Thousands of Los Angeles-area students walk out to protest immigration Gestapo

Kimie Saito, Elizabeth Cabrera, Jacob Crosse
17 November 2026

Thousands of students across the greater Los Angeles area walked out of class Monday morning to protest ongoing kidnapping operations by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). More than 7,000 students participated in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) alone, according to an anonymous school police source cited by the *Los Angeles Times*.

Students from dozens of schools participated in the walkouts. Hundreds rallied at Los Angeles City Hall, while approximately 200 gathered at Long Beach City Hall, according to WSWS reporters at the scene. Many carried signs denouncing the immigration police and waved the flags of Mexico and Palestine. Students also rallied outside Thomas Jefferson Senior High School in South Los Angeles and Huntington Park City Hall.

Monday's walkouts continued a movement that began within weeks of Trump's return to office last year and the launch of his mass deportation campaign. In February 2025, nearly 1,000 high school students marched through downtown Los Angeles, followed by further walkouts in which thousands of Southern California students have since participated in. On February 6, 2026, nearly 12,500 LAUSD students from more than 85 schools participated, including students at Carson High School and across the San Fernando Valley.

Students have continued these protests despite suspensions, arrests and police violence, while teachers have faced reprisals for supporting them. In February, Los Angeles history teacher Ricardo Lopez was fired after opening a locked gate to prevent students from injuring themselves climbing a fence to join a walkout. Monday's students demonstrated considerable courage in continuing to oppose the immigration Gestapo in the face of ongoing repression.

The walkouts come as DHS boasts of record immigration arrests and deportations, while the death toll from the administration's fascist terror campaign continues to rise. At least 62 people have died in ICE custody since Trump returned to office, according to a November 6 investigation by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The Trace has documented 32 incidents in which immigration agents fired at people since the deportation campaign began. Those murdered include US citizens Renée Good, Alex Pretti and Ruben Ray Martinez. None of the agents responsible for these three killings have been criminally charged.

Esther, a student at Ben Franklin Classical Middle School, told the WSWS she came to the protest to oppose ICE and "fight for our rights." She said that last month one of her friends was "walking on the sidewalk" near Signal Hill when he was "tackled by ICE for no reason."

Denise, from Millikan High School, explained why she came to the protest: "I want to support our rights for our immigrants, because I feel like what we're doing right now is just socially unacceptable and it's very inhumane and I think that these people should deserve to be treated like humans."

She said immigrants need "due process" that the government should "stop stripping people away from their families and their streets."

She added, "I don't think that [ICE] should be covering their faces. I don't think that they should be just stripping people without questioning them on their citizenship or having any proof, any warrants.

"I definitely think that we shouldn't be dragging people out of their cars, pointing guns, running them over."

Denise said she supported workers going on strike. "Strikes, they're very effective. They show how much people truly care. And it's definitely not something easy, but I think when you commit to it, the outcome is beautiful."

Autumn, a full-time student at Long Beach City College, attended with her three young children. Questioned by WSWS reporter Kimie Saito if she saw a connection between the protests against ICE and demonstrations in Europe against attacks on housing and education, she

© World Socialist Web Site

replied:

"Oh absolutely, I think the younger generation is waking up. They want change." She added, "I think the younger students want socialism. We want what is best for the community and not just what's the best for the pockets of our politicians."

Autumn said her children attended Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School, "which has directly been impacted by ICE.

"There are a lot of students in that area who are afraid to attend school. Attendance rates have been really low. Just in the neighborhood surrounding the school, there are students that have been picked up walking to school by ICE, disappeared.

"There was a man in Long Beach just a few weeks ago who was a US citizen who was attacked and hit by an ICE vehicle."

Ricardo Gonzalez, a longtime resident of Long Beach and US citizen, was brutally assaulted by ICE thugs on October 17. In a GoFundMe, Leslie, Gonzalez's daughter, said her father was struck by an "unmarked vehicle of federal agents" while he was riding his e-bike. After the vehicular assault, she wrote that ICE agents proceeded to tase him twice. Video circulating online shows agents pinning Gonzalez to the ground as he screams for help. The Long Beach Police Department released a statement confirming that they took Gonzalez to the local fire department, who removed his handcuffs and then transported him to the hospital.

Autumn added that she was "scared for my children, their peers, everybody's future, and that's why we're out here today." She said she was glad students were protesting and pointed to Long Beach City Hall behind her, "It's because of the people behind us in these offices that we have ICE in our cities." She noted that while it was "illegal" for police to cooperate with immigration operations, "and yet we see Long Beach Police officers assisting in these arrests every day."

Autumn clarified the role of Long Beach's Democratic mayor, Rex Richardson, in silencing protesting police and immigration Gestapo operations. "No one is allowed to speak" at the city hall meetings, she said.

"In fact, there was a lady who was clapping at one of the meetings, and she got thrown out by a police officer. They are silencing our voices, and the people of this city want answers. We want ICE out of our city. We want our children to be able to go to school and not have to worry about their friends not coming."

On the question of a general strike, Autumn said she would "absolutely" support it. "I know we live in a capitalist country, so I think it's hard for people to kind of visualize how that would look. … True change will come when their pockets are hurt and affected by this."

The walkouts came less than two weeks after the midterm elections, in which millions of people voted for Democrats to express their mass anger with the Trump administration's ongoing attacks on immigrants, living standards and unending wars. Students who spoke to the WSWS expressed skepticism that Democratic Party victories would bring about any positive change.

A student who spoke to the WSWS off-camera said ICE has been operating in Long Beach and that a "lot of the arrests" and "detainees taken by ICE" were "just everyday citizens, not the criminals that the government says they are getting rid of."

The student said they did not identify as a Democrat or a Republican and that in their mind the midterm elections "will not make a change that's beneficial for everyone."

"The Democrats have a history of wanting to cooperate with conservatives. There are certain issues where it is not a matter of 'negotiation,' it's a matter of human rights."

Joshua, a senior at Palisades Charter High School, spelled out his reasons for coming to the protest: "I have a lot of friends and family that could be at risk to ICE and I just think that it's something that everyone should care about, regardless of whether or not you're personally impacted because the fact is that they are taking real people and killing real people and doing horrible things to real people."

Like other students, Joshua has little faith that Democratic Party control in Congress will lead to meaningful change. "I don't think that it's going to actually solve anything. I mean, Democrats are backed by billionaires too. They've shown in the past that they're willing to bend to Republican policy. I think that the solution to the problem doesn't lie in our two-party system."

On the question of imperialist war, Joshua said, "I think that we really don't need to be sending more people overseas to die in wars that none of us have even really heard about, that much less care about it all," noting that both parties "make money off war."



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site