



February 15, 2025

## Unions lose bid to stop massive Trump federal buyout plan

By Mark Gruenberg

BOSTON—A coalition of unions, led by the Government Employees (AFGE) has apparently lost its bid to halt the Republican Donald Trump regime's "buyout" ultimatum aimed at 2.4 million federal workers.

U.S. District Judge George O'Toole in Boston lifted the temporary pause he had imposed since Trump, acting at the behest of his handler, multimillionaire Elon Musk, unveiled the "take it or leave it" buyout plan of eight months' severance pay, the week before.

Judge O'Toole threw the unions' case out by ruling they did not have legal "standing" to directly sue for damages, since they were allegedly not individually harmed. His decision angered AFGE President Everett Kelley, whose union—the largest for federal workers—took the lead in the case.

Trump's Office of Personnel Management chortled with glee when the decision came down from O'Toole, and set a new—and immediate—deadline of 7 p.m. Eastern Time on February 12 for workers to sign up to quit at the end of February, but still get paid through September 30.

"OPM is pleased the court rejected a desperate effort to strike down the Deferred Resignation Program. As of 7 p.m. tonight, the program is now closed," the agency declared. "There is no longer any doubt: the Deferred Resignation Program was both legal and a valuable option for federal employees."

Estimates are between 40,000 and 60,000 already have, despite the vagueness of the buyout terms, and despite the fact that if Congress doesn't approve a new government-wide spending bill by March 14, the buyout recipients will join other federal workers on the no-pay line.

### Claims "no standing"

"The unions do not have the required direct stake in" OPM's "Fork In the Road Directive, but are challenging a policy that affects others, specifically executive branch employees. This is not sufficient," O'Toole wrote.

That directive precisely mimics the language Trump's handler, Elon Musk, used when he fired most of the workers he inherited when he bought Twitter, renaming it X.

"Today's ruling is a setback in the fight for dignity and fairness for public servants," AFGE President Everett Kelley replied in a statement. "But it's not the end of that fight. AFGE's lawyers are evaluating the decision and assessing next steps. Importantly, this decision did not address the underlying lawfulness of the program."



"We continue to maintain it is illegal to force American citizens who have dedicated their careers to public service to make a decision, in a few short days, without adequate information, about whether to uproot their families and leave their careers for what amounts to an unfunded IOU from Elon Musk."

AFGE and other federal worker unions, including those who joined the larger union's lawsuit, have cautioned workers not to accept the Trump buyout offer.

They said its constantly changing promises leave unclear if workers who take the buyouts will be free to seek outside jobs, for example.

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CONTINUING THE DAILY WORKER



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In their suit against Trump's "quit or take your chances" scheme on being fired, the union's called his personnel office's decision a massive "arbitrary and capricious" federal buyout plan to get rid of almost two million workers and replace them with Trump political hacks, just as in the spoils system of the Gilded Age.

That's also a key goal of the criminal corporate class backing Trump's firing plan—which extended to a February 12 Trump order mandating huge "reductions in force," governmentese for cashiering workers, thus increasing profits.

The corporate class prefers untrained, neophyte and subservient Trumpites to career civil servants who know what crimes to seek out and punish. Trump's rookies, ideologues and charlatans don't.

The firings are also a long-time goal of the radical right, and part of Trump's planned constitutional *coup d'état*, a goal of the felonious president and his worker-hating puppeteer, multibillionaire Elon Musk.

Left unsaid is that success by the Trump regime would also completely disrupt the lives of more than two million federal workers and their families. That's not counting some 40,000-60,000 who accepted a prior Trump voluntary "buyout" offer before its deadline of February 6.

"AFGE is bringing this suit with our partners today to protect the integrity of the government and prevent union members from being tricked into resigning from the federal service," said Kelley.

## "Shouldn't be misled"

"Federal employees shouldn't be misled by slick talk from unelected billionaires and their lackeys. Despite claims made to the contrary, this deferred resignation scheme—the buyout plan—is unfunded, unlawful, and comes with no guarantees. We won't stand by and let our members become the victims of this con."

AFSCME joined the suit "to stop the purge of qualified professionals from the federal government workforce. Not only are these actions illegal and a scam, but they are eroding the health and well-being of our communities," union President Lee Saunders said.

"These workers do everything from making sure families receive their Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security benefits on time to protecting our drinking water and the food we eat to overseeing our national security. If this chaos goes unchecked, it will have devastating impacts on working people."

National Association of Government Employees President David Holway said "The 'Fork Directive' is a blatant attempt to undermine the merit-based foundation of our civil service. NAGE will not allow our members to be intimidated into making hasty decisions based on misleading information.

"The administration must be held accountable for this unlawful directive, and we are committed to protecting the rights and jobs of our members. NAGE stands firmly against any effort to replace qualified professionals with partisan loyalists at the expense of the American people."

The buyout, Trump regime officials said, would pay the workers through the end of this fiscal year on September 30, with benefits. But the suit notes there's no guarantee of that. Federal funding runs only through March 14, it notes. And a federal law, the Anti-Deficiency Act, bans paying workers after that if there are no funds available.

The forced buyout is only the latest Trump move, but the most drastic, in a series he, Musk and the right-wing Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 envision to downsize the federal government and remake it in their ideological image.

Prior moves included converting 50,000 top positions to a Gilded Age-like spoils system, a spending freeze, a hiring freeze, elimination of diversity, equity and inclusion offices and elimination of civil rights protections.

Trump also fired 17 independent inspectors general and completely shut down, on February 3, of one agency, USAID, locking out its workers, and lawmakers who came to inquire and protest. Some workers, including top non-partisan administrators, were forcibly evicted.

