

(Washington DC) Congressman Charlie Gonzalez issued the following statement on the planned nationwide walkouts by supporters of comprehensive immigration reform who oppose the scapegoating of Latinos during consideration of the Senate Immigration bill:

“Although I understand how outraged many Latinos feel, I fear that a nationwide boycott will do more harm than good. It is not right that Republicans have concentrated solely on undocumented workers and their families while ignoring the equally culpable employers who knowingly hire these workers. But, missing school or work, the very opportunities all immigrants seek, is counterproductive to achieving fair and realistic reform of our nation's immigration laws.

There are more effective ways to make our feelings known than a boycott. We need to make our thoughts heard through voting and holding elected officials accountable and translate this energy into long-term action. Inform yourself about the issues, vote and make changes on the local level. This is best way to participate in the political process.

Moreover, despite a Constitutional guarantee that people may peaceably assemble, footage of Latinos marching through American cities will be used by the fringe Right as evidence that our nation is being overrun by immigrants. Of course, this is not true. America is a nation of immigrants, which has always been a source of strength. Throughout our nation, citizens of every color are working together to meet the challenges facing us in the 21st Century. Latinos are proud to be Americans, and anyone suggesting otherwise is dead wrong.

Additionally, it is vital that students stay in school. The grandparents and parents of students sacrificed so that they could have the chance to get an education and advance. I encourage them to make their thoughts known to the President and their elected representatives.”

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