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Retirees flex muscle to win Social Security Fairness Act

By Stu Becker

President Joe Biden has signed the Social Security Fairness Act into law. It removed the drastic Reagan-era cuts in Social Security income that millions of public employees had earned during the times that they paid into the fund.

Not only will those workers start receiving the same Social Security benefit as those who did not fall under public pension plans, the payments will be retroactive to January 2024. As many as three million retirees can look forward to big checks.

The Social Security Fairness Act eliminates the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), measures which unfairly reduced Social Security benefits for public sector retirees who receive a public pension—or the spouse or survivor of a Social Security beneficiary—who worked in a job not covered by the Social Security program.

The WEP and GPO have long upset public employees and their unions. They disproportionately affected lower-income workers and women.

Although many groups have advocated for the Social Security Fairness Act, kudos for the main victory goes to organized labor, and particularly to its retiree organization, the Alliance for Retired Americans.

ARA, based in the AFL-CIO's Washington, D.C., headquarters, has active chapters and supporters all over the nation who planned, lobbied, and carried out actions for the bill.

In response to the passage and signing of the bill, the ARA said that “for too long, the government has taken away Social Security benefits from millions of retired federal, state, and local government employees who worked as teachers, police, firefighters, postal workers, and general employees—benefits they earned when they worked other jobs.”

The organization said that as a result of Saturday's vote and Biden's Sunday signing, “millions of Americans will finally have the retirement they earned.”

According to Gene Lantz, president of the ARA's Texas chapter, American seniors can celebrate a number of victories as 2024 closes and 2025 begins. Exit polls showed that the “over 65” vote shifted toward the Democrats in November's election. Some polls showed that the senior vote had gone over to the Democrats for the first time this century.



Drug prices will fall this January thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act. Big Pharma had been able to raise drug prices far higher than the inflation rate for many years. Social Security and Medicare/Medicaid have not, so far, suffered damage from the many Republicans who hate them. In fact, Social Security recipients will see a 2.5% bump in Social Security payments. For all these blessings, Lantz says, seniors “can give large credit to organized labor and the ARA.”

CONTINUES ON PAGE TWO

CONTINUING THE DAILY WORKER



For over a century, People's World and its predecessor publications have taken the side of the 99 percent and worked to promote the struggle for a sustainable environment, jobs, democracy, peace, and equality.

Retirees win Social Security Fairness Act

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Looking forward and backward, Lantz says organized labor is recovering from mistakes they made after World War II when they accepted employer-offered pensions and health care instead of pushing for better Social Security and the national health care that workers in many European countries achieved.

In the future, thanks to this year's accomplishments, union retirees and their progressive supporters have some victories to inspire the unity they will need as they face what is coming.

Organizing is paying off for America's seniors.

Teaching in the Trump era: The classroom as a site of struggle

By Michael O'Dea and Mary Hendricks



“Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.”

– Paolo Freire

This dichotomy is at the heart of the challenges educators face today, especially with public education in the United States increasingly becoming a battleground with reactionary forces targeting issues of race, class, and LGBTQ rights. With a second Trump term now looming, educators have grown weary about the consequences of an emboldened and empowered right wing. For this article, we talked with several teachers from around the country to discuss some of their major concerns.

Anti-immigration

Donald Trump first gained national political attention with his infamous escalator ride in 2015, which marked the beginning of a campaign filled with anti-immigrant rhetoric. During his bid for a second term, he pledged to deploy the U.S. military to deport all undocumented individuals in the country.

Such a sweeping policy would profoundly impact the hundreds of thousands of children who are integral members of diverse school communities nationwide. The removal of these students from their schools would have devastating effects on their emotional and social well-being.

Educators from states like Texas and New York, for instance, have expressed grave concerns over the inhumanity of such proposals. With approximately 620,000 undocumented K-12 students in the United States, according to the social welfare organization FWD.us, the scale of the potential harm is staggering.

These concerns are echoed by educators we spoke with who have witnessed firsthand the struggles their students face, as they grapple.

“Having taught Haitian children and immigrant children, how will the heightened anxiety with mass deportation impact children’s ability to focus and learn?”

“I’m concerned for my migrant and immigrant students that make up about 80% of my school.”

“Immigrant families are declining public services, such as counseling, because of the fear that they could be deported or arrested.”

“Parents that are being deported often have to leave their children with relatives or close family friends.”

When students are forced to carry the weight of fear and uncertainty about their lives outside of school, their education inevitably suffers. Instead of focusing on their academic growth, these students are forced to grapple with the fear of losing their homes and support networks. If these policies are enforced as promised, schools with large immigrant populations will face devastating consequences, tearing apart the very fabric of their support systems.

