

www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-chicago-immigration-march-web-may02,0,2051541.story

chicagotribune.com

Immigrant march: 'Si se puede'

Tribune reporters provide periodic updates from the march

Tribune report

4:23 PM CDT, May 1, 2008

4 p.m. The rally ended peacefully.

"Give us an opportunity"

3:30 p.m. Marcher Guadalupe Carrero, 31, who lives in Berwyn and works as a housecleaner, said she has four kids that were born in the U.S. She said she crossed into the U.S. when she was 15 in the hopes of sending money home to her parents in Mexico.

"We are all the same, looking for hope that some day the senators or president will make immigration reform. . . . They should give us an opportunity. We all want hope to work," Carrero said.

Craig Lanigan, 39, a construction equipment salesman from Oak Lawn, was one of the onlookers watching the march pass.

"I'm conservative. I think America welcomes immigrants. You just have to do it the right way," he said. Lanigan, who's against a blanket amnesty for undocumented immigrants, was looking at the signs when he said: "I don't understand signs that say, 'amnesty for everyone.' What's the sense in having laws?" Lanigan said his grandparents came to America from Ireland, but they came legally.

Vanessa Bauza

"You are part of America's landscape"

3:15 p.m. The crowd is thinning out at Federal Plaza, although there are speakers from community organizations that remain on the stage. Chicago Mayor Richard Daley spoke around 2:45 p.m., coming up on the stage after a rendition of "This Land is Your Land" by musician Tom Morello, best known for his work with the bands Rage Against the Machine and Audioslave.

cheapOair.com
the only way to go !!



"The city of Chicago was founded by immigrants, in the past, in the present, in the future," the mayor said. He then motioned up to the buildings around the plaza. "Look at all the high-rises, see the people up there. . . . They are immigrants, they are no different from you."

"You are part of America's landscape, you are part of our culture, our history, our great tradition," Daley said "And in Chicago we say immigrants are invited here."

Vanessa Bauza

"Yes, you can"

1:15 p.m.

After about 25 minutes, the first marchers have reached Federal Plaza. Behind the lead contingent are demonstrators stretched out more than five blocks.

As they marched through the heart of the financial district, marchers chanted, "Si se puede" ("Yes, you can") and called out for people on the sidewalks to join them.

David Laurino, 59, who identified himself as a businessman from the North Side, chanted: "U.S.A., U.S.A., no illegals, U.S.A."

"I'm a U.S. citizen," he explained. "I think everyone should be a U.S. citizen. People went through Ellis Island in the past. If they want to become legal, great. If they can't, they should go back to their country."

Speeches are expected to begin shortly. Mayor Daley is scheduled to speak, as is Jesse Jackson.

Antonio Olivo

And they're off

11:50 a.m.

The march is under way with about 2,000 participants.

Antonio Olivo

'It's not just the grown-ups'

11:20 a.m.

Carlos Hernandez, 18, a Farragut High School freshman, said he and about 20 classmates were

willing to risk an unexcused absence from school to attend the march. His contingent held Mexican flags and a sign that read "Legalization for All" in both English and Spanish.

About half of his school's student body is Latino, he said, and, as he is, him are relatively new arrivals to the U.S.

"We want our families to have papers so they are not always worried about being deported when they go to work," he said.

"We want to change the immigration laws. We have to support our parents," he added. Marlene Rivera, 15, a Kelly High School freshman, boarded buses along with about 200 other students at the school.

She and others from a school club called Latinos United spent the last month preparing for the march. Standing with three friends who held Mexican flags, she said they wanted elected officials as well as the presidential candidates to know that youth supports changing immigration law.

"We want to help out and let them know that it's just not the grown-ups, but young people too," she said.

Elizabeth Quiroz, 14, another Kelly freshman, said many of her classmates have been born in the U.S. to undocumented parents and live with the fear their parents may be deported at any time.

"If parents get sent back to Mexico, then the kids are going to be on their own," she said.
Carlos Sadovi

A citizen marches

11:15 a.m.

Flag vendor Aida Quizhpe, 57, came to the U.S. from Mexico 30 years ago and said she identifies with undocumented workers because she used to be one herself.

She became a U.S. citizen in January because she wanted to vote. She cast her first ballot in this year's primary election.

"Seeing so much discrimination, I decided to become a citizen to add one more voice," she said.

Quizhpe was selling small U.S. flags from a cart for \$2 each. In years past, vendors were criticized for selling flags from countries other than the U.S., and she took that to heart, she said.

Jerry Clarito, 57, of Skokie, originally from the Philippines, is another march veteran who said this year's version looked smaller to him but that he wasn't discouraged.

"If you look at the struggle of the working people, it doesn't take one year or two years--it's continuing," he said. "Small ripples will actually create waves of change."

Vanessa Bauza

'We have to speak out'

11 a.m.

The crowd is now well past 1,000, and the park definitely is beginning to fill up.

A number of high school and college students have arrived. Some may be attracted by the music that will be featured at the rally later this afternoon, but there are also people like Diana Hernandez, 15, who came with a group of six friends from Lake View High School.

"They work for us," she said of her parents. "So we have to speak out for them."

Her friend Bernice Rosario, also 15, said: "Our vote is tomorrow's vote. If we don't make ourselves heard, who is going to listen?"

Antonio Olivo

Sounds of the march

10:30 a.m.

As people continue arriving at Union Park, many people are circling around the park's basketball court, where they are praying and singing gospel hymns. The park also is filled with the sounds of a group of Korean drummers who plan to lead the march. The percussion instruments, Poongmul drums, are of special significance to the labor movement in South Korea.

