

Campaign for sacked London bus driver David O'Sullivan wins international support

Our reporters
25 May 2021

A crowdfund for London bus driver David O'Sullivan, sacked for defending his colleagues' right to a safe workplace during the coronavirus pandemic, has raised more than £7,500 in little more than a week. Bus drivers, teachers, key workers and readers of the *World Socialist Web Site* from around the world have donated generously.

O'Sullivan is challenging his dismissal by bus operator Metroline, owned by Singapore-based transport giant Comfort Del Gro. He was sacked on February 3 after claiming his rights to a safe workplace under Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act.

The 57-year-old driver sought to alert co-workers to the spread of Covid infections at a garage shared by more than 600 drivers and engineers. O'Sullivan was fearful of spreading COVID-19 to family members as his daughter was born with a serious heart condition.

At least 60 London bus workers have died from coronavirus. Drivers are demanding urgent redress of safety breaches by the bus operators, Transport for London and Unite the union.

Information obtained under Freedom of Information has confirmed that 46 staff at Cricklewood garage became infected with COVID-19 between October and January this year. Extraordinarily, Transport for London, chaired by Labour Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, claims it did not collect data on Covid infections between January and October 2020.

O'Sullivan's campaign has struck a chord in the working class. So far, 75 percent of the campaign's first £10,000 target has been pledged. Messages of solidarity have been submitted on the Crowd Justice page and to the *World Socialist Web Site* from Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. A selection is reprinted below:

Anonymous bus driver, UK:

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.

Peter Skinner, bus driver, UK:

Solidarity, I'm a former Unite rep that resigned during the pandemic due to lack of support from Unite and its officers.

Tony Blampied, LGV Driver, UK:

There's too much of this sort of thing going on at the moment. This mistreatment of workers along with fire and rehire need to be stopped.

Patrick, construction worker, UK:

Good luck. I know what it's like to have your union betray you. (Former lecturer and UCU Branch Chair, now self-employed builder)

Josh Arkos, UK:

Today I learned from the WSWs of the victimisation that Dave O'Sullivan underwent at the hands of the bus company Metroline and the trade union Unite. It is dreadful. I have pledged £50 under this name. I have confidence that the case is winnable and he will become reinstated in his job. News of this passed around fellow workers.

Malcolm, former coal miner, UK:

I fully support the reinstatement of David O' Sullivan and donate to Dave's campaign with full support from miners' strike 1984-85.

Mattiolo Dominique, France:

Tout ceci est scandaleux... encore un Daniel Blake...

Yves Leccia, construction worker, France:

International solidarity is the good way!

John Seaman, care worker/nurse, Australia:

I give my full support to David O'Sullivan for upholding workers' rights to health and safety during this pandemic that has claimed the lives of more than 60 bus workers in the capital. He is undoubtedly one of the many heroes in this world who are criticized and punished by our capitalist governments for standing up for the employment rights of the working class.

Inari Kiuru, Graphic designer and artist, Australia :

Everyone has the right to work in a safe environment.

Natalie, Australia:

That's unfair, give him his job back!

Stacy Judin, Australia:

From Australia David, public transport workers are with you. I am sure you will be reinstated and wish you all the very best in this fight!

Lesley, former social worker, New Zealand:

I am sympathetic to your stand David in such difficult work situations. Even here in NZ essential workers have sometimes been put in extremely unfair situations. Kia kaha and I hope your courage brings change and correction for you and others similarly at risk.

Harvey Lichtman, retired teacher, United States :

In this day and age, workers having to fight for the right to be safe shows how obsolete capitalism is. Now multiply that, times a pandemic that could mostly have been avoided. Much thanks to David O'Sullivan for his integrity.

Warren, Educator, United States:

I donate in the name of the Tennessee Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee.

Rin Roche, Charity worker, UK:

My Grandfather and uncle fought in a war and risked their lives against tyranny, oppression, Nazism, fascism and dictatorship and to ensure freedoms... You have my full solidarity. Workers are abused in many ways, particularly rights. Tell "bosses" to bugger off, they've literally no right to risk your life or that of others. To be honest their handling of covid breached health & safety and as a result workers and drivers died. They should be standing trial far as I'm concerned.

All we had to do was stop for a couple of months, prepare, make safe, plan, protect... Instead, too many let things carry on "as normal"...

Phillip Moroney, teacher, UK:

I understand how the system can attempt to vilify and destroy you when you stand up. In the end you will be vindicated and applauded for speaking the truth and your actions have saved the lives of more people than you can know.

David, UK:

As a teacher I support every effort by essential workers to keep our families safe.

Ruth, Educator, UK:

So many union reps and members in frontline jobs like David have suffered victimisation for speaking out to protect the health and safety of their colleagues and families. This must stop and this test case is a powerful tool in the fight for safety at work, not just for David but for all workers.

Rebecca Shawcross, education, UK:

This cannot continue, justice is needed. Thank you to everyone for supporting this campaign.

Maxine Walker, Julian Assange Defence Campaign, UK :

I would like to send my solidarity and support to David O'Sullivan who is facing sacking and victimisation for raising the vital issue of health and safety for bus workers.

His case is an essential one for workers to win. The voice of key -often low-paid workers who have had to keep working and facing the many dangers of this pandemic has been stifled during public debate. Yet it is they who have kept the show on the road.

While people in the professions have largely worked at home, bus drivers, health and care workers, shop and warehouse workers and many more have faced lies and secrecy from their employers, from government and politicians of all varieties and an obscene disregard for the precautions that might have kept them safe. As a result, they have died in disproportionately large numbers. COVID overall has hit workers and working class communities hardest of all and has been rightly called 'social murder' in the British Medical Journal.

Dave has stood up and challenged this. In doing so he has given voice to the unacknowledged and unheard working class. Parasitic billionaires are heard, useless politicians are heard and the irrational voices that deny the need for basic public health measures are all over the place. It is time for the workers to be heard.

I met Dave whilst campaigning on the Julian Assange case. It is notable how much support the fight to stop Assange's persecution for revealing war crimes has received from bus workers. Many of the struggles we fight separately today have the same enemies. I hope this struggle for workers' rights is victorious—A victory for one will be a victory for all.

Visit [here](#) to find out more and join the campaign for David O'Sullivan's reinstatement. You can donate to O'Sullivan's legal defence [here](#) .



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact