

Carson High School students walk out against ICE raids, dictatorship and war

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On the morning of February 6, 2026, more than 100 students at Carson High School in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) walked out of classes in a powerful protest against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), authoritarian rule and the accelerating assault on the working class under the Trump administration.

Beginning at 8:30 a.m., the walkout reflected a growing radicalization among youth confronting attacks on democratic rights, living standards and their future. Similar walkouts took place the same day at several other high schools in Downtown Los Angeles, North Hollywood, Van Nuys, Glendale and Burbank. Nearly 12,500 LAUSD students from more than 85 schools joined, with San Fernando Valley seeing heavy involvement from at least 40 sites.

Last August, 18-year-old Benjamin Marcelo Guerrero-Cruz was brutally kidnapped by ICE agents as he was walking his dog. He is a student at Reseda High in the San Fernando Valley, part of LAUSD. During his four-month detention in ICE custody, the student lost 20 pounds.

Carson High School serves a predominantly working-class student body. In 2025, Hispanic students made up 57 percent of enrollment (more than 1,500 students) many from immigrant families directly threatened by deportation, police-state repression and economic insecurity. For these students, the ICE raids sweeping Southern California are not abstract political questions but daily realities hanging over their families, neighborhoods and schools.

As Brooklyn, a senior at Carson, explained, “Why do we learn history just to keep repeating it? So we need to be the change that we see.” Her remark captured a broader sentiment among students: that the lessons of history demand action in the present.

The Carson walkout must be understood as part of a broader response by youth to the Trump administration’s drive toward dictatorship, unlimited war spending and the privatization of social life, alongside brutal attacks on immigrants, workers and public education. While hundreds of billions of dollars are funneled into war, border militarization and police-state apparatuses, schools face chronic underfunding, hospitals are pushed to the brink and workers are told there is “no money” for wages, pensions or safe jobs, even as nurses strike on both

coasts against intolerable conditions.

Students are acutely aware of the violence carried out in the name of “border security.” In nearby communities, ICE has seized people at schools and workplaces. Last year, nine-year-old Martir Garcia Lara was detained at Torrance Elementary School and deported alongside his 50-year-old grandfather. In Wilmington, Eloy Martin, a coffee maker, was held for a month in a detention center after ICE agents detained him while taking out the trash at work. These cases expose the lie that immigration enforcement targets “criminals.” Its real function is terrorizing the working class.

This repression is enforced amid a massive expansion of the immigration detention system. From early 2025 to November 2025, the number of ICE detention facilities increased by 91 percent, from 114 to 218. Under Trump, immigration judges have been directed to deny bond to thousands previously eligible, while ICE officers are barred from granting humanitarian release without high-level approval. The result is the mass incarceration of migrants, many of them asylum seekers, in for-profit detention centers riddled with disease, overcrowding and abuse.

Students directly addressed these realities during the protest. Edon, a Carson student, denounced the flagrant violations of constitutional rights: “They’re breaking into people’s homes and businesses, no warrants, breaking their Fourth Amendment. Absolutely not correct. Arresting them for [video] recording and [exercising] their First Amendment right. We don’t need ICE!”

This repression is lavishly funded. In July 2025, the US Senate passed legislation allocating nearly \$170 billion to border enforcement and immigration-related programs. These obscene sums stand in sharp contrast to the starvation budgets imposed on schools, the lack of basic sanitation supplies in classrooms and the mass layoffs and speedups imposed on workers.

At Friday’s protest, students marched along Main Street and Carson Street and carried handmade signs that read “No one is illegal on stolen land,” “The revolution is in the hands of the youth” and “It was never about criminals.” The demonstration proceeded from Carson High School to Carson City Hall, passing through busy intersections lined with shops and

apartment complexes.

Throughout the march, passing cars and delivery trucks honked in support, underscoring the deep sympathy among workers in the community. Students and adults distributed water and snacks to ensure no one went hungry or dehydrated. Contrary to reactionary stereotypes, students took responsibility for keeping the protest orderly and peaceful.

Sydney, a senior soccer player at Carson, emphasized the collective character of the action: “A walkout signifies that we are all stronger together. We need to use our voices to stand up for what’s right.” Another student echoed this sentiment, explaining, “For me as a young person, I know my voice is not heard, and for there to be so many people out makes me so happy. The more people there is, the more chance we have of being heard.”

Many participants stressed that the walkout gave voice to students whose families fear retaliation, deportation or job loss if they speak publicly. While only one parent was directly involved in providing security, the protest reflected a broader community impulse rooted in shared working-class conditions.

Jodesy, a member of the Carson marching band, spoke movingly about the dehumanization faced by working class youth: “We are people. We are peaceful. We stand up for what is right, and we want to know our friends and family are safe—that we can go grocery shopping without worrying about who’s gonna take us, who’s gonna get us, who’s gonna kill us.”

The anger driving the walkout has developed largely outside official institutions. Students reported that discussion of ICE and state repression is effectively taboo in classrooms. LAUSD policies prohibiting teachers from expressing political views, in practice, suppress discussion of democratic rights and state violence occurring in students’ own neighborhoods.

Madison, a student from Inglewood High who attended the protest said, “In Biology, I was talking about how I was excited to go to the protest, and my teacher said not to talk about it—that mentioning ICE in our school is not a good thing to do. That upset me because I want to talk about it and really want to know everything that’s going on in this world.”

The walkout itself was organized informally through social media, particularly Instagram. That no single organizer has been identified speaks to the organic character of the protest and the growing capacity of youth to organize independently of school administrations, political parties and union bureaucracies.

A junior at Carson linked the action to broader historical struggles: “People complain but don’t really do anything. When we do things like strikes, it shows our government that we’re here. Nepal tore down their entire government in two days. I know America is bigger and complicated, but I think change is possible.” Another student added, “This is just a trial. If we keep getting bigger and better, we can really make some noise.”

The Carson walkout is not an isolated event. Similar student protests have taken place across California and the country in response to ICE raids, police violence and attacks on immigrants. Internationally, youth are mobilizing against war, authoritarianism and austerity, reflecting a global crisis of capitalism.

These struggles are unfolding amid a broader offensive against democratic rights. Trump has announced plans to reclassify tens of thousands of federal workers as “at-will” employees, stripping them of job protections and due process. For today’s students (tomorrow’s workers) this represents a future of insecurity and repression.

The fight being waged by students is inseparable from the growing strike wave among workers. Nurses are on strike on both coasts. Teachers in Los Angeles and San Francisco have voted overwhelmingly for strike authorization. Yet the role of the union bureaucracy must be addressed. Organizations such as United Teachers Los Angeles posture as defenders of education while subordinating workers to the Democratic Party, which has overseen deportations, police violence and austerity for decades.

Students cannot place confidence in the union apparatus or any faction of the political establishment. Only independent, democratically controlled rank-and-file committees can unite workers across industries and mobilize their collective power. The same lesson applies in schools.

As Jasmine, drum major of the Carson marching band and president of the Latin America Club, stated, “Immigrants are giving America life and funding it. If every immigrant stopped what they were doing, the country would go to sh-t. If you’re not Indigenous, you are an immigrant.”

The high school walkouts mark an important step forward. They demonstrate that youth are drawing far-reaching conclusions from their experiences. The critical task now is to give this movement political clarity, organizational form and a conscious orientation to the working class, the only social force capable of stopping dictatorship, war and the deepening catastrophe of capitalism.



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