Immigration Crackdown Sparks Silicon Valley Protests

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Dave Johnson

The TV show Silicon Valley regularly makes fun of tech companies that promise to "make the world a better place."

Now, Tech Stands Up and Silicon Valley Rising want tech companies to follow through on this promise – starting with their workers.

Tech Stands Up describes itself as "a grassroots movement giving a voice to the rapidly growing concerns about the current administration's policies affecting the tech community and its users."

In Tech Stands Up: A Manifesto, the organization explains,

Walk into many tech firms, and you are likely to see a set of company values hanging on their walls. Some of those values are inclusion, transparency, innovation, diversity, openness, ownership, and empathy. Today those values are under attack. Now is the time for all tech companies to stand up for these values and prove that those values are more than just hoodie slogans.

"Pi Day" Rally Protests Trump Immigration Policies

On "Pi Day," March 14, Tech Stands Up organized a Palo Alto rally of Silicon Valley tech workers to protest President Trump's immigration policies.

"This is not an anti-Trump rally; it's a get-active rally," the group's co-founder, Amber Allred Taylor, told USA Today. "Our message is simple: Don't wait for change. Create it."

The event, which attracted hundreds to downtown Palo Alto, was co-organized by Silicon Valley Rising, a coalition of community, faith-based and labor organizations that represent tech's service workers.

"We hope the event not only sends a message, but creates new opportunities for the low-wage, largely immigrant subcontracted janitors, security officers, cafeteria workers and shuttle drivers," said Derecka Mehrens, Silicon Valley Rising's co-founder.

Participants carried signs like "Silicon Valley is powered by diversity" and "No ban, no wall -welcome all."

"I feel like I have a responsibility and I must speak out on any injustices," said Ram Sridharan, a software engineer who came to the U.S. from India twenty years ago and became a citizen last year. He carried a sign that read, "No Xenophobia, No Islamophobia."

Tech Workers Aren't Just Techies

When you hear about "tech workers," you probably think about engineers working on apps and self-driving cars. You think they get paid a lot. You rarely equate the term with the food service workers, "Google Bus" drivers, people who clean the buildings and others who do the work to keep the businesses running.

In Silicon Valley, these tech workers are all too often treated as little more than commodities to exploit and throw away. Now, with a little help from Tech Stands Up and Silicon Valley Rising, this may start to change.