

Pro-immigration marchers rally against Trump

By Paris Achen
Capital Bureau

SALEM — About 1,000 demonstrators marched around the Oregon Capitol Saturday protesting President-elect Donald Trump’s positions on immigration.

The more than 90-minute rally and march on a frigid day in the capital city drew Oregonians from as far as Medford. Turnout exceeded by a few hundred the number of RSVPs listed on the event’s Facebook page.

Speakers, who included several lawmakers, blasted what they called Trump’s agenda of “xenophobia and hate.”

“In Oregon, we recognize the vast contribution made by undocumented immigrants,” said Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon, D-Woodburn, who in November became the first Latina immigrant elected to the Oregon House. “We stand with you united against the hateful rhetoric of Donald Trump.”

The rally was one of 50 “National Day of Action Events Against Trump Policies,” according to the One Oregon coalition, which organized the rally in Salem.

Trump has said that he will seek to deport millions of undocumented immigrants, end executive orders by President Obama that shield certain illegal immigrants from deportation, and start a Muslim registry.

The coalition is “deeply concerned about the impact this will have on immigrant and refugee communities, who are integral to Oregon’s economy and future,” said Diane Goodwin, a spokeswoman for Basic Rights Oregon, a member of One Oregon.

Demonstrators held signs that read “Immigration began in 1620” and “We resist Trump’s hate.” Marchers chanted slogans in both English and Spanish, which included “This is what community looks like.”



Demonstrators march around the Oregon Capitol Saturday, Jan. 14, 2017, in opposition to President-elect Donald Trump’s positions on immigration.

Paris Achen/Capital Bureau

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden and U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader joined in the rally. Also, making an appearance were several state legislators.

Wyden declared to immigrants that as long as he is in office: “Your fight will be my fight.”

Unsure about the future

Hernandez, whose family immigrated to the United States from Mexico, said the lawmakers would make sure Oregon “stands against xenophobia and hate.”

One of Obama’s executive orders, known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, protects from deportation undocumented immigrants who were brought to

the United States as children. Young people who are eligible must apply for the program every two years, receive a work permit and may attend college.

DACA has allowed about 700,000 young people nationally and 15,000 in Oregon to get driver’s licenses, work permits and to attend secondary education institutions, said Andrea Williams, executive director of Causa, a member of the One Oregon coalition.

Zaira Flores of Salem is one of the young people who has benefited from DACA.

Her mother immigrated to the United States when she was 6 and her brother was 3. Flores, who graduated from Portland State University, now works for the state of Oregon.

Since Trump’s election, “I’m feeling very unsure about my future,” Flores said. “If I didn’t have DACA, I wouldn’t have a driver’s license, I would lose my job, I would lose the roof over my head, all the basic human needs. It’s really scary.”

The One Oregon coalition of 60 organizations opposes anti-immigrant policies. Immigrant rights organizations Causa, APANO and Unite Oregon lead the group.

The coalition plans to support state legislation in 2017

aimed at reducing racial profiling during police stops, expanding Medicaid to more children and increasing affordable housing funding.

There were no counter protests to the event. Oregonians For Immigration Reform, which frequently clashes with Causa on policy proposals, had scheduled a meeting for later in the day to discuss the impact of Trump’s election and state legislation in 2017.

Trump’s immigration proposals have begun to address many of the frustrations some Americans have had with immigration policy and practices, said OFIR President Cynthia Kendall.

“I think the Trump administration has nailed it when he said we need to reassess what we are doing and why and how is it benefiting the United States,” Kendall said.

She said she supports

Trump’s plan to end the DACA program. “Those parents made the choice for their children to pick them up and bring them to this country,” Kendall said. “I didn’t make that choice for them.”

OFIR attempted to advance ballot initiatives last year that would have made English the official language of Oregon, required businesses to use a federal program to verify citizenship of employees and required proof of citizenship to vote. The initiatives ultimately were tied up in court after immigrant rights organizations and the ACLU challenged the ballot titles.

OFIR plans to offer at least four pieces of legislation next session, though Kendall declined to disclose specifics earlier this week. None are expected to gain momentum in the Democratic-controlled Legislature.

M. C R O W & C O .



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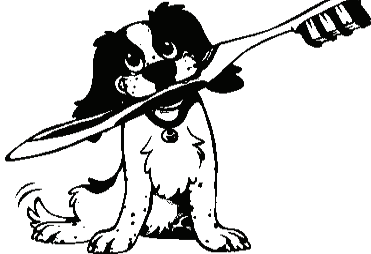


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