

Walkout Is Planned to Show Solidarity With Immigrants

The New York Times

May 1, 2006 Monday, Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

Section: Section B; Column 1; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 4

Length: 725 words

Byline: By FERNANDA SANTOS

Body

From behind a vending cart in Jackson Heights, Queens, Mohammad Ali, 58, minced some betel palm tree leaves and nuts in a plastic bowl -- mouth freshener made to order for the man in a burgundy tunic who sells Islamic books from a nearby stand.

"Busy, busy, every day, but 15 minutes Monday, no work," Mr. Ali said yesterday, using the few English words he has managed to master since arriving in New York five years ago from Hyderabad, a city in India.

He then unfolded a bright orange flier and offered it to this reporter, by way of explanation. "Form a human chain in an expression of **solidarity** for **immigrant** rights," the flier read. "Join the nation in highlighting the many ways in which **immigrant** workers and businesses contribute to our economy."

At 12:16 p.m. today, **immigrants** and their supporters are set to take a short break from work and stand side by side along busy commercial strips citywide to make their presence known. Later in the day, at 4:30 p.m., **immigrants** and advocates are to rally in Union Square.

The specific moment of the lunchtime demonstration is meant to represent the date -- Dec. 16 -- that the House of Representatives passed a bill that would make it a felony to be in the country illegally, organizers said. In early April, a version of the bill stalled in the Senate.

Similar demonstrations are **planned** for the same time in the city's other boroughs: along East Broadway, Canal Street and St. Nicholas Avenue in Manhattan; on Fifth Avenue between 40th and 60th Streets and along Coney Island Avenue in Brooklyn; and at East Fordham Road and the Grand Concourse in the Bronx. It was unclear yesterday where the Staten Island demonstration would take place. In Jackson Heights, protesters will gather at 37th Avenue and 74th Street, just outside Pizza Boy, where Nick Lombardo, 53, has worked for the past 30 years, long before he became a United States citizen in 1998.

"These **immigrants** came here, I came here, my mother and father came here for a better future," said Mr. Lombardo, who was a teenager when he left Sicily to move to New York. "Everybody around here is from some place else. America is a country of **immigrants**, so it's important that we all participate, whether we're legal or not."

Word of the demonstration spread quickly throughout Jackson Heights, where the language options at automated-teller machines -- English, Spanish, Korean and Hindi -- mirror the diversity of the neighborhood. There were mentions in the pages of ethnic newspapers and on Spanish-language television broadcasts.

Mr. Lombardo, a manager at Pizza Boy, said he got his flier on Thursday, as did many of the business owners and workers in a four-block section of 37th Avenue, between 72nd and 76th Streets -- a stretch known as Little India for its South Asian flair. He has since ordered the two Mexican brothers who bake and deliver the pizzas for his restaurant to join the demonstration.

Walkout Is Planned to Show Solidarity With Immigrants

Mr. Ali plans to be there as well, along with Adrian Cardenas, 37, a hairdresser at Ingrid's Full Service Salon nearby.

"We must be united to affirm our strength," Mr. Cardenas, who hails from the Colombian coffee-growing city of Armenia. "It doesn't matter where we're from."

Two-thirds of Jackson Heights residents are foreign born, according to the 2000 census, but no single ethnicity prevails. On Roosevelt Avenue, for example, one can savor culinary delicacies from nearly every country in Latin America. On Broadway, near 37th Avenue, there is a small strip of Korean-owned businesses. On 37th Avenue, the air smells of curry, women wear colorful saris and stores display the elaborate jewelry from the Indian state of Gujarat.

While immigrant groups in a number of American cities were organizing full work stoppages for today, and some legislators in Albany were planning to walk out this afternoon, groups in New York City preferred just the brief demonstration.

"Some workers had legitimate concerns about losing their jobs," said Ana Maria Archila, executive director of the Latin American Integration Center, which provides services to immigrants in Queens and on Staten Island. "Business owners are immigrants, workers are immigrants and the people who shop in many of the stores in this city are immigrants, so if we boycotted business, we'd be basically boycotting ourselves."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Many immigrant workers in Jackson Heights planned to demonstrate. (Photo by Shiho Fukada for The New York Times)

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: IMMIGRATION (90%); MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS (77%); LANGUAGE & LANGUAGES (76%); FOREIGN LABOR (76%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (75%); IMMIGRATION LAW (74%); EMPLOYMENT HISTORY (74%); PROTESTS & DEMONSTRATIONS (73%); MUSLIMS & ISLAM (73%); RELIGION (57%); FELONIES (50%); Immigration and Refugees; Demonstrations and Riots; Illegal Immigrants

Person: Fernanda Santos

Geographic: NEW YORK, NY, USA (94%); HYDERABAD, ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA (72%); NEW YORK, USA (91%); UNITED STATES (92%); INDIA (79%); New York City

Walkout Is Planned to Show Solidarity With Immigrants

Load-Date: May 1, 2006

End of Document