

1,600 students walkout against ICE in Hillsboro, Oregon

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19 December 2025

On December 12, some 1,600 students walked out at four Portland, Oregon-area high schools, Hillsboro, Liberty, Century and Glencoe, and three middle schools, South Meadows, Poynter and R.A. Brown. With approximately a total of 9,100 students in its middle and high schools, the number that walked out represents a significant percentage of the Hillsboro School District student population, the fourth largest in Oregon.

Waving home-made signs and yelling spirited chants, students marched along the major Tualatin Valley Highway, with many cars honking their support, to make clear their opposition to ICE raids. Congregating at Shute Park, students chanted, “We want justice, we want rights. We want ICE out of sight,” and “Hey, hey, oh, oh, ICE has got to go.”

Student walkouts also took place earlier in the week in the cities of Beaverton and Forest Grove, both adjacent to Hillsboro. These actions are part of a growing national wave of walkouts against ICE and state terror that have occurred in Michigan, Minnesota and North Carolina. The protests in North Carolina grew to 56,000 students at their peak.

One of the student leaders in Oregon, Manny Chavez, whose testimony to the Hillsboro City Council denouncing ICE went viral in November, posted on his social media account: “For months, ICE has terrorized Hillsboro and all of Oregon. They claim to be targeting criminals, yet they target everyone with a brown skin complexion. U.S. citizens have been detained without reason. By doing this walkout, we are showing Hillsboro and the Oregon community that we stand for them and are tired of this reign of terror.”

On Tuesday, over a hundred students from Lincoln High School in downtown Portland and from other schools in the city also walked out against ICE.

Jasmine Hamilton, one of the student organizers, told KPTV News, “I have a lot of friends and family that have been impacted by this, and I know that some people can’t speak about this out of fear that they’ll be targeted next, and so I want to be that voice for the people who can’t talk for themselves and are being put under pressure and fear.”

Recent data released by ICE show that it has arrested 644 people in Oregon since the Trump initiated crackdown. According to the Portland Immigrant Rights Coalition, a “heat map” indicating a higher intensity of ICE activity in a given location on its website, show that Hillsboro and Beaverton have both experienced a larger amount of ICE activity.

The large presence of ICE in Hillsboro is especially significant given that it is the most diverse city within Oregon, with slightly more than 40 percent of the population consisting of minorities. A large agricultural sector draws migrants from Mexico and Latin America, while an extensive tech industry, such as Intel, draws from Asia and South Asia. More broadly, it is an extremely working class town, many of whom are native-born, expressing the fundamentally class nature of the attacks by ICE on workers across the country.

The methods being deployed are part of a nationwide escalation. Federal agencies are building a mass data and policing apparatus, including airline passenger lists that have been handed to ICE by the TSA, while facial recognition and targeting software are used to generate arrest lists and quotas, making raids increasingly automated, indiscriminate and far-reaching.

A trial in US District Court in Portland held at the beginning of December heard testimony from ICE officers detailing the generation of post-detention arrest warrants, false allegations inserted via copy-and-paste onto the warrants, arrest quotas and the use of facial

recognition tools and, in addition, a software called Elite designed for ICE that can aggregate “names and photos of people in a general area who had prior contacts with immigration officials at some point in their lives.” The officer testified, “The goal was to make eight arrests per team per day,” adding, “We had to develop our own targets.”

Moreover, the raids have exposed the inability of the Democrats to oppose immigration raids. Despite Oregon’s Sanctuary Promise Act and the designation of Hillsboro as a “sanctuary city” in a 2017 city council resolution, ICE has proceeded with impunity to target, arrest, jail and deport hundreds of Oregon residents. While the law itself “prohibits federal immigration authorities from carrying out warrantless arrests in Oregon’s courthouses and their vicinities,” this has simply shifted the focus to minority-intensive towns like Hillsboro.

Under Trump’s second term, the Democrats have emerged as collaborators with the administration. The Democrats provided the necessary votes to end the government shutdown in October and in November on Trump’s terms, ordered local law enforcement to work alongside federal agents. Coinciding with attacks on the working class domestically, the Democrats have backed the escalation of America’s wars abroad, including the undeclared war against Venezuela.

Among the most wretched examples of this collaboration came from New York City Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), who visited the White House in November and declared a “partnership” with the fascist. Mamdani even released a video encouraging residents to follow ICE commands: “Do not impede their investigation, resist arrest or run,” Mamdani warned, in an effort to demobilize the broad masses of workers opposed to the flagrant and dictatorial attacks on democratic rights. And in Seattle, Mayor-elect Katie Wilson, a self-described “socialist,” has stated she will “meet with anyone,” including Trump.

The targeting of Hillsboro by the Trump administration is not a mistake. The city is only about 17 miles west of Portland, a frequent focus of Trump’s fascistic agitation. In September, Trump ordered National Guard troops to Portland, with authorization to use “deadly force.” He posted at that time on Truth Social, “At the request of Secretary of Homeland

Security, Kristi Noem, I am directing Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth, to provide all necessary Troops to protect War ravaged Portland, and any of our ICE Facilities under siege from attack by Antifa, and other domestic terrorists. I am also authorizing Full Force, if necessary.”

The next stage of the walkouts must include a turn by the students to the working class. Students, teachers, parents and workers must form rank-and-file committees in every school, workplace and neighborhood to coordinate opposition to all efforts by the American ruling elite, with the support of both capitalist parties, to erect a dictatorship and plan for even greater wars. They must connect with other committees under the umbrella of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) and fight to abolish the source of all these social ills, capitalism.



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