Palestine solidarity

Although Trump and his supporters often portrayed him as anti-war, his actions reveal him to be as much an imperialist as any other leader. With \$100 million in support from media mogul Miriam Adelson, he is poised to remain a loyal ally to the Israeli government when it comes to the latter's policies in Gaza and the broader region.

During his first term, Trump proudly moved the U.S. Israeli embassy to Jerusalem, a move that signaled his full endorsement of Netanyahu's aggressive policies.

Lately, Trump and his allies have gone so far as to equate anti-genocide protests with support for terrorism. He even vowed to deport students on visas for expressing solidarity with Palestine, blatantly contradicting his hollow rhetoric about freedom of speech.

While the Democratic administration of President Joe Biden supported the genocide and local Democratic officials in many areas cracked down violently on protests, Trump is likely to intensify surveillance and hostility, escalating the repression further. Educators who express solidarity with Palestine face unique challenges.

"I was already being retaliated against for my solidarity with Palestine, so I just expect more of the same. Republican fascism instead of 'Democratic' fascism."

"My principal explicitly told me not to talk about what's happening in Palestine as it could offend students. She said nothing about any other wars or political issues."

Educators who have spoken out in support of Palestine are all too familiar with the consequences of administrative retaliation. As reactionary forces grow bolder, these brave individuals are likely to face even harsher crackdowns for their efforts to shed light on the issue.

In many public schools, the only meaningful discussions about the ongoing genocide will come from courageous educators who take the risk of addressing it discreetly, without the knowledge or approval of their administration.

"Patriotic" education

During his campaign, Trump laid out a vision for education reform, vowing to "reclaim our once great educational institutions from the radical left and Marxist maniacs." His plan included establishing a new credentialing body to "certify teachers who embrace patriotic values and support the American way of life."

He also proposed cutting federal funding for schools and colleges that teach "critical race theory, transgender insanity, and other inappropriate racial, sexual, or political content," while providing incentives to states and schools that align with his agenda. This has left educators who strive to teach the truth about history and social relations deeply concerned.

"Patriotic education, as proposed by Trump, seeks to rewrite curricula to align with a narrowly defined and ideologically driven version of American history."

"I worry about the push towards a so-called 'patriotic teaching of history.' What implications will that have on my students and my practice?"

"I'm concerned about what will be taught. How they will continue to try to 'edit' history."

The term "patriotic education" serves as a euphemism intended to promote reactionary views on race, gender, and class. This approach could significantly shape the political ideologies of young Americans for generations, reinforcing narrow and ideologically driven perspectives.

It is crucial for educators to resist these narratives and strive to present history in its most accurate and honest form, ensuring students develop a well-rounded and critical understanding of the past.

Eliminating the Department of Education

With the support of his billionaire allies, including Vivek Ramaswamy and Elon Musk, Trump has vowed to abolish the Department of Education, claiming that he will return control to the states. However, it remains unclear whether critical programs such as Title I funding, financial aid, and services for special education and IEPs will be absorbed by other government institutions or face complete dismantling. This uncertainty raises serious concerns about the future of these essential supports for students and schools.

"I'm concerned for the educational system as a whole and if he does eradicate the DOE how that is going to impact children of color, children with special needs, and children in lower income families and communities."

"I worry that high poverty schools will be completely abandoned so that anti-union charter schools become the only choice."

While there are countless other concerns weighing on educators, these represent just a few of the most pressing. In the face of these mounting challenges, educators shoulder an immense responsibility—not only to teach but also to resist.

Whether it means standing up for immigrant students, pushing back against propaganda disguised as patriotic education, or advocating for the resources necessary for all children to succeed, educators must remain steadfast in their commitment to truth and justice.

The classroom has always been a site of struggle, and it is clear that the battle for a liberatory education system that serves all students is far from over.



Unions, allies form coalition to protect federal workers from Trump

By Mark Gruenberg



WASHINGTON—Faced with the existential threat of Donald Trump’s plans to fire nonpartisan civil servants while politicizing the government by populating it with his non- and anti-union followers, unions and their allies created the Civil Service Strong coalition to protect the nation’s two million civil servants from the planned depredations of the Republican president-elect’s coming regime.

And Civil Service Strong has a big threat to fear. After all, Trump, exposed as a political puppet of multibillionaire Elon Musk, who’s aided by multimillionaire Vivek Ramaswamy, wants to fire at least 50,000 top civil servants and replace them with his political hacks. Ramaswamy and Musk, in a recent op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*, want to fire 15 times as many.

The coalition includes good government groups and the Government Employees (AFGE), AFSCME, the Teachers (AFT) and the National Federation of Federal Employees, a Machinists sector. It went public on December 24, seeking popular support, too.

Civil Service Strong describes itself as “a new effort and public resource center that houses information to support the American people, including the 2.2 million federal government civil servants across the country who work tirelessly to make our country stronger.”