Trump's Environmental Protection Agency chief also is telling his workers he plans to fire 1000 of them and Trump plans to eliminate the entire Department of Education, too.

"The continued success of government is based, in large part, on the institutional memory of its career civil servants who are committed to the missions of their agencies and the prospect of working for the American people," the four unions said.

## They are experts

"These civil servants are professionals and subject matter experts, many of whom have worked diligently and impartially through successive administrations of both major parties to implement changing administration priorities. If these employees leave or are forced out en masse, the country will suffer a dangerous one-two punch."

Besides losing expertise, there will be fewer workers left to manage all the programs Congress enacted, the suit notes.

"And when vacant positions become politicized, as this administration seeks to do, partisanship is elevated over ability and truth, to the detriment of agency missions and the American people.

"That is why Congress, since 1883, has established rights and processes for protecting these employees from undue political influence and has granted employees who have completed a probationary period, or prior applicable service, protections from termination.

"The administration, in its first two weeks, has purported to wipe away longstanding civil service protections and merit system principles mandated by Congress, with strokes of a pen."

Those "strokes of a pen" overriding congressional decisions on spending and priorities, are another part of Trump's coup attempt this time. The Constitution says the president "shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed." It does not give the president any power to unilaterally override them.

"Daily, the president is eliminating offices and programs supported by appropriations and tasked by Congress with specific functions," the suit says. "To leverage employees into accepting the offer and resigning, the Fork Directive threatens employees with eventual job loss in the event they refuse."

"OPM stated 'the majority of federal agencies are likely to be downsized through restructurings, realignments, reductions in force,'" it notes. That was Trump's follow-up executive order on February 11.

Or, as longtime right-winger Grover Norquist put it in 2001, “My goal is to cut government in half in 25 years, to get it down to the size where we can drown it in the bathtub.”

The demand for the injunction did not discuss whether Trump may defy it, as Vice President JD Vance has since threatened.

Not only are civil servants a favorite Republican punching bag, but the party created and implanted an image with the people at large that federal workers are overpaid, lazy and shiftless time-servers.

But opinion polls show 90% of the public back a non-partisan, non-politicized civil service.

The entire sequence of memo, deadline and firing threat is “contrary to law” and to “reasoned practices of government restructuring, and ignores history and practices around effective workforce reduction,” the lawsuit declared. It’s a “pretext for removing and replacing government workers on an ideological basis.”

## Confronting Trump and Musk coup: CPUSA launches Rapid Response project

By Cameron Harrison

NEW YORK—Amid rampant corporate greed, rising inequality, and the erosion of democratic rights, the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) continues to uphold its [century-long](#) mission of fighting for the working class. With its recently launched [rapid response project](#), the Party is mobilizing members and allies, as part of the broader resistance movement, to confront the Trump administration and its billionaire backers.

“We’re in for a period of intense class and democratic struggle,” Joe Sims, co-chair of the CPUSA, said. “It’s going to be heavy. We can expect that the GOP is going to use all of the means at their disposal, including threats, intimidation, and fear, to accomplish their goals.”

The rapid response project traces its origins to the post-election period, initially launched as the “Sixty-Day Campaign.” This effort aimed to maximize pressure on Congress during the critical window before the presidential inauguration. Inspired by the widespread mobilization tactics adopted by hundreds of organizations, the Party’s initiative helped amplify grassroots pressure while complementing on-the-ground organizing efforts in the face of a rising fascist threat.

In the period between the election and Trump’s inauguration, the CPUSA mobilized against the Stop Terrorism Financing Act, a draconian [bill](#) that would have granted the Treasury Department unchecked power to accuse any nonprofit of supporting “terrorism” and dismantle it. The project also rallied forces behind Senator Bernie Sanders’ [joint resolutions](#) to block arms sales to Israel and demanded Congress confirm 47 pending judicial appointments before Trump could further stack the courts with far-right judges.

Additionally, the project pushed for the passage of the Neighbors Not Enemies Act, legislation which aimed at protecting immigrant communities from mass detention and deportation—policies that harm all working people. The act would have repealed the Alien and Sedition Act of 1798, a law that could be weaponized to deport millions of immigrants.

The Party also advocated for the Social Security Fairness Act—which successfully passed—repealing the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset to end discriminatory practices that reduced Social Security benefits for [millions of workers](#).



The initiative also played a role in advocating for Cuba’s [removal](#) from the so-called “State Sponsors of Terrorism” list. While President Biden briefly delisted Cuba during the end of his term, the Trump administration, led by anti-Cuba hawk Marco Rubio, swiftly [reversed](#) the decision. The CPUSA highlighted the humanitarian stakes for the Cuban people and the benefits that cooperation with Cuba would bring U.S. workers and farmers.

Following the inauguration, the campaign evolved into the ongoing rapid response project. Drawing lessons from the original “Sixty-Day Campaign,” Party organizers recognized the dual impact of sustained protest: maintaining consistent pressure on members of Congress from their constituents while strengthening local, on-the-ground organizing efforts.

Today, the rapid response project has turned its focus to the growing threat posed by Elon Musk and the billionaire class that finds its voice in the Trump administration. Musk’s attempts to consolidate power and influence government policy have sparked [outrage](#), and the CPUSA has mobilized its network to demand that Congress take action to halt this coup attempt.

