

Speak Out Now – Bay Area Transit 9/20/2020

We're Not All in This Together

The pandemic has ushered in a new reality that is transforming our world. In the U.S., since the beginning of the lockdowns six months ago, nearly 55 million people filed for unemployment. GDP, or Gross Domestic Product, measures the total dollar amount of goods and services produced within a country per year. It has now dropped by 32% in the second quarter. These are record setting numbers!

The magnitude of this crisis will affect all aspects of our society, and the worst is yet to come. Across the country transit agencies are projected to have deficits of \$40 billion. In comparison, the agencies faced deficits of \$2 billion after the 2008 financial crash. The CARES Act, passed in late March, gave public transit \$25 billion. When this money dries up sometime next year, a massive deficit awaits.

A coalition of 27 of the largest transit agencies in the U.S. sent a letter to Congress in mid-July, begging for between \$32-\$36 billion in emergency aid, just to maintain service as is. No additional money has been issued by Congress. The most generous proposal only included \$15.75 billion for transit, less than half of what is necessary for the agencies to keep them afloat!

This is a crisis not only of public transit, but of our whole society. Access to education, housing, healthcare and food are not in reach for tens of millions of people. Everyone is facing tough times, except for the ultra-rich. In the U.S. their wealth increased by \$845 billion during the pandemic!

Those 600 billionaires control vast amounts of wealth. The politicians, who represent their interests, are responsible for the crisis we confront. They may claim that we are “all in this together.” But we are not! The rich are protected by their wealth and power. We may not have much in the bank. But together we have the power to impose what we need.

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“Just Happy To Have A Job?”

If you're just happy to have a job:

You might not support a coworker's grievance.... and you might even label and dismiss that coworker as being a troublemaker.

If you're just happy to have a job:

You might overlook an unsafe workplace condition and cut corners to make it work.

If you're just happy to have a job:

You might not be concerned with preserving the conditions workers have won ...and do whatever it takes for what some call “upward mobility.”

If you're just happy to have a job:

You might adjust and accept takeaways planning to compensate with working more overtime.

If you're just happy to have a job:

You might just agree to a 2-tier system – not concerned with those who are not yet hired.

If you're just happy to have a job:

You might just be shocked when you're retired and individuals you weren't concerned with agree to cut retiree benefits because like you once proclaimed, the only thing they care about...is just having a job!

We're Getting Screwed!

COVID-19 pandemic. Heat wave. Smoke from the fires. What's next? The plague? Tornados? Locusts?

Can we catch a break?! Now AC Management is having the windows screwed shut to limit the amount of exhaust fumes that enter the bus. Why weren't drivers consulted to decide if it makes sense?

What is going to happen when the rainy season comes? What kind of air circulation will we have when the air hatch is closed and the windows are screwed shut?

It's not just the windows that are getting screwed...