The resource center “will help to connect those civil servants seeking union representation to their appropriate contact” and will also provide research, a legal response network for workers harmed, harassed or threatened with firing, information on government worker rights and protections, including which agencies to contact and how.

And it will “monitor and publish ongoing attacks on the civil service as well as other changes, including Reductions in Force (RIFs) to specific agencies or departments, which would hinder the government’s ability to protect and deliver for people.” “RIF” is a fancy way of saying “firing.”

Sponsors of Civil Service Strong call it “an effort by civil society, non-partisan good government and watchdog organizations, lawyers and unions joining together to ensure our nation’s civil service is able to continue to serve the American people and our Constitution, deliver for our nation, and support our communities.

Government Employees President Everett Kelley noted civil servants are “2.2 million patriotic individuals” who all take oaths to uphold the Constitution. A third, including Kelley, are veterans.

All “provide vital services...including ensuring clean air and water, securing our borders and communities, supporting our military, protecting our skies, combating health care crises, caring for our veterans, providing Social Security benefits, inspecting our food, upholding our civil liberties, and so much more,” said AFGE President Everett Kelley, when Civil Service Strong was unveiled.

“Federal employees are the backbone of our society, delivering upon the promises made in the U.S. Constitution. On behalf of the 800,000 civil servants we represent, AFGE is proud to be a part of the Civil Service Strong initiative, standing up against attacks on the federal workforce and the essential services they provide to our nation’s citizens.”

Civil servants, the unions and their allies—The Project on Government Oversight, the Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, the Democracy Project and others—note civil servants also protect worker rights and prevent the exploitative corporate class from reducing workers to being beggars or worse.

Though “95% of Americans believe government workers and civil servants should be hired and promoted based on their merit rather than their political beliefs, there are now increasingly alarming threats against the civil service and individual civil servants themselves—ultimately threatening the ability of the government to work for the people and democracy itself,” the coalition warns. “In today’s environment, civil servants are already experiencing harassment, and many are considering whether to leave public service or endure firing, reassignment, and retaliation.”

protecting federal workers from Trump

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FOUR

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And it’s not just from Musk, Trump and Ramaswamy.

For example, a far-right anti-Hispanic, anti-migrant group, funded by the Trump-linked Heritage Foundation, started naming—Joe McCarthy-style—Homeland Security Department officials, both political appointees and career officials, whom it claimed are “soft” on migrants. Two of the first seven it fingered, with no proof of course, had Hispanic last names, including one woman, and there were four other women.

Beyond replacing the top civil servants with partisan Trumpites, Trump’s platform, Project 2025, goes much further—challenging the very concept of civil service itself.

It also wants to cut workers’ pay and pensions—and kill their unions. And not just federal unions, either.

“Congress should consider whether public-sector unions are appropriate in the first place. The bipartisan consensus up until the middle of the 20th century held these unions were not compatible with constitutional government. After more than half a century of experience with public-sector union frustrations of good government management, it is hard to avoid reaching the same conclusion,” declared the right-wing ideologues of Project 2025, led by top former Reagan regime personnel official Donald Devine.

“The modern merit system increasingly made it almost impossible to fire all but the most incompetent civil servants. Complying with arcane rules regarding recruiting, rating, hiring, and firing simply replaced the goal of cultivating competence and expertise,” the project adds in one of its milder lies about federal workers.

The H-1B visa program debate – beneath the corporate media spectacle

By Cameron Harrison and Dom Shannon



Amid a heated political and ideological [battle](#) between Republican President-elect Donald Trump’s MAGA allies over the H-1B visa program, many facts about the nature of the guest worker program have been lost in the weeds of corporate media chatter and ultra-right demagoguery.

That’s no accident. Ever polarizing, the mainstream press has focused on generating outrage and hyping up division, with little attention to the real issues at stake behind the supposed debate. Hesitant to spill any information which could threaten ruling class profits, the media instead opts to frame the debate as a false choice between the camps of “pro-immigrant” and “anti-immigrant,” or “right” versus “left.”

The whole effort serves to divert attention away from the real root causes of the H-1B dilemma and the complex challenge they present for the working class.

MAGA factionalism

The H-1B visa program was established under the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and later modified by the Immigration Act of 1990. The program provides work authorization for migrant workers in occupations for which enough U.S. workers supposedly cannot be found, typically those requiring advanced education, like computer sciences, information technology, and software development. It is the largest temporary work visa program, with nearly 600,000 workers currently in the U.S. in this category.

Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy, the tech and pharmaceutical billionaires chosen to lead the proposed Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) under Trump, are at odds with ultra-right, anti-immigrant Trump advisors such as Stephen Miller and Steve Bannon, who’ve long advocated sealing the border.

