

Ohioans rally as part of nationwide Presidents Day protests against Trump, Musk

By **Jordan Laird**
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Protests in front of the Ohio Statehouse have become a familiar sight under Donald Trump's second presidency and Presidents Day was no different.

Hundreds from Columbus and across Ohio rallied despite cold temperatures falling from a high in the mid-20s into the upper teens Monday afternoon, protesting against Trump, Elon Musk, Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and a flurry of actions they've taken that have tested the limits of the executive branch's legal powers.

The demonstrators in Columbus were not alone. Protesters totaling in the thousands came out nationwide in Cleveland, Cincinnati, Washington, D.C., Denver and other cities as part of the 50501 movement, which stands for "50 protests. 50 states. 1 movement."

The movement's goals and demands include upholding the Constitution, limiting executive branch overreach, shutting down DOGE and limiting unelected citizen meddling, according to a flyer passed out by organizers at the event Monday.

Rally attendees expressed opposition to many different executive orders and actions by Trump and Musk, including defunding USAID, policies targeting transgender people and attempts to do away with birthright citizenship.

Trump and his administration have shown "a blatant disregard for the rule of law," said Benjamin Kirkbride, of Wayne County. Specifically, Kirkbride is disturbed by Trump firing over a dozen inspectors general who act as independent watchdogs on the federal government.

Kirkbride helped organize Monday's event in Columbus after attending the 50501 protest on Feb. 5 in Columbus.

"It's been a whirlwind. That's what happens when a movement springs out of nothing in a few weeks," Kirkbride said. The effort began as a post on Reddit.

Laura Sykes said she and her boyfriend, Seth Bennett, traveled from Bucyrus to attend the Columbus demonstration because they wanted to gather with others to fight the Trump administration's actions damaging democracy. As a disabled person who uses a wheelchair, Sykes said she is concerned about how

the Trump administration is handling disability issues and what the future holds.

"We want to implore people to get involved in their local governments and local political parties," Sykes said.

Becky Kronk, of Columbus' Italian Village, said she and her husband joined the protest because they're disturbed by the defunding of USAID and the assaults on other agencies such as layoffs at the Federal Aviation Administration amid numerous plane crashes and at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Kronk said she has to believe events like this make a difference.

"Otherwise, we're doing nothing and we can't stand around and do nothing," she said.

Galloway resident Sandra Stires said protesters are trying to send a message to Ohio's Congressional delegation that "we aren't going to sit down and take this and they really need to do their job and uphold the Constitution — uphold the checks and balances."

Kirkbride said the 50501 movement is trying to motivate people to pay attention.

"I think one of the biggest problems that we're facing right now is the deluge of stuff that's coming out of this administration," Kirkbride said. "It's record-setting numbers of executive orders that are coming out at a breakneck pace, and people are overwhelmed. People are overwhelmed, and that means people aren't paying attention."