

# Activists march through downtown Fresno for immigration reform

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Nadia Pearl

Organizations and citizens marched through downtown Fresno advocating for immigration reform Thursday evening.

Chanting in both English and Spanish and wielding U.S. and Mexican flags, an estimated 400 to 450 people participated in the 2-mile parade that began at Courthouse Park on Van Ness Avenue and Tulare Street around 6 p.m. Many held signs of protests that read "The time is now -- Stop deportations" and "Stop separation of family."

Juan Avitia, a member of the Brown Berets, said the purpose of the event was to put pressure on politicians and remind them of the need for a more "humane" immigration system. He said that while immigrants are the minority right now, soon they could be a majority and the government needs to make changes.

"We want a change in legislation," Avitia said. "We're not pleased with what's out there at the moment."

Led by traditional Mexican dancers, the marchers were escorted by police through the streets of downtown. In previous years similar parades have been held downtown on May Day, a day that recognizes the celebration of laborers and the working classes.

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