

# Speak Out Now! at AC Transit 5/5/2025

## New AC General Manager — Not so New

AC finally names a new GM, Salvador Llamas — probably getting paid around \$500K per year like the last one. Llamas has been with the district since 2012, and he points to his ability to get buses a 10% increase in on-time performance as a major success. Unfortunately, as we all know, the only way they claim on-time performance is by just decreasing our run times, and pressuring drivers to skip their breaks or recovery time. That's not something to brag about.

He also promised his main job will be to tackle the multi-million dollar budget deficit the district faces. And he promises to do that with a motto of "improvise, adapt and overcome." Well, it's no secret what that means. The district has already said the only way they can cut the deficit is to cut costs, and the only way they know how to cut costs is to cut the operations budget. And the only way they know how to do that, is to go after us. The new GM sounds just like the last GM.

## A Budget Deficit by Design

The district keeps using the threats of this budget deficit to warn of big cuts to come. Right now they say the deficit is at \$43 million this year, and \$72 million next year. But where did that shortage come from? First they blame it on ridership declines. But, they've raised prices and cut the number of lines. And the biggest part of the deficit comes from cuts to funding from federal and state governments. So, that's not simply a deficit, that is a funding cut. That is by design!

Clearly, we don't just need to be fighting the district's plans to cut operations even further. We need to also fight to get state and federal money to fully fund transit. Surely, in the wealthiest country in the world, and in the wealthiest state, there is more than enough money to do this.

## Wet Bathrooms: Not a Solution!

The new porta-potties the district is bragging about still have problems. First, they are definitely no substitute for an actual clean bathroom or break room. But, these are also supposed to be self-cleaning. This means every so often the room is automatically hosed off from the inside. What this means is a wet bathroom and a wet toilet seat. That may be fine for those drivers that pee standing up. But for the rest of us, a wet toilet seat is not something anyone wants to sit on. Is it wet with water or something else? We don't want to find out. New bathrooms? Thanks but no thanks.

## Stop Pretending to Care About On-Time

Management can't shut up about improving on-time performance. They claim they really want to get as close to 100% on-time as possible. They claim they care about riders and their need to count on the bus arriving on time. They like to sound so concerned for the riders (who they just raised the fares on).

But if they really cared about the riders, and really wanted on-time buses, then all they'd have to do is talk to the drivers. Then they will be told that the solution is easy. If you want on-time buses, then just make the run times reflect reality. If the run times were realistic, then the buses would be on time. If you want to have on-time buses that meet realistic run times, then just add more buses to the routes.

Clearly they are not willing to do this. They just want drivers to get less time, and to use fewer drivers. So management should just stop pretending they care about riders and on-time performance.

## THE DISTRICT AT WORK...



"We were able to get the routes shorter. Now the only problem is that the drivers still need to eat, take a break and go to the bathroom."

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# Speak Out Now

May 5, 2025

@sonsocialists

speakoutsocialists.org

mail@speakoutsocialists.org

(510) 343-9105

## Trump's First 100 Days: An Attack on Our Lives

Last week marked Trump's first one hundred days in office. Trump campaigned making all sorts of empty promises to improve people's lives. But one hundred days into his presidency, his administration's true goals couldn't be any clearer: attack workers, gut social services for working people, and funnel more wealth to the billionaires.

And Trump's recent federal budget proposal reflects these backwards priorities. The budget proposes to slash education, housing, health care, and funding for National Parks, while increasing the military budget to over a trillion dollars. Some Republicans are even calling for a bigger increase to the military budget.

The cuts to health services in this proposal are enormous, with over 40% cuts to the budgets of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), while the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) budget would increase by 65%. These cuts to the NIH will slow down the development of new medical treatments and cures that could save lives. Patients in the middle of their cancer treatment have had their trials stopped, and their lives put at risk. These cuts to CDC will further weaken the ability to stop disease outbreaks before they spread through communities. Increased funding for DHS means ICE will have more resources to terrorize immigrant communities and deport people. This budget proposal is an attack on our lives, just like many of the other policies we have seen from this administration in the past few months.

Trump campaigned promising to improve the economic situation of people, but instead, all we have seen are chaotic and reckless tariff policies that have brought greater instability into our lives. His administration pretends these tariffs will lead to more investment and jobs. But it has been the exact opposite. Since implementing massive tariffs on imports from China, the number of container ships importing goods from China into the U.S. has plummeted.

We are starting to see the effects of this in the economy. It is likely shortages of goods will be followed by more price increases. And more layoffs in some sectors could come next, as corporations lose business and are forced to cut more costs. Going down this path of an intensifying trade war with China doesn't just throw the economy into chaos, it also risks throwing the whole world into crisis, and increases the threat of this turning into a military conflict.

As we face higher prices, shortages, and job losses, the billionaires Trump serves will barely feel a thing. Their wealth shields them from the instability created by this administration. In fact, the billionaires have never been wealthier. The top 20 richest U.S. households saw a \$1 trillion increase in wealth in 2024, and have more wealth than about the bottom 50% of U.S. households combined.

Trump talked endlessly about using deportations to go after violent criminals. But we have seen this administration deport children, and target Green Card holders for protesting the U.S.-backed genocide in Gaza. We have seen the U.S. deport people to a mega-prison in El Salvador, while Trump openly talks about his plans to deport U.S. citizens that he doesn't like. It's clear his policies aim to divide us, to get us to blame immigrants for the horrible conditions this system imposes on all of us.

The path that Trump and this administration are on is clear. This is a path towards an authoritarian, far-right society run by and for billionaires. This is what they think is necessary to maintain the profits of their system. They are willing to blatantly lie to the public, criminalize protests, use the courts to get their way, and defy them when they don't. And they continue to use the federal budget to threaten programs and institutions to go along with their authoritarian agenda. They want to go after anyone who dares to speak out or protest what is happening. They know these policies do not benefit the majority, and they need to be able to repress the population into submission to drive this agenda forward. It is no surprise Trump's approval rating has gone down significantly since coming into office.

We cannot accept this new reality. Sitting back is exactly what they're counting on — they want us to be overwhelmed and paralyzed by fear. But across the country, people are refusing to be silent. We saw millions of people take to the streets in April at the "Hands Off" protests around the country. We saw thousands of rallies on May 1 nationwide. These can be the start to what needs to be a larger, more organized movement. Every action we take today can help lead things in the direction this needs to go.

This isn't just about opposing Trump's latest attacks — it's about waging a real fight back against their system to defend our interests and fight for a better world. They think their attacks will frighten us into submission. It's up to all of us to prove them wrong.