

Detroit Free Press

January 30, 2026

By Violet Ikonomova, Natalie Davies and Darcie Moran

Detroit area businesses, schools join general strike against ICE

Small businesses throughout metro Detroit closed and high school students staged walkouts on Friday, Jan. 30, as part of a national shutdown general strike to protest Immigration and Customs Enforcement after a series of high-profile killings by the agency in Minneapolis and elsewhere.

At Cass Technical High School, several hundred students marched in the bitter cold while waving signs that said "Stop ICE funding" and "Detroit - shut it down" — one of more than a half-dozen protests throughout the region.

"We have a voice, and we need to use it because next it could be us, next it could be people that sit next to us in class, it could be anybody," Cass Tech senior and protest coordinator Hailee Hallman said as she took a break from shouting chants through a megaphone. "It's our responsibility to speak out and make sure people know that we don't stand for this, because if you look at history, students have been at the center of every single movement."

Shuttered businesses — such The Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, the City Bird and Nest shops in Midtown, and Drifter Coffee in Ferndale — made statements via social media.

"ICE has no place in our communities, and we stand with the people of Minnesota and everywhere who are being targeted by this terror," Sidetrack Bookshop on Washington Avenue said in a Facebook post announcing its closure.

The action encouraging participants to avoid school, work, and shopping follows the ICE killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis. The agency has been involved in at least six other deaths since 2025, according to a tally compiled by the liberal American Prospect magazine and based on news articles.

"Every day, ICE, Border Patrol and other enforcers of Trump's racist agenda are going into our communities to kidnap our neighbors and sow fear," the national shutdown organizing website reads. "It is time for us to all stand up together in a nationwide shutdown and say enough is enough!"

Roughly 100 people gathered for a separate Detroit protest, across from an African market on Seven Mile, where several immigrants were reportedly arrested the week before, according to an organizer. Loren Branch, of the Party for Socialism and Liberation, told the crowd ICE is targeting the city's Black immigrants in addition to southwest Detroit Latinos.

"It is our duty, it is our right, strike, strike, strike, strike," the crowd chanted.

Federal border patrol and immigration representatives did not immediately provide information about possible arrests at the market.

Additional protests were held in Dearborn, Novi, Ferndale and Rochester, where students at Rochester High School staged a walkout Friday morning.

Other businesses that announced closures in southeast Michigan include:

Lost and Found Vintage in Royal Oak
Full Measure Brewing Co. in Detroit
Batch Brewing Co. in Detroit
Library Street Collective in Detroit
Beara Bakes in Ypsilanti
Gutman Gallery in Ann Arbor

Businesses showed support through various means. Detroit café Trinosophes announced on social media that it would open for an evening concert with proceeds going toward the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota.

Others said they would remain open but issued anti-ICE statements. Detroit and Oak Park pizzeria Pie Sci wrote on Facebook that it does not support “the harm caused by current immigration enforcement practices” but will remain open.

“As a small, independent business, closing our doors — even for a single day — would have consequences for only our people,” the post said. “We pay our team a living wage, offer health benefits, paid time off, earned sick time and 401k match. Staying open is what allows us to do that.”

In a counter statement, Oakland County Republican Party President Vance Patrick dismissed the protests as “the radical left putting political theatrics ahead of the rule of law.”

“The so-called ‘nationwide shutdown’ planned for today is nothing more than a petty, childish temper tantrum over the federal government enforcing immigration laws that are already on the books and were duly passed by Congress,” Patrick said, likening the behavior to the “reckless ‘defund the police’ movement” in 2020.