

CAP Increases are Not a Celebration

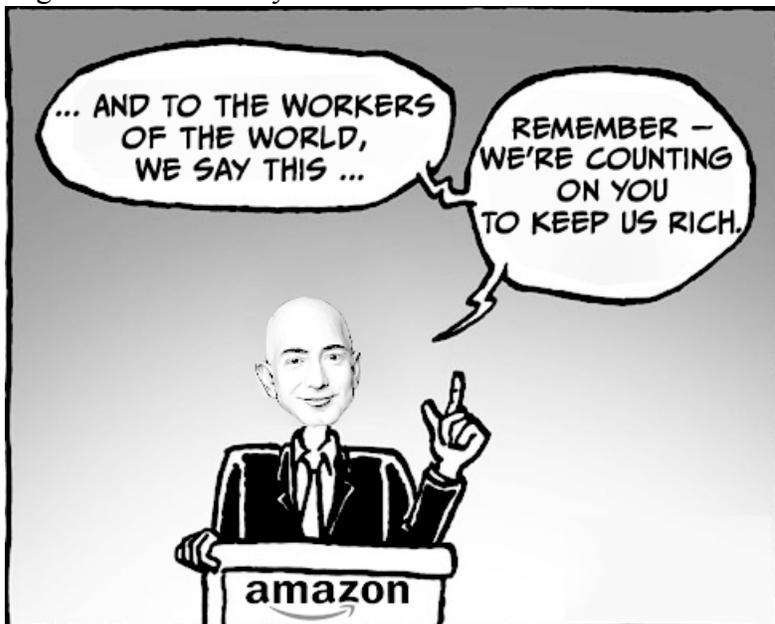
At the last board meeting, the District celebrated 35 years of its Customer Assistance Program (CAP), which provides financial assistance to low income customers. During the meeting, the board also celebrated the fact that the number of people enrolled in CAP increased by 20% during the pandemic.

There is no question that the CAP program is a much-needed program. But is it really something to celebrate when more people enroll? It's not like the District expanded the criteria to qualify for the CAP program. The only reason 20% more people signed up for CAP during 2020 is because that many more people lost their jobs and their incomes. That is certainly not something to celebrate.

Raising Rents = Raising Evictions

In 2020, researchers at the U.S. Government Accountability Office estimated that for every \$100 increase in median rent, there is a 9% increase in the number of people that are homeless. So as rents skyrocket in the Bay Area, so does the number of people without a home, living on the streets. As of May 2022, median rents for San Francisco and San Jose went above \$3,000/month. And nationwide about 5.4 million households are behind on their rent and could face eviction. How many will end up on the streets?

No one should have to be afraid of losing their housing or sleeping on the street. The resources exist to keep people in their homes and house those who are unhoused. Housing is a necessity, and should be guaranteed to everyone.



The Constant Speed Up on Pipeline

We know the District is all about its program to quickly replace and upgrade the pipes throughout the system. But all that pressure to get it done fast means longer workdays at intense speeds. Upper management evaluates the GPS (General Pipe Supervisors) through their KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). Basically, this looks at how many feet of new pipe get installed and how fast it gets done.

But at the end of the day, the only way a GPS can boost their KPI is to make the workers work faster. The District might be in a hurry, but that shouldn't mean plumbers have to brake their necks to get things done on management's imaginary timeline.

Who are the Real Water Wasters?

California is in the worst drought in over 1,200 years. And Governor Newsom recently announced his plan to deal with California's emergency water crisis. Newsom's brilliant plan is to encourage individual households to reduce water consumption in a number of ways. But this is all totally inadequate.

The vast majority of the water use in California — over 80% of it! — goes to agriculture. And 20% of that is just to grow nuts, like almonds and pistachios. But the biggest portion of water use, about 47%, goes towards meat and dairy production through the water-intensive feed needed to raise the animals. Only about 4% of the state's water use can be traced back to individual households.

It's a good thing if individual households can cut back on their water usage. But if the goal is to address the drought, it's time to look at the big corporations that are making millions using up all the water.

Working people do all the work to make society run. But the super rich, the bosses of the big corporations and banks are the ones calling all the shots. This needs to change. Working people can organize and overcome our divisions. And when we do, we have enormous power to change things, and make a better world.

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