

Speak Out Now at BART (November 10, 2025)

Are They Kidding?

Many people may not have seen the recruitment effort from the Transportation Department trying to recruit Superheroes, before it went into the trash. BART wants people to join a "Transportation Recognition Committee" to raise morale.

What are they recognizing? What are the awards they are thinking of handing out? What would take the place of raises that are steadily falling behind the rate of inflation? Would it be a framed certificate created from one of the District's copy machines along with a gift card from a non-union coffee chain?

It's an insult! BART HQ needs mirrors to look into for the source of a morale problem. Then they would see the source of the problem.

RESPECT!

Aretha Franklin spelled it out. R E S P E C T People who are on the front lines keep BART moving. They are the ones who are in daily contact with the public who rely on BART. Those in BART HQ who may believe they are running things are in reality support staff. And they aren't providing much support.

Station Agents are the ones who assist passengers day in and day out to get through this system. They are not there to collect fares. They are there to provide customer service: to assist passengers who don't speak English to find their way. They have to deal with explaining to people why fare machines aren't working, the changes in gate operations, and more. And when there are service disruptions and they have no explanation. Why? It's common to get updates from passengers before hearing from BART management.

A squad of morale-boosting superheroes isn't what's needed. It's respect and that includes a recognition that people shouldn't have to seek overtime to keep up with the rising cost of living.



BART Superhero?

BART and ICE

While cities, towns, schools, hospitals, and other agencies have plans in place to deal with ICE, BART has said little or nothing. But BART applied for and received a \$753,176 Transportation Security Grant through FEMA and Homeland Security. This grant would put BART in a direct relationship with ICE.

One of the priorities of the grant is "Supporting Border Crisis Response and Enforcement," included, as examples of project types, were:

- Procurement of screening, detection, and communications technology to support immigration enforcement activities
- Establishing secure and dedicated communication networks with ICE Field Offices
- Conducting joint training exercises with ICE and local law enforcement to test operational coordination
- Development or enhancement of information-sharing platforms between ICE and local agencies

When publicity about the grant became public, BART management claimed that it didn't know about the connection with ICE. Really? They can't read? Or didn't care? Pressure on AC Transit resulted in the AC Board not accepting the grant.

Recently, a court suit filed by the states where the transit agencies targeted for the grants are located, has blocked the mandatory connection to ICE.

(For more information, go to the website of Oaklandside, oaklandside.org/, and search for BART.)

November Speak Out Public Meeting

We Will Not Pay For Their Crisis!

Sunday, November 16, 4pm (*Doors open at 3:45p*)

A Zoom presentation and discussion with Clara Mattei, an economist and activist.

Niebyl Proctor Library

6501 Telegraph, Ave. \$5 donation requested

If you can't attend the discussion, watch on Zoom at tinyurl.com/SON-TH

Clara Mattei will talk about how this system distributes the wealth workers produce and why we end up with less while those in power get more.

Save the Date:

SpeakOut Holiday Party and Potluck

Saturday, December 13, 6pm

Talk with your Speak Out person for info



Speak Out Now

November 10, 2025

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Elections Aren't Enough – Democrats Won't Defend Us

Since Trump's election, the Democrats have tried to appear as an opposition to Trump and the Republicans. But it was the Democrat's defense of the billionaires at the expense of working people that helped bring Trump to power. And now, after last week's elections, the Democrats are trying to paint their election victories as another blow against Trump. But this isn't true.

The Democrats won the elections for governor in New Jersey and Virginia. They won California's redistricting ballot measure, Proposition 50, which gave the Democrats new electoral maps that dilute the votes of prior Republican-dominated districts to favor the Democrats. And in New York City, Democrat Zohran Mamdani was elected mayor after running a popular campaign promising lower rent, free buses, cheaper groceries, and affordable childcare while calling himself a Democratic Socialist.

For the most part, the Democrats won because many people wanted a way to vote against Trump and voice their opposition to his policies. They are already trying to use these moderate victories to further channel people's anger into the 2026 midterm elections, when they promise they will finally be able to put a stop to Trump's agenda. The reality is, the Democrats certainly oppose many of Trump's policies in words, but they defend the same class of billionaires and have the same priorities. Just look at the end to the recent government shutdown, where Democrats dragged out negotiations for weeks, only to cave at the last minute with no guarantees on extending health insurance subsidies, the one thing they said they were defending.

By passing Prop 50 in California, now the Democrats will have more power in the state to pass more of the same policies they've passed for decades. They refuse to tax the wealthiest to pay for affordable housing, education, or healthcare. Instead, they continuously cut funding for education, for health care subsidies for the poor, and they criminalize the homeless population. Despite Newsom's posture against Trump using federal troops in Los Angeles, Newsom was the one who called out the National Guard against protestors back in 2020 during large protests against the murder of George Floyd. And now we're supposed to feel relieved that the Democrats have redrawn the electoral map to favor themselves? This won't help working people.

And there's the election of Mamdani, who has made some appealing promises to the working class of New York.

Who wouldn't want affordable housing, childcare and free buses in the most expensive city in the country? Despite all of the opposition from Republicans, the Democratic Party leadership, and most of the wealthy elite who dominate the city of Wall Street, Mamdani still won, with the highest voter turnout in 56 years. Certainly Mamdani's promises are a welcome relief compared to the usual message from politicians. But this wouldn't be the first time a politician has made big promises only to carry out business as usual once in office. What will make this time any different?

Ultimately, for many of Mamdani's promises to be carried out, it is going to come down to what the working class of New York City is willing to fight for. There will be a lot of opposition to his promises coming from both parties and the super-rich of New York City. Mamdani and his cabinet alone are not enough to stand up to this. It will depend on the masses of working-class New Yorkers and their ability to organize to defend their interests themselves.

The Democrats want us to believe that they have all the power to make the changes we need if we simply vote them in. The reality is, they have never done that. Every time they've been in office, especially at the state and federal level, they carry out business as usual and defend this system and its priorities. The Democrats have also cut social programs to favor the wealthy, targeted immigrants, sent federal troops to put down protests, given trillions of dollars to banks and corporations, skyrocketed military spending, and much more. They too, like the Republicans, prioritize the interests of corporations and their profits at the expense of the rest of us, even as the cost of living keeps skyrocketing. Ultimately, they may condemn Trump's authoritarianism and claim they can stop it, but they defend the same system that allows it to grow in the first place.

So the way forward can't just be waiting for the next election and hoping Democrats will save us. We've been down that road too many times. Real power comes from ordinary people organizing ourselves — at work, in schools, in our neighborhoods, and standing together and refusing to accept these attacks. We can't rely on either party to fight for us. We have to build that power ourselves. Only then can we stop the attacks from Trump and the Democrats, who both defend this system. And only then can we fight for a future where our lives and needs actually come first.