

Halt the reopening of schools in California!

**Statement of David Moore—California gubernatorial candidate of the Socialist Equality Party
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As the Socialist Equality candidate for governor in California, I demand an immediate end to the reopening of schools for in-person instruction while the pandemic rages.

The reopening of schools, carried out under the direction of the Newsom administration and implemented by Democratic and Republican-controlled cities and counties throughout the state, will lead to a massive surge of the pandemic and the infection, illness and death of countless children.

Already, major districts like Oakland have reopened, while the rest are set to resume by the end of the month. Los Angeles, which like Oakland is controlled by the Democratic Party, is scheduled to reopen this Monday, August 16. This policy must be stopped, and it must be stopped now!

The reopening of schools is taking place even as California, like the rest of the country, is seeing a surge in cases from the Delta variant. Hospitalizations from COVID-19 have increased by 27 percent over the past week and are 12 times higher than at the beginning of June.

There is also more and more evidence of the extreme danger to children from the Delta variant. Nationwide, pediatric COVID-19 cases have reached record levels. Dr. Heather Haq of the Baylor College of Medicine stated on August 9, “More US children are hospitalized with COVID than at any other time point in the pandemic, and this number will continue to grow as the Delta variant spreads.”

Even if children recover, studies are showing that contracting COVID-19 can have long-term health consequences, including significant impacts on mental development for children. Infection is associated with cognitive impacts comparable to lead poisoning or worse.

The catastrophe that is unfolding reveals the bankruptcy of the entire social and economic system,

with both parties responsible for a policy that has killed nearly 650,000 people in the United States, including nearly 65,000 (or one tenth) in California.

The Republicans have organized this recall as part of an effort to remove even the most modest public health measures. The leading Republican candidate, Larry Elder, has said that it is “long overdue for California to return to normalcy,” with no mask or vaccine mandates and no further lockdowns. He is joined, however, on all these points by the leading Democratic candidate, the right-wing YouTube personality, Kevin Paffrath.

Whatever their tactical differences, both big business parties insist that public health be subordinated to corporate profits. Reopening schools to in-person education is central to ruling class efforts to keep workers on the job pumping out profits, which is essential in keeping the stock market booming. Even amid the mass death over the past year and a half, the fortunes of the capitalist oligarchs have increased to new records, with the wealth of billionaires like Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg and Larry Ellison doubling or more during the pandemic.

While the Republicans attack the Democrats from the right, the fact is that the latest surge is the direct product of the policies of the Biden administration. Biden came to office pledging that he would “follow the science” on the pandemic, but his administration is demanding the reopening of schools in the face of warnings from scientists and epidemiologists of the catastrophic consequences.

The Biden and Newsom administrations have cynically called the current surge a “pandemic of the unvaccinated,” and both have insisted that schools must reopen in person. The stark fact is that the majority of unvaccinated people in California are younger than 18, in large part because there are no vaccinations at all for children under the age of 12.

Newsom is requiring that all school staff be

vaccinated or submit to regular testing to ensure that they are not infected, but this is wholly inadequate. With the Delta variant, vaccinated people remain vectors for the disease, and children who cannot be vaccinated will transmit it to their classmates, teachers and family members. A recently published report out of North Carolina State University predicts that even with masks and testing, more than 20 percent of students would be infected within their first three months of school.

Instead of protecting teachers and students, union officials have worked overtime to implement Biden's dangerous policy, with the American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten declaring, "The number one priority is to get kids to be back in school."

No, the number one priority must be saving lives!

My campaign calls on teachers and other workers throughout the state to immediately form rank-and-file committees to organize opposition to the reopening of schools and prepare strike action to enforce the necessary public health measures and stop the pandemic. Absolutely no confidence can be placed in the trade unions, which have demonstrated that they are nothing more than the bought-and-paid-for representatives of the ruling class.

The SEP demands:

- The immediate closure of all schools to in-person education that have been reopened and a halt to all plans to reopen other districts.
- A massive allocation of resources to ensure high-quality remote education and child care for all children affected.
- The provision of full income to all workers affected by school closures and the shutdown of other businesses necessary to stop the spread of the virus.

The recall of Newsom is driven by right-wing forces thoroughly hostile to the working class. For this reason, the SEP calls for a "no" vote on the recall. However, the entire situation, in California and nationally, demonstrates that the Democratic Party is a party of Wall Street. Stopping the pandemic requires the intervention of the working class through mass struggle and an independent political movement directed at the entire capitalist system.

I urge everyone who agrees with this perspective to contact my campaign and take up this fight among the working class in California, throughout the United

States and around the world!

Support the campaign of David Moore for governor!



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