

Crowd Justice campaign for David O'Sullivan meets initial £10,000 target

Our reporters

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A public crowdfund for victimised London bus driver David O'Sullivan has reached its first target of £10,000, with 11 days to spare. The Crowd Justice appeal will finance a legal claim for unfair dismissal against bus company Metroline. O'Sullivan was sacked in February after defending his colleagues' rights to a safe workplace during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Crowd Justice appeal for O'Sullivan's reinstatement was launched on May 16. It reached £10,031 after new donations yesterday from Ireland, Germany, Australia and Britain. In 20 days, 150 donors pledged an average of £69 each. O'Sullivan must raise £20,000 to finance his case at the Employment Tribunal. A hearing date has not yet been scheduled.

O'Sullivan yesterday posted a thank you message to supporters on the Crowd Justice platform, and emailed donors to thank them for their generous backing. His message is posted below, along with statements of support received this past week from bus and transport workers in Britain, Norway, Germany and Australia.

Statement from David O'Sullivan:

We have reached our first £10,000 target, 11 days ahead of schedule. This is a fantastic achievement.

I would like to thank every single one of my supporters—your donations large and small have made a huge difference.

This campaign has connected in a lot of ways with drivers' own experiences, and those of key workers everywhere. It's clear there is a thirst in the working class for a political fight back.

Dominic Cummings' revelations at last week's parliamentary health and science committee proved the Johnson government pursued a "herd immunity" strategy. The pandemic was allowed to spread without the government taking any serious virus eradication measures. This criminal policy was backed by Labour and the trade unions. As my case shows, workers were left defenceless.

In the words of the *British Medical Journal*, the prioritisation of profits over health and the suppression of scientific advice has resulted in a "maelstrom of avoidable harm", including the deaths of more than 150,000 people. The same agenda has been pursued by governments all over the world, from the United States and India, to Brazil, France and Germany.

The issues raised in my campaign are universal ones facing working people all over the world. Data supplied by Crowd Justice shows the largest source of donor referrals has come via the World Socialist Web Site, which is read by growing numbers of workers worldwide.

I wish to publicly thank the WSWs for their support and for bringing my case to the attention of workers across the UK, Europe and internationally. I would also like to thank the team at Crowd Justice for all of their help.

This first £10,000 will allow my lawyers at Leigh Day to begin preparing my unfair dismissal case. Our stretch goal of £20,000 is needed to finance representation by a barrister at the hearing, which is likely to take place over several days. Please keep donating. I will keep everyone updated.

This is the first step in a public campaign that is winning growing support. In the past fortnight I have received messages from bus drivers in London, Leeds, Sheffield and Manchester as well as transport workers, teachers, postal workers, miners and IT workers from Ireland, France, Germany, Poland, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Canada and India.

As the highly infectious Delta variant of COVID-19 is on the rise, with a dangerous uptick in infections and hospital admissions, this legal test case for key workers' rights to a safe workplace in the pandemic takes on new urgency. Thank you once again, and please continue to do all you can to support this fight.

Messages for O'Sullivan left by donors on Crowd Justice show the depth of sentiment in defence of key workers. "I wish you success and your job back if you want it," wrote John. "You need compensation for wrongful dismissal, stress and loss of earnings. The employer should pay your costs and apologise in public for breaking the law and putting you and your work-mates at risk of serious illness and death."

Another donor wrote, "David, you are an inspiration. You have stood up for bus drivers and the bosses came down on you it seems with the help of the union. Shame on them. I am sure you will win."

Kourosh wrote, "As a legal professional representing rank-and-file union members from all over Canada please accept my pledge

in solidarity with your struggle for labour justice and worker safety in the face of capitalist greed during a devastating global pandemic.”

A previous donor wrote, “Another tenner to add to the earlier pledge. Against victimisations, against Covid infected workplaces, for health and safety first and democratic rights in the workplace.”

The *World Socialist Web Site* has also received comments from bus and transport workers in the UK and internationally. A selection is included below:

Bus Driver, Battersea Garage , London:

What happened to David is unfair. He was trying to save drivers’ lives after we lost a lot of drivers to Covid. David wanted the company to improve safety. They should have listened and addressed the safety concerns he had, instead of getting rid of him. This has happened at a lot of companies and all the drivers were scared. At Battersea, there were many who got Covid.

We have a driver now who is still on medication because his lungs were damaged. We lost a driver, Nicu, who got Covid. And also an engineer died from Covid but the company said that he didn’t get it from work. At the beginning the company was covering up—they didn’t want other drivers to know what was happening. They wanted drivers to come into work—their only concern was to make money. After denying that Covid was spreading at the depot, some of the managers got Covid too.

The bus companies now are going back to normal, but the virus is still there. There should be social distancing and masks. But passenger limits have been lifted and they allow passengers to sit behind the driver. This is not fair. The union has done nothing. The reps have been told to go back driving. Unite didn’t even consult us or question TfL [Transport for London]. They don’t care about us. I think what David did was right—it was for all of us. We need protection and this fight is not over.”

Tom, Tram Driver, Munich, Germany:

I fully and completely support the fight for your reinstatement! It is criminal for a worker to be fired for standing up for safe working conditions to protect himself, his colleagues, and his family. What happened to you shows the true face of the unions. In Munich, too, the unions do nothing to protect us drivers from the Coronavirus. They are only concerned that operations run smoothly and that the front doors of the buses can be used without restriction. That’s why it’s so important that we workers unite internationally and independently and base ourselves on a socialist programme. I wish you every success in your struggle and I am sure that with the support of workers worldwide you will be victorious.

Florian, Bus Mechanic, Norway:

Here’s an experienced worker showing responsibility, courage and sensible action for his co-workers, passengers and family. And here’s a management being paid for all of this. They indict themselves as irresponsible by sacking him. Decent workers will not work as much for as against such a management.

Rebecca, Bus Driver, Townsville, Australia:

Queensland drivers stand in solidarity with London bus driver David O’Sullivan, sacked by Metroline Transport and backed by the Unite union. Queensland drivers support David’s actions in trying to keep drivers safe from covid-19, which has already killed

45 London drivers. We support all health and safety initiatives that protect drivers and passengers. Drivers need to recognise that most union leaders are in bed with bosses and sell out workers time and time again. Enlightened drivers support rank and file grassroots organisations that act in solidarity with other workers both in our yards and around the world. Reinstatement David O’Sullivan now.

Patrick, rail transport worker, New South Wales, Australia:

I fully oppose Metroline’s victimisation of David O’Sullivan and call for his reinstatement. This is a blatant case of an employer making an example out of a courageous worker who took a stand in an unsafe workplace. David’s dismissal is a warning to other workers not to speak up about safety issues, and not to get in the way of company profits.

In our industry we are often told that safety is the number one priority. But when issues are reported they are often ignored for as long as possible, if the fix is going to cost them too much money. The reality is profit is the number one priority and David’s situation proves this.

There were 301 infections and 12 deaths among workers at Metroline, which was hiding the number of infections because they knew if workers understood what was happening, they would refuse to work. I know if this was the case where I work, I would absolutely refuse to work in that situation.

This is about the fundamental right to a safe workplace, something that will not exist unless workers stand together on this issue. Transport workers of the world must reject this attack which is an attack on all of us.”

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.



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