

No more child infections! We must eradicate COVID-19!

**Statement of David Moore—California gubernatorial candidate of the Socialist Equality Party
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As the Socialist Equality Party candidate for California governor, I call for decisive measures, including an immediate halt to the reopening of schools to stop the spread of the pandemic, eradicate COVID-19 and save countless lives.

Nearly 650,000 people in the United States, including some 450 children, have died from the pandemic over the past year and a half. One-tenth of these deaths, more than 65,000, have been in California. The global death toll is approaching 4.5 million officially, while the real figure, based on excess deaths, is more than 10 million.

Far from being over, as claimed by the Biden administration in the spring, the pandemic is surging once again. The daily death toll in the US has risen above 1,000, as the more infectious Delta variant spreads throughout the country. In California, new cases are again over 13,000, higher than at any point outside the massive surge between November 2020 and February 2021.

Most horrifying is the impact of the Delta variant on children, many of whom cannot yet be vaccinated. Pediatric hospitals in many states are overflowing with patients. More than 1,900 children are currently hospitalized in the US with COVID-19, a record. In addition to dying from the disease, it is estimated that between 10 and 15 percent of children infected can develop symptoms of Long COVID, with severe and still poorly understood consequences for mental health and cognitive development.

Under these conditions, the reopening of schools—in California and throughout the United States—can be described as nothing other than criminal. The ruling class is carrying out a barbaric experiment with the lives and health of millions of children.

The Newsom administration and the media claim that

all is well in California due to its higher vaccination rates and mask mandates. They know this is a lie. On August 16, the same day the state's largest school district Los Angeles Unified (LAUSD) reopened, Newsom's office issued emergency orders to prepare hospitals and ICUs for an influx of patients. The Democrats know full well that, masked or not, students in schools will become major vectors of the virus.

School districts across the state are already experiencing major outbreaks. In just one week of instruction, LAUSD reported 1,478 cases among students and staff.

The campaign to recall Newsom has been driven by far-right forces in the Republican Party like radio host Larry Elder, who want to end even the pretense of fighting the pandemic. For this reason, the SEP has called for a "No" vote on the recall. At the same time, however, Newsom and the Democrats have fully participated and implemented the policies responsible for the massive and ongoing loss of life.

It is now the Biden administration that is spearheading the reopening of schools to in-person learning. This is driven by the imperative to keep workers on the job where they can continue to pump out profits for corporations.

The entire ruling class is opposed to the necessary measures to end the pandemic once and for all. It has the critical assistance of the trade unions—including the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, and the California Teachers Association—who are fully behind the reopening of schools.

This mad policy must be stopped! A policy based on science and saving lives must be initiated!

This past weekend, the *World Socialist Web Site* hosted a panel discussion with leading public health

scientific experts who clearly outlined what must be done. The elimination and eradication of the COVID-19 virus is possible, but it requires aggressive public health measures, including the shutdown of schools and nonessential production, universal testing and contact tracing.

In the words of Dr. Malgorzata Gasperowicz, a developmental biologist at the University of Calgary, “The Delta variant is our wake-up call. We need everything we have in our toolbox to stop it, to slow it down.” While vaccination is necessary, it is not sufficient to end the pandemic. Vaccinated people can still transmit the virus, and its further spread guarantees the emergence of new, more infectious and even vaccine-resistant strains.”

With the assistance of powerful vaccines, Dr. Gasperowicz explained, aggressive public health measures can eradicate the virus in the space of two months.

These measures should have been implemented from the beginning. If they had, millions of people would be alive now who are not. To save the lives of millions more, they must be implemented now!

The Socialist Equality Party calls for:

? The immediate shutdown of all schools and nonessential businesses. This must be combined with fully resourced online learning for all students and full income to support workers who cannot work remotely.

? A serious program of mass testing, contact tracing, and quarantine to track and eliminate any remaining transmission.

? The provision of adequate protective equipment and infrastructure upgrades to ensure a safe working environment for all essential workers.

? An immediate moratorium on evictions, loan payments, credit card debts, water, electricity and phone bills, along with emergency housing assistance to California’s homeless population.

? These measures must be paid for with the massive fortunes accumulated by the ruling class which have grown enormously over the past year and a half.

The pandemic cannot be eradicated in California alone. It requires national and global coordination, since the spread and evolution of the virus in any location risks reinfection and new outbreaks everywhere.

What has blocked the implementation of a scientific

and rational program to eradicate the virus is the fact that at every point the necessary measures to save lives have been subordinated to the profit interests of the rich. Both the Democrats and the Republicans, along with their counterparts globally, represent the capitalist ruling class.

It is the working class—educators, parents, autoworkers, logistics workers, health care workers and the entire working class internationally—that must be organized and mobilized to put an end to the needless suffering produced by the pandemic.

I call on all workers in California, including parents and educators, to build rank-and-file safety committees to fight for the shutdown of schools and nonessential businesses. This must be connected to the development of an independent political movement of the working class, in opposition to the Democrats and Republicans, that is directed at the ruling class and the capitalist system.

Vote for me, David Moore, in the California recall election and join the SEP to take up the fight for socialism!

On Saturday , August 28, at 2:00 pm Pacific Time, David Moore will be speaking at the meeting of the West Coast Educators Rank-and-File Committee to discuss the perspective of the SEP in the California recall elections.



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