

# US teacher supports international online May Day rally

A member of the Michigan Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee

28 April 2022

*The International May Day Online Rally is being held by the World Socialist Web Site and the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) on Sunday, May 1. We encourage all to attend and participate in this important event by registering here.*

*Rochelle, a Michigan high school science teacher with 24 years of experience, and an active member of the Michigan Rank-and-File Educators Safety Committee, explained why she is participating in the May Day rally.*

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I'm attending and urging other workers to because of the significance of the pandemic, the war in the Ukraine and the climate crisis. On top of that, it is important because of how much we are all struggling financially. We've been trod on by everyone, our elected leaders, the capitalists and the self-serving unions.

The working class are the ones doing the actual labor and producing the profits. We all need to find a way to band together and do what's right for everyone, not just the wealthy few.

We need to stop this war and deal with this pandemic because there is no escaping it. My students have been ill, some infected multiple times, with the virus running through their entire family. Students have lost their parents and other family members.

There is just the fear and anxiety of constantly being exposed, too. These are significant impacts on so many students, staff and the community at large. Our county is one of the worst in the country, with a death rate of one out of 191 people. It's awful.

Politicians are not representing the working class people, they are representing the oligarchy who want to keep the economy going without concern to the loss and damage it causes. This has been happening all over the world. The Great Barrington Declaration says it all,

just let it rip. They tried to tell us that COVID didn't hurt kids. Now we know there are all kinds of health impacts. I have read that only one out of four with Long COVID are fully recovered after one year!

The latest Omicron surge was the most devastating for young children. My daughter had COVID early on in the fall. Everyone in my immediate family has been infected at different times, except me. There are so many lingering and likely life-long impacts from COVID infection that we are just beginning to understand. The sheer number of individuals affected is astronomical. It makes me angry when they are so blasé about mass infection and have stopped precautionary health and mitigation measures as well as real-time reporting of cases.

How much does missing a couple months of face-to-face learning compared to losing a parent in terms of importance? In terms of mental health? I have had relatives that have passed from COVID. My students have lost grandparents, a few have lost a parent.

Unfortunately most don't understand what has gone on behind the scenes with regards to the war, they think we are trying to protect Ukraine. No, it is part of pillaging the natural resources of Russia and for the US to have a puppet to control and do what they want. It has nothing to do with democracy, despite the claim.

The government is censoring information to the general public about both the war and the pandemic. They are trying to silence those who oppose the war, like Julian Assange and Scott Ritter. Instead they are using the neo-Nazi Azov battalion as a source of information and putting it on national news.

No one is benefiting except the very rich. This is an oligarchy. If you look at the investigation into the Flint water crisis here in Michigan, none of the people responsible at the top have been convicted. The state

says their hands are tied, some low-level people were thrown under the bus, and that is all.

I believe the May Day meeting will be important to unify the many different groups around the world. It's going to take a collective effort worldwide to stop both the pandemic and this war. All the money being diverted into this war should be put into taking care of this pandemic, first and foremost.

My husband worked at [auto parts manufacturer] American Axle. They were pitted against the workers in Mexico. That was both the company and the UAW. The union claimed they were going to send work to Mexico if the workers wouldn't accept these cuts. They took huge pay cuts, but they closed up shop anyway.

It's similar with the teachers. [American Federation of Teachers President] Randi Weingarten pushed to get schools open and people face-to-face even though we knew that was dangerous.

We are fortunate at my school that we had individual heating units with MERV filters in each classroom, but our large school districts in urban areas are in utter disrepair! Many don't have properly functioning heating units, much less MERV filters or good air quality. Look how long it took the government to even admit COVID was in fact an aerosol! Instead, we got plastic partitions and social distancing based on droplet particles.

Weingarten worked hand-in-hand with the White House to help accomplish Biden's goal to reopen schools for face-to-face learning and get the economy running by March. The Democratic Party is just as bad, if not worse, than the Republicans. Initially, I thought differently, I was proud of [Democratic Governor] Whitmer when she locked our state down and provided metrics that were based on science for reopening. Ironically, it appears once Biden was elected, all of this went out of the window.

The current duopoly, and pretty much all politicians, don't care about the workers, they are simply two different wings of the same bird. Democrats crossed party lines to vote for [former Education Secretary] Betsy DeVos. They definitely work together, taking turns and pointing their fingers. But behind the scenes they are both doing things none of us want.

War is also a diversion from the pandemic, to help bring about 'national unity' like 911 did. When we look at the results, people can't afford gas in their car,

can't afford food or rent. Working class people are suffering all over the world. Even more so now because of the war, and who benefits while all the others are harmed?

A major challenge to unifying workers all over is to clear up the misinformation and propaganda. To get the things we need means that these capitalistic forces have to be done away with. The unions are self-serving organizations, worried about perpetuating themselves instead of meeting the needs of workers.

The online May Day rally will be the best opportunity to organize like-minded people to effect the types of changes needed to improve the lives of working class people who have been struggling for years. Only through a worldwide collective can we demand what is rightfully needed to end this war, pandemic, and improve the daily lives and future health of humanity.



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