

Many U.S. businesses close in protest against Trump's immigration policies: A Day Without Immigrants

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Chicago, February 4 (RHC)-- A number of businesses from nurseries to grocery stores and salons closed on Monday for a day across the United States in a day of protest against President Donald Trump's immigration policies.

People gathered in Los Angeles for a second consecutive day on Monday. Waving Mexican and El Salvadoran flags, they carried banners that said "Immigration Built This Nation", "No I.C.E.", "Abolish I.C.E." and "I did not serve this country for you to belittle my people".

From his first day in office on January 20, Trump signed executive orders aimed at expelling large numbers of immigrants, including measures to end birthright citizenship. In the weeks that followed, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) intensified its daily raids.

But participation in the “day without immigrants” faced headwinds from employees and business owners who said they needed the income – especially as rumours of widespread raids, often false, are leaving many migrant communities afraid to venture outside, affecting even some schools.

Monday’s event also came on the heels of street protests on Sunday in California and elsewhere. Noel Xavier, organising director for the North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters, said that while it’s important to remind the country of the value migrant workers bring to the communities they toil in, many workers couldn’t afford to take a day off.

“If I don’t go to work today, that’s one day less that I have, you know, to be able to pay for my next rent,” Xavier said of the prevailing sentiment among the workers he organises. “I didn’t see this big rallying around being able to do that, or having the luxury to be able to do that.”

Andrea Toro decided to close her hair salon in Chicago’s Pilsen neighbourhood. She added that many of her clients are teachers and have seen children missing school since Trump took office last month because they fear it may not be safe to go.

“If we don’t have immigrants, we don’t have any work around here,” said Toro, who is from Puerto Rico. “If we’re mute, we’re in silence, then they’re going to do whatever they want.”

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