

# New York Times journalists and staffers to launch 24-hour strike on Thursday

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Journalists and staffers at the *New York Times* are set to walk off the job Thursday to demand a contract that provides significant wage increases and protects health care and retirement benefits.

The 24-hour work stoppage by workers in the Times NewsGuild comes after nearly two years of working under an expired contract. It would be the first full-day work stoppage at the newspaper since the late 1970s.

More than 1,100 members of the NewsGuild signed on to a pledge published last Friday articulating basic demands, including wage increases that “reflect both the contributions we have made to the success of the company and record inflation,” no cuts to their pensions and adequate employer contributions to their health care fund. Workers are also calling for remote workplace policies to protect their health amid the ongoing pandemic and changes to their performance rating system to prevent bias.

The *Times*, which recorded \$220 million in net profits last year, is insisting that workers take a massive pay cut in real terms, offering raise guarantees of just 2.75 percent per year amid 7.7 percent inflation. After more than doubling dividend payouts to investors over the past four years, the *Times*’ wage demands, combined with proposals that would eliminate pensions and grossly underfund health care, amount to a provocation.

Thursday’s walkout follows a number of other work actions by *New York Times* employees, including defying orders to return to the office in September and a half-day protest by technology workers last year in response to the paper’s refusal to voluntarily recognize the newly formed union.

The walkout by over 1,000 journalists and newspaper

staff is part of a surge of strikes across the country, including significant sections of professional workers. A strike by 200 workers at publisher HarperCollins in New York is completing its third week. HarperCollins is owned by Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation.

Also in New York, 2,000 faculty members at The New School have been on strike since November 16. Last week they overwhelmingly rejected the “last, best and final offer” proposed by university administrators. In response, the university has stepped up threats to hire replacements to break the strike.

On the West Coast, 48,000 academic workers in the University of California system are on strike, which the United Auto Workers is seeking to shut down on the basis of agreements that fail to meet any of the strikers’ demands.

The hard line taken by the *Times* against its employees exposes the real character of the newspaper, which is both a major financial-corporate institution and is closely linked to the Democratic Party and the capitalist state.

The *Times* has played a central role in promoting the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, parroting the propaganda of the State Department. During the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, *Times* columnist Thomas Friedman initiated the call for ending all restraints on the spread of the virus under the slogan that “the cure can’t be worse than the disease.”

The *Times*, along with the Democratic Party, promotes the apparatus of the trade unions as mechanisms for the suppression of the class struggle. In September, the newspaper celebrated the intervention of the Biden administration to broker agreements between the railroad unions and companies to force through concessions contracts covering 100,000 rail workers.

As the Democrats moved to pass legislation last week, the *Times* framed their strikebreaking as a legitimate policy to prevent economic calamity, albeit one that risked undermining the authority of the Democratic Party and trade union apparatus.

Over the past four months, the *Times* led an overall media blackout of the first-ever leadership elections for the United Auto Workers, publishing only one article on the elections during four months between the convention in July and the conclusion of the first-round last week. The blackout assisted the UAW apparatus in its effort to suppress the vote under conditions in which the campaign of rank-and-file socialist Will Lehman was winning broad support.

The attack by the publishing giant on its own workforce is entirely consistent with its political role as a promotor of the Democratic Party, which above all is fearful of an independent and class-conscious movement of workers.



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