

Sparsely attended “No Kings” rallies promote Democratic Party amid Trump’s drive toward dictatorship

Our reporters, Jacob Crosse
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Saturday’s “No Kings: Vote Early” events, held at more than 2,500 sites across the United States, according to organizers, drew a fraction of the millions who joined the earlier No Kings protests. The coalition behind them, led by Indivisible, MoveOn and other groups aligned with the Democratic Party, along with the American Federation of Teachers, has turned the movement into a get-out-the-vote drive for the November midterm elections.

The day expressed the widening gulf between mass opposition to Trump’s drive toward dictatorship and the efforts of the Democratic Party and its political auxiliaries to contain that opposition within an election campaign.

The contrast with the previous mobilizations was stark. Organizers claimed more than 5 million participants in the first No Kings protests on June 14, 2025, more than 7 million on October 18, 2025, and approximately 8 million on March 28 of this year. No comparable national figure has emerged for Saturday’s events.

Local reports and observations by *World Socialist Web Site* correspondents confirmed substantially reduced crowds. Hundreds attended the downtown Los Angeles event. In Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the *South Dakota Searchlight* reported that “hundreds showed up.” WSWS reporters estimated at most 500 participants in Washington D.C., where the Associated Press described “a few hundred people” at the Lincoln Memorial and fewer than 1,000 in San Diego.

The reduced turnout was what the Democratic Party and its affiliates wanted. Most of the events were organized as local get-out-the vote campaigns. “Unlike previous No Kings actions, No Kings: Vote Early, is not purely a protest,” Indivisible announced. “Now, we are taking the next step, turning people power into voter power.” One local event page instructed, “Please have your signs

geared toward voting early.” The organizers made this appeal, as the Trump administration is deploying federal agents to polling sites and trying to purge voter rolls of supposed noncitizens.

In line with the “no politics” call advanced by Indivisible before the event, Democratic Party-approved speakers said nothing about the illegal war against Iran or the ongoing genocide in Gaza, as well as the witch-hunt against Minnesota Representative Ilhan Omar, who has been targeted by the Trump administration for deportation.

In Washington, Indivisible promoted what it called a “MASSIVE” march on social media. WSWS reporters encountered a small crowd composed largely of people over 50. Speakers included former CNN anchor and White House correspondent Jim Acosta, who devoted the opening minutes of his speech to personal jabs at Trump. He then turned to promoting the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, denouncing Trump and Elon Musk over the restrictions on Ukraine’s access to Musk’s Starlink satellite network.

“The Ukrainians have been fighting bravely on the front lines for democracy in Europe,” Acosta declared, before proclaiming Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky a “hero.”

In reality, the Zelensky government, infested with neo-Nazis and fascists, has suspended elections, outlawed opposition parties and imprisoned socialists. Bogdan Syrotiuk, a Ukrainian socialist who fought for the unity of Ukrainian and Russian workers against the war, was sentenced on August 10 to 15 years in prison for “high treason.” His appeal is now before the Mykolaiv Court of Appeal.

In New York, Reverend Al Sharpton advanced his own version of “vote blue no matter who.” “We can argue

about who's progressive or not," he said. "In two weeks we are going to vote about it."

Neither Sharpton nor Acosta addressed the October 12 raid by Homeland Security Investigations on Representative Ilhan Omar's Washington home or the administration's campaign to strip her of citizenship and deport her.

The silence of the Democrats on the attacks on Omar underscore that this party is incapable of defending democratic rights, whether its workers and their families being separated, assaulted and killed by the immigration Gestapo or the ongoing assault on constitutional rights.

Despite the Democratic Party politics that pervaded the events, reporters found little enthusiasm for the party. Participants in Washington carried homemade signs opposing war and calling for the abolition of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Many eagerly accepted socialist literature, including after seeing signs calling for a break with both capitalist parties.

Reporters for the WSWS had a similar experience in Lansing, Michigan. Approved speakers discussed election rules and voting rights without naming Trump, the Republican Party or the Democratic Party. Aside from a reference to "this administration," the presentations avoided the political crisis: war, deteriorating living conditions and the threat of dictatorship.

Musical performances and sing-alongs were a dominant feature at the events. After brief speeches in Lansing, a parade proceeded with chants of "the people united will never be defeated" and "one vote, my vote." The audience included retirees, older workers and a contingent of young people. Several young attendees interested in socialism were participating in their first major political rally. Their search for a political way forward found no answer in the proceedings from the platform.

In San Diego, reporters likewise encountered interest in an international socialist perspective. A former Navy sailor, who said he had been deployed during the 2025 strikes on Iran, was interested in the internationalist and anti-war perspective advanced by Socialist Equality Party members. Several attendees expressed agreement with breaking with the two-party system.

At every turn the perspective advanced by the Democrats and their adjuncts is that in order to defeat fascism one must vote for the same Democrats that refused to hold Trump and his cabal of insurrectionists responsible for the failed coup, ensuring his return to power five years later.

The smaller gatherings do not mean that popular anger

has subsided. On the contrary, they show the limited response to this particular electoral appeal, and even among those who came, the organizers' perspective met with doubts and opposition.

The Democrats work to smother a hatred of Trump that is broad and growing. Trump's approval has fallen to 36 percent, his lowest ever. But the Democrats are hostile to a mass movement against Trump from below. They agree with the main elements of Trump's agenda. Their central difference is over the war against Russia, which will be the main policy of a Democratic Congress if they win in the midterms.

In his report to the Socialist Equality Party's Ninth Congress in August, David North placed the earlier No Kings protests, "the largest single-day demonstrations in American history," within a global upsurge of the working class. But, he warned, "The mass movements remain politically captive. The No Kings protests have been channeled back into the Democratic Party, the party of war." Saturday's events put that process on open display.

WSWS reporters distributed the SEP's statement calling for an independent movement of the working class against dictatorship and war. The anger expressed in homemade signs, the interest in socialism and the willingness to break with the two-party system must be developed into conscious political opposition. This requires building independent organizations of struggle in workplaces, schools and neighborhoods, linking workers internationally and preparing a general strike against the Trump administration.



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