

Bernie Sanders poses as critic of corporate bailouts he voted for

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Over the past week, Senator Bernie Sanders has taken to social media to object to various aspects of the CARES Act. On April 27, he hosted a virtual town hall on the effect of the coronavirus pandemic on undocumented immigrants, in which he protested the denial of benefits to immigrant workers in the bill. He failed to mention that he had voted for and praised the bill, knowing full well that it denied benefits to all undocumented workers.

On social media, Sanders has also lamented the lack of funding for agencies such as the United States Postal Service, while business interests and donors linked to Donald Trump have been richly rewarded.

Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and a smattering of other Democrats, who a month ago argued in favor of and voted for the biggest transfer of taxpayer money to the corporate elite in the history of the world, and last week backed a second bailout bill, have sent a letter to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Small Business Administration head Jovita Carranza demanding “accountability.”

The letter is dated April 27 and signed by Sanders, Warren, Amy Klobuchar and 17 other Democratic senators, along with independent Senator Angus King. It “urges” Mnuchin and Carranza to “develop strong supervisory mechanisms to identify instances of unjust enrichment” while “committing” to “transparency measures.”

The letter is a pathetic face-saving effort under conditions where popular outrage is growing over the fact that the government, with the backing of both parties, has placed the public purse at the disposal of the financial oligarchy, while refusing to mobilize the resources necessary to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

Sanders followed up the letter to Mnuchin with an

equally worthless tweet lamenting that Carnival Cruise Lines, the largest cruise line company in the world, owned by the billionaire former sponsor of Trump’s reality television series *The Apprentice*, Micky Arison, received \$6 billion in Federal Reserve guaranteed loans.

If Sanders is opposed to corporate bailouts, especially ones with no strings attached and no accountability, then why does he vote for them? And if he really believed that a measure pushed by Trump and the former head of OneWest Bank Mnuchin, who carried out illegal foreclosures of thousands of homeowners, would protect workers and restrain Wall Street, then he would not only be a fake, he would also be a fool.

Prior to voting “yes” on the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act, Sanders took to the Senate floor to hail the bill as a boon to workers. In a video clip still viewable on Sanders’ Twitter page, the “democratic socialist” defends the bill against a proposed Republican amendment that would have means tested the 13-week \$600 weekly federal supplement to state jobless benefits included in the bill. He warns his Republican colleagues: “If it [the amendment] does go far, I will introduce an amendment to deal with the corporate welfare, the \$500 billion in corporate welfare...”

Thus, while promoting the measure, he admits that it is a piece of “corporate welfare.” So much for Sanders’ crusade against the “billionaire class!”

Three days before the passage of the CARES Act, the Dow Jones Industrial Average had cratered over 10,000 points, falling to 18,591. In the month since the bill’s passage--while the death toll from COVID-19 was rising in leaps and bounds, hospitals across the country were furloughing doctors and nurses, and millions of unemployed workers, blocked from receiving jobless benefits, were lining up in food lines that stretched for

miles--the Dow rose by a record 25 percent, closing Wednesday at 24,633.

The bipartisan support for the oligarchy continued with last week's refilling of the corporate slush fund in the form of the misnamed "Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act." The bill was passed, again, with the unanimous support of Senate Democrats and only one dissenting vote by Democrats in the House.

The votes of Sanders and other phony "progressives" demonstrate that they are defenders of the capitalist class and the profit system. They oppose any challenge to the ownership of the means of production—the banks, industry, transport, telecommunications, hi-tech, land, natural resources—by a tiny and fabulously rich minority of the population.

Instead of seizing the fortunes of the super-rich and using their vast wealth to finance a coordinated national and international response to the pandemic, and turning the corporations that are being bailed out at the expense of society into public utilities democratically controlled by working people, they dutifully line up to prop up the oligarchy.

As they well know, the cost of this theft of social resources will be placed squarely on the backs of the working class.

Unfortunately for Sanders and his fellow "progressives"—Warren, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib, etc.—the people are neither blind nor stupid. They see what is happening and they are seething with anger. They are increasingly seeing through charlatans and political scoundrels such as Sanders and looking for a real alternative to the capitalist status quo.



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