

Voces de la Frontera: Immigrant essential workers, Latinxs & allies expand to a two-day general strike, “Days Without Latinxs and Immigrants”

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Striking workers demand Biden use his executive powers to protect all immigrants, call on Sen. Ron Johnson to stop blocking immigration reform, & Wisconsin Republicans to stop blocking driver licenses & in-state tuition for immigrants

(WISCONSIN) - Sunday, May 1st, is a national day of action for the immigrant rights movement, with actions taking place in 39 cities in 17 states as part of the Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM) and We Are Home. Nationally, immigrant rights groups are escalating pressure on the Biden administration to deliver on promises to roll back anti-immigrant policies from past administrations and pass long-overdue protections for immigrants through executive action.

In Wisconsin, Voces de la Frontera (VDLF) statewide members and allies are gearing up for a two-day "Days Without Latinxs and Immigrants" general strike on May 1 and May 2 demanding that Biden fulfill his campaign promise to abolish the discriminatory 287g program, shut down for-profit detention centers, and expand Temporary Protected Status and other protections for immigrants already living in this country. They are also condemning Republican obstructionism to immigration reform, state driver licenses and in-state tuition equity, and standing in solidarity with Ukrainian refugees and all people seeking asylum by calling on the repeal of Donald Trump's racist Title 42 anti-refugee program.

On Sunday, May 1, immigrant essential workers and families will gather at VDLF's new office on Milwaukee's predominantly Latinx southside in the late morning for live music and a rally with allies in the faith, labor, LGBTQ, reproductive justice, and social justice communities. They will then march to U.S. Senator Ron Johnson's downtown office to condemn his failure to support immigration reform in the U.S. Senate last year. Once they arrive, they will be greeted by a mariachi band and a rally that includes newly elected **Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson**, a **Ukrainian immigrant** whose family has relocated to Wisconsin, and a **Latinx immigrant essential worker**.

Over 125 predominantly immigrant and Latinx-owned small businesses across Wisconsin are closing in solidarity. To date, 35 unions, faith, LGBTQ, women's rights, and other social justice organizations have signed on in solidarity.

On Monday, May 2nd, Voces de la Frontera Action (VDLFA) will hold a lobby day and press conference at the State Capitol in Madison to advocate specifically for the restoration of driver licenses and in-state tuition equity for immigrants in Wisconsin.

A summary of events over the next two days are outlined below. Members of the press are welcome to attend any of these events, but our main programs will be on Sunday May 1 around 1:00pm at the federal courthouse in Milwaukee and on Monday May 2nd at noon at the rotunda of the State Capitol.

A media toolkit with footage from past May Day events is available here. VDLF/VDLFA staff will add footage from the actions on May 1 and May 2 to this folder throughout the two days.

Sunday, May 1st: Mass March to Senator Ron Johnson's Office in Milwaukee

Schedule of events:

10:00 a.m. CT at new VDLF office, [737 W. Historic Mitchell St. Milwaukee](#):
Live music from Cache MKE, African drumming and Azteca dancers, free COVID-19 vaccine clinic

11:30 a.m. CT at new VDLF office

- Rally with allies from the faith, labor, LGBTQ and reproductive justice communities
- Opening Prayer from **Rev. Greg Louis**, Souls to the Polls
- Labor union solidarity message from **Rosalind Medrano**, Latina essential worker in the cleaning industry and member of SEIU Local 1
- **Student speakers from Youth Empowered in the Struggle**

12:00 p.m. CT: March from new VDLF office to U.S. Senator Ron Johnson's Office/Federal Courthouse, [517 East Wisconsin Avenue](#).

[March route available here.](#)

1:00 p.m. CT: Press conference outside U.S. Senator Ron Johnson's Office, 517 East Wisconsin Avenue

Speakers will include:

- **Christine Neumann-Ortiz**, Executive Director of Voces de la Frontera
- **Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson**
- **Karina Tweedell**, Ukrainian immigrant whose family had to relocate to Milwaukee after the war in 2014
- **Israel Peña**, immigrant essential worker from Green Bay, WI
- **Musicians Jeannie Rivers singing "We Shall Overcome" and mariachi band Alas de las Americas**

Monday, May 2nd: Lobby Day & Press Conference at the Wisconsin Capitol in Madison

Advocating specifically for the restoration of driver licenses and in-state tuition equity for immigrants at the state level.

Noon CT: Press conference in the rotunda of the Wisconsin Capitol

Speakers will include:

- **Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes** speaking about his longtime support for driver licenses and in-state tuition equity for immigrants
- **Christine Neumann-Ortiz**, Executive Director of Voces de la Frontera Action
- **Cristhabel Martinez**, Executive Director of Dreamers of Wisconsin
- **Brayan Carreras Garcia**, Senior at Madison East High School organizing student walk-out to participate in the lobby day
- **Immigrant essential worker from northeast Wisconsin**

Background & Context

This two-day strike comes before the hotly contested midterm elections, when Biden's [approval rating](#) among Latinxs is at an all-time low. Since his inauguration in 2021, immigrant and Latinx essential workers in Wisconsin and across the country have been organizing relentlessly to hold Biden accountable for his campaign promises to deliver humane immigration reform, welcome people seeking asylum, and end cruel, anti-immigrant policies from past administrations. In Wisconsin, in 2021 VDLF members organized countless rallies, marches, days of action, and lobbying efforts to push Biden and Democrats in Congress to deliver a pathway to citizenship in their Build Back Better reconciliation bill. In Wisconsin, the height of the escalation occurred in October 2021 when VDLF members voted to organize a [one-day "Day Without Latinxs and Immigrants"](#) general strike in October. With the Build Back Better bill rejected by a single vote in the Senate, immigrants are now calling on Biden to do what he can with his executive authority, and continue to urge him to find a viable pathway to pass permanent protections for immigrants through Congress. They are also pushing back against Republican tactics to scapegoat asylum seekers by blocking the repeal of the discriminatory Title 42.

VDLFA members have been advocating to restore access to driver licenses for immigrants since they were taken away in 2007, and in-state tuition equity for immigrants since it was repealed during Act 10 in 2011. Throughout their first term in office, Governor Tony Evers and Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes have championed the restoration of driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants. In response to the community, Governor Evers and Lt. Gov. Barnes included restoring state driver licenses and IDs, and in-state tuition equity to immigrants twice in his two-year state budget proposals. Unfortunately, the gerrymandered, Republican-led State Legislature has blocked Evers's efforts to restore driver licenses for immigrants by voting it out of the state budget or opposing standalone legislation.