



Speak Out Now

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Trump's Cabinet: Attacks on Workers Are Coming

Trump has announced many of his Cabinet picks, revealing a circus of unqualified loyalists, including corporate executives, wealthy elites, and far-right reactionaries, all intent on giving handouts to the rich, while attacking workers and the poor.

He has selected people ready to shred the Environmental Protection Agency to benefit the fossil fuel companies. He has put far-right white supremacists in charge of immigration policy, in order to drive deeper wedges between native-born and foreign-born workers. His Cabinet is ready to further cut women's reproductive health care, possibly banning medication abortions and birth control, which will hurt working class women the most. And all of these various cuts and attacks will be matched with enormous tax breaks for the super rich.

Trump hopes to slash the budget of the Department of Education, where he has appointed the billionaire Linda McMahon, one of the largest donors to Trump's campaign, who has no real experience in education, and who made her money in the entertainment industry, co-founding the World Wrestling Federation. With McMahon at the helm, Trump has promised to dismantle the agency, which provides funding for education in the poorest neighborhoods in the country, and also oversees legislation that was won during the Civil Rights movement to protect against the discrimination of students based on race or sex. Trump wants to eliminate these protections, and McMahon is ready to carry it out. They plan to use the agency to divert federal funding from public to private schools, and help advance far-right Christian-based schools.

Trump has also selected Elon Musk, the world's richest man, and another of Trump's biggest campaign donors, to help lead a new effort to massively cut government spending and regulation. Musk has threatened to cut thousands of programs, including healthcare, workplace safety, environmental protection, and more. Musk suggested cutting all funding for Planned Parenthood, which provides healthcare to low-income families.

Even though Musk pretends to be against government funding, his companies, Tesla and SpaceX, have

benefitted from billions of dollars in government funds over the years. These benefits will only continue to grow under the Trump administration. The hypocrisy couldn't be any clearer — Musk is in favor of government funding when it supports his class of super wealthy capitalists. He's only against it when it goes to the working class.

Many of these policies and attacks have already been happening in Republican-controlled states across the country. Now they will become accelerated by the federal government under Trump.

The Democrats will surely seize this opportunity to say that voting for them is the only way to defend ourselves. But they've been in power 12 of the last 16 years, and have done nothing to stop these attacks spreading in states across the country. Democrats, just like Republicans, support the interests of corporations and their wealthy owners. Voting for them hasn't done anything to protect the interests of the working class.

Trump's Cabinet gives us a glimpse of the sort of attacks against workers that are coming. But the truth is, none of these limited, yet much-needed protections were handed to us by the government — whether they be minor legal protections for immigrant workers, education funding for the poor, protections for the environment, basic safety protections for workers on the job, or minimal access to reproductive health care. They were all won through hard-fought social movements involving ordinary working-class people. The ballot box wasn't enough to win these gains, and it won't be enough to defend them either. To do that, it will take the same kind of collective struggles that won them to begin with.

No matter what the Trump administration brings, the only response that can defend the interests of working-class people is a unified collective struggle, one that includes all workers — immigrants, U.S.-born, those who voted for Trump, those who voted for Harris, and those that didn't vote at all. In the face of these attacks, we can't afford to sit back. It is up to us to overcome our divisions, and come together to build up the kind of unity we will need for what lies ahead.

Speak Out Now at BART (11/25/2024)

That Rain

We're not in the tropics, but it does rain in the Bay Area. And with the advanced technology of the Fleet of the Future, that means running trains slower under different PL's (Performance Levels). People who ride regularly are getting used to it or aren't surprised by it. And Train Operators know what to expect – sort of.

The length of the day and whether they will be pushed to miss a break or cut their lunch short, often depends on the Foreworkers and Controllers. And also the amount of pushback they feel.

There are ways to plan for this without stressing TO's out who are not looking for the OT that can emerge out of these situations.

@ BART

BART Management has been talking about the success of its "Safe and Clean Plan". At the same time the newspapers report on "crimes at BART". Some of those assaults actually happen on property – in a station or on a train. But when someone is attacked somewhere near a station, even a block away, the headline will include the closest BART station.

A fatal stabbing at Market & Main got a lot of publicity for the Embarcadero station because police went into the station looking for the assailant.

The same day the Bay Area Council and Asian Pacific Islander groups issued a call for the CHP to be deployed at BART stations and on the trains. The reason was because two Asian American women have been attacked this year. In July a 74-year old, was pushed into the the path of an oncoming train and killed. Earlier this month, a 54-year-old woman, was severely wounded when a man slashed her throat. Neither victim knew their attacker.

Four days later there was a shooting on BART property. A news article said, "A BART police officer shot someone at the Union City station on Monday night, according to the agency."

Is it any wonder that people think twice before riding BART?

Tape?

BART can spend \$90 million on fare gates and \$90 million on BART Police headquarters. But when it comes to basic features of the system, like working conditions, it's a different story.

Of course some stations are more important than others, like 19th St. Why could that be? If those who are so critical of Station Agents, looked inside some of the booths, they might be shocked. Some have a spaghetti tangle of wires, as monitors and new equipment have been added. Some booths are equipped with raggedy chairs, each with their own defects. But one common feature is arm rests with the foam and metal poking through. That's when the black tape comes in, that is, when you can find a roll.

Some stations did get new chairs, but some are so short they might have just saved the money and bought a stool. Makes you wonder sometimes.

What's Next?

Last month BART received a \$544.6 million loan through the Federal Department of Transportation for 775 new railcars. Some of the money will be used for the new BART Police HQ.

Is BART going to continue to rely on Federal money to operate the system? Trump's new Transportation Secretary, Sean Duffy, could lead BART closer to that financial cliff they talk about.

When Duffy was in Congress he was described by environmental and pro-transit groups as "having ties to the fossil fuel industry and a climate-change denier who favors internal combustion cars and widening highways over mass transit." (masstransitmag.com)

That doesn't sound very good for BART or for the health of the planet. It's way past time for those in BART HQ to stop doing whatever they are doing that has nothing to do with running this train system and focus on finding a way to fund the system.



Should we worry when our finances seem more solid than BART's

Speak Out Now Holiday Party!

Dec. 7 from 6 to 9pm

In Berkeley, Near Ashby BART

Join us for good food, live music, discussion, and a good time.

Potluck: Bring your favorite dish, dessert or beverage to share. Tickets in advance \$5 Get yours from your Speak Out Person