



## POLITICS

# Protesters in cities across the US rally against Trump's policies, Project 2025 and Elon Musk

1 of 28 | Demonstrators gathered outside the U.S. Capitol to protest the shutdown of USAID seem increasingly frustrated with Democratic lawmakers. Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia took the microphone and described how Democrats plan to fight

BY MORGAN LEE

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Demonstrators gathered in cities across the U.S. on Wednesday to protest the Trump administration's early actions, decrying everything from the president's [immigration](#) crackdown to his rollback of [transgender rights](#) and a proposal to [forcibly transfer](#) Palestinians from the Gaza Strip.

Protesters in Philadelphia and at state capitols in California, Minnesota, Michigan, Texas, Wisconsin, Indiana and beyond waved signs denouncing President Donald Trump; [billionaire Elon Musk](#), the leader of Trump's new Department of Government Efficiency; and [Project 2025](#), a hard-right playbook for American government and society.

"I'm appalled by democracy's changes in the last, well, specifically two weeks — but it started a long time ago," Margaret Wilmeth said at a protest outside the Statehouse in Columbus, Ohio. "So I'm just trying to put a presence into resistance."

The protests were a result of a movement that has organized online under the hashtags #buildtheresistance and #50501, which stands for 50 protests, 50 states, one day. Websites and accounts across social media issued calls for action, with messages such as "reject fascism" and "defend our democracy."



### AP AUDIO: Thousands protest Trump administration policies in cities across the US

AP correspondent Ed Donahue reports protests are expanding to President Trump's proposed changes.

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Outside the state Capitol in Lansing, Michigan, a crowd of hundreds gathered in freezing temperatures.

Catie Miglietti, from the Ann Arbor area, said Musk's access to Treasury Department data was especially concerning. She painted a sign depicting Musk puppeteering Trump from his outraised arm — evoking Musk's straight-arm gesture during a January speech that some have [interpreted as a Nazi salute](#).

"If we don't stop it and get Congress to do something, it's an attack on democracy," Miglietti said.

Demonstrations in several cities piled criticism on Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency.

"DOGE is not legit," read one poster on the state Capitol steps in Jefferson City, Missouri, where dozens of protesters gathered. "Why does Elon have your Social Security info???"

Members of Congress have expressed concern that [DOGE's involvement with the U.S. government payment system](#) could lead to security risks or missed payments for programs such as Social Security and Medicare. A Treasury Department official says a tech executive working with DOGE will have "read-only access."

Trump has signed a series of executive orders in the first [couple of weeks](#) of his new term on everything from trade and [immigration](#) to [climate change](#). As Democrats [begin to raise their voice](#) in opposition to Trump's agenda, protests have multiplied.

Demonstrators strode through downtown Austin, Texas. They assembled in Atlanta's Centennial Olympic Park for a march to Georgia's state Capitol and gathered outside California's Democratic-dominated Legislature in Sacramento. In Denver, protests coincided with nearby operations by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents and an unspecified number of people detained. Protesters in Phoenix chanted "deport Elon" and "no hate, no fear, immigrants are welcome here."

"We need to show strength," said Laura Wilde, a former public school occupational therapist in

Austin. "I think we're in a state of shock."

Thousands protested in St. Paul, Minnesota, where 28-year-old Hallie Parten carried a Democratic presidential campaign sign, revised to read "Harris Walz Were Right." The Minneapolis resident says she was motivated by fear.

"Fear for what is going to happen to our country if we don't all just do something about it," Parten said.

At Iowa's Capitol in Des Moines, protesters who joined the anti-Trump movement went inside to counter a registered event by the conservative parental rights group Moms for Liberty. The anti-Trump protesters shouted over the speakers in the rotunda for about 15 minutes before law enforcement pushed them outside, removing four demonstrators in handcuffs.

In Alabama, several hundred people gathered outside the Statehouse to protest actions targeting LGBTQ+ people.

On Tuesday, Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey promised to sign legislation declaring that there are only two sexes, male and female — echoing Trump's recent executive order for the federal government [to define sex as only male or female](#).

"The president thinks he has a lot of power," the Rev. Julie Conrady, a Unitarian Universalist minister, told the crowd. "He does not have the power to determine your gender. He does not have the power to define your identity."

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The attribution for a quote from the Alabama protest has been corrected to reflect that it was from the Rev. Julie Conrady, not Patricia Todd.

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Associated Press journalists Joey Cappelletti and Isabella Volmert in Lansing, Michigan; Julie Smyth in Columbus, Ohio; Summer Ballentine in Jefferson City, Missouri; Scott Bauer in Madison, Wisconsin; Michael Conroy in Indianapolis, Indiana; Kim Chandler in Montgomery, Alabama; Sophie Austin in Sacramento, California; Steve Karnowski in St. Paul, Minnesota; Mike Stewart in Atlanta; Hannah Fingerhut in Des Moines, Iowa; and Gabriel Sandoval in Phoenix contributed to this report.

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