



# Speak Out Now

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## Their Greed is an Attack on Our Needs

Our lives are under attack – not by foreign powers that those in power claim threaten our well-being. But by those who hold power in this society. Tens of millions of people across the country are being squeezed financially and finding it difficult or impossible to maintain the basics of life. And tens of thousands more are being kidnapped off the streets by armed ICE militias, imprisoned at the border, or arrested when they show up to court appearances.

Those of us who are “free” are struggling to maintain. Some work overtime, if they have a job where it’s available. And that overtime seems to be drying up. Others pick up a second job, but the majority try to make do on what we’ve been earning, which has steadily fallen behind the cost of living. It’s not our collective imagination, it’s real!

Utility rates are soaring. In the last five years, average utility rates have risen nearly 40%. With summer here and climate disruption leading to hotter weather every year, it can be a matter of life and death for those living in areas with hot summers. There are “heat domes” that descend on normally moderate climates where people don’t have air conditioning. Extreme winters cost even more. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is being eliminated, further endangering the most vulnerable members of our society.

Food prices have gone up from 3% to more than 5%. That may increase further now that fertilizers that are shipped through the Strait of Hormuz are blocked because of the U.S. war on Iran. More than 3.5 million people who depended on SNAP (food stamps) have been cut from the program, leaving them and their families without regular access to food. And more are being cut due to rules that demand the people have a job to qualify. Where are those jobs? And a slight increase in income can mean an end to other public assistance they are now receiving.

More than 27.2 million people don’t have jobs with health benefits, and with Medicaid being cut and healthcare costs rising, millions of people don’t have access to healthcare. And those who do are facing increasing expenses and co-pays. Clinics and hospitals across the country are cutting back or closing. So, access to healthcare is becoming non-existent for many.

Cuts to Medicaid, Obamacare (Affordable Care Act), and Federal aid to the states mean that there have been huge cuts already, and estimates are that between 4.9 and 10.1 million people will lose Medicaid coverage in 2028. About five million people are expected to drop from Obamacare due to cuts in state funding.

Homelessness is also increasing, with people who were working living in their cars or moving from place to place, depending on family and friends. An estimated 2.5 million children experience homelessness each year—1 in 30 children. There have been deep cuts to federal subsidies for housing.

And who hasn’t noticed the gas price increase since the war on Iran began? Many people have no choice but to drive or ride with someone to work. Nationally, gas is \$4.22 per gallon. And the oil companies’ stock prices are soaring, and their profits continue.

In addition to these attacks on our survival, the government has built up the ICE paramilitary force that is carrying out brutal attacks on members of our community, some who have recently arrived and some who have been here decades or were born here. “Detention centers” are being built across the country where people are kept under horrific conditions for months. Children are separated from their families. Some people are put on planes and flown to countries they have no connection with.

The Trump administration is carrying out these attacks in a more brutal fashion than previous administrations, eliminating government agencies and programs. Those programs were never enough. But they offered some relief. The rich have always benefited, and that is on display. As Trump and his family enrich themselves, he rewards the super-rich. There are now 902 U.S. billionaires, with a reported wealth of over \$6.8 trillion! They have gotten bigger tax breaks and huge military contracts to build weapons and surveillance systems to defend their control over resources and people to exploit around the world.

We cannot allow this to continue at our expense. We need to find the ways to say, ENOUGH! NO MORE! We cannot continue to surrender our needs and the needs of those who depend on us to their greed.

## Reports From Speak Out Members Around the U.S.

### *Newark, New Jersey:*

#### **Injustice at Newark Detention Center:**

#### **We Must Keep Fighting Back!**

In late May, prisoners at Delaney Hall ICE detention center drafted a letter stating their grievances against their imprisonment. Then, in statements made through phone calls to a rally outside the center, they demanded their freedom and began a hunger and work strike. Since then, protests have continued outside the complex, with hundreds showing up daily. ICE, NJ State Police, and Newark Police have arrested dozens.

The inhuman treatment of human beings doing nothing but trying to make better lives for themselves and their families is racist and criminal. The Trump regime will continue this violence unless we stop them.

The prisoners and the protesters have the right idea. Resistance must come from the prisoners themselves as well as from the larger working-class. But it will need to be in bigger numbers and with more intensity than anything so far. We cannot let this inhumanity go on.

### *Baltimore, Maryland:*

#### **Maryland Schools Betray their Workers**

Workers at Maryland's public schools and state universities are under attack. Last week, the University of Maryland eliminated 150 positions including 84 layoffs, and UMD is also withholding raises that are in the union contract and allocated in the state budget. At Bowie State, where the faculty accused the university president of financial mismanagement, workers are also threatened with layoffs. Public school teachers and staff are being hit hard too: Baltimore and Montgomery Counties have both eliminated hundreds of school jobs this year.

Whether it's the fault of the Trump administration, state or county budgets, or top administrators who don't care about their staff—there is a society-wide attack on school and university workers and on education itself. These attacks impact all of us.

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.

### *Bay Area, California:*

#### **CalFresh's Work Requirements**

#### **Will Cause Chaos in the Bay**

Work requirements for CalFresh, the state version of SNAP, have been reinstated and expanded, effective June 1st. This change will affect over 600,000 Californians, including tens of thousands across the Bay Area.

New and re-certifying applicants will get severely reduced benefits, unless they can show 80 hours per month of work-related activities or get exemption due to age, disability, or other circumstances. The exemption process is complicated and time-consuming, and the county staff responsible will be completely overwhelmed. Slow processing could lead to many losing their benefits despite being eligible, not to mention the people who will lose eligibility because they can't fulfill the work requirements. Congress just passed even more funding for ICE, while regular people can't get food assistance in one of the highest cost-of-living areas in the country. It's despicable!

### *The Triangle, North Carolina:*

#### **Duke Energy Turns Up the Heat**

Duke Energy is proposing to raise the rates 18% over the next two years. Utility bills have already gone up 22% since 2020. What does this mean for poor and working-class people? For elderly people? It means having to choose between not running the AC during the hot summer months or skipping meals.

Duke Energy says that they need to invest in revamping the infrastructure. This all may be true, but why does the working class always end up paying the bill? Duke Energy reported close to \$5 billion of net income for fiscal year 2025. North Carolina is home to 11 billionaires with a combined net worth of more than \$37 billion. Maybe we ought to turn the heat up on all of them!