Musk’s power grab has escalated to the point of [locking down federal buildings](#), enforced by unidentified individuals from mysterious security forces. In a manner reminiscent of Nazi brownshirts, these enforcers are physically blocking doorways, preventing the public, federal workers, and even elected lawmakers from entering the very buildings where they carry out the essential operations of federal agencies.

## Confronting Trump and Musk coup: CPUSA launches Rapid Response project

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The fightback in D.C. has taken shape, spearheaded by the trade union movement, with leadership from the American Federation of Government Employees, AFSCME, and the American Federation of Teachers. Some members of Congress are standing with them, including Reps. Rashida Tlaib of Michigan and Ilhan Omar of Minnesota. The Party is mobilizing its members to join the mass protests in Washington, D.C., including recent demonstrations at the Department of Labor.

The CPUSA sees defending the trade union movement and public workers from Elon Musk's power grab as critical. They are urging public opposition to all Trump nominees and demanding Musk's removal, as well as an end to his efforts to unconstitutionally seize public funds. The Party's message to Congress is consistent and clear: *stand with the working class, not the billionaires.*

In a direct assault on undocumented workers, President Trump and the ultra right, with some Democratic support, have pushed through the Laken Riley Act, a law that undermines constitutional rights by stripping undocumented workers of due process. The measure mandates the indefinite detention of noncitizens accused of even minor offenses, such as shoplifting, without trial.

"It treats immigrants in this country like enemy combatants, opening them up to the same abuses as those who were sent to Guantanamo on unsubstantiated charges of terrorism, and grants to racist vigilantes the power to initiate a deportation process with a mere pointing of the finger," the Immigrant Rights Subcommittee of the CPUSA said.

In addition to the Laken Riley Act, the rapid response project has also taken aim at Trump's unconstitutional executive order ending birthright citizenship—a brazen attack on the 14th Amendment and immigrant communities. As a result of the struggle, multiple lawsuits were filed. The courts have not made a definite decision yet, but have stopped it from moving forward as of now.

In the face of Trump and MAGA's McCarthyism 2.0, the CPUSA has launched a campaign to fight against the so-called "Crucial Communism Teaching Act," a bill designed to vilify progressive movements and divide the anti-MAGA coalition.

By labeling everything from labor rights to climate action as "socialist" or "communist," the ultra-right seeks to roll back decades of social progress won by the working class and criminalize dissent.

The rapid response project has mobilized opposition to this bill, which would allow far-right groups like the so-called "Victims of Communism Foundation"—backed by Project 2025's Lee Edwards—to infiltrate classrooms and spread propaganda that highlights the supposed virtues of capitalism and the "evils of communism." The CPUSA warns that this legislation threatens not only communists but every movement fighting for social justice, from our trade unions to environmental justice organizations.

Joelle Fishman, the chair of the Party's Political Action Commission, told People's World that, in her experience, "one call by me to a member of Congress and speaking with an aide offered a new perspective that contributed to changing a vote against the Laken Riley Act.

"I grew up in the McCarthy era and I know this is the opening gun in criminalizing immigrants and the new McCarthy 2.0 period."

The CPUSA's rapid response project is more than a simple tool for mobilization—it's striving to be a connector between the broader working class and democratic forces and the Party in an era of unprecedented social challenges.

"The answer is to organize, organize, organize in unity and solidarity. That is the only way to defeat the fascist forces, defend democracy, and even make progressive gains and victories for the working class and people of this country" Fishman said.

As the struggles against fascism and monopoly rule intensify, the rapid response project stands as a key tool in the organized resistance. The CPUSA is proud to stand with the many labor, democratic, and progressive forces that continue to make demands on their representatives from Washington down to city councils, and take to the streets with labor and its allies in organized, mass struggle. The future of the country depends on it.

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## VA nurses are in short supply, unions say Trump's deferred resignation plan could make things worse

By Carla K. Johnson and Brian Witte

For the federal government's largest group of employees — nurses caring for military veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs — the Trump administration's deferred resignation offer and its looming Thursday deadline come amid longstanding staffing shortages, deemed severe at more than half of all facilities.

Unions are discouraging nurses from accepting the offer, and leaders say an exodus would directly and immediately affect the care of its 9.1 million enrolled veterans.

"We're already facing a staffing crisis in our hospitals," said Irma Westmoreland, a registered nurse who heads the Veterans Affairs unit for National Nurses United. "We cannot afford to lose any more staff."

Nurses for the VA — the federal government's largest employer — comprise the biggest single group of federal workers, numbering more than 100,000 and accounting for 5% of all full-time permanent employees, according to an Associated Press analysis of personnel data.

Union official Mary-Jean Burke said she's taken calls from nurses and other VA workers from across the country. At first, she said, some thought the buyout plan sounded attractive, but second thoughts have set in.

"Originally, I think people were like, 'I'm out of here,'" said Burke, a physical therapist and American Federation of Government Employees leader. As more information came from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, it started sounding "a little bit too good to be true and people were hesitant."

## VA nurses are in short supply, deferred resignation plan could make things worse

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VA nurses are somewhat older than the rest of the workforce, with 16.2% of nurses 55 and older, compared with 14.6% for the rest of the federal workforce, AP's analysis shows.

Burke said some workers who are retirement eligible have been "on the fence" about the offer, which promises pay through Sept. 30, though there have been broad concerns about the program's legality.

Nurses were confused at first, and now they're angry, Westmoreland said.

Official communication on the offer has implied the nurses are not productive, she said, and that's insulted those she's talked to. A follow-up question-and-answer email from the Office of Personnel Management encouraged federal employees to find a job in the private sector.

"The way to greater American prosperity is encouraging people to move from lower productivity jobs in the public sector to higher productivity jobs in the private sector," the email said.

