



Speak Out Now

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Their Democracy: Buy or Block Our Votes

In the first-ever Republican Midterm Convention on September 9 (which cost Dallas taxpayers nearly \$2 million), Trump put on a show before his captive audience. He promised that every adult U.S. citizen would get \$5,000 if the Republican Party maintained control of both the House and the Senate in the 2026 midterm elections.

How's that for a bribe? It's also an obvious, outright lie. When has Trump ever delivered on his outlandish promises? Fat chance we would see that money, even if enough people were fooled by this scam.

Trump's open display of arrogance in offering to buy the election is not that different from what the billionaires have been doing forever – but the billionaires do it more quietly. So far, \$615 million has gone into funding Senate races in the upcoming 2026 midterm elections. Super PACs (Political Action Committees) have contributed \$38 million so far. These are groupings that are allowed to fundraise unlimited amounts of money for campaign advertising. Much of this campaign funding comes from “dark money” via nonprofit organizations, which are set up to receive unlimited donations from corporations, individuals, and unions and do not need to disclose their donors. This means that the rich and powerful, like Elon Musk and Peter Thiel, can use their massive wealth to buy elections with no receipts. And sometimes they do it openly. So far Musk's PAC has spent \$800,000.

There are still two months until the elections and they have plenty of money left to spend. Trump's MAGA Inc. Super PAC has \$350 million of cash on hand to help influence election outcomes. Often, the candidate who wins an election is simply the candidate with the most money. Is this democracy? The democracy of the rich.

For the votes that they can't buy from us, they are trying to threaten or block who can vote. In April, the Supreme Court gutted the 1965 Voting Rights Act, removing representation and voting protections for minority voters. This has led to billionaires pouring millions into massive redistricting efforts to control election outcomes. In the South, this is like going back to the denial of voting rights during the Jim Crow era.

In late August, the Supreme Court upheld Trump's executive order to hinder mail-in voting and threaten postal workers who do not follow the confusing demands, which

have nothing to do with their job description. Trump has been promising to station the National Guard and ICE at the polls as an open threat to voters. And states have been empowered to increase their own voter-restriction bills and remove polling sites, making it harder for people to vote.

These attacks are not just about voting in this election cycle. These attacks on our democratic rights are part of the overall attack on working people, increasingly expanding to more layers of society. Social services are being slashed, cutting access to food, medical care, housing, after school programs, and other essentials. While the cost of everything is soaring, wages are falling behind.

ICE and Border Patrol are carrying out open terrorist attacks on working class people they identify as immigrants, kidnapping and sometimes killing people with no legal consequences. And people who mobilize in their defense are being criminalized. And some are now facing trials or lengthy time in prison. This is a warning to us all.

These attacks on our rights are not new. They are just more open. These rights weren't handed to us. Social Security, the right to unionize, the right to vote, civil rights, immigrant rights, social services, and environmental protections were all the result of massive working class and social movements. And these gains have faced attacks by both Republican and Democratic parties since they were won. Just as these rights were won through mass struggles – in the streets and in workplaces – we can and must defend every democratic right we have by mobilizing our power.

Their capitalist system is in crisis, and those behind Trump understand that people react when we are under attack. So they threaten and revoke our rights to maintain control. We need to protect all our rights, including the right to vote. But not because electing someone new will save us. Their elections are part of their system of control, but we can use these rights as we organize.

As we organize to defend our polling places, defend our families and neighbors being targeted by ICE and our postal workers being threatened with election meddling charges, we are also building our numbers and our networks for a much bigger fight. We have a real democracy to win – a democracy of the majority, of the working class – a democracy of equals.

Reports From Speak Out Members Around the U.S.

The Triangle, North Carolina:

Prepare for Mass Defense of Voter Rights

On August 29, 40 or more Proud Boys, a racist militia, mobilized at Winston-Salem's Central Library. Their aim was to intimidate members of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) who were meeting there. A few of the Proud Boys entered the meeting, filmed participants, and later circulated images online.

The Proud Boys harassment of DSA is simply practice for a more important goal: interfering with the efforts to mobilize anti-Trump voters, especially Black voters, for the midterm elections. North Carolina is a swing state and there is an open Senate seat which the GOP is anxious to hold. The Trump forces control the state's election machinery and have eliminated polling places in Black neighborhoods and cut opportunities for Sunday voting. There needs to be a unified effort to organize mass defense of voter rights from both attacks by the state government and by the militias, which are certainly coordinated behind the scenes.

Bay Area, California:

Way More Waymos Headed for the East Bay

Last month, Waymo's self-driving taxis were approved for rollout in the East Bay. Already common in San Francisco and the Peninsula, they are especially noticeable outside large events where they often crowd streets and block traffic. Tesla's golden "Cybercabs" are also being tested in Oakland, although they are under a safety investigation over their lack of a steering wheel, pedals, or any controls reachable from inside.

It's important to remember that machine-learning systems like these must be trained by humans to respond correctly to the visual data around them. These trainers often live in countries facing economic crisis and can only find work on online platforms where they wait for hours a day to be assigned low-paying model-training tasks. Waymo and Tesla don't want us to think about the exploited workers who make their high-tech systems work.

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.

Newark, New Jersey:

All Working People Out to Defend Immigrant Workers!

In late August, a coalition of union members held another Labor Eyes on ICE demonstration outside Delaney Hall in Newark. About 200 picketed against the kidnapping and detentions of immigrant workers in Delaney Hall and nationwide.

Although the demonstrations so far are a good start, they are still too limited. To have a greater impact, we'll need more rank-and-file workers to join the protests. As long as we allow the billionaires and their media to divide us by blaming immigrants for our problems, we don't focus on the real problem: them and their economy!

All working people come out to the next Labor Eyes on ICE! Immigrant workers are not our enemy!

Sun, Sept. 27, 4 - 6pm.

Delaney Hall, 451 Doremus Ave, Newark

Baltimore, Maryland:

Let's Keep Organizing to Keep ICE Out

When ICE agents swarmed into Frederick, MD and put vehicles and agents on the streets of a quiet neighborhood on an extended stakeout, many residents got stuck in their homes for two days out of fear. Others quickly mobilized to protect their community, monitoring and filming the agents. After two days of this intimidation, the ICE agents charged the neighbors who had peacefully locked arms in front of the targeted house. They had to dive out of the way of ICE SUVs speeding onto the sidewalk, and they were beaten with batons and dragged across the ground. Eventually, ICE left without making any arrests.

The residents of Frederick were organized enough to show ICE that they weren't welcome in their city. Who knows how many people ICE might have kidnapped if they hadn't taken action!

