

For an indefinite strike by University of California workers! Build a working class movement against the policies of the incoming Trump administration!

World Socialist Web Site Healthcare Workers Newsletter
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The WSWS invites readers to attend an important discussion Wednesday evening of the outcome of 2024 US presidential elections: “Of the oligarchy, by the oligarchy, and for the oligarchy, Trump’s cabinet & the restructuring of the American state.” Please register here.

The World Socialist Web Site and the Socialist Equality Party fully support the two-day strike this week by nearly 40,000 University of California workers, including in the UC medical system and among cafeteria, janitorial and transportation workers. The strike must become part of a broader movement of the working class in defense of good-paying jobs and of the healthcare system, which is under unprecedented attack by the ruling class.

UC workers’ just demands include starting pay of no less than \$25 an hour with inflation-busting pay increases and no increase to insurance premiums. Workers’ incomes are also being squeezed through the cost of parking, which workers report is around \$70 a month.

Declining pay and benefits are issues which workers are fighting for everywhere. The strike is the latest in a series of major strikes across the United States this year. Earlier, more than 33,000 Boeing workers and 46,000 dockworkers on the East and Gulf Coast docks carried out powerful strikes. This is part of a global movement, including an ongoing strike by more than 50,000 Canada Post workers.

Healthcare workers have been at the forefront, with massive strikes across the US and around the world since the start of the pandemic, in which public health has been sacrificed for profit.

The UC system is also emerging as a major political battleground. Graduate students have launched three strikes since 2019, including a system-wide strike earlier this year against the crackdown on anti-genocide protests. One of the largest employers in the state, controlled by a board of directors stuffed with corporate Democrats like Governor Gavin Newsom and the super-rich, the UC campuses have gone from world-renowned academic institutions to a concentrated

expression of capitalist inequality.

This is why this strike is above all a political struggle. Workers are not just fighting for themselves but against the control of a tiny oligarchy over every aspect of society. They are opposed by a political system completely dominated by the ruling elite.

This is the first major new strike in the US since this month’s presidential election. Whatever the illusions of those who voted for Trump, the new administration will provoke massive social conflict on a scale never before seen in the United States.

Trump is seeking to convert the presidency into a fascist dictatorship, the most extreme form of government of, by and for the corporate oligarchy. This is seen as necessary to carry out a massive attack on the working class.

The healthcare system is the number one target of this planned assault. Elon Musk, appointed to head Trump’s so-called “Department of Government Efficiency” alongside biotech billionaire Vivek Ramaswamy, said he intends to slash \$2 trillion in government spending *per year*, starting with Medicaid.

The appointment of antivax ignoramus Robert F. Kennedy Jr to head the Department of Health and Human Services is a sign that Trump intends to drive back healthcare by centuries. Behind the attacks on science is frustration by the ruling class that too much money is being spent on measures to lengthen and improve the lives of workers—money which they consider would be “better” spent shoveled into Wall Street and into the military.

On Monday, Trump confirmed that he intends to immediately deploy the military inside the US to carry out mass deportations upon taking power next January. This is a direct threat to the tens of thousands of immigrant workers taking part in this week’s strike, as well as to the democratic rights of workers everywhere. Trump attempts to blame immigrants for poverty caused by capitalists in the United States. But the working class, united on a world scale by its fight against global

corporations, has no interest in this racist appeal.

The WSWS calls for a mass mobilization of the working class against the new government. This must be directed above all at the source of dictatorship in the capitalist profit system.

Such a movement must be completely independent of the Democratic Party. The other main capitalist party, they are much more afraid of a mass movement from below than they are of Trump's threat to democracy.

Having sometimes called Trump a fascist during the election campaign, Biden, Harris and the rest now say they hope for his administration's "success" and for a smooth transition. Their sole concern is that Trump continue the wars launched under Biden, including the genocide in Gaza and the war against Russia. The firing of US missiles Tuesday into Russian territory was aimed at locking in a massive escalation of the war, which Trump also supports.

If Trump was able to make a right-wing populist appeal in the election, this was above all due to the indifference of the Democrats to social and economic concerns of workers and their defense of genocide and war. But once the meaning of Trump's actual policies become clear, it will drive tens of millions of workers, including those who voted for him, into a political struggle against his government.

The Socialist Equality Party ran its own candidates, Joe Kishore for president and Jerry White for vice president, to provide an independent alternative for workers in opposition to both big business parties, and to prepare for the fight after the election.

The fight against Trump also requires a fight against the sellout union bureaucracy, which is in bed with management. The officials in AFSCME and UPTE have limited this strike in advance to two days, while other healthcare unions have shut down a strike at University of Illinois-Chicago and blocked a strike at the University of Michigan medical center. By disrupting a serious, united struggle, they are doing Trump's dirty work.

Their limiting of the strike follows the sellouts of workers at Kaiser Permanente, where the unions receive millions of dollars in company funding through a "Labor Management Partnership," the United Auto Workers' sabotage of the strikes by graduate students, and by major sellouts in the auto industry, UPS, Boeing and others which paved the way for massive layoffs.

The union officials are in bed with the Democrats, with AFSCME and UPTE's parent union the Communications Workers of America having spent over \$19 million on Democratic candidates in the last election. The pro-corporate policies of the Democrats have not only paved the way for Trump, but the union bureaucracy has played a central role. One after the other, they have imposed massive sellouts through deals brokered by the Biden White House.

The fight to defend public healthcare, and the rights of the working class in general, requires workers develop new

structures to transfer power from the pro-corporate union apparatus to the rank-and-file.

A rank-and-file committee, composed of workers and not union officials or Democratic Party operatives, must be built to give workers the power to countermand decisions that violate their will and provide the means to link up with workers across the UC system, the healthcare industry and around the world. Workers are already building a network of such committees, affiliated through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.

We propose a rank-and-file committee of UC healthcare workers concentrate on the following program:

- The expansion of the strike from a two-day to an indefinite strike, drawing in the entire workforce of the UC system, including graduate students and academic workers facing political repression from the administration.

- Hands off healthcare! Trillions of dollars should be allocated to guarantee free and high-quality public healthcare. This must be funded by transforming major corporations into publicly owned enterprises, transferring wealth from the corporate parasites, supporting fascism and war, to the workers who produce the wealth.

- Serious measures to fight COVID and future pandemics! Real science, and not stock portfolios, must take absolute priority.

- The defense of immigrants! Workers must insist that their brothers and sisters, regardless of origin, have the right to live and work wherever they choose.

- An end to war! Trillions are being sucked out of the working class into criminal wars for markets, natural resources and supply chains, with the workers of the world the ones being killed. The genocide in Gaza, the war in Ukraine and all other imperialist wars must be ended, the resources squandered on the military used to rebuild those societies and improve living standards all over the world.

If you agree with this, then contact the WSWS today! Fill out the form at wsws.org/workers for more information about rank-and-file committees.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact