

No to San Diego school layoffs! Defend the right to high quality public education!

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There is widespread opposition to the layoff of 1,500 educators and school staff by the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD). Claims by district officials that there is “no money” for the schools in the wealthiest state in the wealthiest country in the world are simply unbelievable.

District officials say the \$124 million deficit is caused by declining attendance, along with rising health care costs. This is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Federal, state and local officials have siphoned money from the public schools to boost investment opportunities and charter school operators. This has led to deteriorating school conditions and falling student enrollment. The new layoffs and budget cuts will only accelerate this destructive process.

As for rising health care costs, this is not the fault of teachers. It is due to primarily to price-gouging by the large pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies and hospital chains, whose private profit interests the Democrats and Republicans defend.

Governor Jerry Brown, California Democrats and the unions claimed the passage of Proposition 55 would “save public education” and prevent the firing of teachers, custodians, counselors and others. This was a lie. The regressive sales tax on working people and token tax increase on the wealthy has resolved nothing.

The state’s general fund for education has reached its lowest level since 1973. Some \$8.1 billion has been stripped away from public education, and another \$2 billion from higher education since the financial collapse of 2008. While both political parties bailed out Wall Street and the financial criminals who crashed the economy, most US states are spending less on schools today than in 2007.

Thirty-nine California school districts have indicated they will be facing financial hardship over the next two

years, but the same is true across the country. In response to budget deficits in Chicago, school officials have threatened to close schools three weeks early, furloughing teachers and staff and forcing hundreds of thousands of households to scramble for childcare.

To fight the layoffs and defend the right to public education, teachers, parents and students in San Diego must understand what they are up against. Whether a Democrat or Republican has sat in the White House or controlled the state government, the assault on education has continued unabated. During his eight years in office, Obama went even further than Bush’s No Child Left Behind scheme and accelerated the scapegoating of teachers, the shutdown of public schools and expansion of charters.

This laid the foundation for Trump and Betsy DeVos, who are proposing a \$1.4 billion school voucher program to hand public money to private and religious schools. The elevation of the billionaire DeVos, who carried out a wrecking operation in Michigan schools, to the highest education office in the nation makes it clear the Trump administration is determined to destroy public education.

As far as America’s wealthy elite are concerned, high quality education should be available for only those who can afford it. And when it comes to working class children, they should be piled into overcrowded and under-funded classrooms, before being dumped into low-paying jobs or onto the battlefields of the next war.

The San Diego Education Association (SDEA), the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) are aligned with the Democrats. They tell workers to appeal to the courts and political establishment to protect their jobs but this will do absolutely nothing. Meanwhile, the unions are welcoming the opportunity to collect union

dues from the growing pool of highly exploited teachers in the expanding charter school business.

The priorities of the Democrats and Republicans are clear: unlimited resources are available for Wall Street bailouts, corporate tax cuts and subsidies for the super-rich and endless and escalating wars to plunder the world's resources and wealth. When it comes to schools, health care, affordable housing, decent-paying jobs—the answer of both parties is the same: “We don’t have the money!”

The WSWS *Teacher Newsletter* urges educators and other school workers to organize rank-and-file committees, independent of the unions and both big business parties, to mobilize students, parents and the entire working class population to oppose all budget cuts, school closings, and attacks on teachers’ jobs and living standards.

We call for:

- The immediate revocation of all layoff notices!
- The right to free, high quality public education, and higher education for all!
- Sharp reductions to class sizes and increases in school funding!
- Restoration of all wage, health care and pension cuts and permanent status for all teachers!

Securing the social right to quality education is, above all, a political struggle, which pits the interests of the working class—black, white, native-born or immigrant—against the financial oligarchy and the corporate-controlled parties that defend the ruling class.

The Socialist Equality Party is leading the fight for the building of a mass political movement of the working class, which is opposed to war, social inequality, and the attack on immigrants and democratic rights. Only the political mobilization of the working class and the fight for a workers’ government can break the dictatorial grip of the corporate and financial oligarchy, and create the conditions for the socialist reorganization of society, which places human needs, not private profit, first.

The SEP calls for the dismantling of the Pentagon

war machine, the closure of US foreign bases, and the transfer of the nearly \$1 trillion annual military budget to socially useful purposes, including a crash program to hire millions of teachers, to repair and construct school buildings and to provide all the necessary resources to raise the educational and cultural level of all children, regardless of socioeconomic background.

We call for a radical redistribution of wealth through a sharp increase in taxes on the billionaires and millionaires. This includes a genuinely progressive taxation program that places the burden of taxation on the rich, while lowering taxes for the vast majority of the population, and a sharp increase in taxes on the profits of all major corporations.

We urge teachers, parents and students who are looking to fight the layoffs and attacks on education to contact the WSWS *Teacher Newsletter* and the Socialist Equality Party today.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact