

Trump administration threatens to deport half million immigrant workers, who entered US legally

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The brutal assault on immigrant workers by the Trump administration has grown in recent weeks, with hundreds of thousands of workers who entered the United States legally now facing the threat of imminent deportation and the loss of their livelihoods.

Earlier this month, letters were sent to hundreds of thousands of immigrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela (CHNV) who are part of a Biden era program, which allowed them to live and work legally in the US for up to two years while seeking legal avenues to remain after the expiration of their humanitarian parole.

Workers in factories, warehouses and other workplaces across the country received emails from the US Department of Homeland Security on April 7, declaring:

It is time for you to leave the United States. DHS is now exercising its discretion to terminate your parole immediately.

On his first day in office, Trump issued an order to eliminate the program, which the Biden administration established in 2022-23, as part of its own efforts to curb “illegal immigration.” The program covers an estimated 532,000 individuals, including 110,300 Cubans, 211,000 Haitians, 93,100 Nicaraguans and 117,330 Venezuelans, who were sponsored by relatives to come to the US and apply for asylum.

Last month, the DHS announced it would end the permits on April 24 and remove program participants “who do not depart the United States before their parole termination date and do not have any lawful basis to remain” in the US. DHS warned it could “commence enforcement action against any alien at any time, including during the 30-day waiting period created by this notice.”

On Monday, a federal judge in Boston, Massachusetts, on Monday granted emergency relief to the Haitian Bridge Alliance and other advocacy groups, who filed a lawsuit to stop the administration’s action and issued a preliminary injunction

halting DHS Secretary Kristi Noem from revoking the parole protections.

In a 41-page decision, Federal Judge Indira Talwani said:

The early termination, without any case-by-case justification, of legal status for noncitizens who have complied with DHS programs and entered the country lawfully undermines the rule of law.

The White House press secretary Tuesday denounced the decision, saying “another rogue district court judge is trying to block the administration’s mass deportation efforts with this latest injunction.” She added, “We will continue to focus on deporting as many individuals as we can.”

At best the judge’s actions will only temporarily delay the administration, which has repeatedly defied the federal courts and insisted the executive branch’s actions to “defend national security” are beyond judicial review.

Nearly 80 percent of the CHNV beneficiaries live in south Florida. However, many live in communities across the country, including in Springfield, Ohio, where Haitian migrants were the target of a fascist witch hunt during Trump’s election campaign, provoking widespread revulsion from local residents and throughout the country.

Large numbers of Cuban migrants have also settled in Louisville, Kentucky, which is home to the giant UPS GlobalPort, two Ford factories, the GE Appliance Park and other large employers, who have hired CHNV recipients to address labor shortages.

Nearly 200 GE workers received letters earlier this month instructing them to depart the United States by April 24 or face “adverse immigration consequences.” One Louisville resident, who received a letter, anonymously told The Courier Journal that the notices went out regardless of current residency status.

The GE Appliance Park, owned by Chinese appliance maker Haier, employs more than 5,000 workers who assemble dishwashers, refrigerators and other appliances. It has a multi-

national workforce who reportedly speak 20 different languages, with many immigrants from Latin America, the Middle East and Africa.

The workforce has also repeatedly demonstrated its militancy, forcing the temporary shutdown of the plant in the early days of the pandemic, and repeatedly rejecting pro-company deals signed by the International Union of Electrical Workers-Communications Workers of America (IUE-CWA) Local 83761.

In December 2024, rank-and-file workers voted by 73 percent to reject a union-backed sellout agreement, which included starting wages of \$18.27. One worker, who voted against the deal, said, “All these tiers and the highest paid haven’t seen a significant raise in over two decades.”

Trump’s witch hunt against immigrants and mass deportations have always been aimed at the working class as a whole. The aim is to divide workers and silence opposition in the same way as the administration’s campaign to deport international students opposing the US-backed Israeli genocide has been used to destroy free speech and academic freedom.

But opposition in the working class is growing despite the best efforts of the trade union bureaucracy and the Democratic Party. Aware of the widespread disgust with the anti-immigrant attack, IUE-CWA Local 83761 President Dino Driskell and national union officials have issued statements opposing the threats against GE appliance workers.

IUE-CWA President Carl Kennebrew said:

What is happening to our members at Appliance Park is unfolding at workplaces and in communities all across the country. ... We cannot allow those who are sowing division to win. Blaming immigrants is an age-old trick to create fear and distract us from the takeover of our economy by billionaires.

The AFL-CIO has also issued a statement opposing the dismantling of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and CHNV programs largely from the standpoint of the interests of corporate America. The AFL-CIO bureaucrats declared eliminating

various forms of humanitarian parole will cause severe workforce disruption that risks crippling key industries that rely heavily on immigrant labor, such as construction, hospitality, manufacturing, and food processing. Rather than benefitting the remaining workforce, mass deportations amidst an already tight labor market will shutter businesses, disrupt supply chains, drive up costs for consumers, and put jobs at risk.

In any case, the AFL-CIO did not propose any collection action by workers and instead declared:

We call on lawmakers to reject this destructive approach, and instead return focus to comprehensive reform of our unjust immigration system in ways that center a pathway to citizenship and ensure all workers are able to live and work safely and with dignity.

This is worse than useless. Far from organizing opposition to Trump, the Democrats and the union bureaucracy fear a movement of the working class against the administration far more than accommodating themselves to the fascist president. Several leading figures, such as United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain, Teamsters President Sean O’Brien and International Longshore Association President Harold Daggett, have already embraced Trump’s “Make America Great Again” national chauvinism and drive to world war.

To effectively combat the attacks on immigrant workers and defend democratic rights for all, it is crucial to build and expand rank-and-file committees not just in workplaces and communities within the US but internationally. These committees can serve as independent organizations of workers, free from the constraints of the nationalist and pro-corporate trade union bureaucracies.

The formation of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) provides a crucial framework for developing this international solidarity and coordination. Only through such an international mobilization of the working class and the development of rank-and-file committees across borders can immigrant workers be effectively protected, and a genuine fight for democratic rights against the rising tide of fascism be waged.



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