Musk, the richest person in the world, has spoken out in favor of H-1B visas and said he will “go to war” over this issue. Ramaswamy, in an X post that originally lit the fire, complained that Americans are simply not “good enough” when it comes to competing with foreign workers in the technology sector and that’s why he backs expanding H-1B admissions. He blamed the “dumbed-down” culture of the U.S. as the main culprit—sending the “America First” section of the MAGA coalition into a frenzy.

Ever eager to please his billionaire backers, Trump—who in 2016 pledged to eliminate “rampant, widespread” abuse of “H-1B as a cheap labor program”—said recently: “I have many H-1B visas on my properties. I’ve been a believer in H-1B. I have used it many times. It’s a great program.”

Big Tech exploits H-1B visa program for profit

Originally meant to fill U.S. labor market shortages with skilled foreign workers, the H-1B visa program has diverged from its initial purpose over the years. Rather than plugging holes and raising economic standards, in many ways the program has become a disaster for visa holders and U.S.-born workers alike.

The corporations that rely most heavily on the program—such as Tata Consulting Services, Infosys, Cognizant Tech Solutions, and others—have an outsourcing business model that exploits the program by underpaying migrant workers, who have virtually no labor rights. H-1B incentivizes corporations away from seeking qualified workers in the U.S. who are looking for higher pay. It has been criticized as a “job laundering” program and a form of “indentured servitude.”

A glaring example of the exploitative nature of the H-1B visa program was seen in 2015, when 250 Disney workers were told that they would be laid off. Many of their jobs were transferred to migrants on temporary visas for “highly skilled technical workers,” or the H-1B visa. Over the next three months, some Disney workers were required to train their replacements to do the jobs they had just lost.

“I just couldn’t believe they could fly people in to sit at our desks and take over our jobs exactly,” one former worker told The New York Times. “It was so humiliating to train somebody else to take over your job. I still can’t grasp it.”

Musk has been using his newfound influence in the Trump coalition to push for increasing the cap on H-1B visa recipients. His Tesla corporation, like the tech consultancy firms, has relied heavily on H-1B to trim its costs and boost profits. In late 2024, Tesla ramped up its use of H-1B visas to replace the U.S.-born workers it let go during a wave of layoffs earlier in the year.

Roughly 15,000 workers were made jobless at Tesla last spring, with every department reportedly impacted. Current and former workers at Tesla said that many of the laid-off U.S. workers were replaced by H-1B visa holders. They said that many workers let go were senior engineers with higher pay; they’ve been replaced with junior engineers at significantly lower pay rates.

Amazon, one of the world’s largest corporations, ranked first for a number of years recently in terms of both new H-1B workers and layoffs. In 2022, the company hired 6,400 new H-1B workers and almost the same number the year before, with nearly 6,200 brought on board. But the company is also looking at laying off 27,150 workers, more than double the total number of H-1B workers they hired in 2021 and 2022 combined. Amazon’s owner and multi-billionaire Jeff Bezos is now an ally of Trump, seen wining-and-dining at private events with the incoming president.

Google and Meta, both tech giants and virtual monopolies in their own right, have been top H-1B employers for many years, bringing in over 3,100 new H-1B workers last year. Meta has such a large number of H-1B workers that it has classified itself as an “H-1B dependent” corporation in government filings because over 15% of its U.S. workforce consists of H-1B workers. Google and Meta jointly laid off 33,000 workers in 2022, almost 11 times the quantity of new H-1B workers they hired.

Weak labor protections at the heart of program’s failures

Corporations, in the pursuit of maximum profit, exploit the guest-worker recipients through lower wages and precarious working conditions. U.S. law leaves them minimal economic and political rights and prevents them from seeking new job opportunities or advocating for better working conditions.

“The main function of the H-1B visa program and other guest worker initiatives is not to hire ‘the best and the brightest,’ but rather to replace good-paying American jobs with low-wage indentured servants from abroad,” said Sen. Bernie Sanders, Ind-Vt. in a statement. “The cheaper the labor they hire, the more money the billionaires make.”

Sanders highlighted that during the years 2022 and 2023, the top 30 corporations utilizing this program laid off at least 85,000 U.S.-born workers while they brought on board over 34,000 new H-1B guest workers. Estimations suggest that up to 33% of all recent Information Technology job openings in the nation are being filled by guest workers.

Furthermore, according to U.S. Census Bureau information, millions of Americans with advanced degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) are not currently working in those fields. As many as 74% of such graduates are not employed in the sector they trained for.

Teamsters General President Sean O’Brien said on X that “Senator Sanders is 100% right. The H-1B guest worker visa program displaces U.S. workers and allows billionaire tech employers to exploit foreign workers.”