The sound of the drumming is mixing with the ringing of bells from ice-cream cart vendors making their way around the park.

Additional marchers are expected to gather at Haymarket Square this morning, before walking over to Union Park where the main march will begin.

Antonio Olivo

'Everyone should be let in'

10 a.m.

The crowd in Union Park has grown to a few hundred people and some are wearing T-shirts showing their allegiance to different union and activist groups. Some are sporting lime-green shirts with "Legalization for All" written on the front. Others were wearing shirts with the SEIU logo for the Service Employees International Union.

Also present is a group of communist activists wearing black T-shirts and attempting to sell pamphlets to passersby.

University of Illinois at Chicago students Tad Maguire and Tanya Bhattacharya, both 19, said they were urged to turn out for the march by one of their professors.

After listening to the activists, Maguire, a first-time marcher, said he was starting to see their arguments about immigration.

"I think everyone should be let in," he said.

Antonio Olivo

Students march for parents

9:50 a.m.

A group of about 20 students from West Aurora High School arrived at Union Station to participate in the march. Wearing white T-shirts, many said they had joined the demonstration in previous years.

Although Stefano Arrieta, 16, a junior, was born in the United States, he said he could relate to the issues central to the march because his grandparents emigrated from Durango, Mexico. He, like many of the students, said he came to represent his parents and others who could not participate because they had to work.

"A lot of people we know come to this country for a better life, a lot of my friends. I came to support them," Arrieta said.

Others said they refused to be disheartened by the lack of immigration reform in the past few years.

"We're not going to give up that easily. We're going to keep fighting because a lot of people need us," said Carolina Ballines, 15, a freshman. "We've seen people suffering, trying to work, trying to make money, trying to have a better life."

Jose Padilla, 17, said he felt compelled to participate, even if it doesn't spur immediate change.

"It's necessary we come back to see if we can get something accomplished for our families," the junior said.

The students were accompanied by Bences Maravilla, 55, a soccer coach and youth worker at the Aurora Township Youth Center. He held a statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe in one hand and a wooden walking stick in the other.

He said the march provided an important lesson for the children and was not a time for them

to goof off.

"They are 16, but in two years they will be able to vote, to elect those who will support us," he said. "They are the voice of different people who are not able to attend because of their economic situation."

Vanessa Bauza

Early turnout is sparse

9:35 a.m.

Not more than 100 people are present in Union Park so far.

Demonstrators are setting up their banners. One reads, "Anti-immigrant is anti-American." Another says, "Keep families united."

Vendors are unloading U.S. and Mexican flags to sell.

Sylvia Avila, who lives on Chicago's Northwest Side, said she marched last year and this year is selling flags for \$3 to \$10 apiece. She said her family has been hit hard by the economy and she felt compelled to earn extra money by selling flags.

But, surveying the small crowd, she said her chances to make a huge profit are dim. "It's not going to be the same as last year, because we've had three marches already," she said. "But those who come are going to help."

Beatriz Ramirez also attended last year's march and said she came this year to give voice to the children of undocumented immigrants "who did not decide to come here. What is their future? We have to fight for them."

Iris Burgos surveyed the crowd and was struck by their small number. "I hope more people come later. But these people are Hispanics and we show up late all the time," she joked.

Scheduled to speak at the park this morning are Mayor Richard Daley, Jesse Jackson and a number of immigrant activists and labor leaders.

From Antonio Olivo

The march for immigrant rights scheduled to wend through Chicago on Thursday is now an annual rite of political passion for some and traffic frustration for others.

Organizers predict Thursday's event will be much smaller than the 2006 and 2007 marches that attracted hundreds of thousands of demonstrators and galvanized a movement.

Chicago police, who are predicting a peaceful event, decided to allow Thursday's march to culminate in a rally at Federal Plaza, betting they would not need sprawling Grant Park to hold the marchers.

Should the turnout exceed the few thousand demonstrators expected, the march's endpoint could be switched to Grant Park, where the massive rallies of recent years finished, police said.

The marchers are scheduled to begin gathering at 10 a.m. at Union Park, 1501 W. Randolph St., and step off two hours later for their march downtown. They will proceed east on Washington Street to Desplaines Street, south on Desplaines to Jackson Boulevard and east on Jackson to Dearborn Street.

The marchers then will turn north on Dearborn to Federal Plaza at 230 S. Dearborn St.

Accordingly, these streets will be closed to traffic: Washington from Ashland to Desplaines; Desplaines from Washington to Jackson, and Jackson from Desplaines to Dearborn. Police warned of traffic congestion around the downtown area during the afternoon and evening rush hours.

Students from many high schools in the city and suburbs are expected to take part.

Waukegan Public School officials sent a note home to parents Wednesday warning them that if students don't show up without an appropriate excuse they will be marked as unexcused. The note, which mentioned the march, goes on to tell parents to support the "best educational interest of your children," by encouraging them to attend school.

Hundreds of students from Benito Juarez Community Academy High School, a Chicago Public School in the Pilsen neighborhood, are expected to participate. Students will either take off the entire day or take off early.

Yazmin Velazquez, 18, a Juarez 12th grader, said she expects up to 80 percent of the school's 1,500 students to attend, about the same number that took part in the previous marches. Students plan to meet outside the school Thursday morning and march to Union Park.

The majority of Juarez students are part of the immigrant community, many with family members who are undocumented and affected by [Immigration](#) laws, she said.

Tribune reporters Antonio Olivo and Carlos Sadovi contributed

Copyright © 2008, [Chicago Tribune](#)