Burke said she's been asked by workers about the flurry of other executive orders, too.

"I can tell you here in Indiana and other places, people are really frightened about the chaos, the chaos they kind of feel around them," Burke said.

The department's leadership also has expressed concern about the potential impact on nursing in the VA, she said. More than 80% of facilities are experiencing a severe nursing shortage, [according to a 2024 report](#) from the VA Office of Inspector General.

"They're scared, too," she said. "They know that they have to follow the president's orders, per se, but then you hear the caveat, like, 'Hey, if five nurses take the buyout, we don't have an OR anymore.' That's in the dialogue of conversation."

The VA did not respond to an email seeking comment.

In an email sent Wednesday by the Office of Personnel Management, officials ramped up pressure on federal workers to accept the financial incentives to resign.

"Employees will be subject to enhanced standards of suitability and conduct as we move forward," the email said.

Burke said she is worried about the federal workforce more broadly.

"I know it's going to look different," she said. "A lot of people are stressed out because they kind of feel like the predictability of their mission is a little bit different."

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## 'It's demoralizing': Trump's climate funding freeze has left tribes and community groups in limbo

By Naveena Sadasivam

When the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe landed a \$19.9 million grant from the Environmental Protection Agency in early January, Robert Byrnes was elated. As a grant writer for the tribe, he and a few other employees had pulled 60-hour weeks during the holidays to ensure the agency had all the paperwork it needed to award the funds. The much-needed money would be put to use on the tribe's reservation in South Dakota, repairing a historic bridge that had been razed a few years ago due to safety concerns, replacing asphalt roofs, and establishing resilience hubs to help tribal members during extreme weather. The grant was, as Byrnes put it, the "hugest" the tribe ever received for environmental work.

Once the [agreement was inked](#) on January 10, the tribe got access to the money through the Automated Standard Application for Payments, an online portal that grant recipients use to submit reimbursements and draw down their funds. In the weeks that followed, the tribe made a call for bids, hired contractors, and bought roofing materials, construction supplies, safety equipment, and freeze-dried food to stock the resilience hub.

Work proceeded quickly until the Trump administration [issued a memo on January 27 directing federal agencies to freeze all funding](#). Suddenly, the tribe was shut out of its funding. Its \$7 million grant to install solar panels through the EPA's Solar for All program also is in limbo. Byrnes remains unsure about the future of a \$300,000 grant for resilient infrastructure from the Department of Energy and \$600,000 for food distribution from the Department of Agriculture.

"We've got a lot of hours invested," said Byrnes. "It's demoralizing especially after a signed contract.

And you would think at that point, you got a contract with the federal government that should be pretty secure." He said the tribe hasn't been reimbursed for roughly half a million dollars.

Over the last two weeks, community groups, environmental organizations, and tribes that had been awarded billions in funding for climate and equity work have been scrambling to assess what the federal funding freeze means for them. One nonprofit with a \$2.2 million [Community Change grant](#) from the EPA has accrued half a million dollars in unreimbursed expenses and has decided to stop hiring people. Others have pulled out of partnerships funded by the federal government, paused work with contractors, and are considering laying off or furloughing employees.

"It's insane," said the leader of one nonprofit. "The last three weeks have been lost work." (Several grant recipients requested anonymity because they did not want to jeopardize federal funding, but a review of [publicly available government spending data](#) confirmed that they received grants.)

These groups have been unable to access their money despite at least two court orders requiring that the federal government release it. On January 31, a Rhode Island court issued a [temporary restraining order against the Trump administration](#). Then, on Monday, the same court ruled that the [government continued withholding funds](#) in defiance of that order. It ordered the government to "immediately restore frozen funding" and "immediately end any federal funding pause." (On Tuesday, a federal [appeals court rejected the Justice Department's request](#) to lift the restraining order.)

But as of Tuesday, many of the nonprofits and others awaiting disbursements still don't have access to them. Meanwhile, they continue incurring costs. Because grant payments are made through reimbursements, recipients are expected to front the money for any expenses, then submit receipts electronically for reimbursement. In some cases, this happens instantaneously. Since many of the grants cover payroll, labor costs, and supplies, those relying on them tend to submit this paperwork on a rolling basis. Some groups are seeking bridge loans and ways to cover the shortfall.

"There are all kinds of ways that folks are trying to mitigate harm, but they're not going to be able to avoid harm," said Hana Vizcarra, a senior attorney with the environmental law firm Earthjustice. "There's harm to the communities they're working in because if they're unable to move forward with projects or have stalled those projects, that has an impact on the communities."

On President Trump's first day in office, he signed an executive order requiring federal agencies to pause all funding appropriated through the Inflation Reduction Act and the bipartisan infrastructure law, both of which Congress passed to infuse the economy with billions of dollars for climate and environmental projects. The government appeared to release at least some funding following last month's court order.

On February 4, the EPA sent an internal memo notifying employees that it is unfreezing funds, including those from the Inflation Reduction Act and the bipartisan infrastructure law, to comply with that order. The letter noted that the agency's Office of Budget would provide a "detailed list" of programs that will continue receiving funds. But a follow-up list reviewed by Grist included just one Inflation Reduction Act program for "consumer education."

Then on Thursday, Chad McIntosh, the agency's acting deputy administrator, instructed his staff to review all grant programs. Grist reviewed that directive which said that was needed to root out fraud and abuse.

"Congress has been clear on the need for oversight of funds provided to the agency for the implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act and other funding programs that may be improperly utilized," the memo noted.