Rather than using the H-1B program only as a last resort when U.S. workers are not available, many corporations hire H-1B workers because they can be paid less and are essentially tied to the employer who sponsored their application—hence the indentured servitude descriptor.

“We must stand against worker exploitation in all forms, be it American workers, workers overseas, or immigrant workers here in America,” said labor-backed former Ohio State Sen. Nina Turner. “The ruling class wants cheap labor and will game any system to secure it.”

Most H-1B workers are vastly underpaid, earning less than the market average for their occupation and location. According to a study done by the Economic Policy Institute, 60% of H-1B positions certified by the U.S. Department of Labor are assigned wage levels well below the local median wage for the same occupation. What’s more, current DOL rules allow for large-scale wage theft of H-1B workers. In a 2021 study, EPI found that thousands of skilled migrants employed by HCL Technologies—an India-based IT staffing firm that places H-1B workers at corporations like Disney, FedEx, and Google—were underpaid by at least \$95 million.

Guest-worker programs operate outside of standard labor laws, allowing corporations to employ a workforce that has few of the protections afforded to citizens and permanent residents. And since corporations aren't required to test the U.S. labor market to see if any workers are available before hiring an H-1B worker, or pay their H-1B workers a fair wage, corporations have exploited the program.

When H-1B workers are laid off, they are under immense pressure to find a new employer to support their visa within a strict 60-day timeframe, or else face potential deportation from the U.S. The fear of being forced to leave serves as a powerful tool to prevent workplace organizing and encourages compliance with management orders.

In effect, the precarity of these workers and their conditions lower the labor standards for all workers in their respective fields.

As capitalism's chief critic, Karl Marx, pointed out, the system's mode of production leads to the elimination of "specialized" labor and a general reduction of wages and conditions of life for the entire working class to the same low level. The H-1B visa gives corporations the power to dilute the bargaining power of workers who have special education and training, driving down pay and security for everyone—U.S.- or foreign-born—in the interest of profit. It allows companies to shift the labor market's supply and demand equation for their benefit.

Another benefit to monopoly corporations is the "brain drain" of other countries, whereby the workers who could produce in their countries and contribute to economic development there are being used up and exploited here in service to Corporate America.

MAGA doesn't really care about U.S.-born workers

The ultra-nationalist section of the MAGA coalition, represented in Trump's circles by people like Bannon and Miller, are demagogically using the discourse around the H-1B program—along with the justified criticisms of it—as a battering ram against all immigration and immigrant workers in general.

In the run-up to the 2016 election, Bannon and Miller raised the same grievances, alleging that "legal immigration is the real problem" for the economy. They deceptively try to portray themselves as defenders of U.S.-born workers.

Last week, Bannon warned Musk that he and other MAGA fanatics are going to "rip his face off" unless Musk "smartens up" and stops pushing visas for foreign workers to "take jobs from Americans."

With the incoming administration threatening the "largest deportation operation in the history of the U.S.," this latest maneuver by the ultra-right around the H-1B program only contributes to the negative ideological influences of nativism, jingoism, and nationalism on the working class. United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain has warned that MAGA and the capitalist class are preparing to "divide and conquer" and "leave with all the loot" while pretending to care about U.S. workers.

Georgi Dimitrov, an anti-fascist leader of the 1930s, explained the ideological influence of fascism on the masses of working people:

"Fascism aims at the most unbridled exploitation of the masses, but it approaches them with the most artful anti-capitalist demagoguery, taking advantage of the deep hatred of the working people against the plundering bourgeoisie, the banks, trusts, and financial magnates, and advancing those slogans which at the given moment are most alluring to the politically immature masses."

The fact of the matter is that these ideologues of the capitalist class don't actually care about U.S.-born workers, or the working class in general. They are staunch opponents of basic civil rights such as the right to vote, let alone union and labor rights, women's rights, LGBTQ rights, or the rights of racial and ethnic minorities. It's yet another instance of fascists using the grievances of the working class, paying lip service to them, dressing them up in an "anti-capitalist" veneer, and turning them on their head for capitalism's benefit.

As corporations struggle to maintain and expand their profits, we're also seeing an increase in the exploitation of other guest-worker programs, such as H-2A and H-2B visas. There is widespread abuse, especially in meatpacking and poultry, of these programs, leading to human trafficking and the abuse of migrant workers—even children—in the process.

For workers laboring in these industries worried about deportation and visa loss, many choose not to raise their voices or unionize their shop. It's the same situation faced by workers in the H-1B visa program—but at even more precarious wage levels and working conditions.

The more hesitant these vulnerable workers are to organize, the more likely corporations will be to continue putting the squeeze on working conditions and wages for all workers.

