

Speak Out Now at BART (March 10, 2025)

On the Front Lines

Two deaths on the trackways, at least one death on a train, and more chaos in some stations. The loss of life anywhere is tragic. But how many people who ride BART think of the consequences for those who operate the system? And 99% of what goes down, goes unnoticed by most people.

The common view is that front-line workers have cushy jobs. They just sit in the booths or the train cabs. And some seem to believe that System Service workers need to be told that there is a scrap of paper on the platform or in the station.

The Bay rolls through BART, the good, bad and the ugly. And unfortunately some of the ugly gets right in the face of those on the front lines. Those blue coats should keep that in mind as they are roaming through the stations looking for a reason to be there.

BART Math

Straight from BART's news feed... "BART has a fare increase program that calls for small, regular, less-than-inflation increases every two years, with the next increase of 6.2% scheduled for January 1, 2026."

That's "less than inflation" when their 2% + 2% wage increase supposedly kept up with inflation!

That might make a funny Saturday Night Live comedy sketch. But the rising cost of living is no joke.

BART Is Still Dancing On The Fiscal Cliff -

BART says it is looking for ways to operate with a low ridership. Meanwhile it continues with the expensive installation of the new communications system at Milbrae, which is aimed at increasing the frequency of trains running through the Transbay tube.

Now, along with other state transit agencies, they are asking the state for \$2 billion to keep running in 2026, when both the Super Bowl and the FIFA World Cup will be played in Santa Clara. The money would be shared with other agencies in the region as well as to upgrade the transit system in Los Angeles in preparation for the 2028 Summer Olympics.

Obviously maintaining the operation of an efficient, climate-friendly system for the people whose taxes and fares have built and maintained the system isn't a priority.

What's on your mind? Get involved. Contact us



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VTA Out!

Workers organized in ATU Local 265 at the Valley Transit Authority (VTA) which operates the light rail and bus systems in the South Bay, are on strike. One of the key issues is wages. VTA Management made a "final last offer" of 3% a year, over the next 3 years. The union is demanding 18%. Management also wants to cut the length of medical leave before termination and refuses to deal with outstanding safety questions.

Like other places in the Bay Area the cost of living, especially housing, is insane. A while back some VTA drivers parked their RVs in the yard parking lots to sleep there instead of driving long distances home, only to eat, sleep and then head back to an 8 or 10-hour shift. This became public, and management was embarrassed and created a "RV program" and pushed the RVs into one yard. No more RVs were allowed. And now, when people retire, no one is allowed to take their place.

If the strike goes on, get ready for the stories of greedy VTA workers. They will find someone who has worked their ass off picking up as much OT as possible, and wave that around as if that's the average wage for a bus driver, mechanic or service worker.

Let them get behind the wheel of a bus, just for one 8-hour shift. Or clean, wash or repair buses in this winter weather.

Meanwhile, the management of Bay Area transit systems are trying to get "in synch" - with scheduling and other operations. Imagine if the workers at BART, VTA, MUNI and other systems got in synch. Then the chump change offers and threats wouldn't have the impact they do today.





Speak Out Now

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Trump, Musk, and the Billionaire Pigs at the Trough

Trump's speech to Congress put on full display both the administration's massive attacks on working people, as well as the Democrats' absolutely useless response.

The Trump administration is doing everything they can to cut spending on workers and the poor in order to make room for a tax cut for the wealthiest people on the planet. The biggest cut is proposed for Medicaid, totaling an estimated \$880 billion, which about 20% of the population relies on for low-income health insurance. They plan to cut \$230 billion in funding for food stamps (known as SNAP, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), which serves about 40 million low-income people. They are proposing to cut about \$300 billion from education and housing assistance budgets, which would mostly harm millions of low-income children and families.

They are proposing to fire 80,000 workers from the Veterans Affairs department, which millions of working-class veterans rely on for many services, including essential health care. The administration has ripped up the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) workers' union contract and their rights to collective bargaining in order to try to push through mass layoffs, and go after government workers' unions in general. The administration has threatened that it will try to close and likely privatize the Postal Service, which employs over 600,000 postal workers. And there has been a whole host of layoffs of National Park Rangers, research scientists, and more.

During his speech, Trump even used a 13-year-old cancer survivor as a prop to pretend to support cancer research, even as the administration has made millions of dollars in cuts to funding for cancer research, some of the very research that was needed to keep this boy alive.

The Republicans know these attacks on working people are angering many in their base, but they are pushing forward anyway. The party heads recently sent out an order to cancel in-person Congressional town halls because Republican voters are showing up furious at the ongoing and proposed cuts to the government budget.

And as some opposition to these attacks is growing, the administration is trying to create a more repressive atmosphere, trying to scare people into being quiet and not standing up. The administration has threatened that any immigrant here on a student visa, who protested against

Israel's ongoing genocide in Palestine, can have their visa revoked and face deportation. Over the weekend, a Palestinian graduate student at Columbia University, who was initially here on a student visa but has since become a permanent resident with a green card, was arrested by ICE, claiming his visa and green card have been revoked by the State Department, and he now faces deportation. The administration is threatening many more arrests like this.

As their attacks on workers increase, and the repression intensifies, the Democratic party is showing itself to be completely useless, opposing Trump only in words. During Trump's speech to Congress, the Democrats looked weak and pathetic, holding up signs that read "this is not normal." They are willing to wait this out until the next election.

The reality is, the Democrats defend the same system as Trump, a system that protects the interests of a tiny class of billionaires above everything else, and dictates all other policies — this is a dictatorship of the rich, a dictatorship of capital. Before Trump, Democratic and Republican administrations concealed this dictatorship behind a mask of democracy. But under Trump, the mask has been removed, revealing the ugly face of this system. Trump is a declaration that this tiny class of rulers is willing to rely on open violence and dictatorship to defend its interests, and they are ready to intensify their war on the working class.

But without the mask, the true nature of this system is exposed for all to see. The rich are pigs at the trough, sucking up whatever they can for themselves. Their attacks are clearly aimed at the majority of the people in the country, and they only benefit a tiny group of the super wealthy. But we outnumber them. The working class is the vast majority in this country, and we do all of the work to make their system run. When we organize ourselves — in our workplaces, our communities, our schools — we have the power to shut down their whole system, and we can use our power to build something better. But to do this, we must start by building up our own forces to fight back.

Now is the time to take a stand, to speak up wherever we are, to let others know that we don't have to accept these attacks and their miserable vision of the future. Just as millions before us have stood up against violence and oppression, now is the time to stand up to Trump and his minions, to fight for our future, and to fight against their entire system.