



Speak Out Now

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It Will Take More Than Elections to Respond to Their Attacks

Over the next few weeks and months, most states will finish holding their primary elections before the midterms in November. Of the many candidates running for various positions in their states, many Democrats and a few Republicans and independents have expressed their criticism of the Trump administration. Some talk about the so-called affordability crisis, or the unprovoked war on Iran, or the mistreatment of immigrants by ICE, or raise other critiques as well. Regardless of their different criticisms, all of them point to the elections as the best way to confront the attacks from this administration. But it will take more than elections to stand up to all of these attacks.

Everywhere we look, the attacks on ordinary working people and the poor are escalating both here in the U.S. and internationally. The U.S. war on Iran continues to drag on, causing immense suffering inside Iran, and needlessly wasting billions of dollars. With full U.S. backing, Israel is escalating its assault on Gaza and Lebanon, seizing more territory and costing more lives every day. And the Trump administration has intensified its military threats against Cuba, where the entire population is suffering from a fuel shortage imposed by the U.S.

In response to ongoing bombing, Iran continues to block the Strait of Hormuz, causing economic chaos across the world, especially in oil markets, which has resulted in skyrocketing prices around the world in energy and many other essential goods.

All of this amounts to way more than a so-called affordability crisis. Corporations are making record profits as millions of working families are struggling to get by, and the effects of deepening cuts to vital social services are settling in and becoming impossible to ignore.

Schools and education programs are closing from lack of sufficient funds. Public hospitals and smaller hospitals are facing huge cuts and possible closures in many states. Access to food assistance, housing assistance, and transportation is being slashed. Health care costs continue to increase, forcing millions to go without care. Reproductive rights are under open attack across the country, with the Trump administration pushing to ban abortion medication nationwide.

This goes far beyond mere affordability! Those in power are determined to make it harder and harder for working people just

to live. Every program we depend on is being treated as something to be cut, while the money flows to wars and to the billionaires.

On top this, we are seeing new levels of authoritarian repression and corruption. We see restrictions on voting rights, redistricting efforts to disenfranchise voters of color, the removal of people from the voter rolls, and new restrictions on mail-in voting. There is even a fund with \$1.8 billion that has been set up by the Trump administration to give financial support to far-right groups and individuals who stormed the Capitol on January 6, 2021. It is certainly possible that these groups, along with ICE agents, could be used in November for voter intimidation and further attacks on the population. The fact that this blatant corruption can even happen just shows how corrupt their system is, and how little they really care about justice or democracy.

Alongside all of this, ICE's attacks on immigrants keep intensifying, with mass arrests and deportations carried out without any hearings in the courts. And the Department of Homeland Security is spending billions to acquire and construct new detention facilities to hold more and more people. These facilities are designed to hold immigrants, but we are also seeing the government increasingly target and detain activists who oppose their policies, calling them terrorists or extremists.

Across the board, we are seeing a real escalation of attacks on the whole population in order to serve the interests of billionaires and their corporations. And what are we supposed to do in the face of all of this? We are told that the midterm elections are where we should direct all of our anger and put all of our hope. Regardless of how these primaries play out and whatever happens in November, we can say clearly that the ballot box will not be enough to stand up to these attacks — it will take a lot more.

But we are not powerless. The only way working people have gained anything under this system has been by fighting for it. And when we stop fighting, their attacks escalate, and whatever gains we made can disappear.

Our real power lies not in the ballot box, but in the fact that we do the work to make their system run. And in order to stand up to their attacks, we will have to organize our forces in order use that collective power. We can't wait for November. We must start now to organize for a real fightback to resist their attacks and defend our interests.

We live in the wealthiest country in the world, and it is our labor that has created all of this wealth. We aren't the ones who benefit from this. The super rich — the bosses of the big corporations and banks — keep the wealth and make all the decisions. Working people do the work that makes society run, and we can organize to unite our forces. When we do, we have enormous power to change things and make a better world.

BGE Bills: Are You Feeling Relief Yet?

Data centers to power the AI that threatens our jobs; a monstrous war on Iran; an insatiable drive for profit: all these have contributed to the incredible increases we're all seeing in our utility bills this year. To try to look like they are doing something about it, the Maryland General Assembly has gifted us a whole \$150 in savings on our total power bills next year! Called the Utility RELIEF Act, the new law gives with one hand what it takes with the other. To fund this drop in the bucket of our huge bills, Maryland politicians have cut energy efficiency programs that have helped people reduce their bills by weatherizing their homes and other measures. As usual, it's too much to expect these politicians to dip into corporate profits to give working class people a hand. How about power for the rest of us, not the energy companies!

Why Have Baltimore Homicide Rates Dropped?

The Penn North neighborhood just marked over a year without a homicide for the second time in the last five years. Other neighborhoods, like Sandtown-Winchester and Park Heights, have done similarly. Local politicians are quick to praise their policies, including the Safe Streets initiative, for the drop in killings.

We should all appreciate the decline in murders. But we should also note that these communities suffer from systemic racism and poverty that continue. The result is ongoing crises of food deserts, dangerous housing, underfunded education, inaccessible health care, and deadly drug markets.

Undoubtedly, the main reason that Safe Streets has helped reduce homicides is that it puts initiative and resources in the hands of local community members in addressing our own problems. Let's go a step further, not just involving grassroots people, but having us in charge. And not just for street violence, but for jobs, nutrition, housing, schools, and physical and mental health care. Otherwise, these communities will keep facing uphill battles.

JHU vs. the Public Interest


The Maryland Board of Public Works (the state's Governor, Treasurer, and Comptroller) approved without discussion a \$9 million grant—not a loan—to Johns Hopkins University to build a new data center in East Baltimore. Local residents have raised concerns about community risks, including data centers' environmental impacts, infrastructure burden, and utility cost effects, not to mention the unpredictable outcomes of expanding artificial intelligence (AI) throughout society.

These are serious issues. We shouldn't allow Hopkins, the corporate colossus of Baltimore, to throw its weight around like this. Data centers have faced tons of opposition from residents all over the country. We need widespread and deep community discussion of major decisions that affect our future... and the use of our hard-earned tax dollars.

Baltimore County Housing Crisis

There is a housing crisis in Baltimore County, primarily because of a huge shortage of affordable housing, and it's hitting those with disabilities the hardest. There is little subsidized housing to go around. For decades, house-building in the county has been left up to developers whose main concern is profit, not the needs of most people. Subsidized and affordable housing will always fall to the wayside when this is the system. Human beings, regardless of their abilities, deserve to live in affordable, safe, reliable housing.

How the most vulnerable are treated in our society tells us a lot about the priorities of those in power. These companies and their politicians are not concerned about those in need, but about fattening their wallets. This is unacceptable!



This Summer, Let's

BUILD AND FIGHT BACK!

Join our General Organizing Meeting

Sunday, June 7, 5pm
Homewood Friends
3107 N. Charles St.

\$5 donation.
No one turned away for lack of funds.