The following day, the agency's budget office sent an internal email announcing a funding pause for more than two dozen air pollution, environmental justice, and clean vehicle programs.

"This list includes a number of climate and equity grants," said Michelle Roos, executive director of the Environmental Protection Network, an environmental nonprofit that helps local groups navigate EPA's grantmaking process. "And grantees are being told that EPA is releasing funding in tranches."

In a statement, an EPA spokesperson told Grist the agency had begun disbursing funds tied to the Inflation Reduction Act and bipartisan infrastructure law. It has over the last week worked to ensure access was restored "by Friday afternoon," according to an email. However, it also has identified several programs "as having potential inconsistencies with necessary financial and oversight procedural requirements or grant conditions of awards or programs." The spokesperson also said the agency received "numerous concerning responses" to EPA administrator Lee Zeldin's call for tips about theft of funds and misuse of grant money.

Some groups saw their funding restored on Friday only to lose it again. The Gonzaga Institute for Climate, Water, and the Environment, along with its partners, secured nearly \$20 million from the EPA in early January in part to build climate resilience hubs in Spokane, Washington. When the institute lost access to that money last week, it grappled with what that might mean for its work. The group had already hired a program coordinator and debated whether it could continue to employ them. Brian Hennings, the organization's director, felt relief when the freeze was lifted Friday. The hammer fell again on Tuesday, but Hennings said the institute remains committed to its work.

"We're a Jesuit Catholic humanist university committed to social and environmental justice and see part of the reason for our existence as wanting to serve those who are most vulnerable to the impacts of a rapidly changing climate," said Hennings. "We have a legal obligation under this contract, but we also have a moral responsibility to see this work through."

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## MAGA's anti-DEI assault aims to intensify racial division of labor

By African American Equality Commission, CPUSA

During this time studying in both the United States and Germany, W.E.B. DuBois' observed much of the racism that CPUSA leader Henry Winston would later identify as a "breeding ground" for fascist ideology. Describing his experiences in academia, Du Bois wrote:

*"In graduate school at Harvard and again in Germany ... race became a matter of culture and cultural history. The history of the world was paraded before the observation of students. Which was the superior race? Manifestly, that which had a history, the white race ... and consequently in America and Germany, Africa was left without culture and without history."*

Indeed, if racism is a weapon utilized by the ruling class, historical and cultural erasure is one of its most reliable forms of ammunition.

Over the past few years we've witnessed the Supreme Court's reversal of affirmative action, the banning of books discussing racism and social justice, along with the elimination of African American studies in publicly funded academic institutions.

Today, this treacherous form of racism, that of erasure, is once again being openly wielded by wealthy corporate bosses and the owning class of our country. In fact, they seek to erase the multiracial, multinational working class from the workplace itself.

In the weeks following the election of Donald Trump, a tsunami of companies — household names like Walmart, McDonalds, Target, Toyota, and Molson Coors — have announced plans to roll back their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs. The Trump Administration, in just the first day of being in power, eliminated all mention of DEI at the federal level. This includes revoking Executive Order 11246, signed by Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965, which prohibited federal contractors from discriminating on the basis of gender, race, and nationality in their hiring practices.

Certainly, the elimination of nondiscriminatory hiring practices and workplace policies will not and never has created a "more fair" or "merit based" system. Trump and his MAGA cronies have asserted that this move attends to the needs and demands of U.S. workers — that it strengthens the foundations of U.S. society, but it unquestionably does the opposite.

The move risks putting us back on the same foundation of the racist segregation era. It risks resurrecting long defeated old Jim Crow, just under different pretenses. The division of labor based on race, nationality, and gender did not create a stronger workforce in the United States then, and it will not now.

### **A gift to the bosses**

As NAACP President Derrick Johnson said recently, the Trump Administration's action will "only worsen America's racial hierarchy and benefit the oligarch class." Concealing and obfuscating the history of struggles for social justice within minority communities aim to keep working people ignorant of the strength in class unity, and only fodders the flame for Trump and MAGA's false narrative, making it that much more potent.

It is no wonder why many large corporations and wealthy bosses have fallen in line behind Donald Trump. Nor do we have to wonder why the erasure of African American history curriculums included the stripping away of important notes on resistance, or why books such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* or *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* were banned by far right actors. The onslaught against DEI is indeed the ruling class wielding the weapon of racism, using erasure as its ammunition, against working class unity.

This is even further demonstrated by the actions of the unelected head of unofficial government entity DOGE. Elon Musk's not-so covert attempt to carry out a coup against the executive branch of the federal government is being performed under the guise of cutting "illegal" DEI mandates and programs.

In just a little over a week, we saw and continue to see Musk and Trump fire longtime civil servants, issue a memo to freeze federal grants, implement federal hiring freezes, and access databases with confidential information.

Almost immediately, we saw its disastrous effects. Just days after the Trump Administration gutted agencies dedicated to keeping the country's airways safe, such as TSA and FAA, we witnessed multiple plane crashes leading to nearly 75 total lives lost. In turn, like a malefic merry go round, the President responded by doubling down on his anti-DEI tirade, detracting from the real root cause — his anti-working class onslaught of the federal government.

One interesting line from the now rescinded memo that issued the freeze on federal grant spending was this:

*"The use of Federal resources to advance Marxist equity ... does not improve the day-to-day lives of those we serve."*

Within this lie, there is a kernel of truth. And that is that real Marxists, at least those of us in the Communist Party USA, will always fight for equality, along with diversity and inclusion. We will always struggle to unite the multiracial, multiethnic, multi-gendered working class against forces determined to keep us divided — forces determined to usher in Jim Crow 2.0.

