

**LOCAL NEWS**

**North Shore area group stages protest against Trump and ICE agents on the ground in Chicagoland: ‘This isn’t the nation I grew up in’**



Demonstrators participate in an anti-ICE protest Sept. 12, 2025 along an Interstate 94 overpass on Winnetka Avenue in Winnetka. (Audrey Richardson/for Pioneer Press)



By **JESSE WRIGHT** | Chicago Tribune

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Amid a recent increased presence of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents across Chicagoland, protesters launched a rush hour demonstration near exits of the Edens Expressway at Lincolnwood, critical of heightened immigration enforcement efforts.

As traffic on Interstate 94 flowed below Friday, a handful of protesters stood on an overpass at Pratt Street in Lincolnwood holding upside down American flags and signs pushing back on President Donald Trump's immigration push through ICE.

Julie Ewart waves to cars while participating in an anti-ICE demonstration along an Interstate 94 overpass on Pratt Avenue in Lincolnwood on Sept. 12, 2025. (Audrey Richardson/for the Pioneer Press)

Julie Ewart holds a pro-democracy sign and waves an upside down American flag as she participates in an anti-U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement demonstration Sept. 12, 2025 on Pratt Avenue in Lincolnwood. Ewart helped to organize the demonstration, which blasted the increased ICE presence across Chicagoland. (Audrey Richardson/for Pioneer Press)

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“We have so much injustice with the United States government attacking the people here and abroad,” said Neal Resnikoff, who took part in the protest. “We know from history that if we get ourselves together to oppose it, we can gain Democracy, peace and justice.”

On both sides of Pratt, facing eastbound and westbound I-94, the demonstrators also hung banners, with one reading “Fight for Freedom Not Fascism.”

“We thought I-94 would be good since they pretty much have to go down I-94 to get anywhere,” Julie Ewart, one of the event organizers, told Pioneer Press.

The demonstration was hosted by the North Shore Says No and Chicago Area Peace Action groups and was part of a series of protests that day – including during the morning rush hour – at spots along I-94 in the north suburbs.

In addition to Pratt Street, protests were staged at Church Street off the Dempster Street exit near Morton Grove and Skokie, on Glenview Road in Glenview north of the Old Orchard Road exit, and in the Winnetka and Northfield areas on Winnetka Road just south of the Willow Road exit.

Organizers said the locations were strategic, aimed at catching the attention of any federal law enforcement agency stationed at Naval Station Great Lakes, including ICE and its parent Department of Homeland Security. Trump said he would use the facility for staging the federal agencies.

Motorists honked their horns, and some shouted “thank you” and gave other encouragement as they drove past. Resnikoff took the responses as a sign that people care about what is happening in a number of national and global situations, he said.

“The public opinion polls show more people oppose American arms to Israel. They oppose the rich getting richer. They oppose attacking Medicaid,” he said. “The polls show that on most issues, it’s not so dark and depressing.”

Protest organizers pushed for their demonstration to be peaceful, especially coming on the heels of other deadly events.

On Sept. 10, 31-year-old conservative influencer Charlie Kirk was shot to death as he spoke on the campus of Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah. Prosecutors allege Tyler Robinson, 22, of Utah, [shot Kirk in the neck](#) with a bolt-action rifle from the roof of a nearby building on the campus, located about 40 miles south of Salt Lake City.

Much closer to home, the same day as the I-94 demonstration, [ICE agents shot and killed a man](#) identified by federal officials as Silverio Villegas-Gonzalez, 38, in Franklin Park following a traffic stop. DHS said in a written statement that Villegas-Gonzalez was a citizen of Mexico and was in the U.S. illegally, though further details were not provided.

According to DHS, ICE officers conducted a vehicle stop early morning Sept. 12 to arrest Villegas-Gonzalez, who has a record of reckless driving offenses. Federal agents say Villegas-Gonzalez tried to flee the scene of the stop and ended up injuring an agent — who fatally shot Villegas-Gonzalez.

“I abhor violence,” said Ewart, who called the protest she participated in a peaceful one. “I abhor what happened (in Utah). ... This isn’t the nation I grew up in.”

Ewart only recently got involved with protesting, she said. For years she worked in the federal government, most recently in the Department of Education where she did media relations until this spring. Since she lost that job, she’s been out regularly, holding up signs.

"I always felt that, as a federal employee, I was helping future generations," she said. "With this (demonstrating), I feel like I'm doing something."

***Jesse Wright is a freelancer.***

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