

## ***Speak Out Now! at AC Transit 10/10/2022***

### **Overworked, Underpaid, and In Demand**

Is it a surprise that there is a bus driver shortage here in California? Not only for us at AC, but for many other bus and paratransit agencies. Being out here on the front lines and dealing with all the craziness on the streets, it's no wonder a lot of people quickly leave for other less stressful jobs. The end result though, more work for the few of us that are still here.

Recently, all staff at the general office are being required to return to the office. This might be a swift kick in their butts, as they realize just how much traffic has been added in the past few months. There appears to be many more vehicles on the road, possibly back to pre-pandemic levels. Of course the schedules don't match up to what's happening, and we are the ones who suffer in traffic and with shorter breaks. One thing we should remember though, we drivers are the ones who are in demand, and necessary for the company to run. We shouldn't blame ourselves for the realities on the road, even when they make us late on the schedules. Until we are fully staffed and fully appreciated, why should we get bent out of shape for their mess!

### **Masks Off**

At AC Transit as well as BART, the mask mandates just ended at the beginning of October. For some it is a relief, for others it raises anxieties. In some ways, this is an acknowledgement that many have already adapted to, that the virus is a normal part of life.

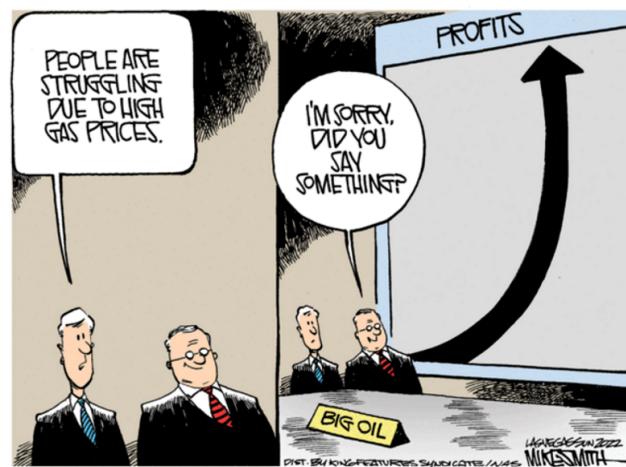
Whatever people think about the response to the virus, most could probably agree that it was a huge failure and mess. One aspect that doesn't get talked about much is the lack of healthcare coverage - leading to people avoiding seeing the doctor when they really needed to. A recent Yale study estimated that around 338,000 lives could have been saved in the United States during the pandemic if people had universal healthcare. That is more than the population of Stockton, California!

The masks of this profit driven society come off when you look at the body count.

### **The Struggle Against Price Gouging**

Here in the United States, as we struggle to fill the gas tanks and grocery carts, corporate profit margins are at the highest that they have been since the 1950s. It is getting more and more difficult to survive and take care of our families.

But these problems are felt all around the world. From England to Indonesia, Lebanon to Haiti, working people are in bitter struggles for their lives against the extreme inflation that we are facing. Strikes and mass demonstrations are breaking out. Perhaps it's time to follow their lead and engage in our struggles too!



### **War, Inflation, Growth of the Far-Right ...**

### **How Can the European Working Class Fight Back?**

Join us for an online discussion on the various challenges that working people have faced in Europe as well as their efforts to fight back for a better life.



**Saturday, October 22 at 11AM**