As a single, united, and class conscious force, workers can break the foundations of fascism currently being laid by Trump and his MAGA cronies.

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## **Rev. Barber at the Capitol: 'The president is not a king'**

By Mark Gruenberg

WASHINGTON—There was an unusual speaker with a straightforward message amid the parade of lawmakers and union officials marching to the podium near the U.S. Capitol on February 11 to support embattled and endangered federal workers: The Rev. William Barber II.

What the Poor People's Campaign co-chair said was quite succinct: "The president is not a king."

"A president is not a dictator unless we let him be a dictator," Barber preached.

"We stand with the workers, and they"—Republican President and oligarch Donald Trump, his multibillionaire puppeteer Elon Musk, and other oligarchs who support and plan to profit from the duo's actions —"are fighting hard against us because they're scared."

"You can't bow, I can't bow. This is the time to take a stand," Barber declared.

The Government Employees (AFGE) sponsored and organized the rally, which drew more than a thousand people to within sight of the U.S. Capitol dome. It was called to show solidarity with workers and against the destruction of the civil service and illegal closure of government programs by corporate capitalist Republican President Trump and his controller, Musk.

They're aided and abetted by Trump's anti-worker executive order edicts and a Musk task force of 22-somethings, the so-called "Department of Government Efficiency," or DOGE. The task force is all computer and spreadsheet geeks, who invade agencies, demonize workers, and commandeer sensitive records and personal financial and other info.

"Save the civil service" from Trump-Musk destruction "and you save the country," its rule of law and the U.S. Constitution, declared Government Employees President Everett Kelley, whose union organized and hosted the rally.

### **Pointed message for lawmakers**

But he also had a pointed message for lawmakers, including pro-Trump Republicans, who have so far turned deaf ears and blindly followed their ruler: "Demand the executive branch follow the law and support and defend the people we represent, their rights and their security."

Barber's remarks were unusual because the Poor People's Campaign has been resolutely apolitical. It denounces politicians of both parties for ignoring the needs of poor and low-wealth people in the U.S. It's concentrated on mobilizing them and registering them and getting out their votes for supporters of the poor's priorities.

Worker rights, especially the right to organize, is one of those priorities. So is raising the minimum wage to a living wage. So are large cuts in war spending, with the cash transferred to health care for all, better education, and affordable housing, among other priorities.

So has the elimination of the Trump-GOP tax cut for corporations and the rich, and the exposure of partisan political right-wing preachers. Barber calls them un-Christian for equating Christ—or even God—with Republican dogma and capitalist repression of workers.

"The attack on you, the attack on the civil service is unacceptable, unconscionable and un-American," said House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y. "We'll stand with you until every one of Trump's executive orders has been reversed."

DOGE not only roots out the data Musk and Trump want—for their own purposes and profits—but it arbitrarily closes and padlocks agencies, firing all the workers. Trump plans to replace non-partisan civil servants with his loyalists, who would swear allegiance to Trump, not the U.S. Constitution.

“The civil service provides expert service from people who know what they’re doing. They’re not political hacks who sow chaos and confusion,” said Rep. Bobby Scott, D-Va., the party leader on the politically hyperpolarized House Education and the Workforce Committee.

“To the Republicans: Uphold your oath of office. Don’t aid and abet an autocratic administration,” AFGE President Kelley declared. “Use the power you have to protect the Constitution of the United States and the American people.” No Republicans spoke at the rally.

“And #2, defund the Musk empire” by yanking federal funds for Tesla plants and other enterprises, Kelley proposed. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Wis., a Painters Union member who sits on the House Appropriations Committee—which is supposed to help distribute federal funds—promised to try that, but didn’t say how he’d succeed on the GOP-run panel.

“Number three, defund firms that engage in union-busting,” said Kelley. Musk’s Tesla and X, formerly Twitter, union-bust. So does another prominent Trump backer: Amazon’s Jeff Bezos. “Elon Musk and Donald Trump would like people to believe you have swanky jobs,” Rep. Emilia Sykes, D-Ohio, commented. “That’s what they have. It’s called projection” in psychology.

Some speakers put the impact of the Trump-Musk purge of workers in practical terms that even pro-Trump Republican voters could understand. Kelley suggested some Trump voters now “suffer from buyer’s remorse.

#### **Didn’t vote for contaminated meals**

“They didn’t vote for putting contaminated meals on supermarket shelves” because there aren’t enough Agriculture Department food inspectors due to the Musk-Trump purges.

“They didn’t vote to put our soldiers at risk by firing Defense Department employees and replacing them with contractors” who cost double as much as government workers and make more mistakes, added Kelley, himself a veteran.

“You keep food safe to eat and water safe to drink,” said Sykes. “And when the Environmental Protection Agency came to East Palestine, Ohio,” after the horrific Norfolk Southern train derailment, fire, and release of toxic chemicals, “They made sure the people of East Palestine had clean air, clean water and monitoring” of contamination from the leaky tank cars.

“An attack on you is an attack on the American people,” added Sen. Angela Alsobrooks, D-Md., who, after speaking in D.C., rushed off to an anti-Trump, anti-Musk, anti-DOGE rally at Social Security headquarters in Woodlawn, Md., a Baltimore suburb.

Musk and Trump are targeting both the workers and Social Security payments, other speakers said. “Without federal workers, the country grinds to a halt,” said Rep. Linda Sanchez, D-Calif., a former L.A.-area Electrical Worker as their chief counsel.

