

Speak Out Now at BART (May 5, 2025)

Dead Zone?

Station Agents at Richmond often find themselves in a dead zone. Not a place of zombies, ghouls and other spirits, although at times it may seem like that. But a dead zone as far as communication is concerned.

There hasn't been cell phone service forever. For some in Management, that may not seem like a problem. But it creates challenges for everyone -- both passengers and Station Agents. To add fare to the Clipper phone app requires access to the internet. And without access to the internet this is impossible. It means passengers have to walk to the far edge of the station, which takes time and isn't always safe.

In addition, for Station Agents, if other communications are down, it means they are isolated. In an emergency, this could be disastrous.

Would those working at BART HQ accept working in a Dead Zone? Would it have any real impact on system operations or passengers?

BART Star Wars or Reality?

BART is trying attract passengers with it's promos - the latest is the "May the Forth Be With You" (Star Wars) ride. It may provide a little publicity and add a few riders, if they didn't know that BART exists.

If it's about ridership, maybe people who actually work in the stations might have some ideas. New fare gates are a big change and pose challenges to riders, including those who got used to riding for free, because it seemed like everyone was doing it. (Not that we shouldn't have free transit available.) There are discounted fares available. Does everyone know that?

Just imagine what ideas could come from people who actually know about the system!



Is Something Missing?

BART has been installing the new fare gates for months now. For the most part they work well. But when there are upgrades in software for the card readers, it's not always smooth.

Are there gremlins in the system or is there something missing in the testing?

Bay Area Public Transit?

California and the Bay Area are supposedly at the forefront of environmental consciousness. If that means being aware of global climate disruption, it might be true. But, if it means really doing something to limit putting carbon in the atmosphere by providing alternatives to driving, it isn't.

Public transit systems are broken. There is all sorts of talk and money being put into linking the numerous systems in the area. But those systems aren't fully funded. Like everything else, it is a matter of priorities. The pandemic hit transit hard. But the billionaires of the Bay Area did well. And after building their little empires here, with all sorts of tax breaks, some have moved on.

Now MUNI is cutting more lines because it is facing a deficit. Is this a way to serve the public and reduce pollution? What are those who live or work in neighborhoods where the MUNI lines are being cut supposed to do? How do they get to school or work? How do they run errands, visit family or friends, or just get around the city that is their home?

Meanwhile the city government has opened up the transit-and-taxi-only portion of Market street to Waymo - Alphabet's (Google) robotaxi company.

That sends a message, loud and clear, just like every cut to a line at AC Transit, or every BART fare increase. It's not just in the Bay, it's across the country. It's a matter of priorities. A matter of need vs. greed.

Speak Out Public Meeting

The Crisis of Capitalism Today

To change the world we must understand it

An online Discussion with

Richard D. Wolff

Wolff, a longtime professor of economics, will discuss the the chaos of the changing world order we confront today.

Sunday, June 1, 4p

Henry Ramsey Jr. Center

2939 Ellis St, Berkeley (near Ashby BART)



Speak Out Now

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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.