

# Pennsylvania school bus driver explains why she is coming to the International May Day online rally

Paul Sherman  
30 April 2021

*Kathy, a school bus driver near Philadelphia and a leading member of the Pennsylvania Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee, recently spoke with the World Socialist Web Site about why she is attending the International May Day Online Rally on Saturday and supporting the call for the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.*

*She described the conditions teachers and support staff have faced in her school district during the pandemic and broader issues, including police brutality, inequality and the need for an international response by workers to the deadly disease.*

I'm a bus driver. When the pandemic first broke out, I had to stay home, and I felt safer. I was on unemployment and had income, so I wasn't too worried. I didn't go places, and I stayed away from people.

When I had to go back to work, I started getting nervous. Before we got our shots, there were quite a few people who got sick, maybe half a dozen. Three got it really bad and were off work for a while. Two have since come back, but the third person had it bad, his blood platelets are off and he will be out the rest of the school year.

Others got it but didn't get so sick. I try to keep my distance, but our bus compound is very small. Apparently, a few of the special needs students tested positive for COVID, and now eight of them can't go in. Nearby some of the bus drivers caught COVID and died.

I would give my company a "C" when it comes to safety. They have a small kiosk where everybody clocks in. There is hand sanitizer by it, but why make everyone come so close together. There is no social

distancing.

They are not social distancing with the kids either. There are too many kids on each bus, and the buses aren't big enough. I've tried it, and it doesn't work. There is no way you can do it.

I don't even bother with the union anymore. They don't do anything. In the summer when this whole thing went down, I got into an argument with the chief steward, and I haven't bothered with them since.

I was concerned about whether they were doing anything with the company to ensure our safety. I said they should do things like putting a barrier around us. The union steward ignored me and just said this was about us being outsourced.

The school district outsourced the bus drivers to First Student about seven years ago, in 2012. We were going to send letters to all the parents about the outsourcing the day after it happened, but the union stepped in and stopped it. They had a deal worked out with First Students behind our backs.

You never see the union officials until election time when they act like your best friend.

I support the demand of our rank-and-file committees, that all the schools and nonessential workplaces be shut until we get this under control, until everybody can get their shots. Until the spread of the virus is brought down to zero transmission, there should be a lockdown—no school and no nonessential businesses, and full compensation for everyone impacted.

The politicians, Democrats and Republicans, work for the ruling elite. They want to make capital, which is more their concern than saving human lives. The Democrats claim to be a little better. The Republicans

are more heartless. But in the end, they have the same agenda, but they do it a little differently.

The Democrats want to come across as the working man's friend, but they have the same policy. They do what the ruling elite want. They may give a little handout here and there to keep us from revolting.

The cops are horrible. They might as well be Hitler's brown shirts. They don't work for us at all. I don't know who would ever call them. Today, I saw them arrest a 73-year-old woman, who had dementia. They dislocated her shoulder, and they were watching it and making jokes. Another one was caught on video mocking people who wanted police reform. They are horrible. They are being trained like the military to be used against the working class.

The way countries are handling the pandemic is only going to make things worse. Look at India. If the world doesn't work together to stop this, I am worried there will be new variants that the vaccines won't stop. None of the countries are doing what needs to be done. We are seeing mass slaughter like in a war.

Instead of the wealth going to the upper echelons, for whatever they use it for, it should be used socially to help people. Instead, they keep cutting the social programs so that they can make more money and hurt the poor.

The Republicans in all these states that are passing all these voter laws are becoming like a fascist regime taking over. And the Democrats are letting it happen.

I would like to see what happens at the International May Day Rally on Saturday. It will be important to coordinate the work of our rank-and-file committees internationally and get the word out to everyone, so that it spreads throughout the workforce globally. It is good that people see it. If it is growing, people will see they have something to go to, and if they only have the unions, it will fail them every time.



To contact the WSWWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)**