AFGE’s rally attracted National Nurses United, Communications Workers, Service Employees, Professional and Technical Engineers, Treasury Employees, Postal Workers, Auto Workers, Electrical Workers, the Association of Flight Attendants/CWA, AFSCME, the Machinists, the Painters, Unite HERE, the Steelworkers and the Amalgamated Transit Union.

One notable union absentee: The Teamsters, one of the few unions to stay neutral in the 2024 election. Their headquarters is a city block from the rally site on Capitol Hill.

The BlueGreen Alliance, a joint union-green organization, and Jobs With Justice also came, as did the Union of Concerned Scientists, Free DC, and several members of the CPUSA.

The rally showed mass solidarity with the millions of public workers, especially federal workers, whom corporate criminal President Trump, convicted of campaign finance law-breaking in New York and his owner, multimillionaire Musk, target for the trash.

Their tools to destroy the federal civil service, and replace it with the 1880s-style spoils system of the Gilded Age are a series of Trump executive orders. They cut the workforce, and try to strongarm workers into taking so-called—and unfunded—“buyouts.”

The executive orders also freeze hiring and break the law and the constitution by closing agencies and impounding funds Congress appropriated and shutting agencies Congress established. Their aim, many speakers said, is to institute their own right-wing pro-corporate agenda, especially to fund a future tax cut this year for corporations and the rich.

Their big tool is the so-called “Department of Government Efficiency” (DOGE) a Musk-headed task force of 22-something computer geeks, blessed by Trump, to invade federal agencies, remove and analyze vital data—everything from your tax return at the Treasury Department to your firm’s minimum wage and overtime pay violations at the Labor Department.

It’s also to replace non-partisan civil servants with Trump loyalists.

#### **Fired everyone**

In at least one case, the agency named the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, which actually pursues corrupt corporations who fleece people, Musk’s DOGE shut it down, padlocked the doors, and fired all workers, except for brown-shirted security guards.

DOGE also defies congressional oversight, even though the U.S. Constitution says the president “shall take care that the laws” Congress passes “be faithfully executed.”

Trump isn’t doing that, and Musk’s DOGE is aiding and abetting that lawlessness, congressional speakers told the crowd. Signs at the rally referred often to “stop the coup.”

Trump and Musk are enacting all this by executive orders and edicts right now “because they’re afraid of you,” Barber told the crowd of several thousand people. The duo also knows their program would never get through even a GOP-run Congress. Congressional speakers promised to tie it up in knots.

Rep. Pocan, a member of the Painters, made the point that Musk “spent \$277 million to buy Donald Trump’s ass and put it in the White House” in the 2024 presidential campaign.

“And all of these attacks are coming out of Project 2025,” the Trump Republican platform authored by the extreme-right Heritage Foundation, and headed by Russell Vought, now Trump’s Office of Management and Budget director and the second-most powerful federal official. “An unelected billionaire has been bulldozing the workforce,” Pocan said of Musk.

“It is unsurprising that an administration run by billionaires is eliminating oversight and firing dedicated federal workers,” AFSCME President Lee Saunders said.



“They know federal workers protect the public against corporate abuse and won’t allow them to use taxpayer dollars as their own personal slush fund.

“So, instead of trying to improve the lives of working people, they are creating a staffing crisis...that hurts children, seniors, people with disabilities, working people, and those most vulnerable. We won’t stand for it, and we will keep fighting back.”

Other speakers warned Musk and Trump won’t stop with cowing federal workers, but will extend their corporate hold to the entire country.

That prospect led several speakers, with Rep, David Norcross, D-N.J., an Electrical Worker being the first, to lead the crowd in chants of “Fuck Trump!” Rep. Maxine Dexter, D-Ore., added Musk’s name to that chant.

It also led to an ad-libbed version of Which Side Are You On? sung at the end of the rally by Elise Bryant, a News Guild member and director of the D.C. Labor Chorus. Its end:

“Trump’s now coming for us. He wants us all to fail,” she sang. “But we all know what we want. We want Trump in jail.” “Which side are you on? Which side are you on?” Bryant got a big roar.

## The 2025 People’s World Fund Drive has begun!

By Special to People’s World

[We aim to raise \\$200,000 and are calling on our generous, committed readers and supporters to help us achieve our goal and donate today!](#)

We must achieve our goal. Here’s why.

The mainstream corporate media is in crisis; it is unable (or unwilling) to take a stand against the unfolding fascist Trump/Musk coup. It seems adrift in the constitutional and democratic crisis confronting the country.

This crisis facing the corporate media is many-sided.

The growth of a vast right-wing media-propaganda network funded by fascist billionaires has misled and confused millions by spreading disinformation, creating information silos, and guiding public discourse with lies, racism, misogyny, and xenophobia.

Simultaneously, a handful of oligarchs now monopolizes and controls most of the legacy media while Wall Street hedge funds devastate many iconic local newspapers.

Moreover, corporate media is capitulating to Trump or overtly aligning with the administration’s authoritarian agenda out of fear of repercussions. It even goes so far as to pay tens of millions in protection fees. In return, the mainstream media normalizes the fascist threat, and Trump’s racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, and corruption, or neglects to cover these critical issues.

The attack on press freedom is straight from the fascist playbook. It uses state power to coerce the mass media into compliance, suppress independent voices, spread mass propaganda, and install right-wing media as state media and the source of “official news.”

These developments threaten constitutional democracy, including First Amendment rights. An independent and free media is a vital pillar in any democratic society, whether bourgeois or socialist.

It is part of intensifying information warfare, or the “battle of ideas,” which is essential to the class and democratic struggle.

