

Boston rebels against Trump immigration policies with an 'ICE Tea Party'

By **Camille Bugayong** Globe Correspondent, Updated December 17, 2025, 12:25 a.m.



Members of the Boston Area Brigade of Activist Musicians perform in front of a protest message that reads, "ICE off our streets" on the facade of the Old South Meeting House on Tuesday, Dec. 15. KEN MCGAGH FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

On a frigid night, protesters held an "ICE Tea Party" on the Boston waterfront to protest US Immigrations and Custom Enforcement policies and action.

They dumped ice into Boston Harbor, a moment of dramatic irony Tuesday, the 252nd anniversary of the Boston Tea Party of 1773.

Back then, protesters marched boldly from the Old South Meeting House in Downtown Crossing to the harbor, where they tossed shipments of tea into the water.

This time, the people marched in resistance to the harsh treatment of immigrants by the Trump administration.

“We descend from Immigrants and Revolutionaries,” read a battle cry beamed onto the side of the brick meeting house Tuesday.

“The society that stops seeing the people at the grocery line or the people that ride the bus with us, as human beings with beating hearts, then it’s not far off before our society devolves into no society at all,” Gilberto Calderin, director of advocacy at the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition said to the crowd of hundreds.



Activists gather in downtown Boston before a march to Boston Harbor for an “ICE Tea Party” in protest of ICE’s immigration crackdown. KEN MCGAGH FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

The protest was organized by activist groups Boston Indivisible and Mass 50501, and began at the Irish Famine Memorial Plaza, just steps from the meeting house.

The lively crowd held up signs, waved American flags, and chanted during the march along Milk Street and Congress Street to the harbor.

Janet England of Brighton held a sign that read, “Democracy Needs Courage.”

The protesters, she said are “true patriots because we want freedom and democracy.”

“Although protest is a long game, we can’t give up. If you think about women’s suffrage, gay rights, the civil rights movement, it took years, but we just can’t give up,” she said.

Gloria Krusemeyer, from Alrlington, used a walker to join the march.

“I’m irritated that I haven’t done more, and I’m just lucky that I can walk fast enough to be doing this,” she said.



Lights spell out “No ICE” on the Congress Street Bridge, the site of the 1773 Boston Tea Party, as activists throw ice into Boston Harbor in an act of resistance against immigration arrests called the “ICE Tea Party.” KEN MCGAGH FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Rick Mueller, from Cambridge, was dressed as Uncle Sam and held a large sign that read, “Liberty and Justice For All.”

“We’re fighting for America, so I’m gonna be America,” he said of his costume.

He handed small American flags out to protesters who waved them enthusiastically.

Ice dumping duties was limited to volunteers and select people.

Among them was Sarah, a mother who brought her 4-year-old daughter, Fiona.

Sarah declined to share her last name for her daughter’s safety.

After throwing ice into the harbor, Fiona shyly said that she wanted to come to the protest to “help families stay together.”

Through tears, Sarah said her decision to bring along Fiona came from wanting to teach her daughter to care about people from all walks of life.

“Kindness and compassion are things we learn in kindergarten and she will be in kindergarten so it’s really important for her to be kind and compassionate,” Sarah said, kissing her daughter’s cheek.

Likewise, Sara Sievers, from Cambridge, brought her parents, sister, her nephews, and niece to dump ice.

“I think this is one of the most brutal regimes we’ve had in this country, and I want my niece and nephew to remember that it’s important to protest, and that we in Boston are part of a proud tradition of dumping things into the harbor with which we disagree,” Sievers said.

The family wore costumes of historical figures including Abigail Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and King Charles.

As the protest came to a close, Martha Laposata, spokesperson for Boston Indivisible, said she wanted protestors to walk away knowing their voices matter.

“We cannot stand down,” Laposata said. “When people rise up against an authoritarian government, if they stay consistent and they keep growing, ultimately an authoritarian government will stand down.”

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