

Canadian workers defend victimised UK bus driver David O’Sullivan

Our reporters
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At a meeting in late May, the Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee (CERSC) passed a resolution in solidarity with victimized UK bus driver David O’Sullivan, who was fired from his job because he was fighting for measures to protect workers from COVID-19. CERSC members and supporters have been reaching out to educators and other workers across Canada in recent weeks to inform them of O’Sullivan’s arbitrary dismissal, and to build solidarity for the campaign to win his reinstatement and uphold workers’ fundamental right to work in a safe environment.

O’Sullivan was not only targeted by his employer, Metroline, but also by the trade union Unite. Scandalously, Britain’s largest trade union provided evidence against him at a company disciplinary hearing that rubber-stamped his dismissal.

The CERSC resolution, published by the *World Socialist Web Site* on May 27, explains that the attack on O’Sullivan is an attack on all workers: “The CERSC states unequivocally that O’Sullivan’s fight is the same as ours. Throughout the pandemic, we teachers, education support staff, and caretakers have been forced to work in dangerous conditions because the political establishment wants ‘open schools’ to act as child-minding services, so that parents can be made to go to work in unsafe conditions to generate profits for big business. Like O’Sullivan and his bus driver colleagues, we confront a gang-up of our employers in the form of right-wing provincial governments with the trade unions. They have collaborated to ensure that schools remain open as long as possible and to suppress all worker opposition to life-threatening working conditions.”

Terry, a caretaker at an Ontario school, commented, “Metroline has sent a clear message to its workers by

sacking Mr. O’Sullivan and it is to shut up. They are using David as a scapegoat to prevent bus drivers from speaking out for themselves to demand a safe and healthy workplace. Workers must continue to fight and speak out for their own interests.”

Ken, a teacher from Ontario’s Peel Region, which has been especially hard-hit by the pandemic, said, “To those who look the other way now because you’re not a bus driver, wake up! There will be no one left to fight for you when the money managers, sell-out unions, and political lackeys come for you. Workers United! Will never be defeated! Reinstatement David O’Sullivan now!”

Gareth from British Columbia wrote to us, “As an organic farmer on the west coast of Canada who has witnessed the destructive and dangerous practices of industrial agricultural corporations who put profit above the health of their workers and the health of the soil, I stand in full solidarity with London bus driver David O’Sullivan. He was unjustly sacked for courageously standing up for the safety of his fellow workers and his family, particularly a daughter who was born with a heart defect, by attempting to bring to light the number of drivers who had been infected with COVID-19 at the garage where he worked. Obviously his fears are well founded as over 60 London bus drivers have died from the virus over the last year.

“The Singapore-based transport corporate giant Comfort Del Gro and its subsidiary Metroline should be charged with wrongful dismissal and David O’Sullivan should be compensated and reinstated as he was simply doing what any concerned father would do regarding the health of his family and co-workers.”

A Montreal teacher who wished to remain anonymous commented, “Mr. O’Sullivan has a right to work in a safe place. Give him his right back and stop pretending he’s wrong. This virus is still spreading

around the world, you just can't pretend it's not dangerous for a worker who has dedicated all his life to your company. Give him the right to work in safe conditions!"

Ava from Ontario said, "As a student, one thing I'm not looking forward to in the future is long work hours, low wages, and capitalist exploitation. Therefore, I fully support David O'Sullivan in his work to support workers throughout this pandemic and in the future."

Greg, a worker in the oil and gas industry in Alberta, added, "David O'Sullivan has made a stand not only for himself and his family, but for his co-workers and the whole of the working class. Such courage is remarkable. Do not let him stand alone."

Daniel, a postal worker from Hamilton, remarked, "Any worker who asserts their right to a safe workplace needs to be protected from reprisal. This is a fundamental right! I stand with David O'Sullivan, as should every worker. An injury to one is an injury to all!"

Samantha, a cleaner from Surrey, British Columbia, stated, "I think what has happened to Mr. O'Sullivan is terrible, but unfortunately it's the kind of thing that so many of us deal with when we speak out about unsafe conditions at our jobs. My husband was working as a taxi driver when the pandemic started and I was so terrified that he would get sick from one of his customers and bring the virus home to our two little ones. Bus drivers are interacting with so many more people in a day! It must have been so horrible for Mr. O'Sullivan and his coworkers to see so many people at their bus garage get sick like that. He was right to speak out and I am disgusted at how he has been treated by his employers and his union too. I fully support him and the stand he has taken to protect his coworkers, his family and the people around him every day."

Peyton, a student from Victoria, British Columbia, added, "I support David O'Sullivan! He has the right to a safe workplace just like anyone else. Nobody should ever be fired for standing up for the rights and safety of themselves and their colleagues. Management care a whole lot more about their bottom line than their employees. It was always that way but it's been so much worse during the pandemic. They don't care if we die. Workers like David are the people who keep the world running. I stand in solidarity with you, David!"

To get involved with the work of the CERSC, contact us at cersc.csppb@gmail.com. Find out more about the campaign to reinstate David O'Sullivan by visiting **this page**.



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