

Voces de la Frontera: 30K+ march in Milwaukee to resist Trump and Sheriff Clarke

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MILWAUKEE, WI – On Monday, over 30,000 Wisconsinites went on strike, closed their businesses, and withdrew their children from school in solidarity with the nationwide May 1st Day without Immigrants to resist Trump's attacks on immigrant communities, Black communities, Muslims, LGBTQ people, women, and working class people. Community members demanded Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker remove Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke, block anti-sanctuary city legislation and support the return of driver's licenses to immigrants. Protesters oppose Clarke because of his efforts to deputize his sheriffs to act as Immigration agents through the federal 287g program, and for deaths at the county jail and abuse of power.

The day's events, known as a "Day Without Latinxs, Immigrants, and Refugees," culminated in a massive march of over 30,000 people (using estimates from the [crowdsize.com](#) app) from Voces de la Frontera's offices to the Milwaukee County Courthouse. Throughout Wisconsin over 140 businesses closed out of solidarity or due to worker absence, including over 100 in Milwaukee ([partial list here](#)). Many more businesses experienced decreased production due to work stoppages. Following the march, the massive crowd rallied on the steps of the courthouse, listening to music and speeches from community members opposed to the Sheriff and elected officials.

“Wisconsin is seeing an example of bold resistance to Trump for the country and the world,” said **Christine Neumann-Ortiz, Executive Director of Voces de la Frontera**. “Just a month ago our strike inspired others nationally and May 1st represents an escalation. There are actions in over 100 cities today embracing the general strike and boycott as a national strategy. The fight against Sheriff Clarke and 287g is of national importance. Clarke is being considered for a national post in DHS to be a liaison to all law enforcement in the US. He is trying to legitimize 287g and encourage law enforcement to profile and carry out raids that break up families and undermine community safety. We are here today to send a message to Sheriff Clarke. We will not stop till you are removed from office and face criminal charges for your human rights abuses. We will not stop till 287g is shut down.

State Representative David Crowley of Milwaukee spoke next. “Our so-called Sheriff was not elected to be the puppet of Trump, he was not elected to be an ICE agent, and he was not elected to use his office to advance a political agenda through fear and intimidation,” said Rep. Crowley. “Four people have died under Clarke’s supervision at the Milwaukee County Jail. For his outrageous neglect of duties, his use of his office to intimidate and threaten Milwaukee residents, and his promotion of violence and hatred, David Clarke deserves his own cell in the County Jail.”

Melissa Hall of Milwaukee addressed the crowd. She is the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit against Sheriff Clarke for shackling women during pregnancy and even birth. “I’m the main plaintiff in the lawsuit against Sheriff Clarke for shackling and chaining me while I had my child,” said Hall. “We are challenging Clarke’s policy of handcuffing pregnant women. It’s a violation of our human rights. No mother or child should have to suffer this. A woman giving birth and her child are innocent.”

Walter Stern spoke also. He is an attorney representing the family of Terrill Thomas, who died of dehydration after Clarke’s deputies turned off his water for 7 days. “As the lawyer for three of Terrill Thomas’ children, the most important right is the constitutional right to life,” said Stern. “That means the county jail and Sheriff Clarke cannot torture a person in their custody. You do not torture, and I hope that this family can see justice.”

Dan Black of Milwaukee, who is also suing Sheriff Clarke, shared his story with marchers. “A few months ago I saw Sheriff Clarke on an airplane, I shook my head at him,” said Black. “He was wearing Dallas Cowboys gear on the day they

were playing the Packers, and I was surprised Milwaukee's Sheriff would be supporting the Cowboys. Two hours later when we landed in Milwaukee I was met with six sheriff's deputies. I was arrested and interrogated. I was scared. I filed a complaint with the county. How did Sheriff Clarke respond? He posted a death threat on Facebook for me. If this is how he acts for this, how are we supposed to trust him with 287g? We can't. There can't be 287g. Sanctuaries cities now."