Defending the existence of a free press while championing an independent, pro-labor, pro-democracy, and anti-corporate media is vital for establishing a united front majoritarian alliance against fascism.

The legacy of mainstream corporate media cannot be relied upon for this task. The pro-democracy alliance must establish an independent media ecosystem as part of the broad anti-MAGA popular front alliance of organized labor, the wider left, and mass democratic movements.

*People’s World* is essential to this effort. Our mission is to report on and amplify the growing resistance nationally and at the grassroots, expose the ongoing Trump/Musk coup, and provide a radical democratic alternative in economics, politics, and foreign policy.



At the same time, we plan to modernize as a multimedia platform that includes print, podcasts, videos, and audio articles. We need to expand and enhance our coverage while deepening our Marxist analysis. We must grow as a strong alternative media voice that connects with new audiences, including those disillusioned, alienated, or influenced by the right-wing media ecosystem.

[Therefore, we must meet our \\$200,000 goal! Please donate \\$10, \\$20, \\$50, or \\$100 today! Or become a monthly sustainer!](#)

In 2024, we raised approximately \$180,000 during very challenging circumstances. We want to express our deepest gratitude to you, dear readers, for your generous donations and monthly sustainers that made this possible.

Despite the ongoing economic and political uncertainties, we can reach our goal this year and do some heavy lifting by raising \$140,000 by May Day.

Members of the Communist Party USA National Committee supported the campaign by pledging over \$12,000!

I’ll conclude with a shout-out to Eric Gordon, a staff writer and cultural critic for *People’s World*. Eric is a passionate fundraiser. He recently celebrated his 80th birthday by organizing a party that raised \$5,000. Eric reached out to readers, friends, and family, garnering large and small donations.

[Although the rest of us may not be able to do what Eric did, we can all do something to ensure the future of People’s World!](#)

Let’s go!

John Bachtell

President, Long View Publishing Co., Inc

Publishers of *People’s World*

## **India's ruling far-right BJP wins New Delhi election**

By Morning Star

India's ruling Hindu nationalist party won the most seats in the high-stakes state legislature election in India's federal territory, including New Delhi, for the first time in over a quarter-century, according to official data released on Saturday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 47 seats in the 70-member assembly that includes India's capital of 20 million people, ousting the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) that has ruled New Delhi since 2015.

The AAP won 22 seats. The outcome of the race in one remaining seat had yet to be declared, according to the Election Commission of India.

India's main opposition Congress party failed to win a seat for the third consecutive election.

In a major upset, the AAP founder and leader Arvind Kejriwal and his deputy, Manish Sisodia, lost their seats.

"We accept the mandate of the people with great humility," Mr. Kejriwal said in a video statement while congratulating the BJP on its victory.

The BJP's Amit Shah, who is India's home minister, said that the BJP would make New Delhi "the world's number one capital by fulfilling all promises."

## **Los líderes mundiales consideran ofensivo y desconcertante el plan de Trump para "tomar Gaza"**

By Roger McKenzie

El presidente de Estados Unidos, Donald Trump, ha redoblado su promesa de tomar el control de Gaza.

Hablando el domingo, el presidente Trump dijo: "Estoy comprometido a comprar y ser dueño de Gaza. En cuanto a reconstruirlo, podemos dárselo a otros estados del Medio Oriente para que construyan secciones del mismo.

"Otras personas pueden hacerlo gracias a nuestros auspicios. Pero estamos comprometidos a apropiarnos de ello, a asumirlo y a asegurarnos de que Hamás no retroceda".

Trump añadió: "No hay nada a lo que volver. El lugar es un sitio de demolición. El resto será demolido".

Haciendo caso omiso de la ola de oposición mundial a su plan, el presidente Trump insistió en que las naciones árabes aceptarían acoger a los palestinos después de hablar con él e insistió en que los palestinos abandonarían Gaza si tuvieran la opción.

Afirmó: "No quieren regresar a Gaza. Si pudiéramos darles un hogar en una zona más segura, la única razón por la que hablan de regresar a Gaza es que no tienen otra alternativa. Cuando tengan una alternativa, no querrán regresar a Gaza".

Los dos principales candidatos en las elecciones alemanas de finales de este mes criticaron el plan de Trump.

El canciller alemán Olaf Scholz describió el plan del presidente Trump como un "escándalo" en un debate preelectoral el domingo.

Scholtz, socialdemócrata, afirmó: "La reubicación de poblaciones es inaceptable y contraria al derecho internacional", añadió en el debate en la televisión pública ARD y ZDF.

Su principal rival, el demócrata cristiano Friedrich Merz, estuvo de acuerdo con Scholtz. Dijo: "Es una de toda una serie de propuestas provenientes de la administración estadounidense que son ciertamente desconcertantes, pero hay que esperar y ver qué se entiende realmente en serio y cómo se implementa; probablemente haya mucha retórica en esto".

Mientras tanto, en Jerusalén oriental, la policía israelí ha allanado una antigua librería de propiedad palestina, deteniendo a los propietarios Ahmed y Mahmoud Muna y confiscando libros sobre el conflicto que dura décadas.

La policía israelí dijo que los libros incitaban a la violencia.

La Librería Educativa se estableció hace más de 40 años y es un centro de vida intelectual en Jerusalén oriental.

Según May Muna, esposa de Mahmoud, los soldados escogieron libros con títulos o banderas palestinas, "sin saber lo que significaban".

Dijo que usaron Google Translate en algunos títulos en árabe para ver qué querían decir antes de desecharlos.

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