The working class response

The labor movement and its allies have to contend with the reality of the situation facing the working class of our country. While the response of the ultra-right in this discourse is to put blame on the recipients of H-1Bs and drive wedges between workers, the working class response is to fight for stronger political and economic democracy for working people—whether they be domestic, permanent, temporary, or migrant workers—including but not limited to the guaranteed right to organize at the workplace, fair and equal wages for equal work, and dignity on the job.

The lack of good-paying jobs, rising debt, and the lack of productive work has led to widespread precarity, depression, and anger amongst the U.S. working class. As household and college debt continue to pile up, workers are increasingly having to work underemployed and low-wage jobs, while the capitalist class exploits the H-1B program to pay lower wages for what were once considered higher-wage jobs.

The ultra-right demagogically uses the deteriorating conditions of life for working people not to criticize the system of capitalism but to place the blame for the ills of the system on marginalized sections of the class.

The presence of weak labor laws makes it very profitable for corporations to prioritize hiring H-1B workers over U.S.-born workers, not only because of their exceptional skills but due to the reduction in payroll costs and their indentured relationship with employers. For capitalism, it's all about profit and maximizing it.

The H-1B visa program debate

CONTINUED FROM PAGE SEVEN

“We must significantly raise the minimum wage for guest workers, allow them to easily switch jobs,” Sanders said. “It should never be cheaper for a corporation to hire a guest worker from overseas than an American worker.”

The EPI recommends [changing the rules](#) of the H-1B program to force companies to pay visa holders wages that are higher than the U.S. median. This would disincentivize the corporate practice of hiring H-1B workers as a cost-cutting measure to fill positions with lower wages. Moreover, closing the exploitative loophole that fuels the outsourcing business model and enforcing prevailing wage laws for H-1B workers would ensure fair pay and discourage corporations from undermining U.S. wage standards.

The threat of lay-offs, and thus deportation of migrant workers and their families, must be challenged head-on by the labor movement and its allies. Many H-1B visa holders have deep ties to the U.S., especially in their local communities, and are likely to have U.S.-born children. Can they be seen as a force separate from the whole of the American working class?

At minimum, the H-1B program needs reform—the guest workers must be allowed to switch jobs within the field they were received under; they must enjoy the same labor rights and protections as other workers; and they must be allowed to organize without fear of retaliation. The initial solution lies in working class unity and solidarity and refraining from playing into Corporate America’s “divide and conquer” tactics.

N.C. Supreme Court tries stealing election to add another MAGA Republican to its ranks

By John Bachtell



The MAGA-dominated North Carolina Supreme Court Republican party has sparked a major constitutional crisis by blocking the certification of Justice Allison Riggs’ Nov. 5 re-election victory in a highly contested race for a seat on the Court.

Riggs, a Democrat and incumbent appointed to the Court in 2023, was initially declared the winner by a narrow margin of 734 votes following multiple recounts. Over 5.5 million voters cast ballots in the election.

Since the election, Republicans have sought to overturn the results. The plot to steal the seat involves throwing out thousands of votes and installing her Republican opponent, Judge Jefferson Griffin.

Griffin has challenged the validity of approximately 66,000 ballots, citing bogus issues such as incomplete voter registration and absentee ballots lacking photo ID.

The North Carolina Board of Elections, with a Democratic majority, rejected Griffin’s challenges on Dec. 11. The case then went to a federal judge appointed by Trump, who sent it back to the state court for consideration.

The action is the latest in a long history of lawless attempts by North Carolina Republicans to impose one-party rule. Following the Nov. 5 election, GOP supermajorities in both houses of the state legislature [passed](#) a law stripping Democratic Governor-elect Josh Stein of his powers, including his ability to appoint members to the state election board. Republicans then overrode Gov. Roy Cooper’s (D) veto.

Republicans passed legislation to [strip](#) Cooper of power after he narrowly won in 2016. This included cutting the number of positions under the governor, requiring all cabinet nominations to be approved by the Senate, and limiting appointments to the state Board of Education and North Carolina University Board of Trustees.

Following the election of a Republican majority in the Supreme Court in 2022, Republican legislators [adopted](#) some of the nation’s most extremely gerrymandered congressional and legislative maps in 2023. The new maps give them legislative supermajorities and most Congressional seats despite North Carolina being a closely divided “purple state.”

Griffin argues that the challenged ballots, including some from military members, violate state and federal election laws and requested that the Court throw them out. Riggs, who recused herself from the Supreme Court decision, blasted Griffin's efforts to disenfranchise voters and overturn the election results.

Justice Anita Earls, the lone Democrat on the Court, stated that "the standard for a temporary stay has not been met here," adding that "there is no likelihood of success on the merits and the public interest requires that the Court not interfere with the ordinary course of democratic processes as set by statute and the state constitution."

