

# Workers Struggles: The Americas

Generation Z protests against newly appointed president of Peru José Jeri; Government workers strike continues in BC as union okays non-binding arbitration

20 October 2025

*The World Socialist Web Site invites workers and other readers to contribute to this regular feature.*

Trabajadoras y Trabajadores del Campo y la Ciudad) was established in July 2024.

## Generation Z protests against newly appointed president of Peru, José Jeri

On Wednesday, October 15, youth and young adults marched on the heavily guarded and fenced national legislature and attempted to remove the fence that restricts entry. The demonstrators were joined by trade-unionists and other workers.

The demonstrators carried signs and flags calling for the removal of Congress and of newly installed president José Jeri, appointed following the removal of the hated Dina Baluarte.

The demonstration was violently assaulted by hundreds of police, who corralled the demonstrators and pushed them away from the building. Two demonstrators were shot: Peruvian musician Eduardo Mauricio Ruiz Saenz, 32, killed by a police bullet, and Luis Reyes Rodriguez, 28, shot in the head and now in a medically induced coma.

Press reports indicate that police specifically targeted news reporters with rubber bullets and beatings.

Demonstrations also took place in other major cities: including Arequipa, Peru's second largest city, where the Tenth Spanish Language Congress is taking place coinciding with the visit of Spanish King Felipe IV.

## Rural and Urban workers rally in Mexico City

On October 15, the Organization of Rural and Urban workers, rallied at the National legislature in Mexico City demanding that its members' rights be recognized, and wages protected in the 2026 budget presently being discussed.

Speakers at the rally denounced the fact that contracts are, in many cases, "dead letters," allowing employers, private and public, to do whatever they want. Many workers are paid less than the legal minimum.

The Organization of Rural and Urban Workers (Central de

## Indianapolis casino workers strike for union recognition

Workers at Horseshoe Casino Indianapolis have launched a strike over union recognition with the Teamsters after a scheduled National Labor Relations Board union representation election was indefinitely postponed due to the federal government shutdown.

The Teamsters had proposed using a neutral third party to conduct the vote, but management rejected the idea.

The casino, owned by the multibillion-dollar Caesar's Entertainment, took in \$336 million in revenue last year.

## Kapiolani Medical Center staff walk out in Honolulu, Hawaii

More than 300 workers at Kapiolani Medical Center in Honolulu struck October 17 over pay and working conditions. The workers are members of Hawaii Teamsters and Allied Workers Local 996, including nurse aides, surgical assistants, maintenance staff, and other support workers.

The workers say their pay cannot keep up with the notoriously high cost of living in Hawaii. "Over here, most of our members, about 90 percent of them, usually work two to three jobs just to make a living," said Kevin Holu, president of Teamsters Local 996 told a local news channel. "They don't get time to spend with their families or have any quality time."

Hospital officials say that had already unilaterally raised pay by 4 percent, a pittance given inflation. Management is maintaining operations with strikebreakers.

Meanwhile, workers at Kaiser Permanente facilities in Hawaii returned to work last week after a 5-day strike.

## South St. Paul, Minnesota tannery workers strike over wages,

## benefits and working conditions

Workers at Twin City Tanning in South St. Paul, Minnesota, have been on strike since October 9 over wages, benefits and hazardous working conditions. The 67 workers are members of Chicago and Midwest Regional Joint Board, Workers United Local 150, an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union. The walkout is the first strike for the local shop.

The workers process raw animal hides used in boots, clothes and upholstery. The work involves dangerous chemicals.

“There’s hazards all over the place,” maintenance worker Mark Aufderhar told the *Pioneer Press*. Another worker, Carlos Vaños, told *Workday Magazine*, “The wages that we are getting paid do not value our hard work. The chemicals are very dangerous.”

The company initially offered a 25-cent wage increase in year one, followed by a 10-cent increase in years two and three. Their followup offer was \$1 the first year and 70 cents in each of the next two years. The current union request is for \$1.50 followed by 50 cents in years two and three.

Workers are also seeking two additional personal days off and a weekly attendance bonus of \$40. Previously, the bonus was monthly and valued at \$100. According to Workers United, the strike will continue until the demands are met.

## South Carolina Waffle House workers in four-day strike

Workers at the Waffle House restaurant in Orangeburg, South Carolina launched a four-day strike October 13 over wages and working conditions. The workers are organized by the Union of Southern Service Workers, based out of North Carolina.

A petition launched by the workers states, “We’re sick and tired of making poverty wages, the constant threat of in-store violence, and mandatory meal deductions – whether we eat a meal or not while on a shift.”

Workers are demanding a \$25 an hour base wage for all employees—cooks and servers. They also charged they are threatened, harassed and ignored when they report issues to management. They are calling for a 24/7 security presence.

Waffle House has over 2,000 restaurants in 25 states, mainly concentrated in the Midwest and South.

## British Columbia General Employees Union agrees to non-binding arbitration as province-wide strike continues

Last Friday, the union representing striking public service workers across British Columbia agreed to enter into non-binding mediation with the province in their dispute. The strike, which is entering its eighth week, now involves 25,000 of the 34,000 workers in the bargaining unit, with several thousand more still awaiting strike mobilization or are deemed essential and therefore must remain on the job. Workers will continue striking during the mediated negotiations. This past week the strikers were joined by 1,600 more workers,

members of the province’s Professional Employees Association (PEA).

Workers are demanding wage increases after years of wage erosion, cost-of-living adjustments and access to remote work, among other issues. The New Democratic Party provincial government has rejected the BCGEU’s proposal for an 8.25 percent wage increase over two years, announcing that its most recent offer—a paltry 1.5 percent in year one and 2 percent in year two—is “fair and reasonable” and necessary so it can “maintain” its fiscal plan.

## Part-time Ontario community college support workers vote to strike just as full-time support workers end their own strike

More than 10,000 full-time support workers in 24 community colleges across the province of Ontario returned to work on October 16 after officials from the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) reached a tentative deal with the College Employer Council (CEC). Workers, however, will not vote on the proposed contract until November 4.

The workers, on strike since September 11, walked out in pursuit of improved wages and benefits as well as crucial job security provisions. The workers provide a full gamut of services in the provincial college network including library technologists, student advisors and co-op placement coordinators, administrative staff, job counselors, IT specialists, tradespeople, custodians and food service workers.

A day after the full-time support workers returned to their jobs, the 13,000 part-time workers, also organized by OPSEU, voted by 64 percent to give a strike mandate to the union. That mandate, however, will not be exercised until a final round of mediated negotiations take place beginning on November 20 after almost two years spent dragging out negotiations. The poorly paid part-time workers are seeking a “fair” wage increase. However, the employer has thus far proposed a wage freeze for 2024 and possibly 2025 as well.

The tentative agreement just reached for the full-time support workers contains a \$1.05-an-hour raise for all staffers in the first year, followed by 2 percent raises in each of the next two years. However, college management did not budge on job security protections that were a central demand of the strikers. The College Employer Council, backed by the right-wing Conservative provincial government, have insisted that 10,000 of the 60,000 jobs in the community college system must be eliminated this year along with over 650 curriculum programs. Layoffs across the college network had already begun before the strike began.



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