

Crowdfund campaign wins support for sacked London bus driver David O'Sullivan

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A crowdfund appeal for London bus driver David O'Sullivan, victimised and sacked for defending workers' rights to health and safety during the coronavirus pandemic, had raised more than £4,000 by yesterday evening.

The appeal, launched on the CrowdJustice platform, must raise £20,000 to cover legal costs associated with an unfair dismissal claim against bus company Metroline.

O'Sullivan states in his crowdfund appeal, "In January, I asserted my rights to a safe workplace under Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act (1996). I was sacked after warning my colleagues about the spread of COVID-19 at the garage and informing them of their rights under the Act."

He explained the background, "The London Bus Rank-and-File Committee had already reported serious COVID-19 safety breaches by management in September. We wrote to Metroline Managing Director Steven Harris, London Deputy Mayor for Transport Heidi Alexander and Unite the union officials John Murphy and Peter Kavanagh—but our calls for protection were ignored."

The case has broad political significance. "My claim against Metroline is a test case for the rights of key workers during the pandemic," O'Sullivan stated.

O'Sullivan's appeal struck a powerful chord. "As a key worker, I wholeheartedly support David O'Sullivan in his fight against unfair dismissal for standing up for workers' health and safety rights during a global pandemic," wrote a donor named James.

A bus driver who donated wrote, "Dave stood up for the drivers and this is a test of us vs them. Metroline managers are crooks and bullies. Drivers are overworked, forced to work extra hours, called constantly by the garage managers while they are off

sick to come back to work and 'help them out'. Dave, we back you up."

Another donor wrote, "London Bus Drivers deserve medals for bravery for their service to London during the Covid-19 pandemic not persecution by their Transport for London-contracted employer."

Readers of the *World Socialist Web Site* from Australia, Germany, France and the United States were among those giving generously.

O'Sullivan told the *World Socialist Web Site*, "I'd like to extend a very deep, heartfelt thank you to everybody who has donated on the first day of our legal fundraiser. It is a fantastic result so far, especially knowing that a lot of contributors don't have much money. These are difficult times. The pandemic is not just a medical emergency but a huge social, economic and political disaster for working people around the world.

"Metroline will fight tooth and nail to uphold my victimisation and sacking, and they have the resources. ComfortDelGro, the parent company, is worth more than £1 billion.

"But we have truth on our side. I'd like to thank my colleagues particularly for the messages of support I have received today and urge fellow drivers and key workers everywhere to support the campaign."

O'Sullivan's legal challenge has significance for the entire working class. Infections due to the highly transmissible and more deadly B.1.617.2 variant, that has taken a catastrophic toll on the workers and toilers of India, is set to become dominant in the UK within days according to scientists.

Professor of medicine Paul Hunter from the University of East Anglia told the *Guardian* yesterday that India's variant would, "become the dominant variant in the UK in the next few days if it hasn't

already done so.”

Yet the Johnson government, backed by Labour and the trade unions, is proceeding with its homicidal plans to lift all social distancing and lockdown measures, opening pubs, restaurants, sporting venues, hotels, bingo halls and casinos. Once again, workers are to be left defenceless.

Measures announced last week by Labour Mayor of London Sadiq Khan and Transport for London came into effect yesterday on London buses, lifting passenger limits and dramatically increasing the risk of airborne transmission of COVID-19. 60 passengers are now allowed on double-deckers, 28 on single-deckers (10 metres and longer) and 22 passengers on a single-decker (less than 10 metres).

The Socialist Equality Party and the London Bus Rank-and-File Committee urge drivers to support the campaign for O’Sullivan’s reinstatement and to help spearhead a fightback by workers against capitalism’s deliberate, reckless and barbaric subordination of lives to profit.

Please donate here and visit the campaign page here.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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