The State Board of Elections and federal courts have dismissed Griffin's challenges, asserting that the ballots in question comply with election laws. However, Griffin continues to appeal these decisions, prompting the state Supreme Court to block certification.

The North Carolina Democratic Party (NCDP) argues that the challenges are baseless and criticized the state Supreme Court's decision, arguing that it is a partisan tactic to reverse the outcome of a legitimate election.

"In what has become a monthslong, anti-democratic campaign at taxpayers' expense against Justice Allison Riggs – who was found to be the clear winner of North Carolina's November state Supreme Court election by two separate recounts – the Republican-led North Carolina Supreme Court is now attempting to give itself sole power to decide its next member rather than the North Carolina voters who unquestionably elected Justice Riggs," said North Carolina Democratic State Chair Anderson Clayton.

"Make no mistake – these craven attacks on North Carolina voters are an affront to this country's foundational values of democracy and the rule of law. One day after the fourth anniversary of Jan. 6, Republicans are once again attempting to overturn an election in plain sight."

Labor and civil rights organizations have responded strongly to the North Carolina Supreme Court's intervention. They call the move a brazen attempt to dismantle democracy and impose GOP authoritarian rule in the state.

"Instead of gracefully conceding, her opponent, Jefferson Griffin, is attempting to throw out tens of thousands of votes – many of which were cast by members of our military – in an attempt to undermine our democratic process, said North Carolina State AFL-CIO President MaryBe McMillan.

"Every vote counts, and now that every ballot has been tallied multiple times, it is clear that Allison Riggs is the winner. It's time for Judge Griffin to concede that he lost in a free and fair election."

McMillan cited a previous election in which Chief Justice Cheri Beasley had to concede after losing by 401 votes in 2020.

Most of the [votes](#) Griffin wants the Court to reject come from voter registrations that lack the last four digits of the voter's Social Security number or driver's license number. However, excluding these votes on this basis would violate federal law. Besides, Griffin has provided no evidence the voters are ineligible to vote.

Sizzle Pie: Oregon pizza workers face firings and union-busting

By Jennifer Kelly and Noah Williams

PORTLAND, Ore.—On the dreary solstice afternoon of Dec. 21, 2024, Sizzle Pie Workers United and many community supporters gathered in solidarity and warmth in front of the 624 East Burnside location to celebrate their win at the National Labor Relations Board, to rally for their upcoming union election, and to demand that multiple unjustly fired workers be reinstated.

Ever since these pizza workers filed for recognition of their union on Sept. 19, 2024, management has been engaging in a dragged-out campaign of union-busting to delay the relatively simple demands of the workers: Reinstatement of all fired workers, stop indiscriminate firings, and increase the pay.

The overwhelming support of the community for the organizing Sizzle Pie workers warmed each and every one of the many, many hearts who stood shivering on East Burnside under a dismal winter sky. They made rousing speeches and chanted for an audience of themselves, customers, passers-by, and a single glowering HR drone seething alone inside the restaurant.

So far, at least four Sizzle Pie workers have been fired during the union campaign, three in the two weeks before Christmas. Union members are clearly being targeted for their legally protected union activity. After the workers declared their intention to unionize, Sizzle Pie management began forcing workers to write letters documenting alleged violations of company policy, then cruelly using these humiliating letters as grounds for the workers' own dismissal.

On the day before the rally, HR actually threatened to call the cops on one worker, Ruthie, as she gathered her belongings and said goodbye to her beloved coworkers of many years. Ruthie is one of the workers that organizers want reinstated.

In fact, Ruthie was fired the very morning after she and other Sizzle Pie workers marched on the boss. At dinnertime on Dec. 19, they delivered a petition with their demands for reinstatement of their fired coworkers and an end to forcing workers to write letters.

Sizzle Pie management is clearly panicked at seeing the workers' total unity and is desperately overreacting in a last attempt to disrupt the workers' hard-fought, long-awaited union election.

Due to the continued firings and horrendous treatment by management, many other workers have decided to leave the company, and few, if any, new employees are starting there. The store has had to close at odd hours due to dwindling staff, leaving workers without pay and customers confused.

Union organizers stated that their goal is to bring Sizzle Pie back to its former glory, which they said was once a great place to work. The organizers also want it to be a better place for customers, having enough staff to be open at consistent hours so customers can actually eat pizza if they want to.

The union election is scheduled for Jan. 9, 2025. Workers feel strongly that they will win the election, and they will continue to organize up to and beyond the vote.

Canadian monopoly capital rallies to Conservative Party as Trudeau calls it quits

By Dave McKee

TORONTO—Three weeks after the abrupt resignation of his Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister [Chrystia Freeland](#), and amid a growing chorus of Liberal Party MPs and regional party caucuses calling for him to move aside, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced on Jan. 6 that he will step down as Liberal leader and head of the government.

