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Thousands march in Chicago to demand end to US immigrant detention camps, raids and deportations

Thousands gathered in Chicago on Saturday morning to protest the planned raids of immigrant neighborhoods and the detention and deportation policies of the Trump administration. One day earlier, two hundred protested at Federal Plaza, part of nationwide protests throughout the US.

The Saturday protest was sponsored by the Democratic Party's "Indivisible" organization and the American Civil Liberties Union, with the support of a collection of Democratic-aligned nonprofits, unions and officials.

The event was aimed at containing the enormous social opposition to the extreme-right policies of the Trump administration and the Republicans within the confines of the Democratic Party, which has facilitated these policies at every point.



Only a small number of Democratic Party representatives participated. Neither Illinois Governor JB Pritzker, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, Cook County Democratic Party Chair Toni Preckwinkle, or Illinois Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin endorsed the event.

From the stage on Saturday, Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton spoke of her office's efforts to move legislation to improve the conditions of immigrant families under the Trump administration. A bill signed into law by Pritzker at the end of June made Illinois the first state in the country to ban private civil detention centers.

Recently elected Democratic Mayor Lori Lightfoot, a former federal prosecutor and corporate attorney, issued a press release calling on the Chicago Police department not to cooperate with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids. Despite calls from many immigrant rights groups to issue an executive order to that effect, she refused, and instead offered extended support services like legal advice.

DSA-affiliated alderman Carlos Ramirez Rosa was on the stage during the proceedings, and DSA-backed Rossana Rodriguez endorsed the event, but the other four DSA-affiliated alderman, all recently elected this spring, were not among the sponsors.



US Representative Jesus “Chuy” Garcia attempted to posture as an opponent of anti-immigrant policies, declaring, “If they come on our turf, Chicagoland and Illinois, let's defend and protect all of our people.”

Not a single one of these figures is working to shut the concentration camps and end the attacks on immigrant families. Instead, the Democrats are working with the Trump administration’s Jared Kushner and Republican leader Lindsey Graham to implement a new asylum law that will place immense burdens before immigrants seeking entry into the US.

Durbin and Graham, who have long worked together on immigration legislation, have been collaborating on a bill that aims to transform



asylum law, each bringing legislation to their own parties. The bill would force those emigrating to make asylum claims in their home countries first, before arriving at the US border. It could also extend the time minors can legally be detained with their families to 100 days, up from the current maximum of 20 days.

Durbin has been reported to be carrying around a sheet of yellow legal pad with “potential areas of consensus.”

“I’ve identified to [Graham] five or six things that I believe Democrats in the Senate and the House will support. And I’ve begged him: Take it,” Durbin said of the discussions, according to *Politico*. Durbin said that Democrats had dropped the effort to block Trump’s cuts to aid for Central American countries, indicating they would return to that at a “second level” of negotiations.

Durbin, the second-highest-ranking Democrat in the US Senate, takes no responsibility for the horrific conditions created by US intervention in Latin America. He recently “supported” and “applauded” the Trump administration for its aggressive regime change policy in Venezuela.

Such hypocrisy is fueling the social anger against the Democrats for their collaboration with Trump and support for the wars that create refugees the world over.



Jennifer Gallardo

Jennifer Gallardo, from Michigan, spoke with the WSWS: “I’m an immigration attorney, and I’m here to say this is not okay. I think that migration is a human right, and borders are a man-made illusion. It can’t be that on one side [of a border] you have certain rights but on the other side you don’t. It’s not natural. It’s a man-made phenomenon.”

Sophia, a service worker, said: “I am tired of seeing my friends and family being treated like animals. I don’t agree with the Democrats giving Trump billions of dollars. He’s not putting that money where it should be going. It could be going to housing, education, actually taking care of immigrants that are being detained for just trying to live their lives. Until we build a democratic society, this is how it’s going to be.”

On the building of a working class party fighting for socialism, she said, “The way we’ve been going about trying to change this hasn’t been doing anything. I would absolutely be in favor of that. History just keeps repeating itself and repeating itself, and we’ve never really tried this. So it’s worth a shot.”



Jackson

Jackson, an art student at Senn High School on the far north side, brought part of an art project to the demonstration. A stuffed child’s toy wearing a reflective emergency blanket was at the center of it. He explained, “I couldn’t bring the dog cage, but it’s supposed to be in a cage.”

He continued: “Seeing reports of the detention of children really hurt me. This could have been me. I had to do something.” Jackson’s parents, also attending the demonstration, explained he was adopted. He arrived in the US speaking no English and, were it to happen today, his life would be in danger.”

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