigrants can be halted is by building a powerful movement of the working class, uniting workers and young people of all races and ethnic backgrounds, in a common fight to defend democratic and social rights.

This means building rank-and-file workplace and neighborhood committees, independent of the trade union bureaucracies and the Democratic Party, to organize mass protests and strikes to protect the rights of all workers. This must be combined with a political counteroffensive against both corporate-controlled parties and the capitalist system they defend. The funding of high quality public education, affordable housing, free health care and other social rights for everyone is only possible through the expropriation of the oligarchs and for socialism.



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