In the process, the labor movement could set the tone for Canada's next federal election—which is coming very soon—and mobilize millions of working people into the political struggle.

Imagine the effect of a sustained all-labor campaign to highlight the need for government action to reduce prices on necessities like food, housing, and fuel, and to increase incomes for working people, including unemployed workers and retirees.

What about a cross-country mobilization for full employment, given that two million people are still out of work and that full-time jobs are diminishing and being replaced by part-time employment?

Or what of a coast-to-coast-to-coast call for real action on the housing crisis, complete with rent rollbacks, rent control, a tenants' bill of rights, and a massive construction campaign to build millions of badly needed units of truly affordable publicly owned and publicly provided housing?

This is when Canada needs organized labor to spark a real discussion about the need for strong and expanding social programs like health, education, childcare, and climate and environmental clean-up and protection.

Now is the time for the union movement to call for an end to the government's plans, supported by all parties in Parliament, to jack military spending by more than 100% to \$80 billion in less than a decade, and in the process drain the public coffers of any capacity to protect and expand social programs and infrastructure.

It's a big call, sure—but working people need the labor movement to move into and lead this kind of action, based on working-class politics and class struggle unionism.

If it doesn't happen, the next three months are sure to be dominated by political discourse that sells an agenda based on austerity, militarism, privatization, and growing inequality. And the election that comes out the other end of that discourse will have little to offer but more of the same, with labor and the working class left further behind.

Biden prohibirá algunas perforaciones de petróleo y gas en alta mar de una manera que Trump no podrá deshacer fácilmente

By Cristen Hemingway Jaynes

El presidente Joe Biden planea prohibir el desarrollo de petróleo y gas en alta mar en 625 millones de acres de aguas costeras de Estados Unidos en el Atlántico, el Pacífico y el este del Golfo de México.

La medida es un esfuerzo por brindar protección permanente a las aguas costeras de Estados Unidos y a las comunidades que dependen de ellas contra la perforación de petróleo y gas y el riesgo de derrames de petróleo dañinos, informó Bloomberg.

Mientras tanto, Biden deja abierta la opción de nuevos arrendamientos de petróleo y gas en las partes occidental y central del Golfo que proporcionan aproximadamente el 14 por ciento de la producción del país, según personas familiarizadas con el asunto.

La prohibición incluye las costas de Washington, Oregón, California y parte del mar de Bering en Alaska.

Trump dijo que cuando asuma la presidencia el 20 de enero "desprohibirá" la extracción de petróleo y gas en el área "inmediatamente", aunque no está claro si tendrá la capacidad de implementar esto fácilmente.

La prohibición no tiene fecha de vencimiento y puede resultar difícil para Trump revocarla, tanto política como legalmente.

Lo que los científicos han hecho evidente es que es necesario reducir la producción de combustibles fósiles para evitar los impactos más extremos del cambio climático.

La acción de la administración Biden se está tomando en virtud de la Ley federal de Tierras de la Plataforma Continental Exterior de 1953, que otorga al gobierno autoridad sobre los recursos costa afuera. Ocho presidentes, incluido Trump, han retirado previamente el territorio estadounidense de la extracción de combustibles fósiles en virtud de la ley. Trump lo utilizó para prohibir la extracción de petróleo y gas en las costas de Carolina del Sur, Georgia y Florida.

Sin embargo, la ley no incluye una disposición expresa que permita a los presidentes revocar una prohibición de perforar sin pasar por el Congreso.

Los grupos ambientalistas aprobaron la decisión bipartidista, que protegería la vida silvestre marina y las comunidades costeras de futuros derrames de petróleo.

¡Llamándolo una "victoria épica en el océano!" Joseph Gordon, director de campaña para el clima y la energía de Oceana, una organización conservacionista sin fines de lucro, se unió a otros grupos ambientalistas para elogiar la acción, informó The Guardian.

Los grupos industriales no estaban tan contentos, y el presidente de la Asociación Nacional de Industrias Oceánicas, Erik Milito, expresó su deseo de mantener algunas áreas abiertas a la perforación.

La medida es la más reciente de las decisiones de política climática de última hora de la administración Biden antes de que Trump regrese a la Casa Blanca.

"Los estadounidenses de ambos lados del pasillo apoyan la protección de nuestros océanos de las grandes donaciones de petróleo", dijo la directora ejecutiva de Evergreen Action, Lena Moffitt, como informó The Guardian. "La audaz acción del presidente Biden hoy subraya que no podemos permitirnos la expansión continua de la producción de petróleo y gas si queremos cumplir nuestros objetivos climáticos y evitar los peores impactos de la crisis climática".

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People's World
3339 S. Halsted St. Chicago, IL 60608
Ph: (773) 446-9920 Fax: (773) 446-9928

