

Religious groups protest immigration crackdown, call for ICE funding to be cut



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Protesters marched silently on Tuesday in front of the ICE offices in Burlington.

By Thomas Oide

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BURLINGTON — About 100 people of different faiths convened at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement office in Burlington to protest the federal crackdown on illegal immigration and to launch a local campaign to deprive the agency of funding.

Cantor Vera Broekhuysen, of Temple Emanu-El of Haverhill, said one of the goals is to urge legislators to exert more pressure on ICE and encourage constituents to voice their displeasure with the agency.

“We want to encourage people of faith and people who are not of faith to voice their opinions to their public officials and stress that this is an important issue to them,” Broekhuysen said. The group plans another march June 26 at the same location, she said.

The “FREEZE ICE in CD-3” movement — referring to the state’s Third Congressional District — isn’t the only group encouraging ICE’s defunding. National immigrant rights groups, including United We Dream, have called for action, raising concern about reports of mistreatment and separation of families.

On Tuesday, the protesters walked in a loop along District Avenue, adjacent to the ICE office. There were no chants or arguments: For the duration of the march, protesters remained silent. The only sounds were the shuffling of feet and the rain hitting umbrellas.

“We are demonstrating for people who don’t have voices,” Broekhuysen said. “We’re going to be here with our bodies to represent people whose voices won’t be heard.”